

English Textbooks for P1 and the New Competence Based Curriculum



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Three approved textbooks: Spotlight, East African publishers and Laxmi.

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Context:

The new competence-based curriculum came into effect in January 2016.

No textbooks were available to schools in support of the new curriculum for the whole of 2016.

In January 2017 textbooks were available for teaching P1. However, the Laxmi book has proved impossible to get hold of, and is understood not to be in the schools. The East African Publishers book consists of a Pupil's Book only. They have not produced a Teacher's Book, apparently on financial and economic grounds. Spotlight's book is the only one with an available Teacher's Guide.

Set out below are my observations and comments on the approved textbook, English for Rwandan Primary School Pupil's Book 1 from **Spotlight Publishers**. This is the textbook most used currently in the schools according to information from distributors and REB.

The textbook is, of course, required to follow the curriculum, and so my observations and comments whilst directed at the textbooks are also a commentary on the curriculum.

I have spent 22 years working in the primary education sector in Tanzania, for which I was awarded an MBE. I have now spent five months working every day in government primary schools in Gasabo District. My first career was as a lawyer, and my first degree and post-graduate studies were in law. I have qualifications and many years' experience as a teacher of English as a foreign language. From all of my experience my command of the English language and my ability to analyse it and to teach it is of a high standard.

Background:

The pupil

In the first year of teaching English to beginner, young pupils it is crucial to make the new language accessible and relevant. In other words, the learners must be motivated, and to be motivated they must be led to understand the language fully and to succeed. There is nothing like success. Success breeds success. Success for young learners is essential in learning a new language. If the young learners cannot feel successful from the beginning then their interest in the new language will decrease rapidly, and soon, in the learner's mind, there will be no motivation or incentive to learn further.

Success comes when learners fully understand the meaning of the new language. They fully understand the meaning when they can **see** the meaning. For instance, they see and touch tangible objects and learn the names of those objects, and can say the noun for that object

in a sentence which has full meaning. The golden rule in teaching young learners is ‘one new thing at one time’. These are the building-blocks of the language, one upon another, and only one at one time.

The teacher

However, the concerns of the teacher must also be addressed. The teachers who teach English in the Lower Primary are, by very definition, primary school teachers. The Lower Primary school maths teacher can only be expected to have ability in mathematics to a level just a few grades higher than the level she or he is teaching, or at the most up to O’level standard. The Lower Primary English teacher can, similarly, only be expected to have ability in English up to O’level standard at the most. No teacher in Lower Primary can be expected to be the top in her/his subject – not a professor of mathematics and neither a fluent English speaker. However, for the Lower Primary teacher of English expectations do indeed abound that he/she has a fluent command of the English language. As this is not the case for the vast majority of Lower Primary English teachers, these unrealistic expectations only exacerbate the problems and the failures.

ANALYSIS: The Teacher’s Guide

The book, on the cover, is stated to be ‘Property of the Government of Rwanda’. In order to become such property it is supposed that it should have been subject to some scrutiny. From my analysis it seems that any such scrutiny was not as thorough as it should have been.

Introduction – errors of editing, and language level

The book starts on page vi, and then over the page is page iv, and then the Contents appear and then the book continues with page viii. After that comes page xiv, over the page xii, over the page again x, over the page again xvi. This is a neglect of simple editing. It makes the whole of the Introduction unreadable and, therefore, useless. I obtained a second copy which does not have such errors of binding the pages, but I wonder if copies which have been sent to the schools have those binding errors. However, my analysis continues because there are points of important principle to be noted.

It is written for a teacher of English to P1. Therefore, the reader of this book is a Lower Primary school teacher. Some of the vocabulary in the book is advanced, for example: ‘*contextual*’ (page viii), ‘*is geared towards*’ (page ix – with the meaning ‘is expected to’), ‘*to handle*’ (page ix with the meaning ‘to manage’), ‘*a host of*’ (page ix), ‘*conducive*’ (page ix), ‘*tactile*’ (page xv), ‘*compliments/complimentary*’ (page xiii – and the word is, in fact, incorrect as it should be ‘*complement/complementary*’), ‘*concrete*’ (page x) which is jargon and is not explained as something that can be touched and is a ‘real object’, ‘*conversant*’ (page xi), ‘*kinesthetic*’ (page xi), ‘*to settle*’ (page xi with the meaning ‘to accept’), ‘*part and parcel*’ (page xviii).

