

**‘What happened to our good English?’**

**An analysis of the teaching and learning of the English  
language in Tanzanian primary schools with  
recommendations.**

**Katy Allen MBE  
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## **Background:**

It is important when reading this paper to understand my background as the author. I am British, a lawyer by profession but also with the CELTA<sup>1</sup> qualification in teaching English as a foreign language and experience in TEFL<sup>2</sup> work. I speak clear English, and am used to simplifying my English when speaking to non-native speakers of English. I have lived in Tanzania since January 1994 and from that time have been involved in government primary schools in the Kilimanjaro region. My involvement has been through the NGO, Village Education Project Kilimanjaro. I taught in two primary schools for three years using the English syllabus and the available textbooks. I now train UK student teachers who come to help to teach English in the primary schools and I regularly observe their lessons. I also spend time in several primary schools working and mixing with the local teachers. I have conducted a District seminar for teachers in the teaching of English to primary school pupils. Our NGO has, since 2000, embarked on programmes of in-service training for primary school teachers and has hosted many visiting professionals, and their views are taken into account in this paper. I am married to a Tanzanian (who is over the age of 55 and has very good English) and my sole aim in writing this paper is to improve the standard of English in Tanzania as proficiency in the language is not only needed for academic studies but for aspects of business, for use of computers and the internet and for contact with most visitors from abroad. This is not an academic paper, but rather aims to be a pragmatic look at present problems and how to solve them.

## **Introduction:**

It is my considered opinion after working and living in Tanzania for over 14 years that the English language syllabus and accompanying textbooks for the primary education sector are the main reasons for the lack of good command of the English language, both spoken and written, in Tanzania today.

This paper attempts to show that the standard of English has declined dramatically over the years, that the main cause of this decline is the teaching of English in primary schools following the English language syllabus. It also attempts to show how the syllabus and textbooks have caused this by an analysis of them. It also includes recommendations for addressing the situation and arresting the further decline and the time-scale suggested for this.

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA)

<sup>2</sup> Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

## **Lack of good command of the English language both spoken and written**

It is contended that if you talk to Tanzanians over the age of 50 the chances are that they will know quite good English. A percentage of these will speak and write English very well and their accent and pronunciation will be good. They might use some rather archaic expressions such as ‘it’s raining cats and dogs’ or ‘I’ll try my level best’ and call you Sir or Madam, but on the whole their English is of a commendable standard such that a conversation can be held about general topics, and some are completely fluent speakers.

Today if you speak to people below the age of 50 there is, on the whole, a noticeable degradation of their English language ability commensurate with their younger age. How many primary school children are heard to say ‘What is my name’ (*‘What is your name?’*)<sup>3</sup>, ‘Give me my pen’ (*‘Please could you give me a pen?’*), ‘Goodi mworn’ (*‘Good morning’*)? There is also a marked over-use of the present continuous tense which is grammatically incorrect and where the present simple tense should be used. For example, ‘He is having a nice car’ (*‘he has a nice car’*), ‘We are speaking English at my school’ (*‘we speak English at school’*), ‘He’s coming from England’ (*‘he comes from England’*). There is also very little use of elisions which gives rise to a very staccato and unnatural delivery of English. For instance, ‘My name is John’ (*‘my name’s John’*), ‘We would like to come, but we do not have a car’ (*‘we’d like to come but we don’t have a car’*), etc.

It is impossible to hold a conversation in English with most Standard VII primary school pupils. It may be possible to elicit answers to questions, but even when simplifying the language structure for them their grammar and vocabulary is too poor to be able to engage in dialogue. Broken grammar may get their message across, for example, ‘Me now go home’ (*‘I’m going home now’*), but lack of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar defeats most conversation. Indeed, John Benson states ‘A statement I heard over and over again in all the schools was that a standard VII leaver knew far less English than a standard IV leaver in earlier times.’<sup>4</sup>

Secondary school students only fare marginally better, and yet secondary and tertiary education is all in English. They may be able to engage in simple dialogue but normally only after they have asked for the question/sentence to be repeated at least once. Again fluent, complicated structures are mostly not understood at all. Written English is a greater problem. How many secondary school students write the almost nonsensical ‘How are you? On my side I’m fine and going on well with my daily activities’.

Recently talking to university graduates who were embarking on post-graduate studies their lack of confidence in the language was striking. To make conversation I needed to adopt very simple structures at a very slow, unnatural speed.

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<sup>3</sup> The italics in smaller font represent the correct English that is meant to be said or written

<sup>4</sup> John Benson “A Complete Education?” Observations about the State of Primary Education in Tanzania in 2005

Very many speakers in this under-50 category have poor pronunciation with marked interference from Kiswahili's vowels, especially vowels at the end of words. This gives rise to utterances such as 'the oldi mani was firsti in the bus' (*'the old man was first in the bus'*), 'Eating fruit is good for my healthi' (*'eating fruit is good for my health'*). There is a distinct reluctance to pronounce the 'y' at the end of English words, such as 'Please come to my part on Saturday night' (*'please come to my party (parti) on Saturday night'*). This can give rise to funny sentences, such as 'He is in the custod' which sounds to an English person as if 'He is in the custard' (custard is a very sweet sauce)! It should be '*He is in custody (custodi)*'. Most primary school teachers today are in this category of under-50 year olds with poor spoken English.

Written English is admittedly difficult, and spelling is not mastered by many native English students these days. However, most noticeable in written English in Tanzanian schools is the lack of command of grammatical structures.

### **What every Swahili speaker knows**

An examination of the English curriculum in Norwegian primary schools was made, as the Norwegians speak exceptionally good English. It was assumed that their primary school syllabus would lay the foundation for this mastery of the language. Their curriculum states, 'Learning English may also give us better insight into our native language and other languages we know, thus becoming an important element in our personal development and making a significant contribution to our communicative abilities.' It also states that one of the aims of English language learning is that the pupil shall be able to:

- Identify areas where English is useful to him or her
- Find similarities between words and expressions in English and his/her own native language
- Use dictionaries and other aids in his or her own language learning

A young Swahili speaker learning English might be surprised to know that he/she already knows at least 20 words of English before he/she has any English language lesson. All that is needed is a little help with a change of pronunciation. It is suggested that the introduction of these words (examples are listed below) in some of the early lessons would give enormous motivation to the language learning. Work on the pronunciation at an early stage would also be most beneficial.

