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ABSTRACT
        The educational and linguistic rationales for
designing an adult English-as-a-Second-Language literacy program
based on phonics are discussed, with specific reference to an Ibibio
adult literacy program in Nigeria. An introductory section gives an
overview of Nigerian policy and practice concerning literacy
education. Next, the phonics approach to reading and the language
experience approach to second language learning are explained. A
third section addresses the role of Ibibio sounds in teaching English
pronunciation. Some comparisons are made between the two phonological
systems, and specific areas in which English phonology should be
emphasized are identified. Strategies for teaching initial reading
are then outlined. Prerequisites for phonics-based learning are noted
(motivation and encouragement, visual and auditory discrimination)
and techniques for teaching consonants and vowel sounds are
described. Classroom principles and procedures for using the language
experience approach are then enumerated. A concluding statement
emphasizes the need to approach adult second-language literacy
instruction with extra consideration for adult learner
characteristics, including physiology, native language interference,
and self-consciousness. A brief bibliography is included. (MSE)
(Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Initial Reading Programme for the Ibibio Adult Learner:
Some Practical Considerations

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ABSTRACT

The Psychology of first language learning is different from the psychology of second language learning. The compulsion present in the former case is absent in the later case. Besides, the child's mind is often refered to as a kind of blank slate on which his first language is impressed. This compulsion is absent in the later case for there is an alternative in the first language, through which the second language must pass. Also of importance is the physiological development of the second language learner. It is essier for a child to adjust to differing articulations than an adult, who not only has an alternative in his first language but also lacks, the flexibility in articulating strange and new sounds as well as unfamiliar distribution of familiar sounds.

This paper aims at drawing up a programme for the teaching of English pronunciation to the Ibibio Adult Education pupil who at the time he starts his education not only has acquired and mastered his first language, but is also highly developed physiologically.

The Phonics Approach is prefered as a basic approach. It is combined with the Language Experience Approach to produce a programme for teaching initial reading to the Ibibio adult learner.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There has been an intensive national Mass Literacy
Campaign for a long while in this country. These campaigns
have been aimed at eradicating illiteracy. In a country where
many factors contribute towards school drop outs, this
programme is very welcome indeed. The National Policy on
Education (1981:32) states:

> Adult Education and Non - Formal
> Education consists of functional
> literacy, remedial continuing, as
> thetic, cultural and civic education
> for youths and adults outside the
> formal School system.

The objective therefore include providing functional education
for various categories of people. Such education range from
functional, remedial as well as furthering education for adults
of varying ages.

The underlying factor here is Literacy. For the period of
these campaigns, many agencies have been directly involved.
Two of these seem to be on the forefront:

    (1)   The Nigerian National Council for Adult
           Education (NNCAE)

    (2)   Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN)

Both agencies have consistently performed admirably in
literacy work and their positive contributions in this regard
have been quite visible.

The benefits of Literacy are numerous. Uzodinma (1993:37)
stresses its contribution to economic development with four
strong points:

(1) It raises the productivity of neo-literates and individuals working with literates.
(2) It expands the flow of knowledge to individuals.
(3) It helps in the selection of able individuals thereby enhancing their occupational mobility.
(4) It strengthens economic incentives.

These benefits are very crucial to a developing nation like Nigeria. It is for this reason that Adult Literacy becomes very important in Nigeria's development today.

Reading is the basis of this literacy. It therefore becomes very important to have a good foundation in reading especially in Adult Education Programmes.

Different psychologies underlie language learning, be it first or second language. In learning a first language, there is a certain level of compulsion involved which is necessitated by the lack of a choice. Besides, this is usually done at an early age where the articulators are very flexible and untained by a previous language. Again, the child's mind is blank and free of any impressions. Strategies for teaching initial reading in Ibibio have been discussed elsewhere (Udoh 1993).

The psychology of learning a second language is slightly different from that of learning a first language. The compulsion in the later case is absent in the former case, for there is an alternative in the first language of the learner. The learner can easily revert to his first language if any problems arose with learning the second language. Besides, this feat is being accomplished at an adult age where the articulators have become less flexible and have been used to articulating certain sounds and their distribution in his first language for years.

This implies therefore that the second language will have to pass through his first language which most of the time would not only have a different sound system but also a different distribution of these sounds.

These assumptions underly this programme for the teaching of English pronunciation to the Ibibio adult learner.