Introduction – grammatical errors and incomprehensible phrases

Page viii, ‘... *as they learn new words or have them reinforced*’; this is American English and is a complex structure. A simple structure using better English would be ‘... as they learn new words, or use words already learned’. Another example of American English is on page xiii, ‘...*or the teacher can have one pupil say a word at a time.*’ This would be better stated as, ‘...*or the teacher can ask one pupil to say a word at a time.*’

There are many instances of words being missed out, which does not help the teacher who is struggling to read English. For instance, on page xiii, *'The teacher should help the learners pronounce each word...'*. This would be much better, and easier for the teacher to understand if 'to pronounce' had been used. On page xvii there is, *'Design activities that enable you develop both the subject and language competencies'*. That sentence must have 'to develop' for it to make sense.

Of more concern are the number of sentences that seem to have no meaning. For instance, *'Allow learners to choose their pair-share partners for you to know their interactivity and cooperation members'* (page xvii). On page xxiv, *'All scores from all assessment procedures should be.....'* – what are 'assessment procedures'? Surely, the word 'assessments' would be more than adequate and more easily understood by Lower Primary teachers. On page xi, *'Real objects and models (touch/kinesthetic) coordinate visual representation with touch to present information'*. What a very complicated and nearly non-sensical way of saying 'Real objects and models can be seen and touched. The pupil will know what the object is and so will be able to know the meaning of the English word for that object'. On page xvii, *'Learners should be cautioned on the use of sharp objects like scissors, knives (sic), razor blades and unfamiliar animals....'*! I can offer no explanation as to why unfamiliar animals would be in the classroom. On page xxv, there is a section on *'Reporting to parents'*. Here is suggested, *'A simple scale is use of the RAG table whose colours show.....'* Exactly what RAG stands for is only explained on page 15. RAG stands for 'red, amber, green', and as such is needlessly advanced as 'orange' could just as well be used instead of 'amber'.

On page xviii, *'There are three major types of assessment namely continuous/formative assessment and summative assessment'*. I only count two types of assessment in that sentence.

On page xiv *'The teaching procedure of English in Primary Four could take the following steps:'* – this is, presumably, a typing error, but it would make the reader think that this part is, therefore, not relevant for teaching Primary One.

On page x, *'Teaching about language involves teaching language structures with not much thought given to language outside the classroom. This approach is not suitable for the needs of Rwanda pupils at Primary One. English teaching should not be confined to the classroom situation. The learners should be able to apply what they learn in their daily lives.'* I cannot begin to guess what this really means. The Lower Primary teacher should not be subjected to sentences such as these. The authors have a duty of care to help the teacher.

Introduction - pedagogy

This is the most worrying part of the Introduction, and, as such, of the entire Teacher's Guide; the fact that there is little understanding of the beginner level of the P1 learner, little understanding of how a child learns a foreign language, and little understanding of the real situation in the majority of government primary schools.

On page viii the layout and content of the Pupil's Book is analysed.

'A. Oral work. This section has different activities such as songs, poems, stories, questions for discussion, pictures. It is based on oral work. Learners are to listen and speak about the topic. This enables learners to express themselves freely.'

I wonder what P1 learner of English can 'discuss' and 'express themselves freely' in English? The P1 learner of English has extremely limited vocabulary and even more limited sentence

structures. The only 'discussion' and 'free expression' would take place in Kinyarwanda. The use of mother-tongue is not to be encouraged, as the pupils need all the time available for the learning of English rather than the development of their Kinyarwanda. The latter is important, but is for the Kinyarwanda classes.

'H. Writing. The writing section includes a guided composition task based on the unit. It also ensures practice of the vocabulary and the language structures. The learners are given opportunity to write short texts that are applicable in real life like comparing people or about rights, responsibilities and rules after the writing activity offer useful and summarized information on how to handle the activity.' This is a direct, accurate transcription of that paragraph in the Teacher's Guide; with words missed out, and the final sentence that makes very little sense. However, the main point is that P1 pupils should not be expected to 'write short texts'. An examination of the Pupil's Book shows that, in fact, the 'Writing' activities are mostly oral activities which then require copying from the book, and also some 'gap fill' written activities.