<b>Swahili</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Pronunciation tip for English</b>
Baa	bar*	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Betri	battery	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Buluu	blue*	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Kompyuta	computer	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Kondukta	conductor	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Picha	picture*	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili
Pancha	puncture	acceptable as it is pronounced in Swahili

Basi	bus*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Begi	bag*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Benki	bank*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Blanketi	blanket	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 2-syllable word
Blausi	blouse	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Boksi	box*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Chipsi	chips	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Faili	file	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Glasi	glass*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Keki	cake*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Koti	coat*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Soksi	socks*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 1-syllable word
Televisheni	television	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 4-syllable word
Taulo	towel*	drop the final 'o' sound to make a 2-syllable word
Wikendi	weekend*	drop the final 'i' sound to make a 2-syllable word
Baisikeli	bicycle*	drop the final 'i' and stress the first syllable
Hospitali	hospital*	drop the final 'i' and stress the first syllable
Penseli	pencil*	drop the final 'i', and stress the first syllable
Redio	radio*	move the stress to the first syllable
Sekondari	secondary	move the stress to the first syllable
Shati	shirt*	drop the final 'i' and lengthen the first sound
Sketi	skirt*	drop the final 'i' and lengthen the first sound
Biskuti	biscuit	2 syllables with sound 'bisket'. Stress on 1 <sup>st</sup> syllable
Tangi	tank	drop the final 'i' and change 'g' to 'k' sound

\* Words appear in *A General Service List of English Words*<sup>5</sup>

### **Consideration of what is needed for good English teaching and learning.**

*Grammatical Structure and its Teaching* is worth quoting from at length<sup>6</sup>. The book was written just before the decline in English teaching had started in Tanzania. The following four paragraphs are taken from it.

'Whatever the reason, the fact remains that many teachers have suffered a loss of confidence in themselves and what they have been teaching, and there has been a marked swing away from grammatical studies, which very often, if misconceived, did give both teachers and pupils something solid to hold on to. As a result the teaching of English seems to have lost whatever 'backbone' it may well have had, and standards have suffered.

<sup>5</sup> *A General Service List of English Words* – Michael West, Longmans 1953 – a list of 2,000 'general service' words considered suitable as the basis of vocabulary for learning English as a foreign language. The semantic count was a count of the frequency of the occurrence of the various meanings and uses of words as found in a study of 5 million running words

<sup>6</sup> *Grammatical structure and its teaching* – L A Boadi, D W Grieve, B Nwankwo (Lagos: African University Press, 1968)

‘Teachers who have some insight into how the forms of English language behave in certain circumstances – who understand its grammatical structure – ought to be able to teach it all the better as this knowledge can have considerable influence on the methods they use in the classroom. A knowledge of the structure is essential for the teacher and pupil of English. In the classroom the teaching and learning of structure is a foundation for the teaching of certain other aspects of English. When it comes to the content and method of teaching it is the teacher rather than the linguist who is – or ought to be – the ‘expert’.

‘The teacher’s primary need is for:

- As fluent command as possible of the language he is to teach
- An insight into its structure in a variety of registers
- A ready command of methodics and methodology of language teaching
- An understanding of the needs and problems of his pupils

‘Very often when ‘patterns’ of English are taught in primary school they are drilled in a meaningless way. Drills are important but before a drill the pupils must learn the meaning of the patterns being drilled. Otherwise the pupils cannot see the point and therefore there will be no motivation. In primary school the spoken medium predominates. Oral practice and ‘situational’ teaching will not of itself result in an improvement in control of the written language – the grammar of conversational English is different from the grammar of most varieties of written English. Many structures, eg non-defining clauses, appositives, strongly contrasting clauses signalled by ‘but, while, whereas’ etc rarely occur in conversation. Therefore it is impossible to teach through oral work many of the structures and sentence-types most common and useful in writing. Oral work must be supplemented with specific instruction and practice in patterns of the written medium.’

The book also sets out some general principles:

- Spend at least 85% of the time on practice – 10-15% is ample for explanation.
- Concentrate on elements of structure causing difficulty to pupils (whatever the textbook may say)
- Ensure items previously learned are repeated at regular intervals (not in the form of set revision) but in the form of the repetition of items previously learned in the context of the presentation of the new items. Items not repeated constantly are soon forgotten.
- Keep class lively and active, associating as much language work as possible with activities inside and outside the classroom and with other school subjects.

The analysis below (p.11-14) of the *New Oxford English Course* books by F G French highlights how well those books adhered to and exemplified all of the above.

## **Don't forget the children: How do children learn?**

L1<sup>7</sup> acquisition is a monumental task with five main components<sup>8</sup>:

- i. phonology
- ii. vocabulary
- iii. grammar
- iv. discourse (how sentences are put together such as stories, explanations)
- v. pragmatics (rules about how to use the language).

The speaker must have control over all five to be a native speaker, and, therefore, it is a major undertaking in the first five years of a child's life.

The child's L1 development is broadly:

5-8 months = syllables, ba, ma

12-18 months first words, and turn-taking in conversation.

The process of learning culturally appropriate ways to use the language continues throughout pre-school years as the child learns rules of politeness etc. During pre-school years children engage in extended oral language development and acquire 6-10 new words a day while broadening their understanding of meaning of words they know, and grammar.

When a child learns English he has no native speakers of English at hand whom he may imitate – nor does he receive as much social encouragement as learning L1. Possibly patterns of speech of his L1 are in conflict with those of English especially in the early stages. Most striking is the relative lack of powerful motivation. In learning L2<sup>9</sup> the teaching must be systematic, progressing from one point to another in regular fashion. Structural patterns must be taught in an orderly way, and therefore insight into grammar or structure is absolutely essential, and is central to L2 learning.

Learning English is an important task: learning new habits and skills. It is more like riding a bike or learning to swim than learning history or geography. Learning new habits is a matter of practising new patterns of behaviour, not of learning facts. So, the learner must be shown patterns that recur regularly and practise them systematically. The whole of English should be broken down to a limited number of regular patterns. If pupils practise all these regularly and systematically they can quite quickly acquire a mastery of speech habits in English.<sup>10</sup>

L2 is acquired after the basis of L1 is established. However, for child learners it is important to compare cognitive capacity and cognitive demand. The older the child the greater capacity for cognitive capacity. The older the child the greater the demands made

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<sup>7</sup> L1 refers to native language (language 1)

<sup>8</sup> See *One child, two languages: a guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language*, Patton O Tabors 1997

<sup>9</sup> L2 refers to the foreign, second, language being learnt (language 2)

<sup>10</sup> L A Boadi et al (ibid)

on him. Young children might not be better or quicker language learners but if they know a little it impresses others because of their overall cognitive ability.

