

UNIT 2: EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ORAL ENGLISH

Unit Outline

- Session 1: Listening and speaking in everyday life: implications for classroom practice
- Session 2: The teacher as a model in the English classroom
- Session 3: Factors that inhibit/promote effective listening and speaking
- Session 4: Beginner activities – rhymes and songs for primary pupils
- Session 5: Teaching unusual English sounds, /θ/ and /ð/
- Session 6: Story telling in the English language classroom

Listening and speaking are skills that make us human. They are skills that all human children acquire very early in their lives. Indeed the literary skills of reading and writing are really poor modelling of these fundamental skills. In teaching oral English, we are dealing with these basic skills upon which a child's whole future career is grounded. Oral English teaching, therefore, demands the greatest commitment from the dedicated teacher.

OVERVIEW

Unit Objectives

- By the end of the Unit, you should be able to:
1. tell the importance of listening and effective speaking in language acquisition;
 2. communicate with pupils in English and invite them to speak to you and one another in English in and outside the classroom;
 3. ensure that pupils learn to listen attentively, and speak effectively; and
 4. ensure that pupils speak English with confidence.



**SESSION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING IN EVERYDAY LIFE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

You're welcome to Unit 2 of this module. In Module 1, Unit 1, you learnt that it is man's ability to **listen** and to **speak** that sets him apart from other animal species. It is for this reason that man is regarded as **Homo Loquens**: Man as a talking animal (Dennis Fry, 1977) rather than **the Naked Ape**, (Desmond Morris). In other words, we are human beings because we can *listen* and *speak*. Listening and speaking are basic linguistic skills upon which other skills such as reading and writing are modelled, as we have seen in Unit 1 of Module 1. It is not surprising, therefore, that in non-literate societies, the entire daily life is lived either listening or speaking. Even in literate societies, about 80% of our daily life is spent in either listening or speaking; the remaining 20% of our time is shared between reading and writing.

INTRODU

Can you guess the proportion of your daily life lived listening and speaking?



Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to

- a. tell the importance of *listening* and *speaking* in your daily life;
- b. tell why oral communication depends on the twin-skills of listening and speaking;
- c. explain the implication of the importance of these skills in the classroom; and
- d. explain why children should be given a fair chance to listen and to speak in the classroom.



Now read on...

1.1 Listening and Speaking as Human Activities

Why do you greet people in your house when you get up in the morning? Greeting is ostensibly a form of a wish. For instance, "Good morning" means "I wish you a good morning." So are such other greeting forms such as "Good day", "Good afternoon", "Good evening" and "Good night". What about "Good-bye"?



Apart from the *wish* conveyed, greetings are social rituals with no clear message.

Remember that you often greet someone you perceive as an enemy. What do people in your community say about a young person who does not greet his/her elders? What do you yourself say? So greetings are valued as a social norm recognized as showing respect to others, but even more importantly, greetings express goodwill, and keep the channels of communication clear and open. Proper communication in the form of conveying information and feelings is however the central function of language.

1.2 Development of Listening in Babies

This can be an interesting topic which, for our current purpose, we may not explore. The curious reader may find interesting sources in E. Lenneberg, *Biological Foundations of Language*, Wiley, 1967, and R. Campbell and R. Wales, "The Study of Language Acquisition" in John Lyons (ed) *New Horizons in Linguistics*, Penguin 1970, and several others.

1.3 Language use in Everyday Life

For some interesting discussions, you may see M.A.K. Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, Arnold, 1973. Ordinarily, however, during most of our working hours, we are either listening to some-one talk or we are talking ourselves and making others listen to us. What do you do when you talk? Of course, you do a lot of things. Often you talk:

- a. to give information to somebody:
 - Mother will return today.
 - The time's a quarter to four.
 - It's not easy acquiring a diploma.
- b. to ask for information from someone:
 - What's your name?
 - How long have you been teaching?
 - Do you find your job interesting?
- c. to order someone to do something:
 - Shut that door, please.
 - Call the police, someone.
 - Put the exercise book on the table.
- d. to invite someone:
 - Have dinner with us.
 - What about a bottle of fanta?
 - Breakfast's ready!

- e. to make a request to someone:
 - Could/Can I use your pen?
 - Would you mind if I open the window?
 - Tell me your name, will you?

- f. to prohibit someone from doing something:
 - Don't jump through the window.
 - You don't have to shout in class.
 - Don't come to class late.

- g. to warn or threaten someone:
 - Don't talk or I punish you.
 - Laugh again, and I send you out.
 - If you're late again, I shall send you back home.

- h. to express our feelings:
 - Wow, you're gorgeous in that kente!
 - How clever!
 -
 - Great to win an election!

Can you give two examples to each of the functions listed above?



What observation can you make about these functions? Yes, there are far more language functions than the traditional four grammatical forms to express them. Although we have listed eight functions, we have actually not exhausted the list. Can you think about other functions? Yes, we use language to express a wish, to teach, to meditate, etc.

In all these functions, it is clear that we are using language to influence the behaviour of other people, (for example, our pupils) or we are being influenced by others. Thus, in our daily lives we are listening to be influenced, or we are speaking to influence our listeners.

1.4 Listening and Speaking in the Classroom

In our normal everyday life, the norm is for *listening* to alternate with *speaking*, as we find in everyday conversations or dialogues: a monologue is unusual and very much restricted to just a few special occasions as preaching a sermon by a priest or an imam, a sessional address by a president, and few others. The classroom is not one of such occasions. The teacher monologue must, therefore, be frowned upon.

in the oral English class. Choral practices are meant to facilitate speaking after a fair spell of listening.

1.5 The importance of Careful Listening and Speaking

Why do you think pupils must be trained to listen carefully? Yes, unless the child listens attentively, he/she cannot exhibit the required behaviour demanded of him/her be it a question, an invitation, a request or prohibition. This is one good reason for a teacher not to keep repeating his/her question. But this condition presupposes that the teacher's own message is clear, concise and complete. A good question elicits only one answer at a time. It is, therefore, important for the teacher to avoid ambiguous instructions. For instance a statement like:

“I didn't come because it was raining” is ambiguous.

Can you suggest possible interpretations? One could be
I did come despite the fact that it was raining.

Another could be:
I stayed away because it was raining.

We might as well say:
I was absent because it was raining/
Because it was raining, I did not come.

1.6 Listening and Speaking as Reciprocal Activities

We must always remember that it is not only our pupils who must be encouraged to listen attentively; the teacher must also listen critically, but sympathetically and patiently. Impatient and rude interruptions of pupils' efforts at self-expression in a foreign language like English can only be recipes for destroying their interest and self-confidence in English.

SUMMARY

In this first session of the Unit, we learn that listening and speaking are reciprocal activities we employ in our everyday interactions. Since language is used to elicit specific behavioural changes, appropriate responses can only be obtained after a careful listening to a linguistic task. The teacher's endless monologue is unnatural in the primary school language class. Attentive listening and clarity of expression are essential qualities required of the teacher and his/her pupils.



Self Assessment Questions

Exercise 2.1

1. List six functions, and illustrate each with two (2) examples.
2. “Too many monologues in the oral English classroom cannot be a good teaching method”. Do you share this view? Express your opinion in just about 100 words.

Assignment

Discuss six functions of talk using appropriate examples.