'E. Language structure – Sounds and spelling. Basically, this section is meant to help the learners master the spelling of words taught in every unit. It enables learners to recognize and pronounce sounds and use rhythm and stress correctly. The learners also learn about common word endings, word families and roots of words.' An examination of the Pupil's Book shows that these 'Sound and spelling' sections m the pupils with toty not be helpful to the pupils in their English. Some of the words are those which the pupils do not know. Also the words bear no relation to each other in either sound, spelling or grammar items.

'I. My word bank. Since many pupils have no dictionaries, this section is designed to ensure that all pupils have a quick reference to all the vocabulary of every unit.' This is the most extraordinary part of the Pupil's Book. The definitions of the simple words which the pupils have been introduced to in any unit, use very advanced language which includes passive tenses, complex structures, and even then fail to define the words precisely. In fact, the words to be defined are mostly nouns, being names of objects, and so a picture by the side of the word would be far more easily understood by the pupils. That these 'mini-dictionary' sections exist shows a lack of understanding of the ability of young learners, and how they learn a foreign language.

On page xiii in "Look, say and use", it suggests that the teacher hold up cards with words written on them. The learners read from the card. *'Once the learners have pronounced the word correctly, the teacher asks one pupil at a time to construct a sentence using the word.'* This would seem ambitious for P1 pupils, especially as they are taught very few sentence structures.

On page xx-xxi under 'Reading passages or texts'. It is suggested that at first the teacher and the pupils *'discuss the text using pictures or stories'*. The language for such discussion would have to be Kinyarwanda, as this is P1 English where the pupils' language competence in vocabulary and sentence structures would not enable them to 'discuss'. The Teacher's Guide then continues that the *'...passages in this course present contemporary issues in an exciting way that naturally provoke discussion. This results in prolonged oral practice of language already acquired.....The passages are written in simple language that is readily accessible to the P1 learners.'* As I develop my analysis, below, of the Pupil's Book together

with the Teacher's Guide, it will be seen that the reading passages are far too advanced for P1 learners, and as such will do very little to help the pupils' language ability or reading ability.

On page xxiv under '*Teaching materials*' it is suggested that the teacher might use '*proverbs or similes of the week*.' Proverbs and similes use advanced language and structures and are not suitable for the P1 learner. If this is to be an exercise in rote learning then the educational value has to be queried.

My final comment is about Red Amber Green (RAG) table set out on page xxvi with comments on page xxvii. The table is puzzling as it encompasses 'numeracy', and I wonder if the authors are aware that the English teacher probably would not teach P1 for any other subject other than English. From teaching English it might be hard at this level to assess '*critical thinking*' and '*research and problem solving*', as the pupils are operating in a foreign language. However, the analysis of the table on page xxvii states that '*it is clear that...*' I found it far from clear, and cannot agree with the written comments about Jean Mihigo based on the table.

ANALYSIS: Unit 1 pages 1-15 Pupil's Book – Welcome to the Classroom

The first lesson, and the whole of the first unit is, probably, the most important in the whole year. The first unit covers 25 periods, or nearly 17 hours of study.

From the very first lesson each pupil should come away with a thorough understanding of some English words, and have a great sense of achievement in being able to say new words in a new language.

The Spotlight book, on page 1 has '*A. Oral Work*', and the so-called 'poem' is not only non-sensical but the English is bad. It uses the auxiliary verb 'do' before the pupils even know the main verb, and it uses it in an advanced use of the affirmative 'I do stand'. The last line, '*Sing, clap, dance I can do*' is not fluent English, and makes little sense. Also that sentence introduces the modal auxiliary 'can'. This is far beyond the beginner learner. It is interesting to note that the version of this poem set out in the Teacher's Guide on page 3 is not the same as that in the Pupil's Book – and editing of the books should have picked this up. Learning vocabulary for this poem and reciting it, are the first activities for the pupils of P1. The very first tasks in their new journey of learning English. Many of the words they will not understand, such as, '*my feet*' '*on a chair*' '*I can do*'. In fact, the only words they are supposed to learn are '*stand*' '*sit*' '*speak*' '*listen*' '*sing*' '*clap*' and '*dance*.' I am not sure how the teacher is going to perform '*speaking*' or '*listening*'. Of great concern pedagogically is that the pupils are to recite this poem whilst doing the actions. If the pupils are doing actions, then the only English that they can meaningfully be using is the present continuous tense. This poem is set in the present simple tense. If they do actions whilst learning the present simple tense then the meaning and use of that tense is lost. When they come to learn the present continuous tense they will be confused, as they will have already been led to see the present simple tense as one using the exact same actions to convey meaning.