So, the belief that primary schoolchildren were *ipso facto* better language learners than older children has not been upheld.<sup>11</sup>

Factors affecting L2 acquisition are aptitude (some are more talented at languages), social (some are more outgoing and talk more) and psychological (some are more motivated because they want to become like people who speak L2).

There are three other factors at least which affect a child's progress in language acquisition: motivation; exposure; age.

1. Motivation: the child must want to learn L2. This is an actual decision for children, a decision to take on the process of learning L2. Even if the child has made that decision then he may stay in a non-verbal phase for ages. Wanting to communicate with people who speak that L2 is crucial if acquisition is to occur.
2. Exposure: the quantity of exposure to L2 in a learning environment
3. Age: young children are at an advantage because expectations of what they must learn is quite low. They don't have to use L2 in as sophisticated a way as older children. But young children are at a disadvantage because their learning capacity is not very great. Therefore, young children may take longer to move along the developmental pathway, and young children may spend a longer period in a non-verbal phase; the younger the child the longer in the non-verbal phase. Younger children take longer to acquire formulaic phrases because of the need to develop strategies for breaking down phrases into useful pieces and to create productive phrases in L2.

Motivation is perhaps the greatest factor: 'Let us say that, **given motivation**, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data.' (Corder, 1967)

Alongside motivation the incentive value of success is another most important factor. For teachers and writers of the language materials there are five 'strengths' to bear in mind:<sup>12</sup>

1. Relevance – of the content to the student's own language needs
2. Completeness - inclusion of all the language necessary for the stated aims of the course
3. Authenticity – the material should be both linguistically and culturally authentic
4. Satisfaction – the student should leave each lesson feeling he has benefited more than simply progressed
5. Immediacy – the student can use the material in a lesson straight away

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<sup>11</sup> See Steven H McDonough, *Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching* 1981

<sup>12</sup> See E Stevick, *Evaluating and adapting language materials*

The first three above apply overall to courses and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> more particularly to individual lessons. It is not to be expected to find all five present in any one piece of teaching material.

The analysis below of the *New Oxford English Course* books by F G French shows how all of the above were incorporated, while an analysis of the textbooks that followed the NOEC shows that they were lacking in these ‘strengths’.

Studies have indicated<sup>13</sup> that early success is more likely to be followed by favourable attitudes at later stages, and with success at later stages. Nothing succeeds like success! Thus, the content of the first year or two of any English course needs to be motivating and to fulfil the above so that pupils can succeed.

### **History of English language teaching in Tanzania and the use of the NOEC<sup>14</sup>**

The Tanganyika Territory Syllabus of Instruction – under the Authority of the Education Ordinance 1927 and the Education Regulations 1934 (printed in 1935) together with the Tanganyika Territory Syllabus of Instruction for use in the schools of Tanganyika Territory as prescribed by the Director of Education under the Authority of the Education Ordinance 1927 and the Education Regulations (printed in 1939) refer to the use of the textbook: Michael West Series, The Oxford English Readers for Africa or equivalent for the reading component of the syllabus, and gives short paragraphs of advice for the other components of conversation, translation, writing, dictation, spelling, grammar, composition and repetition. With the opening of Middle Schools in the 1950s English was introduced as a subject in Standard V and used as a medium of instruction from Standard VII onwards.

In 1952 the Tanganyika Department of Education Provisional Syllabus of Instruction for Middle Schools again states that English as a subject is introduced in Standard V. It states, ‘In the absence of a suitable four-year course it is recommended that the series of six books entitled the “*Oxford English Readers for Africa*” be used and that by concentrated effort this series should be completed within the four years. The following programme is suggested:-

Standard V: First Year English Primer Oxford English Readers for Africa, Book I  
Standard VI: Oxford English Readers for Africa, Books II and III  
Standard VII: Oxford English Readers for Africa, Books IV & V (first half)  
Standard VIII: Oxford English Readers for Africa, Books V (second half) & VI

It further suggests that, ‘for the development of rapid reading and an increase of the passive knowledge of the language, as many supplementary readers as possible should be completed in each standard.

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<sup>13</sup> Steven H McDonough (ibid)

<sup>14</sup> NOEC – *New Oxford English Course* by F G French CBE. Oxford University Press 1956 –1961 with revisions

The syllabus further stated that, ‘A limited amount of translation work from Swahili to English and vice versa should be introduced from Standard VI onwards. This should be begun in Standard VI with easy connected passages of English to be translated into Swahili and short Swahili sentences exemplifying points and grammar and syntax to be translated into English. This should be continued throughout Standards VII and VIII leading by the end of Standard VIII to the translation from both Swahili to English and English to Swahili of short connected passages of prose.

‘No provision for the separate teaching of formal grammar, dictation or composition is made in this syllabus, as these subjects are taught incidentally as part of the Oxford English Course, the adoption of which in full is recommended.’

The above is repeated in the *Tanganyika Department of Education Provisional Syllabus of Instruction for Middle Schools 1959*. However, in 1958 English was introduced as a subject from Standard III onwards

In the *Tanganyika – Ministry of Education Approved Primary School Syllabus for Standard I to VIII* printed in 1963 in Swahili it stipulates the use of the *New Oxford English Course* Book 1 to Book IV for standards III to VI. The syllabus for Standards VII and VIII is written in English and stipulates the use of the *New Oxford English Course* Books V and VI respectively. The English syllabus for Standards III to VI is reproduced in Appendix 1 with a translation. This, with amendments, remained in force until March 1970.

At that time children started primary school aged 7 and entered Standard I. They started learning English in Standard III. At the end of Standard IV there was selection to go to Middle School. At Middle School all subjects were taught through the medium of English. Middle School was from Standard V to Standard VIII, but in 1966 Standard VIII was abolished and from then on all Middle School children only attended Standard V to Standard VII. At the end of Middle School there was selection to go to secondary school.

In early 1970 English was introduced in Standard I.

In 1980 the Ministry of Education decided to change the year in which primary school pupils began to learn English from Standard 1 to Standard III. The English Language Syllabus for Primary Schools Standards III-VII 1986 was a response to the Ministry’s decision. At that time the number of periods allocated to English learning was dramatically reduced. Coming full circle again, it was announced in 1997 that from 1998, in some regions, English would again be taught from Standard I. The English Language Syllabus for Primary Schools Standard I to VII 1997 was a response to that decision. A comparison of language items and the stages at which they were/are taught is in Appendix 2. However, from 1966 NOEC Book 6 was no longer used as Standard VIII was abolished.