SESSION 2: THE TEACHER AS A MODEL IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

We welcome you to Session 2 of the Unit. We hope that you found the exercises on the previous session interesting and useful. In the present session, we want to examine the significance of the English teacher in the English language classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- explain why a child's first language is often called "mother-tongue";
- explain why the English teacher must be a model of excellence to his/her pupils in his/her level of language use; and
- explain why the teacher should encourage his/her pupils to communicate in English not only in the classroom, but also outside it.

Now read on...

2.1 The Child Learns the English it is Exposed To

Why is it that a five -- year old Ghanaian child taken to a London primary school speaks English with Standard British accent within, for example, twelve months? For an answer, let us ask another question. Why is it that a Ga child grows to speak Ga, and an Ewe child speaks Ewe? Have I heard you say "the Ga child acquires its Ga from its mother and the Ewe child learns from its mother"? Since the mother speaks most of the time to the child in Ga, it automatically picks Ga. Other Ga speakers in the house, for the example, the siblings speak Ga to the child. The cumulative effect is that the child grows to speak Ga, the mother's tongue. It is the mother's tongue that acts as the basic stimulus; the other people's Ga is supportive and reinforcing. Similarly, the Ewe child acquires Ewe because it is the language the Ewe mother speaks to it. So are all other children in normal circumstances. The conclusion we draw is that every human child acquires the mother's language so long as it is the language the mother speaks to it.

We observe that no child fails to acquire its mother's tongue unless it is severely handicapped at birth. The child's rapid acquisition of the mother-tongue can be explained in terms of the high incentive to speak. For instance, speech enables it get attention from people; obtain satisfaction for its needs; even more importantly, it enables it attain humanity for language is the symbol of our humanity. We may

also add that speech enables the child to explore and control its environment, not for nothing that a child's first language is naturally the mother's tongue.

Interestingly, however, no child is born to acquire a particular language; rather, a child is born with the ability to acquire any language it is exposed to, whether Akan, Hausa, Japanese or French. It follows naturally that if a child is not exposed to any human language, it cannot acquire any language. Unique examples are the sad stories of Genie of America and Peter of Avon, France.

In the classroom, the teacher is the surrogate mother whose variety of speech the child will grow to speak. If the teacher speaks a very poor variety of English in the classroom, his/her pupils will acquire that poor variety as efficiently as anything else. What is even more devastating is that the wrong variety learnt in childhood generally resists any corrections later on in life. The teacher, therefore, *must* always speak the correct and acceptable variety of English to his/her children. This is a sacred duty, as it were.

We can now properly summarise the answer to our first question by saying that the five-year old Ghanaian child in a London primary school speaks English with an admirable British accent because that is the variety of English he/she is exposed to. Naturally, the primary school teacher must therefore expose his/her pupils to the best variety of standard English (See Unit 5 below). This means the teacher's speech patterns, that is, pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are appropriate, the grammar is correct and words chosen are the right ones for the social context of use. This must be done **not** sometimes, but **always**, both in the classroom and outside it.

Can you suggest any justifiable reasons for this?



You may compare your reasons with the following: most children spend their waking hours in their mother tongue, which, invariably, is not English. The only opportunity they have to learn and use English is at school. School, therefore, provides the only true environment for acquiring and using English. Unless the children practise their new communicative skills in English, they are not likely to attain perfection in it. A teacher who does not employ every opportunity to speak English to his/her pupils is certainly not promoting their proficiency.

The children must be encouraged to communicate with one another in English even with their limited vocabulary. Their efforts should be appreciated and encouraged. This way, they learn to think in English, which facilitates

fluency, an essential life-time skill.

2.2 English or the Local Language

The question is often asked whether it is right to punish pupils who insist on using their local language instead of English in and outside the classroom. Whatever your views are, there cannot be an easy answer. The intention to make pupils proficient in English is excellent, but the effort in making them do so requires tact, patience and understanding. Punishment, particularly corporal type should be avoided as much as possible, even if we are aware that it might do the learner a lot of good afterwards. This may be due to the fact that undue punishments often arouse the learner's hatred not only for the teacher who inflicts the punishment but the hatred may also be extended to the subject, English. Once a child develops hatred for English, no meaningful acquisition can take place. Initial resistance may be the result of lack of self-confidence. Just as no normal child fails to acquire the mother-tongue, so given appropriate incentives and motivation supported by sympathetic attention, no child should fail to learn English. To some great extent, therefore, a child's failure in English is also the teacher's failure. We cannot pick figs from thorns. What to you say to that?

In this session, we have seen that every normal human child acquires the mother-tongue in order to get attention from others, receive satisfaction for his/her needs, establish his/her human identify and explore and control his/her environment. Children are born to acquire any language they are adequately exposed to. Since the primary school teacher's English is what the child is exposed to, it should be the standard model, and since English is learnt almost entirely at school, the teacher must endeavour to communicate with the children mostly in English and must also encourage the pupils to speak to one another in English.



Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 2.2

1. Give three reasons why no normal child fails to acquire the mother tongue.
2. Explain why a primary school teacher must be a model in English usage to his/her pupils.
3. Should a pupil be punished for failing to speak English in the classroom? Give reasons for your answer.



Assignment

Argue for or against the view that every normal child can acquire a language without being forced.

SESSION 3: FACTORS THAT INHIBIT/PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LISTENING AND SPEAKING

You're welcome to Session 3 of this Unit. We trust you found the exercise on session 2 interesting and helpful. Can you summarise the content of session 2 in just about three sentences? In this session, we will examine factors that inhibit effective listening and speaking and those that facilitate successful listening and speaking.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:



- a. list and illustrate at least 3 factors that undermine effective listening and speaking;
- b. list and explain at least 4 factors that promote effective listening and speaking; and
- c. demonstrate the teacher's role in listening and speaking.

Now read on...



3.1 Factors that Inhibit Effective Listening

Can you suggest any factors that retard effective listening? Yes, we may identify at least 4 major factors.

3.1.1 Medical Condition of the Child

Some children are born congenitally deaf, that is, born deaf. Such children show their medical condition very early after birth by not reacting to sound or noise in any way. Because of their condition, they cannot acquire any vocal language. They become deaf and dumb. Such children are beyond the help of the teacher, but he can refer the parents to the special school for such children. On the other hand, some children become partially deaf after a disease such as measles or an accident. Such children should be seated in front of the class as much as possible while their condition is medically monitored.

3.1.2 Unfriendly Physical Environment

(a) Uncomfortable sitting posture: When children sit on too low chairs, they find it hard to be attentive because of the inconvenience they suffer. It is necessary to ensure standard chairs for children based on their age.

(b) Unbearable noise level: There may be too much noise level outside or inside the classroom. Sometimes the pitch level may be too high or too low making

listening hard. There may be distracting activities outside. What should the teacher do under such circumstances? Conducive listening environment must be ensured. How?



3.1.3 There is the Psychological Factor

A hungry child cannot pay attention for any length of time. Similarly, a child who feels threatened particularly at school by mates or the teacher cannot be expected to pay attention in class. A child's fear of real or imaginary threats undermines his/her paying close attention. Ensure security for your pupils always.

3.1.4 The Teacher Factor

The following activities of the teacher discourage effective listening:

- The content of the message is far above or far below the level of listeners.
- The content is delivered too fast for the pupils to follow.
- The delivery is a long, boring and uninteresting monologue.
- The teacher fails to indicate the purpose of the talk to his pupils.
- The teacher is unduly repetitive.

3.2 Factors that Promote Effective Listening

Having studied the factors that inhibit effective listening, can you suggest ways to promote effective listening? Below are some things to consider.