The next activity is to read the '*B. Reading*' on page 1 of the Pupil's Book; '*Mrs. Gasimba gets into the classroom. She is the teacher of Primary One. She greets the children: Good*

morning children. The children say: Good morning Mrs. Gasimba. The children sing a song. They clap their hands. They are happy to be in school'. I doubt that the pupils could read a similar text in Kinyarwanda. If they read this English text then they will be reading with no understanding as they will know no words whatsoever, as nothing has been taught so far. The language is far too advanced. In the first sentence '*gets into*' is not reflected in the accompanying picture, and would be better for the pupils, and the sense given by the picture, to be written 'Mrs Gasimba **is** in the classroom'. However, the language of this Reading is too advanced; using the definite article, '**the** teacher', plurals '**the children**'/'**they are**', preposition of place '**in** school' etc. Also the punctuation is not good, with the quoted speech merely following a colon whereas it should be in inverted commas/speech marks, 'She greets the children, "Good morning children."'

Still with no teaching, the pupils are expected to do the *Reading Activity* on page 2 which is a gap-fill exercise. This whole activity flies in the face of all and any language learning pedagogy. It is akin to any of us just reading a passage in Norwegian. We might just be able to read it, but there would be no meaning at all, and so the exercise would be a demoralizing waste of time. This is exacerbated in '*Sounds and spellings*' on page 2. The pupils, again, just read the words without any idea of what they mean. This is not furthering their language learning, and will only serve to confuse and frustrate, and so within no time at all I expect most pupils will not enjoy their English lessons. In the Teacher's Guide on page 5 there is a brief mention in '*Learning and teaching methods*' of '*think-pair-share*'. This is not the correct use of that valuable teaching method. That method develops thinking skills and creativity; what is being done here is repetition of words of which the pupils do not know the meaning.

Lesson 4 is the '*Vocabulary*' on pages 2 and 3. In the Teacher's Guide (at the bottom of page 6) it is stated, '*Once the two girls and two boys have gotten the actions...*'. This is totally American-English and as such should not be used in a book concerned with teaching English-English. On page 7 of the Teacher's Guide is the rather sweeping statement that the teachers should, '*Inform the learners that they should always follow instructions given to them by elders.*' I would hope that learners would be guided to use their discretion, otherwise you might see young girls accepting lifts in cars by men they don't know etc.

In summary, in the first unit, the learners are tasked with learning greetings and how to introduce themselves. This is actually extremely difficult.

'*Good morning*' '*Good afternoon*' and '*Good evening*' is not language that can be **seen**. To convey the meaning the teacher will translate. This is not a satisfactory way for learners to learn their first English words. This will merely be learning by rote.

When the learners are to introduce themselves the possessive adjective 'my' is combined with an abstract noun 'name', to form 'My name is'. Coupled with that, the teacher asks 'What is your name?' which uses another possessive adjective.

This again, will be learned by rote, as the language is too advanced for the pupils to understand at this stage. The full meaning of the words the pupils are saying is **not seen** or understood, and so there can be little feeling of real success.

Possessive adjectives are difficult items of grammar for young learners, and, indeed, many teachers in the schools have difficulty in using them correctly. They are difficult to teach,

because the speaker, by definition, must use a different possessive adjective, 'my', from the listener who views the speaker as 'you' and the speaker's item/name as 'your'. There are good methods for teaching this, but only if the pupils can **see** the noun. For instance, 'my shirt' would have real meaning for a pupil, who can **see** his/her shirt and who knows that it is indeed his/her own shirt, and so can then gain the full meaning of 'my shirt'.