In the years when the NOEC books were in use the primary schools (Standard III to Standard IV) had 7 periods a week for English, that is about 280 periods in the school

year. In the Middle Schools (Standard V to Standard VII or VIII) there were 11 or 12 English periods each week (although it should be noted that there were 3 class periods on Saturday mornings). Since 1997 there have been 6 periods of English per week for Standard I and II, eight periods per week for Standard III and Standard IV and seven periods per week for Standard V, Standard VI and Standard VII – so a range of 240 to 320 periods in the school year. It is worth noting that in Norway each of the seven years of primary school is given 328 teaching hours of English (equivalent to 480 periods or 12 periods a week).

### **The New Oxford English Course**

It is worth considering in some detail the *New Oxford English Course* (NOEC) books. As will be appreciated Book One and Two used with pupils in Standard III and Standard IV aimed to get them to a sufficiently proficient level in English in those two years that they could enter Middle School and cope with all subjects taught in English.

The NOEC books were written between 1956 to 1961 with revisions. They were written by Mr F G French CBE<sup>15</sup>. I have spoken to many people who learned English using the NOEC books and not only do all of them speak good English but they remember the books with great affection. They can recall the stories in them, and even name the characters in the stories. They quite clearly enjoyed their English learning, were motivated to learn, and understood their lessons and succeeded – hence their good command of the English language. So, what made the NOEC books so good?

The first thing to note is that all the NOEC books are accompanied by Teachers' Notes which give comprehensive guidelines on how to teach each lesson. The 'stages' of each lesson are clearly set out, and take the place of lesson notes or lesson plans. For Books One and Two there is a Handbook. The Handbook for use with the Teachers' Notes to Book One helps the teacher to organise the lessons and to understand parts of English speech. It also sets out extensively the various techniques to be used in teaching the language. Both Handbooks for use with Teachers' Notes to Books One and Two give detailed lesson notes for each period with suggested timings, suggestions as to when to explain things in Swahili to the pupils, the stress to be given to words and how to use teaching aids. It also highlights difficulties that will be faced by Swahili speakers and how to overcome these difficulties. The Handbook itself states, 'these Lesson Notes are to take the place of the teacher's own notes. This book should be on the teacher's table, open at the right place, while he is teaching, to remind him of the different steps of the Lesson, and of the method to be used for each step. It must be remembered, however, that these are only notes; that is, they are reminders of what the teacher has prepared.' So the Teachers' Notes and the notes and techniques contained in the Handbook were to help the

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<sup>15</sup> Frederick George French, born 1889 and died 1963, also wrote the NOEC for Asian schools. He fought in the Great War in Burma and subsequently became a school's inspector in Burma. Before his work in Africa he became a judge on the Channel Island of Guernsey. He was a generous benefactor to the Island, and commissioned a window in St Anne's Church which depicts his work in Africa. He died in Guernsey with no known relatives.

teachers in the preparation of their lessons. The Lesson Notes within the Handbook were to be used not only during preparation but also in the classroom when teaching.

The author of the NOEC notes, 'Well-prepared lessons make confident teachers who enjoy their work and who pass on this enjoyment to their pupils. If both the teacher and the class enjoy their English lessons together, then the pupils are sure to be learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher, by careful preparation of his work, to make sure that what is learnt is correct'.

In addition the Teachers' Notes for Books One to Three each had a complete section on how to pronounce the words used in the pupil's book. Book One was also accompanied by wall charts.

It would have been even more helpful to the success of the NOEC if all the Teachers' Notes and Handbooks had been written in Swahili.

However, the most important key to the success of the NOEC books is the pupils' books themselves. The content is of meaning and interest to the pupils, drawing on their environment and people and things to whom and to which they can relate. The stories are mostly funny, and mostly follow the same characters through several episodes. The content is built up by endless repetition and revision; each lesson uses language items from previous lessons so that the language learning is continuous and not segmented. The exercises are many and various, and in the early books there is an emphasis on looking at words and pronouncing them and recognising them and differentiating them from similar words. There is built-in group and pair work, and lots of action suggested for the pupils to be able to demonstrate their understanding. Additionally, 95% of the vocabulary used in the pupils' books is within the 2,000 words suggested in *A General Service List of English Words*.<sup>16</sup>

It is stated in the Teachers' Notes to Book One, 'Most people agree that 'direct' or 'oral' methods are best for those beginning to learn a foreign language. Pupils taught by these methods will become so used to the correct sounds and sentence-patterns that those will come naturally to their minds without conscious translation from their own language. But no one can learn to speak a new language unless he has first heard it. The pupil, therefore, must frequently hear the correct sound or pattern before he can say it correctly; and the teacher must repeat any new word or pattern several times before he asks the pupils to say it.

'The framework of the English language is best presented in typical sentence-patterns. There are not very many of them, but the pupils should give their whole attention to each one. First they must hear each pattern, then say it, then practise it again and again. It is important that they should add to their vocabulary; but it is even more important that they should thoroughly master the patterns.' This is in total accord with the findings stated on p 5-6 above.

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<sup>16</sup> *A General Service List of English Words* – Michael West (ibid)

The NOEC's author continues, 'You will have observed that when an Inspector visits a school he is always much more concerned with how much, and how clearly and how correctly, the pupils can speak than he is to discover whether they have learned the Reading Book by heart. Moreover, if the Oral Work is not thoroughly well done, the teachers of all the following classes will complain that the groundwork is weak.'<sup>17</sup>

In the Middle School Handbook No 1, Standard V-VIII, Department of Education, Tanganyika 1960, it states that, 'The teaching of English must be individual. Too much time is spent by the whole class, or part of a class, repeating in chorus words, phrases and answers to questions. The result of this kind of teaching is that:-

- a. Individual mistakes are not noticed, and therefore not corrected
- b. Many pupils at the back of the class sit doing nothing, or merely moving their lips in time with the rest of the class
- c. The pupils form a habit of speaking English in a sing-song way, each waiting for the next one to speak, and all speaking in a slow, unnatural way.

'In various places in the Teachers' Notes there are instructions that the whole class should read or say some words or sentences in chorus. These instructions should be followed, but at no other time should there be chorus work. All other spoken English should be by individual pupils.'

The guidance available to teachers was plentiful. The shortcoming was that all such guidance was not printed in Swahili. Indeed, as all teachers' books accompanying textbooks teaching L2 in Europe and many other places in the world are in L1 it seems a shame that the decision was taken to write the NOEC teachers' books and handbooks in L2 (i.e. English) and not in L1 (i.e. Swahili).