- Beware of the medical condition of each of your pupils so that you sit them according to their needs.
- Make your pupils feel safe and secure in your class. Ensure that they sit comfortably.
- Maintain reasonable noise level both in and outside the class.
- Eliminate distracting pictures and activities.
- Whatever you say, ensure that it is within the mental level of the pupils; that it is clear, brief and interesting.
- Ensure that listening is a purposeful activity; that pupils understand the purpose for each activity.

3.3 Factors that Inhibit Effective Speaking

Speaking, like writing, is a complex creative skill. Apart from having something to say, there is the problem of organizing the message, being aware of the purpose and the audience to be addressed, and the style to be adopted. Besides, the following factors inhibit effective speaking of your pupils.

3.3.1 Stammering and Slurring

Can you distinguish between these two conditions? Yes, stammering is speaking haltingly with a tendency of repeating rapidly the same sound or syllable. For example, "G - g give her that p - p - pen". On the other hand, "slurring" is joining sounds or words so that they are not distinct. Is it "soldier" or "shoulder"? Do you know someone who is a stammerer or who slurs? These conditions may be medical, that is a natural handicap, or psychological, that is a self-protective device. Whatever the cause, they inhibit effective speaking.

3.3.2 Uncertain what to Say

It is natural to speak effectively when you have something to say, all things being equal. However, if you have nothing to say, you can only speak haltingly. On other occasions, you may have something to say, but uncertain how to say it, hence there may be a lot of hesitating features. Do you remember any such occasions?

3.3.3 Shyness

This means self-consciousness and uncomfortability in the presence of others. Shyness undermines effective speaking. It is almost natural with some individuals. With others, it may be due to stage fright or lack of self-confidence.

3.3.4 Threatening or Discouraging Teacher Behaviour

When a teacher threatens you, it is difficult to speak effectively. There is usually a tendency under such a circumstance to hesitate, slur or even stammer.

3.3.5 Too Many Interruptions

When a teacher is too anxious to correct every error of a pupil, there cannot be effective speaking. The speaker's self-confidence is undermined and so he cannot speak effectively. Does this mean that a pupil's errors should not be corrected? Corrections must be guided by goal, sympathy and understanding. It is not proper to attempt to correct every student error if fluency is the goal of the lesson.

3.4 Factors that Promote Effective Speaking

It is the teacher's duty to encourage his pupils to speak effectively, being aware of the inhibitive factors to effective speaking. This he/she can do in several ways.

1. Help your pupils to have something to say.
2. Be positive in your response to a pupil's effort to speak.
3. Be a sympathetic listener with as few interruptions as possible; be supportive when a pupil hesitates and speaks haltingly.

SESSION 4: BEGINNER ACTIVITIES – RHYMES AND SONGS FOR PRIMARY PUPILS

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to Session 4. We hope you find the exercise on factors that inhibit effective listening and reading interesting and helpful. Can you recall how we can promote effective listening and speaking? In the current session, we want to consider rhymes and songs as beginner activities in the primary English classroom.



Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- a. tell why it is good to use English songs and rhymes in the primary classroom;
- b. explain how to use rhymes and songs in the primary English classroom; and
- c. use English rhymes and songs in the primary classroom.



Now read on...

4.1 Rhymes and Songs Defined and Illustrated

What do we mean by “rhymes”? Rhymes have to do with sounds, sameness of sound of the endings of two or more words, normally at the ends of lines of verse. For example, words such as: “day, gay, play”, “leisure, treasure, measure”, rhyme. Here's another example.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay.
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away

beginner classroom:

(a) "Children learn them readily and enjoy doing it" W.R O'Donnell p. 162

(b) The rhythm of rhymes and songs give pleasure.

They unconsciously introduce the learner to the sound patterns, individual sounds, sounds in context, stress, rhythm and intonation – of English. These are internalized as part of the phonological acquisition of

(c) English. The repetitive sounds reinforce each other. The rhymes and rhythms provide musical effect that children cannot resist to dance to.

(d) Rhymes and songs can help children internalize grammatical rules as well. Of course, we do not imply that "only rhymes can be used for the purpose of assisting children to internalize a grammar", O'Donnell p. 163.

(e) Children hardly ever forget their childhood rhymes.

4.2 How to use Rhymes and Songs in the Classroom

(a) Children capture their euphoria or elation for rhymes through the teacher. The manner of presentation of the rhyme or song becomes very important. The presentation takes the form of acting. To act captivatingly, the teacher must select his rhymes carefully. A good source book can be J. Dakin, Songs and Rhymes, Longmans, 1967. But the imaginative teacher can produce his/her own stock of rhymes and songs, at least, he/she can adopt some for his/her own purpose. For example, the simple rhyme,

I see the moon
The moon sees me
God bless the moon
God bless me too

Can be adapted simply but creatively thus,

1. I see my mother
My mother sees me
God bless my mother
God bless me too

2. I love my teacher
My teacher loves me
God bless my teacher
God bless me too

Pupils can easily be encouraged to provide words for the rhyme.

(b) The teacher acts the rhyme by almost singing and dramatizing it. After two or three demonstrations, some pupils will voluntarily join the teacher. This should be encouraged. There follows full class repetitions, roll-by-roll repetitions and individual responses. Being a model, the teacher's enunciation must be correct.

(c) Children can tap the table for the rhythm and later dance or act to the rhythm.

4.3 Teaching Rhymes and Songs

To teach a rhyme or song, the teacher must consider

1. The objective to be achieved. It is good to focus on limited objectives.
2. The rhyme or song to be presented. Can it be easily acted?
3. If the rhyme is properly presented, pupils should get the meaning of the rhyme through the presentation. The meaning of individual words may be taught but this should not be at the expense of emotional response.
4. The teacher must always remember that he/she is a model.
5. The enthusiasm with which children recite or sing the rhyme voluntarily outside the classroom is the measure of the success of the teaching and the learning.

We discuss the importance of introducing children to English through rhymes and songs. We suggest the rhymes and songs selected should be simple and memorable. We insist that the teacher should always be a model and the presentation should enhance children's natural enthusiasm for rhymes and songs.

SUMMARY



Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 2.4

1. Give four reasons for teaching rhymes and songs.
2. How would you present a rhyme to P1 children?
3. Compose a simple rhyme for P1 children.

Assignment

Discuss the factors you would consider in selecting a rhyme for a



SESSION 5: TEACHING UNUSUAL ENGLISH SOUNDS: /θ/ AND /ð/

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to Session 5 of the Unit. We hope you found the exercise on Beginner Rhymes and Songs useful. In this session, we want to introduce you to how to teach some of the sounds of English, that adult Ghanaians usually find difficult.

You must recall that in the last session, we noted that no child is born to acquire any particular language. Every child can speak any language that he or she is exposed to. This means that any Ghanaian child can speak English without any difficulty provided the variety he/she is exposed to is the standard form. It is the variety he/she will acquire. Since the Ghanaian adult spoken English often shows wrong forms, the young Ghanaian child must be introduced early to the correct target forms.

In this session we shall consider a pair of "difficult" sounds, /θ/ as in "thorn" and /ð/ as in "then". Our intention is to use these sounds as a guide to teaching other similar "difficult" sounds.

Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:



- produce these two sounds accurately in isolation and in context;
- ensure pupils do the same;
- contrast these sounds in minimal pairs; and
- use words with these sounds, first in controlled and later uncontrolled contexts.

Now read on...

th

5.1 /θ/ and /ð/ In Context

Let children listen to this short conversation on tape: adapted from R. Hooke and J. Rowell: (1982) *A Handbook of English Pronunciation*, Arnold, London, pp. 27 – 32.