2.0 APPROACHES TO READING

There have been several approaches to teaching, Reading. Each approach should suit the target, i.e the learner. Out of the lot, I have chosen two of these approaches for reasons which I shall discuss shortly.

The adult learner, who is the target here although a pupil, is different from the ideal primary school pupil who is under ten years. The adults problems are different from the children's. He is advanced in age, he is matured linguistically, emotionally and intellectually. In the words of Orisawayi (1993: 218)

> He is probably a more adept psychologist
> than you the teacher. He could read the minds
> of people. He could read between the lines, but
> not the lines of print. For this kind of learner
> therefore, there is need for a kind of special
> programme for teaching him how to read.

Considering the physiological development of the adult, it is more difficult to articulate strange sounds. Sounds which are not in his mother - tongues' inventory. Even for those sounds that he is familiar with, their distribution in the second language is different. From the contrastive analysis' point of view, we predict that these areas would be areas of difficulty.

The Phonics method of teaching Reading would be the ideal method to handle such articulatory problems of these adult learners. Details of this method are discussed in 2.1.

Secondly, the adult learner is full of experiences. This wealth of experience should be tapped on. The adults' power of analogy and generalisation is an added advantage. For this reason, the Language Experience method is also recommended. Details of this method are discussed in 2.2.

2.2 THE PHONICS APPROACH -

The phonics Approach involves the application of Phonetics to the teaching of Reading. It is sometimes called "cracking the code" because it involves learning the relationship between the sound and the letter/symbol it represents. In its history, this approach has been known to be most effective as an essential programme for teaching reading skills when combined with other approaches.

The Phonics approach is recommended here as a first stage for teaching beginning Reading to both adults and children. It is important that the pupil should be able to first of all appreciate and be able to associate the sounds involved in reading tasks with the letters or symbols they represent before attempting to read. This approach could be either "synthetic" i.e putting different sounds of the letters together or "analylie" i.e introducing a whole word and then breaking down the sounds. (RAN Monograph Series A).

A reading programme for any adult learner should begin with Phonics. Naturally, it is assumed that the adult illiterate cannot read. Therefore, the programme should be broken down into three stages thus:

(1) Prerequisites for Phonics teaching

(2) Teaching consonant sounds

(3) Teaching vowel sounds

These stages are demonstrated in a later section.

Phonetic analysis should be the first stage of any reading process. It is a feature of all reading methods and it plays a very significant role in word recognition.

2.2 THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

This approach as the name suggests involves learning to read through one's experiences. It has been in use since the early 1960s and it is quite popular in the United States of America.

Like most approaches to teaching, the Language Experience Approach has slight variations. But basically it has the following Statement by R. Van Allen cited in W.H Miller(1972:45) as the major highlight of its assumptions:

What I can think about I can say.

What I can say, I can write.

I can read what I have written

I can read what others have written

for me to read

An extention of this argument is that a person's own experiences which include his oral language are very important in his learning any skills, particularly Reading. This approach relies heavily on a person's experience which is conveyed through language.

Although Phonetic analysis is not the emphasis, it is introduced at some stage. The individual treatment of these wordsdraws attention to their Phonetic qualities. With so much Phonics at the initial stage of the programme, this approach helps to reinforce the pronunciation of the different sounds, words and ultimately sentences.

The Approach has many advantages which make it such an important device in teaching Initial Reading.

(1) The thought of Reading as "talk written down" is a difficult concept to grasp even by adults. It helps the pupil to handle this.

(2) It also enables pupils to read their own language patterns developed over a certain period.

(3) It is flexible in the sense that pupils' linguistic capabilities differ and as such each pupil can go at his own pace, with the Linguistically adept pupils exploring their capabilities to the highest limits.

(4) It is integrated in nature and as such it stresses the relationships between the four language arts of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

(5) It emphasizes the Semantic aspect of Reading for Reading makes sense only when there is meaning.

(6) It emphasizes the creativity of the pupils since they can both create stories based on their experiences as well as creatively illustrate them.

(7) It forsters real interest as well as love for Reading.

(8) The phonetic analysis stage of this approach reinforces the Phonics which this programme starts with.

Many activities are involved in this approach. Some of these are:

(1) Oral discussion of pupils experiences particularly interesting topics

(2) Reading stores, letters etc to pupils

(3) Watching films

(4) Oral composition of stories

(5) Writing of pupils experiences

(6) Illustration of dictated stories by pupils

(7) Copying or tracing of words from dictated stories

(8) Reading of stories by pupils.