In conclusion it seems that the NOEC books were excellent for structural sequence; it was systematic, covered ground and proved to be successful. The stories in the books were of intrinsic interest to the young learners, and they had numbered sections for ease of comprehension work. The illustrations in the books depicting the basic concepts were clear and good. The exercises were plentiful and comprehensive covering, among other things, recognition, looking and reading, substitution frames for practice of structure patterns, good comprehension questions and games. A few examples are shown below to illustrate:

From Book Three:

1. Here are sixteen sentences. Read them all:

When I was	working in the garden sitting under a tree walking along the road coming down the hill	I	saw a lion found a big ant spoke to a man heard a baby cry
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<sup>17</sup> The role of Inspectors is not considered in this paper, but they too bear part responsibility for the decline in standards of English teaching

2. There are five pictures on page 4 and two pictures in the story which begins on page 7. Find the pictures for:

The animals were walking one behind the other.

When he spoke to the servant, he was near the gate.

When he was outside, he was looking at the footmarks.

The man was holding a stick.

The others went, but the tortoise did not go.

3. If the word has *ou* in it, say, 'Hum.'

If the word hasn't got *ou*, read the word:

Bottom	cotton	about	corner	count	drove
Cough	food	though	good	grow	would
Hoof	should	wood	could	know	over
Outside	sugar	shout	sound	through	soon

These examples are taken out of context but show some of the variety and level of the exercises, although their success lay in their context and the comprehensive practice they provided.

### **Analysis of English teaching in Tanzania after the NOEC**

It seems that when the NOEC books were no longer the prescribed textbooks a syllabus or scheme was extracted from the language items introduced in the NOEC books (see Appendix 2). This would mark the beginning of the decline in English language teaching in the primary schools. Whilst the NOEC was an excellent series of books, its success depended on its details, its particular contents and built-in repetition and revision. Its Teachers' Notes and Handbooks were another unique feature.

The textbooks and subsequent syllabi introduced from 1970 suffered from a lack of detail, and contents that could not entertain or motivate the pupils.

Immediately following the use of the NOEC was English for Tanzanian Schools (Ministry of National Education, 1969-1973). Books VI and VII were highly criticised as being very dense in content, too difficult and inappropriate in content. Books I and II introduced novel techniques for Tanzanian teachers in that pupils were expected to work on their own. There were only short orientation courses for teachers for using the books. With hindsight the English for Tanzanian Schools books probably did nothing but hinder learning. In the early 1980s Primary English for Tanzania (PET) was introduced. However, no syllabus then existed in the schools. Teachers' Handbooks were not introduced at the same time as the textbooks. The PET books were 'not transparent as far as their use is concerned, and they do not provide the support for the teachers that they should. The books have been written by panels and lack the coherence and imagination that a smaller and more skilled set of authors might have produced. Perhaps an opportunity was missed to introduce an interesting coherent primary textbook which

would have encouraged a much more active and oral approach to the language. They also contain errors of English and of design which have received much criticism.<sup>18</sup>

In Primary English for Tanzania, and most textbooks that followed, each chapter or unit was a self-contained entity that bore little relevance to what went before or after, and so items already learned were not practised, and hence were not remembered. It is unknown if the textbooks had any reference to the *General Service List of English Words*<sup>19</sup> which, whilst dated and based on written texts, is still a very useful guide. The teachers' books lacked any detailed guidance and had very little, if any, help with the correct pronunciation of words or the rules of the grammar. In addition in the new syllabus new language items were introduced (see Appendix 2) which, arguably, are unsuitable for a primary school syllabus as they are at an advanced level or too difficult. The inspections became unconcerned with the oral learning but increasingly obsessed with the pupils' exercise books and their written work. This is contradictory as some of the new language items introduced are essentially only used in oral English (eg question tags).

Things could have improved in the early 2000s with the opening up of the school textbook market to private publishers and the permitted multi-textbooks. However, the standards in teaching English had already declined by then, and many teachers were not equipped to be able to choose the best books for their purposes. Teachers have mostly taken the multi-textbook system to mean that they choose one book from a selection of many, and so they still effectively only use one textbook. It seems that the introduction of the multi-textbook system has not assisted the teaching of English in primary schools.

I think it is a fair assessment, especially based on primary schools in rural areas, that the teaching of English in the primary schools has declined to a pitifully low level, and that the majority of teachers in any school have an insufficient knowledge of the language to have any confidence in using it let alone to have confidence in teaching it. Indeed, the *Report on the Teaching and Learning of English in Primary Schools in Tanzania-Mainland* by the Ministry of National Education as far back as 1982 went so far as to assert that 'the teaching and learning of the English language in Tanzania's primary schools at the moment is very bad.' In 1984 Dr Criper and Mr Dodd conducted a nationwide survey<sup>20</sup> and concluded 'At the end of primary education after five years of English the average score of the pupils tested was only 4.0 i.e. barely capable of reading even a picture story book simplified down to the level of using 300 headwords and the present tense. Put another way 68% of Standard VII pupils are unable to read and understand any connected text at this level. ... The level of learning implied here is such that one must question whether these five years have not resulted in a waste of resources.... The current level of English of the majority of primary teachers is extremely low. It is clear that little progress can take place at the primary level until the proficiency of those teaching English in the classroom has been substantially upgraded.' There may

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<sup>18</sup> *Report on the Teaching of the English Language and its use as a Medium in Education in Tanzania* – Dr C Criper and Mr W A Dodd. July – August 1984

<sup>19</sup> *A General Service List of English Words* – Michael West, Longmans 1953 (ibid)

<sup>20</sup> *Report on the Teaching of the English Language and its use as a Medium in Education in Tanzania*, Dr C Criper and Mr W A Dodd. (ibid)

have been some improvements since the 1980s but none significant, and in the intervening period many of the teachers with good English have retired. Indeed, in *The Daily Mail* and *The Citizen* of 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007 The Honourable Minister for Education & Vocational Training, Mrs Sitta, was quoted as saying, ‘The ministry has noticed with great concern the poor performance in the three subjects (English, maths and science)...’ when in the Standard VII results for 2007 only 31.31% passed the English paper. Mrs Sitta also noted the lack of competent teachers in those key subjects and said that poor performance posed a major challenge to the government’s drive to improve both primary and secondary education.