Thoreau (pronounced /θɔ: ru/ and Ruth (ru: θ) are visiting Accra.

Thoreau: A pesewa for your thoughts.

Ruth: What? Oh, I've just been thinking about next Thursday

Thoreau: Why, what's happening then?

Ruth: I'm going to Thorn-hill

- Thoreau: Thorn-Hill? Where's that?
 Ruth: I'm not sure but I think it's about sixty kilometres east of Ada.
 Thoreau: You'd better take your swimming kits then; that's in the middle of the Volta River!

Let the pupils listen to the conversation twice. Then explain unusual expressions and words. E.g. "A pesewa for your thoughts". We use this expression to bring back to reality someone who seems lost in thought and is unaware of what is going on around him.

1. After one or two other repetitions, list the "th" words on the board with the help of the children. Put these into two groups:

/θ/	thoughts	/ð/	then
	thinking		that
	Thursday		the
	Thornhill		that's
	South		

If you are sure of your accurate realization of these voiceless and voiced interdental fricative sounds, you may be sure the pupils will get their sounds right automatically. Otherwise, to make the sounds, let the pupils put the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower teeth. While they try to move the tongue to behind the upper teeth produce the sounds. /θ/ is produced without voice and /ð/ with voice.

2. Drill children on the isolated sounds to ensure they make them right. Then let them practise the isolated words from the dialogue above.

3. a Let children repeat the following words with /θ/ and /ð/ at the beginning:

think	thin	thick	thing
they	that	this	than

- b. Repeat words that have /θ/ + /r/ initially:

three,	through,	throw,	thread
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- c. Repeat words with /θ/ or /ð/ *after* a vowel:

bath	path	tooth	fourth
bathe	brother	mother	father

4. Repeat the following minimal pairs

think	sink
thick	sick
mouth	mouse
thank	tank
three	tree
both	boat
think	zinc
breathe	breeze
bath	bars
though	dough
they	day
then	den

5. Copy out the original conversation on the board and let children practise it in groups and then in pairs.

6. You may end up the lesson by asking children to use the 'th' words in the passage in their own sentences. Or you may ask them to use words in the minimal pairs in sentences of their own. You may even end with another conversation like:

Thornhill

Throuport

Thursley

Bath

Kofi: Excuse me. Which bus goes to

Thornhill
Throuport
Thursley
Bath

?

Koo: The

3
33
333

Kofi: Thanks. What time's the next bus?

Koo: I think at half past three.

Note: The bus numbers above would be said as
The three

The thirty-three

The three, three, three.

In this session, we embark on how to teach a pair of difficult sounds Ghanaian adults encounter in learning English, /θ/ and /ð/. We insist that the sounds be introduced in a context, a taped dialogue. There follows the isolation of the sounds for practice drill. There is the practice of the sounds in word initial, word middle and word final positions. There is a minimal pair practice. Other activities follow to ensure that the pair of sounds are thoroughly learnt.

Self-Assessment Questions



Exercise 2.5

1. Explain why some primary school pupils pronounce /θ/ as [t] and /ð/ as [d].
2. Give at least two reasons why the 'difficult' sounds are presented in an initial tape recording.
3. What advantage is there in ending the lesson on a conversation?

Assignment

Describe how you would help P3 children to pronounce the words "thank" and "think". Pay attention to the sounds /ð/ and /θ/ in the words?



SESSION 6: STORY TELLING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

You're welcome to the last session in the Unit. In the last session, we considered the teaching of unusual and difficult English sounds for adult learners of English. Why is it that given the proper exposure, children may not encounter any difficulty with the supposed unusual sounds? In this last session, we shall look at the place of story telling in the English language classroom.



Children enjoy stories. They are either eager to tell stories or are all ears when a story begins. A story is, therefore, a good material for teaching. We shall, therefore consider the importance of stories in the oral English classroom.

Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- give reasons for using stories in the oral English class;
- determine what stories to select; and
- how to teach a story, determine what children should do during and after a story.



Now read on...



6.1 Children Enjoy Stories

How do children show their enjoyment of stories? They show this in several ways including:

- eagerness to tell a story
- attentiveness during a story
- readiness to participate in the story telling through dancing, acting, singing, etc.

6.1.1 Stories are Important in the Oral English Classroom

Can you suggest some reasons why story telling is very useful in the oral English classroom? Compare your points with the following.



- Story telling helps develop two linguistic skills simultaneously. It helps the listeners cultivate effective listening ability and the teller to developing effective speaking.
- It helps pupils develop fluency in speech.
- It enables the teacher find out pupils' errors, if any, and so can plan to correct them.

- d. It provides opportunity to test oral comprehension.
- e. It provides the chance for children to act the story as a form of active participation in the story telling activity.
- f. It gives/offers the teacher the chance to demonstrate interest in English, etc. (Note the story can be put on a tape and played several times to the children)

6.2 Stories to Tell

What kind of stories do we tell children? The stories we select to tell can be of varied kinds; legends, myths, biographies, fables, trickster tales, etc. It is the quality of the tales that matter for the teaching purpose. We may consider:

- a. ***Age of the pupils:*** For very young pupils, the story must be short of no more than, for example, six simple sentences. For old pupils, the story may be a page or two long, with fairly complex descriptive scenes and settings.
- b. ***The purpose for the story telling:*** A story may be told for the moral purpose, but in the oral English class, the moral goal must play a second fiddle to such mundane things like careful and effective listening, facilitating oral fluency, through acting roles, singing and dancing. A scene in a story may be drawn or modelled, but these activities should not take place during the oral English itself. A story in the oral English class should concentrate on effective listening and speaking. A short story may be told several times over by different pupils. But several pupils at a time could be involved in speaking through dramatization. Another way to get several pupils speaking is for the story to be told in a relay with each pupil speaking just a sentence or two. In the end the child should tell a six-sentence story without too much difficulty.

Note that stories can be read from books to pupils just as the pupils listen to the story in a tape recording. What time do you think children are most attentive?



- a. when a story is told by a teacher or a pupil;
- b. when the teacher reads the story to the pupils;
- c. when the story comes from a tape recording. How would you justify your answer for face-to-face discussion?

6.3 How to Tell a Story

- a. How have you been teaching a story? Yes, the purpose of telling a story in an oral English classroom will largely depend on the teaching objective(s),

however, since story telling provides a unique opportunity for teaching effective listening and speaking, these two skills should influence the teaching methodology adopted. In other words, there must be a clear occasion when children must listen very attentively and a marked opportunity when they must speak through dramatization, summary and paraphrasing.

b. **Picture Stories:** A good starting point could be simple picture stories. At higher levels, the pictures could be more complex and elaborate. This may culminate in series of pictures that tell a single story. Picture stories have the advantage of offering the teacher the chance to prepare the kind of vocabulary or idiomatic expressions to introduce. For example, the expression, "a pesewa for your thoughts" in the previous session could be introduced with a picture story in which the character appears lost in thoughts.

c. **Language of Stories:** The level of pupils should determine the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the narrative style adopted. A story-line that incorporates short dialogues should be preferred to long monologues. Why do you think this should be so? Yes, children cannot be kept for a long spell of time listening. Thus, dialogues help reduce instances of monologues; besides, the dialogues provide avenues for repetitions, ready dramatization and full class participation.



d. **Children to re-tell stories.** Children should be encouraged to hear the story several times; be made to act it several times; and encouraged to repeat it. The vocabulary and idioms that pupils hear repeated and that they repeat several times themselves build their repertory of their English competence.