3.0 THE ROLE OF IBIBIO SOUNDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

There are three important features of language: sound, structure and meaning. All three play equally important roles in the acquisition or learning of a language.

Contrastive Analysis has characterized language learning approaches since 1945 when Charles Fries started the comparsion of the two languages involved in language acquisition. Although there have been very many modifications to the analysis, (like Ladc 1964, Wardaugh 1970, Eckman 1977 etc), the basic assumption still remains the same viz: language is a habit formation and

an old habit either fascilitates or hinders the

formation of a new habit depending on their differencies. These assumptions are based on botn the behaviourists theory of habit formation normally described in terms of stimulus- response, as well as the interfernce theory of memory research. The new language being learned must pass through the learners first language.

Languages generally have a lot of things in common, but no two languages have exactly the same inventory of sounds. In the light of this development therefore, it is not surprising that the first language has some influence on the Learning of a second language. There is the tendency to make wrong equivalents between Ibibio and English sounds. Some cases that appear to be equivalents are mere approximations.

The sound systems of Ibibio and English are not tne same in terms of the sound segments and their distribution. Ibibio has a consonantal system of 15 phonemes: /p b t d k f s kp m n ŋ ʃ y w f/ and a vowel system of 10 phonemes

/i̯ eɜ ʌaɔo ʉ u/ (Essien, 1990) English on the other hand
has a consonantal system of 24 phonemes:
/p b t d k g č ǰ f v θ ð š ž ž h ŋ m n s z w r y/ and a vowel system
of 9 phonemes /i ɨ u e ɜ oæ ʌ ɔ/ (Gleason , 1978).

A closer look at these two sound systems shows that Ibibio
is deficient in voiced sounds as most of the voiceless sounds
do not have their voiced counterparts like the voiced velar
stop /g/ voiced alveola fricative /z/ which are present in
English.   Also the alveopalatal sounds /š, ž./, the dental fricatives
/θ ð/ and the alveopalatal affricates /č ǰ/ in English are
absent in Ibibio.   However, the vowel systems seem to be more
alike

With so many new sounds in English, it is not surprising
that the adults we are talking about would have problems
articulating most of them.   The tendency is that the new voiced
sounds are replaced by their voiceless counterparts.   For
instance, there would be the tendency to pronounce words with
/g/ as /k/ its voiceless counterpart.

For these reasons therefore, there should be certain areas
in English Phonology that should be emphasised.   Naturally, the
areas of differences which should cause any problems should
attract more attention than the areas that seem similar with
Ibibio

4.1   STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING

There are several strategies for teaching initial Reading
in English.   Many of such strategies already put up begin with
the sounds.   Doman (1965) insists that the pronunciation of the
letters should precede reading.   Roberts (1962) with 13
subskills starts his programme with the recognition of the
letters and then graduating to the sounds beginning with single
sounds, digraphs, irregular sounds etc.

This programme begins with phonics. The Phonics should be in three broad stages:

(1) Prerequisites for Phonics

(2) Teaching consonant sounds

(3) Teaching vowel sounds

4.1.1 PREREQUISITES FOR PHONICS

Phonics can be a very abstract exercise. Matching the abstract sounds to their letters is also a very difficult concept to grasp. For these reasons therefore, there is the need to precede the actual teaching with some kind of ground work to help the adult learners get over this particular problem.

4.1.1.1 MOTIVATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

There is need to get the adult learner properly prepared before the lessons. There are a lot of gains that go with literacy. He must be made to appreciate these gains. Some of them would come to learn to read because of some personal reasons. It is important for the teacher to find out what some of these motivations are. This could be done through subtle questions, discussions etc with the class. Learning to read at a fairly adult age is a real feat indeed. Therefore, the motivation needs to be high enough to sustain the problems the adult learner would encounter. Where there is no motivation, it might become necessary to create one. The learner could be made to see his losses in illiteracy and his gains in Literacy.

There is need to encourage the adult learner. Most of them would come to the class burdened with all sorts of problems. Such learners could easily abandon the task. They need encouragement. Teaching them to read could help to divert their minds from their stress. Some of their problems are not perculiar to them alone. Discussing their problems would enable them to learn from other's experiences.