Introducing possessive adjectives with an abstract noun, cannot lead to the pupils gaining the full meaning, and so an opportunity for success and motivation is lost.

Not only that, but '*My name is....*' is used together with '*I am*'. The golden rule of 'one thing at one time' is broken, and confusion will come in. The building blocks of the language require that one structure is practised and practised until the pupils can use it easily, and only then is another building block of the language introduced.

On page 3 the lack of language sequencing is again a problem. That page uses numbers, and the pupils have not learned the English numbers yet. Numbers 1-20 are in the curriculum in Unit 3. The pupils read, or are instructed by the teacher to 'Clap three times' and 'Clap two times' and 'Sing one song.'

There is just too much language that is not taught, that has no real meaning, and that is not being introduced as part of the building- blocks of the language.

On page 9 the pupils are most unlikely to understand '*listen carefully*', as 'carefully' is an adverb that is not easy to teach. If it is to be taught, then it can be taught with the meaning **seen** by the pupils in a demonstration such as 'draw carefully' of 'write carefully'. However, '*listen carefully*' cannot be **seen**, and so is not suited for young, beginner learners in their first 19 hours of study.

Also on page 9 is the sudden introduction of the present continuous tense, '*What is she doing?*'. This is not in the curriculum until Unit 4. As the question is in the present continuous tense, and the picture shows an action in motion, then the only answer is 'She is clapping'. However, if the teacher is not guided, and says 'She claps' then that is incorrect. With a picture, the present simple tense can only be conveyed if it is under a clear heading of 'Everyday' or is clearly in the context of daily routines – as that is part of the meaning and use of the present simple tense. If the present continuous tense is being introduced, as is suggested by the Teacher's Guide on page 13, then to use it for one or two sentences with no proper presentation of the meaning or use of the tense, is a very peculiar pedagogical step.

The game of '*Simon says*' on page 9 of the Pupil's Book is far too ambitious, and at this stage of learning very few, if any, pupils will be able to give the instructions.

Page 11 introduces yet more problems. The possessive adjectives are used again, with '*this*' and '*these*'. The use of '*this*' on page 8 has not shown it in the correct sense of **touching** something or someone. On page 11 this error is continued. The correct English in picture 2 would be '**That** is my bag' – as the boy is pointing to the bag and not touching it. In picture 3 it should be '**Those** are his pencils' as the reader is not touching them, and in picture 4 '**That** is her ruler'. On page 13 in (b) the incorrect use of '*this*' is shown again. However, the

introduction of 'that' should wait until the use of 'this' is thoroughly practised and understood.

On page 12 the *Practice Activity* uses language which is far too advanced; '*This bag belongs to me. It is my bag*'. Again on page 15 in '*G. My Word Bank*' the definitions are far too complicated, and not necessarily correct. For instance, in 8, it is quite possible to clap just once. In 6 the definition describes 'leaning' as well as 'sitting'. In 9 you can 'listen' without it being 'carefully'. In 12 'Introduce *yourself*' is the reflexive pronoun, and is far too advanced for this stage of learning. The word '*concentrate*' in 11 is, again, far too advanced and is difficult to pronounce from its written form.

The allocation of periods is questionable. Pupils' Book page 8 which is solely concerned with, '*This is Anne. She is Anne. Her name is Anne*' and '*Who is this? This is Timothy*' is allocated 4 periods or over two and a half hours.

Overall: The Unit 1 introduction of the pupils to learning English has been an over-load of too many items, and the meaning has not been **seen** by the pupils. Not only has there been too much new language without proper sequencing, but by the end of Unit 1 the pupils will probably not understand or know one good English sentence structure with full meaning. At best they will have rote-learned some separate sentences.

The value of understanding, learning and using sentence structures is that with each word of new vocabulary those structures can be re-used, and so the learner builds his language ability. For example, if the pupils thoroughly understand the meaning of 'This is a shirt' and 'This is my shirt' then he/she can form sentences with new words, such as 'ruler' and 'pen'. Also when he/she learns 'door' he/she will know that the structure 'this is my door' is not correct.

This would be the true nature of a competence-based curriculum; that the pupils are guided, by **seeing** the meaning to build the language in their heads, and never saying anything the meaning of which they do not know. This is a useful skill involving patterns and logic. The competence of the pupil that is needed and aimed at, is in understanding the meaning of the language he/she is using in such a way that he/she learns to build on that language.