In this session, we examine the importance of story telling in the primary school Oral English classroom. We also consider the type of stories to tell, how to tell them and what activities should accompany and follow a story telling session.

SUMMARY

UNIT 3: READING INSTRUCTION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Unit Outline

Session 1: Effective Reading Instruction: Philosophy, Approaches and

OVERVIEW

Principles to Adopt

Session 2: Beginning Reading Instruction – Philosophy and Reading Readiness

Session 3: Teaching Decoding Skills – Sight Words

Session 4: Teaching Decoding Skills – Phonics Instruction

Session 5: Teaching Word Recognition Skills – Recognizing Words Using Structure and Context

Session 6: Teaching Comprehension – Before During and After Reading Strategies

Dear Student, learning to read involves developing effective strategies. Observing very young children as they make sense of their experiences shows that they are **born** with the capacity to make sense; ideally, all children as they become readers should continue to demonstrate this same love for reading. All too often, however, children begin to think of reading as a different sort of activity altogether – one that occurs through rote application of procedures rather than through active and speculative use of available cues. One major goal must therefore be to start children off with very good methods so as not to kill their interest in reading. In fact, your goal should be to develop children who can read. I believe that this occurs when you help the children to develop knowledge about reading and encourage them to read.



Unit Objectives

After going through this unit you should be able to:

1. describe some approaches and principles that should be adopted to enable children read;
2. describe some useful steps for identifying reading readiness for beginning reading instruction;
3. describe the use of phonics instruction as a word recognition technique;
4. describe the use of sight words instruction in helping students to recognize words;
5. describe the use of structure and context in teaching word recognition to children; and
6. describe how children could be helped to read and understand.

SESSION 1: EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION: PHILOSOPHY APPROACHES AND PRINCIPLES TO ADOPT

Dear student, a primary goal of effective reading instruction is to help boys and girls enjoy the act of reading and its results. They will enjoy the act of reading when they have acquired flexible skills which will enable them to read widely. They will enjoy the results of reading when they encounter materials in various fields that fulfill their interests or meet their needs. It is our hope that this session will help you better understand the goal of reading and attain it more successfully.

Objectives

By the end of the session you should be able to:

- (a) state two approaches to beginning reading;
- (b) mention two approaches to beginning reading; and
- (c) state the basic principles of the Developmental reading programme.

Now read on...

1.1 A Philosophy about Reading

It is safe to say that the obvious success that some schools experience in teaching reading is not a chance happening. The schools that succeed work for their success, and they work not haphazardly, but guided by a philosophy that views the development of all of the verbal skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing – as the major responsibility of the elementary school.

At first glance, this focus might seem narrow. It should be remembered that a child learns to listen by listening to something; that he learns to speak and to write by speaking and writing about something; and that he learns to read by reading about something. This philosophy is important especially at the elementary school level.

1.2 Characteristics of Developmental Programme

The foregoing attitude toward the nature and goal of effective reading instruction is increasingly accepted by scholars in psychology and education. Some emphasize the role of semantics while others stress structural linguistics. But there is an increasing tendency to accept the developmental approach. Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant point out that the emphasis on the developmental reading programmes is very recent, about twenty years ago.

Let us look at the features of the developmental approach.

First, the developmental reading programme recognizes that reading is an integral part of the much broader educational programme. Reading shares the responsibility for communicative development with the other linguistic and artistic activating. It is a programme in which parents, teachers, pupils, and administrators have a positive concern. It is flexible, continuous and comprehensive.

Second, the developmental reading programme is distinguished from the reading programme of the past in that it is concerned with every pupil and continues from elementary through secondary school years. It is concerned with maintaining maximum progress for the average, the slow and the gifted learner and with locating and correcting the special problems of the retarded reader.

Third, the developmental reading programme focuses on individual needs and individual differences. Reading experiences and pupil progress are not dictated by a calendar.

Fourth, the developmental reading programme helps the child to fulfill his developmental needs and task as they appear.

Fifth, the developmental reading programme provides the child with the opportunities to learn skills needed to satisfy his needs for reading, as he advances through school.

Sixth, the developmental programme satisfies, extends and enriches the child's interests. Indeed, to be successful, the reading programme must be based on pupil interest.

1.3 Basic Principles of Developmental Reading Programmes

In order to develop any pattern of instruction it is necessary to identify aims or goals. The general aim of reading common to all stages are

1. To develop a permanent interest in reading.
2. To extend and enrich the experience of the reader.
3. To develop standards of appreciation in reading.
4. To provide recreation and pleasure by reading.
5. To develop abilities and skills in reading.
6. To promote critical thinking on the part of the reader.

teachers to formulate effective programmes of instruction. Smith and Dechant stress the following basic principles to help teachers and supervisors make the development programme effective.

Do you consider the principles useful? Are you familiar with some of them?

Another important approach to beginning reading is the informal language-experience.



1.4 The Informal Language – Experience Approach

The informal language – experience approach makes for a good reading programme. This approach is based on reading content that is created by writing down children's thoughts. The four language arts—listening, speaking, reading and writing—are integrated in the language experience approach.

Reading materials are thus created for the class from the stories, experiences and ideas dictated by the children to the teacher. Students should be encouraged to record their own stories as they learn how to write. This is the most frequently-used approach for beginning reading instruction. It can also be valuable for disabled or disadvantaged children.

The teaching of reading, like education itself is regarded by many educators as a process in which the maximum development of every boy or girl is sought according to their unique nature and needs. The trend at present is to treat reading as one aspect of a language art programme and utilize methods of teaching which agree with the objective. This session has presented the general features of reading programmes and has outlined principles that make the reading programmes successful.

SUMMARY

Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 3.1

1. What is the philosophy for teaching reading?
2. Mention any two approaches to beginning reading.
3. State four basic principles of the developmental programme.



Assignment

Find out at least four (4) reasons why some of your pupils cannot read; suggest what can be done to help such pupils.



AND READING READINESS

Dear Student, in any teaching-learning situation the most important element is the learner's readiness for the experience. This factor is critical in learning to read since the child's readiness for the initial experience in reading may, to a large extent, determine his attitude towards his success in this aspect of his education. An examination of the literature indicates that there is a general agreement among scholars with regard to the basic concepts, the factors involved, the techniques of diagnoses and the procedure to enhance readiness.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson, you should be able to:

- (a) describe some basic concepts of Reading Readiness;
- (b) state some major factors of Reading Readiness; and
- (c) state some instruments that are recommended for determining Reading Readiness.

Now read on...

2.1 Basic Concepts of Reading Readiness

Dear Student, reading readiness should be looked upon not merely as a preparation for successful initial reading. It is important at every stage as boys and girls develop reading habits and skills sequentially. In fact, reading readiness is beneficial to the secondary school student first as it is for the class one pupil.

Reading readiness is related to the child's development, physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. Since each child's developmental pattern is unique, readiness must be determined individually.

Guy Bon and Eva Bond Wagner list the following as the basic concepts of reading readiness.

1. All children need to learn to read.
2. Reading growth is continuous.
3. Reading growth starts early in the child's intellectual career and continues as long as he reads.
4. Reading readiness is the concern of all teachers at all levels of instruction.
5. Readiness is complex, since it is made up of many highly interrelated attributes.
6. Children develop at all times and in all characteristics at varying rates.
7. At any level in the school, the child must be taken from where he is and

developed from that point towards.