There are also many teacher absences and, therefore, many English periods are untaught. Also many lessons are not sufficiently prepared, and are merely taught by giving exercises from the textbook and the marking of those is from a total reliance on the answers in the teacher’s book. Indeed, out of a total of approximately 38 teaching weeks or 190 days, if you deduct 10 working days taken to collect salaries, 10 days for other absences, 30 days for weekly/ monthly tests and, say, 10 days when lessons are missed for whatever reason, then the teaching year is reduced to 130 days or 26 weeks or only half a year.

As Mr French wrote in the NOEC Handbook for use with Teachers’ Notes to Book One, ‘Lessons, that is one year’s work, have been divided into 232 periods, but the seven English periods a week on the time-table make a total of about 280 periods in the school year. This leaves about 50 periods for giving extra practice, or for days when lessons are not taught because the teacher is absent, because there is a special holiday, or because of rain etc. A good teacher should be able to finish Book One in a year, but it is important that at least the 232 periods outlined in the books should be taught.’

The textbooks available today give little guidance as to the periods to be used for each topic or section. They give no such lee-way for absences and untaught periods but are, on the contrary, lacking in content. For example, the NOEC Book Three pupils’ book was 138 pages long, whereas the equivalent St V books had/have the following: English Language for Primary Schools Book 5, 61 pages; English for Tanzanian Primary Schools book 5, 70 pages; Oxford English for Tanzania 5, 107 pages. Quantity does not necessarily equate with quality but the NOEC provided quality teaching material with ample guidance for the teachers.

It appears that the cause of the decline in English teaching is in part due to the syllabus, the textbooks and to the teachers themselves.

### **What can be done?**

The easy option is to blame the teachers, but this ignores the fact that they are the result of the system they are in. Their pre-service training needs to be considered, their on-the-job support needs to be considered and any continuing professional development needs to be considered.

The Report by Dr Criper and Mr Dodd<sup>21</sup>, referred to above, even considered removing English from the primary syllabus. They discussed this possible strategy with many people, both professionals and others, and it was universally rejected by all the Tanzanians to whom they spoke. This was partly because it would appear to downgrade education at the primary level, partly for reasons of equity, partly because pupils other than those who go to secondary school need some English and partly because it would constitute yet another change in the system. Therefore, they abandoned this option, and I think for the same reasons it is not an option to be considered now. They did, however, recommend that the periods for teaching English be increased from standard V.

Dr Criper and Mr Dodd suggested that specialist English teachers be employed each to teach an average of 24 periods of English a week. Their report stated that ‘approximately 30,000 teachers are now teaching English. Re-training and upgrading the level of English of this number of teachers is an almost impossible task. The problem becomes more manageable if specialist teachers of English were employed.’

However, the recommendations of Dr Criper and Mr Dodd for the primary sector were not adopted as a whole. The present teaching force is, therefore, shouldering the brunt of the continuing problem of the teaching and learning of English. They are the teachers in post and are the resources with which we have to work. The only solution is to give these teachers who are currently in post every bit of support and help possible.

From the analysis above, it seems that what is needed is:

- Teachers who have confidence in the grammatical structure of the English language
- A text book that introduces structural patterns step by step giving at least 85% of the time to practice with constant revision and repetition of content of grammar and vocabulary
- A text book that provides motivation for the pupils
- A teachers’ book that is comprehensive, with guidance on the structural patterns and pronunciation and written in Swahili

The latter point that teachers’ books and handbooks be in Swahili should, in the author’s view, be the very first step undertaken. All European countries, and many others too, in all their teaching of foreign languages in primary and secondary schools have the teachers’ books in L1. Indeed, usually too all the instructions in the pupils’ books are in L1. This can only help and not hinder the acquisition of the foreign language.

As the teaching of English is in a state of crisis and action needs taking sooner rather than later it is important not to re-invent the wheel. It is important, therefore, not to rush to a ‘quick fix’ solution which in practice will remedy nothing and will have incurred time and cost. If it is accepted that the teaching of English in the primary sector is in crisis then that recognition brings us all half way to finding the solution. Only when the patient admits he is ill and needs help can medicine start to be given.

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<sup>21</sup> *Report on the Teaching of the English Language and its use as a Medium in Education in Tanzania* (ibid)

In the short to medium term it would seem sensible to accept the only tried, tested and successful text book for re-admission to the primary sector: a reissue of the NOEC.

What else would provide certainty that the teaching would be systematic, progressing from one point to another in regular fashion; that English would be broken down to a limited number of regular patterns and that these would be practised regularly and systematically; that new habits and skills be learned by practising the patterns of behaviour of the language; that the pupils enjoy the content and are motivated to learn?

Reissuing an old book is not unprecedented. After all, some things are timeless and high among those are good children's stories and sound principles of English language teaching. In the NOEC there are both.

The priority would be to translate the NOEC teachers' books and handbooks into Swahili, which is not a hugely overwhelming task, and to consider the instructions in the pupils' books being put into Swahili too.

If this were done the advantages would be immediate:

- ✓ The teachers could learn on-the-job by being taken through the structural patterns step by step with their pupils
- ✓ The teachers would be helped by the thorough guidance in the teachers' books and the pronunciation guide in them
- ✓ The pupils would be provided with sufficient practice of each step for the meaning and structure to be thoroughly understood
- ✓ The pupils would be motivated by the stories and by the classroom practice exercises

The only need is for the teachers to be committed to teach all their periods – but this concern is present now, and remains a concern with whatever solution is adopted to address the current problem.

However, the author would not recommend that the NOEC books be used in Standard I. Standard I should be preserved for building a good foundation in reading and writing Swahili, and so should have its own very basic and purely oral English syllabus following on from that introduced in pre-primary schooling.

This medium-term solution should be envisaged to be in place for at least 15 years (that is, at least two complete sets of primary school pupils). The reintroduction of the NOEC with the teachers' books in Swahili would give the teachers an opportunity to learn on-the-job, as they would, initially, be learning with the pupils from the course books. The NOEC is tried and tested, and those over 50 year olds are here to stand testament to its success in English language learning.

Within this medium-term the authorities could work on a completely new syllabus for English language teaching in primary schools. Such a syllabus could take into account that many more pupils progress to secondary school from primary school, and so the

seven years of primary school need only provide a good foundation in English, and not a complete, definitive course. For instance, the need to have question tags, reported speech, the passive voice, form-filling and business letters as part of a primary school English syllabus could be reconsidered.