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4.1.1.2 VISUAL DISCRIMINATION

This is a very important skill for the effective teaching
of phonmic. There is the need to discriminate the fine lines,,
curves and angles required for reading. Again the adults
power of analogy and ability to generalize are of utmost
advantage here. Such activities as the following are of help:

(1) Matching similar lines, curves and angles the following
figures could be matched. Get the pupils to point out or
circle the figures that are like the ones on the right
hand column below:

```
7  L  O  X  C    O
X  7  L  O  C    C
O  L  7  X  C    7
C  7  X  O  L    L
L  O  C  X  7    X
```

(2) Naming letters: using flash cards or merely writing some
letters on the board, get the pupils to recognise some
letters.

(3) Matching letter forms: This activity should be a follow-up
to 1 above. With enough practice on matching curves and
strokes, the exercise should graduate to matching real
letter forms e.g.

```
b  o  d  e  f  | d
f  o  d  b  e  | f
e  d  o  b  f  | b
b  d  o  e  f  | e
b  o  d  f  e  | o
```

(4) Matching word forms: This exercise is a follow up to 3 above. This time, whole words should be used. Note that the emphasis is merely on visual discrimination. The pupils are not expected to know how to pronounce the words yet. They could merely circle or locate the similar words. e.g.

Etim Ckon Udo Eno	Ckon
Okon Etim Eno Udoh	Udoh
Udoh Okon Etim Eno	Etim
Etim Eno Udoh Ckon	Eno

4.1.1.3   AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION

The ability to differentiate between speech sounds is also another very important skill for effective teaching of Phonics. This ability simply involves the differentiation of sounds in words. This can be done using some exercises cited in RAN Moragraph Series A.

(1) Listening to sounds around you. They should be made to listen to sounds around and then made to describe what they heard.

(2) Listening to recorded sounds, Record different sounds like: cracking of nuts, running tap, crying, sneezing etc and get the pupils to identify or even describe the sounds they heard. This exercise will help them to develop their auditory powers.

4.1.2   TEACHING CONSONANTS

The sound system of any language is divided into two groups: The consonants and vowels. The consonants are those sounds that are articulated with an obstruction in the vocal tract. Technically each consonant is described by three features:

(1) The place of articulation (i.e the point in vocal tract at which point the articulation is made).

(2) The manner of articulation i.e whether the obstruction is complete or not.

(3) The state of the Glottis. Thus a sound like /b/ is articulated with the two lips touching, it is a stop and it is produced with a constricted glottis and as such there is a vibration of the vocal cords. In the same vein, /v/ is a labio-dental voiced stop. This description has some implications for teaching for teaching consonants. The labiodental voiced stop, like the velar voiced stop /g/ predictably would create some problems for this category of learners since the two voiced sounds are absent in Ibibio. Therefore an attempt to describe to the learners what to do with regard to producing a vibration in the throat will save a lot of useless and boring drills in the attempt to pronounce /v/ or /g/.

This kind of thinking should be borne in mind while intnoducing the learners to the consonant sounds in English.

It is easier to teach consonants because their articulations are moreconcrete. Besides most words that beginners would encounter begin with consonants. For that reason therefore it is best to begin the lessons with initial consonant sounds. Here are some tips that you may follow:

(1) First of all introduce the consonants by writing them on the blackboard. You could start with stops. e.g t d k g etc. Gradually introduce other classes of consonants. They do not need to be taught in ABC order

(2) When the pupils are familiar with the sounds, introduce concrete words like names of people, places, objects familiar to the pupils. There could be words connected with the pupils individual personal motivation to want to read. But note that all the words in the group could begin with the same consonant and it is best to stick to one or two syllable words at this stage.

E.g.   Terry

Tin

Tete

Titi

Tony etc.

You may have to pronounce these sounds first and ask the pupils to do the same.

(3) Ask the pupils to provide other names beginning with /t/. You could then provide words with the same sound in the middle and eventually the sound in final positions - The exercises should progress in that order. It is better to start with names because most of these names are familiar to them. Eventually, other nouns could be introduced like /f/ in fan

fish

fork

five etc.

The same treatment should be given to each sound. This kind of analytic approach whereby the words are introduced and the sounds broken down should follow a synthetic approach which was used to introduce the sounds first. A combination of a sythetic and analytic analysis of the sounds is recommended.

4.1.3   TEACHING VOWEL SOUNDS

Vowel sounds are sounds that are produced without complete closure of the articulators to the extent that there is audible friction. This implies that the sounds are produced with air passing evenly over the tongue. Slight movements of the tongue can therefore change the vowel quality.