8. Each new learning depends upon previous one.
9. Development should be neither unduly hurried nor allowed to lag.
10. For the most part, readiness factors are amenable to training.
11. Physiological, mental, emotional, and social capabilities of the child must be taken into consideration in formulating an instructional program.

In the developmental program, growth in reading is viewed as a continuous process; the teacher tries to help each child make the necessary acquisitions for successful experiences, not only in beginning to read but also in each succeeding step throughout the course of learning.

2.2 Factors of Reading Readiness

Reading readiness involves the physical, intellectual and social development of children. Let us now examine readiness in terms of these conditions.

2.2.1 Physical factors

A major physical factor in reading is vision. Two aspects of vision are important. These are visual acuity, and visual discrimination. Visual acuity refers to ability to see at a distance and at near points, whereas visual discrimination implies ability to differentiate among words and letters. As a teacher you need to note defects in pupils' vision and report to parents and school authorities for a thorough eye examination.

Another physical factor in reading is hearing. In learning to read, a child needs to hear sounds correctly as well as to reproduce them accurately. If a child's hearing is defective, he receives wrong impressions or merely hears confusing sound. As a teacher, you need to know the condition of each child's hearing, including the extent of impairment that is found.

Sex differences have been observed as a factor in reading. Do you agree with this?

Some studies show that boys have greater difficulty than girls in learning to read. The fact is that each child's readiness must be determined on an individual basis.

2.2.2 Mental Maturity

Knowledge of each child's mental age is of value in helping the teacher appreciate the range of ability in each class so as to make appropriate adaptations of methods and materials. A few years ago some writers stressed the mental maturity of each child as the indicator of readiness. The mental age of six years was regarded as

recommended. Three instruments that are recommended are teacher-observation form, standardized intelligence tests, and standardized reading readiness tests. These will be discussed later.

SUMMARY

This session has looked at the concept of reading. It is observed that the basic reading readiness concepts are quite similar at every point in the educational continuum. Also, the session outlined the composite of factors of reading readiness. These include physical

factors, mental maturity, emotional and social factors.

Finally, three evaluative instruments were mentioned in the session: teacher-observation form, standardized intelligence tests and standardized reading readiness test.

These will be discussed later in your course.

*Physical
Mental
Emotional*



Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 3.2

1. State four major concepts of reading readiness.
2. State three methods, you can use in determining reading readiness.



Assignment

Explain the concept: reading, readiness and discuss factors that aid reading readiness

SESSION 3: TEACHING THE DECODING SKILLS – SIGHT WORDS

Dear Student, word identification has to do with the differentiation of one symbol from another and identifying each symbol correctly. For example, if a child sees the word **dog**, correct identification would tell him the symbol is **dog** and not **house**, “cat” or some other thing. As soon as the symbol is identified, the meaning or interpretation of the symbol occurs. In this case, the child might think of his own pet **dog** or of **dogs** that he has seen. The symbol **dog** however, has only as much meaning as the child's previous experiences allow. In this session we shall consider how we can help children to recognize words.



Objectives

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- (a) describe sight words as a method of teaching word recognition;
- (b) describe the steps that should be taken to teach sight words;
- (c) identify the advantages of using sight words; and
- (d) identify the disadvantages of using sight words.

Now read on...



3.1 Issues in Word Recognition Instruction

The major issue in word recognition instruction is the **sight word** (or **look-say**) approach versus the **phonic method**. The sight word approach is concerned with whole words that the child memorizes, while the phonic approach begins with learning sounds as a basis for decoding words. The controversy between these two approaches is actually not a valid one because most of the reading materials that are used in schools today use a combination of approaches to identify words. Basic readers in today's textbook market are not solely based upon a sight word approach.

Phonics and sight word approaches to reading have prevailed the same way throughout the history of reading instruction. During the 1930's and 1940's, sight word instruction prevailed. In 1935, Flesch published the book **Why Johnny Can't Read**, which criticized sight word instruction and advocated a phonics approach as the solution to reading problems. This book was instrumental in instigating the return to phonic orientation.

3.2 Learning Sight Words

Sight words, are learned through meaningful repetition – since repetition facilitates memorization. Sight words should initially be introduced in a context,

TEACH

but practice exercises may make use of the individual words themselves. It is important for the teacher to remember that words may both look and sound different when they are read in isolation rather than in context. Five is a good number of words to introduce at a single time. If children have difficulty with five, then the number can be reduced to three.

If five words are learned easily, then the number can be increased to seven. Practice periods, should be kept short it to run no longer than approximately ten minutes.

The following steps are useful to keep in mind teaching sight words:

1. Present the word in a context. Sentences may be written on the chalkboard or on chart paper. Underline the word to be discussed.
2. Have children examine the new word closely. The teacher should say the word aloud once more.
3. The class should repeat the word following the teacher's pronunciation.
4. Have members of the class read several sentences in which the word appears. All of the words in the sentences should be familiar to the class except the new word that is being introduced.
5. Games and activities should be used to reinforce the new word. These may incorporate the practice of several new words at the same time.
6. Do not introduce words that are easily confused in a single teaching session. This would include such words as **went** and **want**, **saw** and **was**, and **this** and **that**.

Disadvantages of Using Sight Words

Using sight words has been criticized sometimes because:

1. It does not pay enough attention to word recognition; only words already learnt, can be recognized.
2. Unfamiliar words cannot be figured out by this technique
3. It demands too much memory work.

Can you identify any other disadvantage?



Advantages of Using Sight Words

For several reasons children are taught a number of sight words in their early steps in reading. The ability to recognize words at sight helps children read for thought from the very beginning. By starting in this manner, they also enjoy reading and develop feelings of confidence in this activity. Sight words are important to the

beginner in checking the accuracy of his phonics applications. Sight words are also helpful to the child when he learns to compare unknown words with known words for identical parts or substitute a letter or letters of known words in unknown words.

Sight Words for Meaning: instant recognition of words at sight is necessary if the child is to get thought from the printed page. The child must also see words in groups in order to gain thought. By beginning reading with sight words the child is able to get the meaning from his first contact print.

Sight Words for Comparisons: word analysis is taught by the process of making a rule from a series of examples. This process makes use of inductive reasoning and is easier for the child to use than the deductive process formerly used. For example, the child may have learned **boy**, **baby**, and **big** as sight words. When a new word with the same beginning consonant is met, the teacher may put the above words on the board. She will then ask the children to tell her how they are alike. When the children tell her that they all begin with the same letter, **b**, the teacher will add the new word from their lesson, such as **box**, and ask them how this word is like the others. When they tell her that box begins like boy, they have discovered the sound of a common beginning consonant and will gradually learn to apply this sound to other words that begin with **b**. In this way children start with familiar examples and draw generalizations from them.

Sight Words to Provide Context Clues: the child also needs a stock of sight words to help him use context clues to check his phonics. To be able to use context clues in this way the child must have enough sight words to get the thought. He can then apply and check his phonics generalizations. If the child tries to read the sentence, "Tommy put his new cap on his head," in which head is an unknown word, he will first try to read the word as **heed** because of the rule for the **ea**. According to this rule the first letter takes the long sound and the second is silent. When he realizes that the word **heed** does not make sense, he will check for thought from the known words and decide that the word is head, taking the short sound of e.

In this session we have studied the use of sight words in helping children to recognize word when they want to read. We realized that this method of instruction has some disadvantages. However it has far more advantages than the setbacks. Therefore it is very useful in teaching beginners to read.