Also the author would put forward for consideration that every primary school teacher be encouraged to study for the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), which could, perhaps, be organised in conjunction with The British Council. On reaching test score, say, 4.5 on the General Training Module<sup>22</sup> a teacher should qualify for a significant salary increment. Only with the adoption of an internationally tested and recognised language system on which new salary levels depend will the teachers' English be fairly assessed and will they be sufficiently encouraged to improve.

Before the suggestion to reintroduce the NOEC is laughed out of court, I would challenge the reader to:

- Get hold of the NOEC books and particularly to read the Handbooks to Book One and Two and to appreciate the detail and depth with which the course was designed for Swahili speakers
- Speak to people over the age of 50 and ask their opinion of the NOEC
- Ask those people if they understood their English lessons and enjoyed them
- Think what else can be done (and it needs to be done fairly quickly) to arrest the declining standards in the teaching of English in the primary schools.

There should be no shame or blame in admitting that the teaching of English needs serious reconsideration. This is now the time to work for practical and realistic solutions. The author's suggested solutions above arise out of her passion about education and her passion to give Tanzania's government primary school children the best opportunities possible.

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<sup>22</sup> IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale. Each band corresponds to different English competence. Band 4 is a Limited User such that 'basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in use of complex language'. Band 5 is a Modest User such that he/she 'has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes'.

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## APPENDIX 1

Tanganyika – Ministry of Education  
Approved Primary School Syllabus for Standards I – VIII  
1963

### (c) Kiingereza

Siku hizi mafunzo ya Kiingereza yanaanza tangu darasa la III. Watoto watayapenda zaidi kama yanatayarishwa sawasawa. Katika kitabu cha “Teachers’ Handbook”, kile kinachotumiwa na “New Oxford Course”, Book 1, kuna mashauri mazuri yaliyotolewa kwa kuwasaidia waalimu katika kuanza mafunzo ya Kiingereza vizuri. Soma yale mafupisho yaliyoko mwanzoni ambayo yameeleza njia sawa za kusalimia, jinsi ya kutumia picha za ukutani na “flashboards”, jinsi ya kuwapanga watoto katika vikundi kwa majaribio na mashindano, na jinsi ya kuweka “records” za kazi. Mafupisho hayo pia yameeleza ugumu wa aina mbali mbali wauona waalimu wa Kiingereza na pia yameeleza njia za kufundisha. Kuna maelezo ya michezo yaani “Action Chains”. “Handbook” inafaa sana kutumiwa badala ya “lesson notes”. Kabla ya kufundisha kila somo, “Handbook” isomwe.

Ni muhimu sana mwalimu kusema Kiingereza safi maana watoto hawawezi kusema vizuri kama hawaonyeshwi mfano mzuri. Matamshi yako ndiyo watakayoyasikia na kuyaiga. Ni lazima uhakikishe kuwa matamshi ya maneno ni sawa. Sahihisha maneno yale ambayo huna hakika nayo kwa kusoma sura ile ya “The Sounds of English” ambayo iko mwisho wa “Teachers’ Notes”; pia soma mafupisho juu ya “Stress” katika kitabu cha “Teachers’ Handbook” ambacho kinatumika pamoja na “The New Oxford English Course”, Book 1. Jisikilize na jisahihishe matamshi yako. Jaribu mara kwa mara kuwasikiliza Waingereza wenyewe wakikisema, na pia sikiliza katika redio.

#### **Vitabu.**

New Oxford English Course, Book 1	OUP
Teachers’ Notes, Book 1	OUP
Teachers’ Handbook for use with the New Oxford English Course, Book 1	OUP
The New Oxford English Course Wall Pictures	OUP

#### **Darasa la IV**

Kabla ya kuanza kazi mpya katika darasa hili ni lazima uwe na hakika kabisa kuwa kazi ile iliyofanywa darasa la III imeeleweka kabisa. Kitabu kinachotumika hapa kina masomo saba ambayo ni marudio ya kazi ya mwaka uliopita, na mafunzo ya sehemu za maneno. Kwa hiyo watoto wataweza kujenga maneno wenyewe na watapata ufundi wa kusoma.

Pia kuna kitabu cha “Teachers’ Handbook” kwa kitabu cha II. Humo kila somo limepangwa kwa uangalifu sana na mambo yote magumu yameelezwa.

*Vitabu.*

New Oxford English Course, Book II	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book II	OUP
Teachers' Handbook for use with the New Oxford English Course, Book II	OUP

### **Darasa la V**

Kwa muda mrefu ujao darasa hili litakuwa na watoto ambao wanatoka shule za Primary za mbali mbali; watoto hawa huwa wamefikia sehemu mbali mbali za ujuzi wa Kiingereza.

Hivyo kwa wiki mbili za mwanzo inabidi kufanya marudio ya kitabu cha II. Mwanzo wa kitabu cha III pia ni marudio na kwa njia hiyo inamwezesha mwalimu kujua ni mototo yupi dhaifu na yupi hodari. Kusudi hasa, kwa mwaka huu, ni kuwafunza watoto wawe na ufundi wa kusema, kusoma, na kuelewa habari wanazozisoma, na vile vile kuongeza uwezo wao wa kuandika sawasawa. Hakuna kitabu cha "Teachers' Handbook" kilichotolewa wakati huu. Mwalimu lazima aweze kuandika "scheme" za kazi yake kwa kutumia kitabu cha "Teachers' Notes", Book III.

*Vitabu.*

New Oxford English Course, Book III	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book III	OUP

### **Darasa la VI**

Katika mwaka huu, kusudi hasa ni kuongezea mafunzo yale ambayo wameanza kujifunza ili mwishoni mwa mwaka watoto wawe wamejua mengi zaidi, na kuweza kuyatumia yale maneno ya lazima.

*Vitabu.*

New Oxford English Course, Book IV	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book IV	OUP

Kwa kuongezea vitabu hivi, vipo vitabu vingine ambavyo vimepangwa kufaa watoto wa madarasa mbali mbali (graded supplementary readers). Ni lazima watoto wavisome vingi kati ya hivi.

### **(c) English**

Nowadays learning English starts in Standard III. The children will enjoy learning more if the lessons are prepared properly. In the Teachers' Handbook that is used with NOEC Book 1, there is good advice which is given to help the teachers to start this English course properly. Read the notes that are at the beginning which explain well the methods for greetings, using the wall charts and flashboards, how to arrange group practice and competitions, and how to keep records of work. These notes also explain the difficulties that teachers of English have, and also explain methods for teaching. There are explanations of the physical activities which are 'Action Chains'. The Handbook is

sufficient to use instead of lesson notes. Before you teach any lesson the Handbook must be read.