Such competence would give the pupil a feeling of real success, and that success would motivate the pupil to continue learning.

ANALYSIS: Unit 2 pages 16-29 Pupil's Book – Classroom Objects

This unit would have been better as Unit 1. It uses real objects from the outset and so there is real meaning for the pupils to see and understand.

However, the unit starts with '*A. Oral Work*' with the very complex structure of '*What do you use to write?*'. This not only uses the interrogative (question) form of the present simple tense which brings in the auxiliary verb 'do', but then is followed by an infinitive of purpose. This is far beyond the level of P1 learners.

Also the questions demand knowledge of prepositions of place, which have not been taught. For instance, '*What do you sit on in class?*', has two prepositions of place, and the answer will need to use 'on a chair'. However, from the Teacher's Guide the answers are just the nouns, '*pencil, chair, blackboard*'. This is not teaching the pupils English. They should be encouraged to use full sentences, and in order to do that the questions have to be

graded to the pupils' ability. A one-word answer without even the indefinite article is not good teaching/learning practice.

The poem is too advanced for P1 learners. Giving seven colours is too much, and '*violet and indigo*' are not colours that are known by native English speaking children at that age. Again, the pupils are reading with no real meaning or understanding, and the educational value of that has to be queried.

In '*B. Reading*' the inadequacies of this book are really shown. The passage:
'There are beautiful colours in the sky. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. These are the rainbow colours. After it has stopped raining and the sun shines, a beautiful rainbow is formed. It has seven colours. Have you seen a rainbow? Doesn't it look beautiful?'

Firstly, the use of plural nouns and the verb '*are*' are unknown to the pupils at this stage. '*The sky*' is new and has the definite article, which is new to the pupils. Then there is use of the present perfect tense twice, '*has stopped*' and '*have you seen...?*' There is use of the passive '*..is formed*' and at the end the use of a negative question, '*Doesn't it look beautiful?*' with a shortened form of 'does not' used. This is so overwhelmingly advanced, and so very much beyond the level of the P1 learner that any experience of the authors in teaching English as a foreign language has to be called into question. Whilst native English speakers of the P1 age would probably understand the passage if it was read to them, they would find it difficult to read that passage aloud themselves.

The '*Reading Activity*' or questions on the reading, assumes a knowledge of the number '*seven*', and the pupils have not yet learned numbers in English.

If that *Reading Activity* is only done mechanically, from filling in the gaps by finding the words in the passage, then there is no learning in the activity. At best it might be handwriting practice, but without knowledge of the words, and no 'word recognition' this would be detrimental as a writing practice as it would encourage letter-by-letter copying which is not how writing sentences is to be developed.

For the section on '*C. Vocabulary*' on page 17 of the Pupil's Book, there are some good, clear drawings of classroom objects, labelled with, for example, '*a pen*'. This is quite adequate for the pupils to learn the word and its meaning. However, in the Teacher's Guide, translation is promoted, as the teacher is to discuss classroom items in Kinyarwanda, and then the teacher is to elicit the name of say 'book' in Kinyarwanda and will then tell the pupils that in English it is 'book'. This is done for all items before they open page 17 of the Pupil's Book. This indicates that the authors do not understand how young children learn a second language. They do not learn by translation. They learn by seeing and attaching meaning. If the teacher shows a chair, touches it and says 'chair' then the pupils will understand. However, it would be much more pedagogically sound to give the pupils a sentence structure, such as, 'This is a chair.'

The Teacher's Guide then tells the teacher to find different colours of classroom objects and to follow the same translation method. From the primary school classrooms that I have been in there is very little of colour. Another difficulty here is that the teacher is introducing an adjective (colour) on its own, and so the pupils might think that it is a noun; for instance, if there is a green book in the classroom, and the teacher holds it up and says 'green', then

the pupil might be confused and think the word for 'book' is 'green'. This is a problem as children do not relate to translation but relate to seeing things and interpreting meaning.