SESSION 4: TEACHING DECODING SKILLS – PHONICS INSTRUCTION

Dear Student, in the previous session, we looked at word recognition skills. We saw four very important methods for achieving word recognition. Do you remember them? Which one did we consider in detail? In this session we shall look at the second method of word recognition that is the phonics instruction.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- (a) mention one method of word identification by beginners – the phonics and sight words;
- (b) describe the sight word method of recognizing words; and
- (c) describe the use of the phonics instruction in recognizing words.

Now read on...

4.1 A Brief of the Phonic Method

Examination of materials related to the teaching of reading shows that phonics instruction in American schools has long been a controversial issue. In 1783 Noah Webster advocated stressing the sounds as well as the names of letters. From time to time other phonic approaches were recommended by American educators, and in 1950 a special method, developed by Edwin Leigh, was introduced in the Boston Phonetic School. Several systems appeared in the 19th century, and combinations of phonic approaches were in general use throughout the first quarter of the 20th century.

4.2 The Word Recognition Programme

The terms “word recognition”, “word identification”, “decoding” and “word analysis” are frequently used interchangeably. The four components of the word recognition program are sight words, context clues, structural clues, structural analysis and phonic skills. **Sight words** are words that the reader can identify as a result of memorizing them. Context clues are clues for word recognition that are inferred from the meaning of words in the phrase or sentence.

Structural analysis refers to the recognition of words through **morphemes** (or **meaningful units**) and includes recognition through affixes. Phonics skills, the main issue we shall now focus on, involves the analysis of whole words into smaller spelling units (syllables) and the relation of these units to sounds in speech. The sounds, that is consonants and vowels are combined together to

realize the pronunciation of a word. In order to use phonic analysis effectively, readers must understand that print words represent the words that they already know how to pronounce. In the following example, phonic analysis is applied to the word **moment**, mo/ment (divided into syllables).

4.2.1 Phonics Skills

When the reader is unable to recognize a word through a sight word, context clues or structural analysis approach, the reader should attempt to analyze the word phonetically. Phonic clues are related to the spelling and sound systems of a language.

4.2.2 Teaching Phonics

The phonics programme should be based on a core of known sight words that can be used to explain and illustrate phonic generalizations. For example, the consonant phoneme /b/ could be introduced through the sight words, **boy**, ball, bird, bush, and barn. The correspondence between phonemes and graphemes should be illustrated using the context words children are familiar with. This method prevents any distortion that might occur when words are sounded out by children. Have you ever tried teaching some words this way? Did your pupils get the pronunciations early enough?

It is advisable to avoid teaching phonics generalizations that require the reader to pronounce the word before sounding it out. For instance, some phonics programmes encourage children to divide a word immediately after a long vowel for syllabication, as in the word /b/. This assumes that the reader is able to identify the long vowel and finally divide the word into syllables. There is the need to divide a word into syllables and sound it out if the reader already knows how to pronounce that word. The objective of the phonics instruction is to help readers identify words.

4.2.3 Phonics Generalization

Phonics generalization or **rules** are the principles that govern the application of phonics for decoding unknown words. Pupils should know the English alphabet. They should also know the graphemes or letters that are related to consonant sounds and those that are related to vowels.

The phoneme – grapheme correspondence comprises basic steps

1. Recognizing graphemes, such as b, e, f, d, and k.
2. Dividing the word into parts or syllables.
3. Recalling the phoneme associated with each grapheme

4. Combining (synthesizing) phonemes to approximate a word.

4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Phonics Instruction

In 1938 Arthur Gates and David Russell reported a study of the relative effectiveness of different methods of instruction. One group of children was trained by an "intrinsic" method which stressed words as units of perception. This training was given by the use of various exercises, such as the selection of correct words from groups similar in form or in pronunciation. Instead of instruction through such exercises, a second group of children was given drill in phonics. When it was found that the first group made a greater gain in reading skills, Gates and Russell concluded that excessive amount of phonics should be avoided.

It is generally accepted that phonics has some advantages. Can you think of some of these advantages?



Compare your results with mine below:

- (a) Phonics increases independence in recognizing words previously learnt. That is, since the child relies on the phone units he will always attempt pronouncing every word he meets. In cases where he has seen the word before, he would recognize it.
- (b) Phonics helps in new words by giving pupils a method of sound analysis. This happens because the pupil uses these sounds in helping him pronounce words.
- (c) Phonics also encourages correct pronunciation.
- (d) Phonics further improves the quality of oral reading.

However, it was noted that children of mental ages lower than seven years were not successful at the use of phonics. Thus, it must be noted that phonics is useful at a higher degree of mental maturity. In fact, in a study by J.B. McDowell, it was reported that the teaching of phonics was of little or no value in the first five months of grade one (or class one).

Nile Banton Smith, in summarizing the research concerning the value of phonics and the time when phonics instruction should occur concluded as follows:

1. It cannot be assumed that all children need phonics.
2. Phonics is effective with children who need word-recognition help, but its greatest effectiveness is attained when it is taught functionally and is related to children's reading needs.
3. It is advisable to delay intensive phonic instruction until a child has

4. Phonics instruction is most valuable at the first, second and third classes.
5. The use of configuration clues and context clues should be supplemented with phonics.
6. It would be well to give more attention to both visual and auditory discrimination in teaching all types of word recognition.

Do you agree with him? Do you have any other suggestion?



The value of phonics appears to have been established. What is necessary is the identification of the appropriate time of its use. Apart from that it should be used together with other reading strategies like sight words and syllabication.

This session discussed one important way of recognizing words – **Phonics Instructions Units**. Phonics skills involves the analysis of whole words into smaller spelling units (syllables) so as to help them read, pronounce the words or identify the word. The two methods discussed are very important in word recognition, but are not the only ways. In the next session we shall consider some other methods of word recognition.

SUMMARY

Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 3.4



1. What is phonics instruction?
2. Mention three advantages of the phonics instruction.
3. Give two disadvantages of the phonics instruction.

SESSION 5: TEACHING WORD RECOGNITION SKILLS – RECOGNIZING WORDS USING STRUCTURE AND CONTEXT

Dear Student, in session three, we showed that phonics is useful to a child reading English because many of its words can be identified with the help of letter – sound relationships. Word structure and context are similarly helpful with word identification because some words combine with others or with additional letters to form different but related words. We shall discuss the use of structure and content of words in this session.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- (a) describe the structure of words;
- (b) describe how words can be recognized by structure; and
- (c) describe how words can be recognized by context.

Now read on...

5.1 The Concerns of Structural Analysis

Structural analysis helps with identifications when the unfamiliar word is a derivative, variant, or compound. We shall define each of the terms.

A derivative is made up of a root together with a **prefix** as in **reteach**. It may also be made up of a suffix such as **teachable**. It may also be a combination of both prefix and suffix as in **retachable**. Because the term affix refers to a prefix or a suffix, a derivative could be taken as a root combined with one or more affixes. If a derivative like **reteach** was not yet in a child's reading vocabulary, a knowledge of the word structure would:

- i. help him identify **reteach** as being a derivative
- ii. help him know the pronunciation of **re**
- iii. help him know the effect of **re** on the meaning of **teach**.

A knowledge of phonics as we saw in session 3 would help him in figuring out the pronunciation of the root **teach** if that was not yet in the child's reading vocabulary.

5.1.1 Variants

Variants are other kinds of B words that show an addition to a root. In this case, the additional letters only occur in final position and relate to grammatical usage. More specifically the addition or inflection can indicate number, case, or gender, if the root is a noun. If the root is a verb, tense, voice or mood may be indicated.