It is very important for the teacher to pronounce English properly, because the children won't be able to speak well if they are not given a good example. The teacher's pronunciation is what the children will hear and copy. It is important that you are sure that you pronounce the words correctly. Correct your pronunciation of words of which you are not sure by reading the section on The Sounds of English which is at the end of Teachers' Notes; also read the notes on Stress in the Teachers' Handbook which is used with The New Oxford English Course, Book 1.

Listen to your pronunciation and correct yourself. Try from time to time to listen to native English speakers when they speak and also listen to the radio.

*Books.*

New Oxford English Course, Book 1	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book 1	OUP
Teachers' Handbook for use with the New Oxford English Course, Book 1	OUP
The New Oxford English Course Wall Pictures	OUP

#### **Standard IV**

Before beginning new work with this class it is important that you are sure that the work from Standard III has been completely understood. The book for this year has 7 revision lessons from last year's work, and training on word stems and parts. Therefore, the children will be able to build words themselves and they will gain skills in reading.

Also there is the Teachers' Handbook for Book II. In that each lesson has been planned very carefully and all difficulties are explained.

*Books .*

New Oxford English Course, Book II	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book II	OUP
Teachers' Handbook for use with the New Oxford English Course, Book II	OUP

#### **Standard V**

For some time to come this standard will have children who have come from many different primary schools; these children will have different abilities in English.

Therefore, for two weeks at the beginning it is essential to revise book II. At the beginning of book III there is also revision, and using this will enable the teacher to know those weak children and those strong in English. The main aim for this year is to teach the children to have skills in speaking, reading and to understand what they are studying, and similarly to increase their ability to write well. There is no Teachers' Handbook this year. The teacher must be able to write a scheme of work using the Teachers' Notes, Book III.

*Books.*

New Oxford English Course, Book III	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book III	OUP

**Standard VI**

In this year the main aim is to increase the knowledge which the children have started to gain so that at the end of the year they know more and are able to use common, essential words.

*Books.*

New Oxford English Course, Book IV	OUP
Teachers' Notes, Book IV	OUP

In addition to these books there are graded supplementary readers for each class. It is important for the children to read as many of these as possible.

APPENDIX 2: THE NOEC AND SYLLABI TOPICS			
Language item	NOEC	1986	1997
	Bk St		
this is a ...	1 - St III	St III	St I
this and that	1 - St III	St III	St I
the ...of the	1 - St III	St IV (not 'of the')	
pres cont - 1st pers sing	1 - St III	St III	St I
pres cont - 2nd & 3rd pers sing	1 - St III	St III	St I
preps: on, in, under, near	1 - St III	St III	St III
over, behind, in front of	1 - St III	St III	St III
my, your, his, her	1 - St III	St III	St III
parts of the body	1 - St III	St III	St II
plurals - z sound	1 - St III	St III but no pron work	
them, they	1 - St III	St III	
plurals - ss sound	1 - St III	St III but no pron work	
plurals - iz sound	1 - St III	St III but no pron work	
have ... has	1 - St III	St III	St II
parts of the body - plural	1 - St III	St III	St II
colours & other adjectives	1 - St III	St III	St II & III
simple past tense - 3 irreg verbs	1 - St III	St IV	St IV
simple past tense - in -ed	1 - St III	St IV	St IV
negatives - don't, didn't	2 - St IV	St IV	
simple present tense revision	2 - St IV		
simple present tense - habit	2 - St IV	St III	St III
going to + inf (future)	2 - St IV	St V	St V
time phrases eg on Sunday, never	2 - St IV	St III	St III
countable and uncountable	2 - St IV	St IV	St IV
can - for ability	2 - St IV	St IV	St V
conjunctions; and, but, when, then	2 - St IV	St III	St II
questions; what, where, who etc	2 - St IV		
simple future - will	2 - St IV	St IV	St IV
why - because	2 - St IV	St V	St V
comparative adjectives	2 - St IV	St IV	St IV
why - because	3 - St V	St V	St V
instructions	3 - St V	St V	
past continuous tense	3 - St V	St V	St V
relative 'who'	3 - St V	St V	
countable and uncountable revised	3 - St V		
simple future revised	3 - St V		
relative 'which' 'what'	3 - St V	St V	St VI
superlatives	3 - St V	St V	
1st conditional	3 - St V	St VI	St VI
modal auxiliaries	3 - St V		St V
use of apostrophes	3 - St V	St IV	St V
all, every, some, none, many, a few	3 - St V	St V	
present simple passive	3 - St V	St VII	St VII
present perfect	3 - St V	St IV	St V
2nd & 3rd conditionals	3 - St V	St VI	St VI
past perfect (introduction)	3 - St V	St VI	
ordinal numbers	3 - St V		
punctuation	3 - St V		
<b>Language item</b>	<b>NOEC</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1997</b>

	Bk	St		
revision of known tenses	4	St VI		
relatives	4	St VI		
phonic units	4	St VI		
assisted composition	4	St VI	St IV	
adverbials for time relations	4	St VI		
constructions conveying comparisons -	4	St VI		
- positive and negative	4	St VI		
opportunity for dramatic work	4	St VI		
numbers & quantities - constructions	4	St VI		
interrogative constructions - old & new	4	St VI		
infinitive phrases eg 'what to do'	4	St VI	St VI	St VI
past perfect tense	4	St VI		
passive voice forms	4	St VI	St VII	St VII
indirect questions	4	St VI		
reported speech/ present simple tense only	4	St VI	St VI	St VI
until	4	St VI		St VI
compositions with less assistance	4	St VI		St VII
grammar - naming parts of speech	4	St VI	St VI	St VII
more grammar - naming parts of speech	5	St VII	St VI	St VII
composition - controlled	5	St VII		
spelling	5	St VII		
modal auxiliaries - instructions	5	St VII	St VI	St VI
vocabulary	5	St VII		
composition - free	5	St VII		
spelling - plurals	5	St VII		
revision of possessive pronouns	5	St VII		
addressing envelopes	5	St VII		
letter writing	5	St VII	St VI	St VI & VII
adjectival phrases	5	St VII		
with' - with a knife, with his father, etc	5	St VII	St V	
sentence order	5	St VII		
revision of 'too'	5	St VII		St VII
adverbial phrases	5	St VII		
revision - countable and uncountable	5	St VII		
sentence construction - controlled	5	St VII		
<i>Additional language items</i>			time telling St IV	nationality
			question tags St VII	
			form fillings St VII	