Most languages generally have short and long vowels. The short vowels are those whose duration are short e.g. sit, bat, met etc, and the long vowels are produced for a longer duration e.g. seed, boat, meat etc. Again the vowel can be either pure or gliding vowel. A pure vowel is one whose quality remains unchanged like red, car, sit etc. Glinding vowels are those produced with an evident change in quality. All these features of the vowels should be borne in mind as the vowels are taught. Here are a few tips that may be useful:

(1)   Teach the short vowels first. Write out all the vowel letters on the black board. Pronounce each sound for the pupils in isolation. Get the pupils to repeat after you until they sound almost like you.

(2)   Next call out some familiar words containing each of the vowels, like at, am, an, as etc. More words can be used for this practice and gradually increasing the number of letters in the words.

(3)   Pronounce each of the words slowly and allow the pupils to repeat after you.

(4)   Contrasts can be used in teaching these vowel sounds. Make an attempt to show the differences between the vowels. Pair them up and contrast them. This device is technically called minimal pairs.

Some examples include:

bat	bet
mat	met
sat	set
pat	pet etc

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In pronouncing these sounds the vowels should be stressed.

Note that in all these, the teacher should point out and actually stress the relationship between the sounds and the letters they represent. For more exercises on teaching short vowels, See RAN Morograph Series A.

These kind of exercises are useful in helping the adult learner to get used to the sounds as well as associate the sounds with the letters they represent.

Note that this category of learners are matured enough to grasp certain concepts. For this reason, there might not be much need for too many exercises involving pictures and games. However, the teacher can use his initiative to introduce games that adults in his class would enjoy.

With the ability to pronounce the sounds properly, it becomes necessary to tap on the generalisation and analogy skills of these adults. The following illustration is Walker's cited in Miller (1972:160) of an inductive phonetic analysis.

Using the chalk board, Miss Walker writes some words (closed syllables) like those given below on the board.

> can
>
> pin
>
> run
>
> tin
>
> top
>
> chin
>
> hen   etc

In a discussion that follows the pronunciation exercise, she subtly allows the pupils to bring out the generalization that:

> "when a vowel is in the middle of a one syllable word, the vowel is short".

Such discussions apart from breaking the monotony of pronouncing sounds would also help them in their phonetic analysis.

With the basic pronunciation learnt, the pupils can graduate to more meaningful reading using another approach - The Language experience approach which will be discussed shortly.

4.2 THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

The Language Experience Approach as has been mentioned is useful in a reading programme for adult learners. Adults already have a lot of experiences, some of which are very interesting.

For children, experience charts are often used for teaching beginning Reading. This simply means keeping a group - composed manuscript used for reading. The children are first taken on an excursion for the experience. They are then asked questions to stimulate discussions. This discussion is then recorded in the form of a chart by the teacher. It is used for reading practice.

This kind of chart can be prepared for the adult learners, but in this case, rather than use stories from exercises the adults can be encouraged sometimes to use their own experiences. Here are some hints for the programme.

(1) The next task after the phonics is Oral discussion. Such discussions should be guided and controlled by the teacher in order to bring out some themes related to some of the learners' personal motivation. Some of such stories can be written down in a chart, either using large card board sheets or the black board.

(2) The teacher can read some of these experiences as recounted by the pupils to the whole class or groups. (Use simple words) He can even read letters which had been discussed to the pupils. The idea here is that the pupils should see the connection between the discussion, the print and Literacy in general.

(3) The pupils can be made to compose stories, poems etc. Remember that we are dealing with intellectually mature adults, some of whom might be very creative.

(4) They could illustrate the stories that have been recorded in the chart.

(5) They could be made to locate and circle certain words that they can recognise in the chart.

(6) Eventually, they should be allowed to read their own stories.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has stressed the need to treat the adult learner differently by virtue of his status, age and stage of maturity etc. Most of the adult learners in our Adult Education classes give up the quest for literacy very easily. This is rather an unfortunate situation, since they miss the fulfilment which come with Literacy.

The key to this Literacy is that initial reading ability. There is need to encourage this category of learners to complete their programmes.

Learning another language at an adult age is quite a herculian task. This is attributed to a number of reasons like: physiological advancement, mother tongue interference among others. Above all, the adult is very self conscious. Most of them would not like to be laughed at if their pronunciation is too far from the mark. This perhaps explains why most of them do not like to practice the exercises. If reading is a skill which must be developed, then they need to practice a lot to improve their performance.

This calls once more for careful handling of this category of learners. Apart from following the Phonics and Language Experience Approaches, they need to be treated decently. They need mutual respect and lots of humour and laughter.

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