Similarly, if the root is an adjective or adverb, a comparison may be shown. Let us list some illustrations.

	Root word	Inflected words (variants)
Nouns	book	books
	girl	girls
	chair	chairs
	host	hosts, hostess, hostesses
Adjectives	big	bigger, biggest
	small	smaller, smallest
	tiny	tinier, tiniest
Adverbs	neat	neatly
	fast	faster
	quick	quickly

Add more words to the list above.

It must be noted that in theory, it is easy for a distinction to be made between variants and the derivatives, in practice that is not always possible. For example, a word like **meaningful**, has an inflected ending **-ing** but also has a suffix **-ful**. In any case, the child's ability to recognize affixes and inflections and pronounce them is what is important and not classification of the words.

Because structural analysis is concerned with internal structure, another type of word for which it has relevance is compound words. A compound word is the combination of two or more words or roots that retain their original pronunciation.

Some examples of compound words are:

cup + board	=	cupboard
in + to	=	into
with + out	=	without
birth + day	=	birthday
over + look	=	overlook
under + line	=	underline
arm + chair	=	armchair

Introducing a child to compound words is introducing him to the fact that roots can

combine to form words in which the pronunciation of roots is maintained and in which the roots have a connected meaning.

For Example

Book mark = something that marks the place in a book.
Postman = a man who deals with posting of letters

The exception to the rule are words like **however** and **nonetheless**, which have no connected meaning.

Inflected endings are commonly used in children's oral language, and thus, they should be easily understood in the process of reading. Children who are most likely to have difficulty with inflected endings are those who speak non-standard dialects.

Although structural analysis is a useful approach to word recognition, it is most useful when combined with other word recognition methods. It is worthy to note that once children know about word structure, they are ready to learn some generalizations that offer further help with decoding.

5.1.2 Context Clues

When a reader does not recognize a sight word, the next step is to look for **meaning** (context) clues in the content itself. Authors frequently provide aids to help the reader understand the words that are used in the selection. These clues may be in the same sentence as the word in question or they may be in the preceding sentence, the succeeding sentence, or anywhere else in the paragraph in which the unidentified word occurs.

For example, people searched for better ways to get rid of **trash** and **garbage**. One **way** that was discovered is called **landfill**. The use of context clues is one of the most popular word recognition methods employed by mature readers. Most adults identify the majority of unknown words they encounter in a given context. Thus, the context clue approach should have an important place in the classroom word recognition programme. Children in the primary grades should learn to use the meaning of context as a means of recognizing words.

5.1.3 Listening Strategies

A good way to prepare children to use context clues is through the use of listening

strategies. To do this, read selections of sentences or short paragraphs alone to children. Omit a word or several words and let children suggest what they think the missing word should be. *For example*

Aba felt tired again. The things on his back were getting

The missing word would be **heavier**. Context clues are very useful for kindergarten and first grade level, as well as for older children who continue to have difficulty in reading.

Many children identify words incorrectly because they do not pay proper attention to meaning. Children should understand that the content presented to them in class will always make sense. It is good to teach children to use the following strategy when they come to unknown words: Read the entire sentence and substitute any word for the unknown word.

For example

- He was to school.
- He a dog.

This will make the child think of a word that would make sense in the context of that sentence.

This session has discussed ways to teach readers how to figure out unfamiliar words. One of the ways is by structural analysis. This method makes use of the structure of the word. A child's knowledge of structural analysis is valuable whenever an unfamiliar word is a derivative, variant or compound word. The second way by which word recognition can be achieved by children is by the use of context.

In this method, a group of sentences in which the meaning of the new word is revealed through the context of the sentence is presented. The two methods are not ends in themselves, but complement the phonics and sight words methods discussed in session 3.

SESSION 6: TEACHING COMPREHENSION - BEFORE DURING AND AFTER READING STRATEGIES

Dear Student, the prior knowledge of students is connected with their ability to understand a text. It seems evident that understanding a message that is made up of words should require some degree of familiarity with the words. In fact research indicates that those students with well-developed vocabulary knowledge also tend to be good in reading comprehension and those with limited knowledge tend to be poorer at comprehension. In the previous sessions, we tried to look at four ways of helping students to recognize new words when they meet such words. In this session, we shall consider how to help children understand what they read.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- (a) state and describe some skills in comprehension; and
- (b) describe what could be done to lead students into a text so that they can read the text and understand.

Now read on...

In real life, we do not normally read because we have to but because we want to. We usually have a purpose in reading. In other words, there is something we want to find out some information we want to check or clarify, some opinion we want to match against our own, etc. We also have a purpose in reading when we read stories for pleasure. Probably, we want to find out how the story develops, what happens next etc.

A good method of trying to help students to read is follow a three-part framework.

- i. Before you read
- ii. While you read
- iii. After you read

6.1 Before You Read

It is necessary to spend some time introducing a topic, encouraging skimming, scanning, etc.

We do not usually begin reading with a completely empty mind. We have some idea of what we are going to read about. We will usually have certain questions in mind (usually things we want to know), and we may also be able to make a number of predictions or guesses.

For example with a passage with the heading "Ananse and the Wisdom pot", one would like to know how Ananse got a pot of wisdom, and what he did with the pot.

Questions the reader might have in mind may include:

1. Who was Ananse?
2. Where did he live?
3. How did he collect wisdom into a pot?
4. What did he do with the pot?

If there are any pictures drawn to accompany the story, it is good to draw children's attention to these pictures. They will arouse children's interest in the story or passage and this will help them to understand the passage. You can ask children to identify some unfamiliar words in the passage and discuss the meanings of such words.

6.2 While You Read

One important approach reading comprehension is the Directed Reading – Thinking Activity.

In this approach, children are made to go through a selection bit by bit rather than locating all discussion after reading. In this way you help students experience the thinking process that expert readers use in comprehending a text.

The basic processes are;

1. Before reading a section of the text, use clues to predict what the writer will say.
2. Stop while reading to refine or reformulate predictions.
3. Repeat step 1 and 2 throughout the passage.

To use the approach effectively, you need to select an appropriate reading material, (one that is at the level of children).

After analyzing the selection, choose several points at which your children might be stopped and asked for predictions about what will happen next in the passage. The title, picture, caption, first paragraph, or some combination of these serves as the basis for the first predictions. After each section is read, you and your children will discuss their predictions in light of the clues that the author has given.

Questions you may ask may include

1. What makes you think so?
2. What did the writer say that supports or disagrees with that?

3. Why do you think the author said that?

The above questions depend on the level of children.

With the above approach children's comprehension will be enhanced.

6.3 After Reading

Comprehension questions are just one form of activity appropriate for post reading. One may consider, (1) vocabulary study, (2) identifying the author's purpose for writing the passage, (3) discussing the authors' line of reasoning, (4) examining parts of speech or grammatical structures, (5) helping students to write exercises, (6) allowing students to go back to see which questions were answered from those they set out to read for (7) setting reference goals for children and making them search for information that interests them in the passage.

This session presents a strategy for helping pupils to understand what they read. This involves using a three-part frame-work; before reading, during reading and after reading. One major approach that was mentioned for enhancing comprehension is the Directed Reading – thinking Activity. In this approach to reading children read a passage in bits and discuss section after section. After reading the whole passage various activities can be used in testing pupil's comprehension.

SUMMARY

Self-Assessment Questions

Exercise 3.6

1. Mention four things you can do to introduce children to a comprehension passage.
2. What is the Directed Reading – Thinking approach?
3. State four ways by which you will test children's comprehension.