'D. Language Use' on page 18 of the Pupil's Book introduces the first sentence structure. However, the golden rule for foreign language learning is 'one thing at one time.' Here, two sentence structures are introduced together, and one of them is not shown properly. The pupils are introduced to 'This is... ' and 'It is... '. However, the proper use of 'this' is not shown, nor is an explanation given in the Teacher's Guide. 'This' is used when the speaker is touching the item. The answer to 'What is this?' will depend on whether the person answering is touching the item or not. To be able to answer 'This is a' that person must be touching the object. On page 19 of the Pupil's Book the hands are not touching the items and yet the answer is shown as 'This is a ...' whereas the answer should be 'That is a...'. In order to help with the introduction of the sentence structure 'This is a ...' the hands should be touching the objects. The simultaneous introduction of 'It is a....' is confusing for the pupils. The sudden introduction of the negative 'It is not' is too much to introduce at this stage.

In just three periods, that is two hours of study, the P1 pupils are expected to learn 10 new nouns, nine colours, the structures 'This is a..' 'It is a' 'Is this a....?' 'It is not' and to put adjectives (colours) with nouns and to use 'and'. This is not just ambitious but totally unrealistic, and flouts all the accepted rules and procedures of teaching English as a foreign language to children. However, in the Teacher's Guide on page 27 there is more to put into these three periods, and the pupils are expected to make sentences such as 'The blackboard is black. The colour of this table is brown.' Those structures have not been taught; they involve the definite article, and using 'colour' as a noun, and putting the adjective after the noun, so instead of a 'brown table' it changes to, the table 'is brown'. These are complicated differences that need to be introduced quite separately once the first structures have been fully understood and practised. This is overload, and will result, and does result, in the pupils learning very little, understanding even less, and having no feeling of success in the new language. Success is the only sure motivator.

On page 21 of the Pupil's Book in 'Describing colours' the pupils have three periods, or two hours of study, to use and read sentences describing the colour of objects. There is the introduction of the indefinite article before a vowel 'an orange sharpener', and there is no mention of this in the Teacher's Book as something to teach. Plurals are introduced and yet the Teacher's Guide only guides the teacher to explain that 'These' refers to more than one object, and there is no actual teaching of the plurals. The pupils will not learn these structures just by looking at the words in the Pupil's Book. The introduction of plural nouns needs to be taught, and with it the new structure 'These are....' as opposed to 'This is... ' The plural nouns should be introduced on their own, without adjectives in the sentences.

The Teacher's Guide allocates the number of lessons for each section, and on page 28 states that 'Describing Colours' will take Lesson, 10, 11 and 12. On page 31 the Guide states that '(iv) Talking about possession' will take Lesson 14 and 15. There is no mention of Lesson 13.

It is then assumed that '(iii) Talking about possession' is to be covered in Lesson 13. This single period of 40 minutes, covers four new structures. One of the structures is 'I have a... ' and another structure is 'I have got a' . The second structure is a more advanced

language item and is not appropriate for P1. However, it is in the curriculum, but interestingly, is only introduced in P1 and then is never used again throughout the English course of P2 to P4. Those two structures are then introduced in their question form, and are mixed, 'Do you have a pencil?' 'I have got a blue pencil.' This is not helpful for the pupils. The question form for 'I have' uses the auxiliary verb 'do'. There is nothing in the Teacher's Guide to help her/him to teach this. However, the question form for 'I have got' is quite different and has no auxiliary verb but inverts the subject and the verb to become 'Have you got..?' There is again nothing in the Teacher's Guide about this. This is very difficult language, and not only is a 40 minute lesson inadequate, but the introduction of four structures at once is far too much for child learners.

On page 23 of the Pupil's Book 'that' is introduced. The pictures on page 23 do not show the difference in the use of 'this' and 'that'. It would appear from the book that they are interchangeable terms, but they are not.

On page 24 of the Pupil's Book is the most extraordinary 'poem'. It really makes no sense at all. The poem is 'Good morning to the school. Good morning to the flag. Good morning pencils and pens. Good morning teacher. Good morning to the children. Good morning to learning with friends.' This seems to make a nonsense of the greetings the pupils learned in Unit 1. Greetings are to be exchanged between people. If anyone was found saying 'Good morning' to their pencils and pens it would be extremely odd, to say the least.

On page 27 of the Pupil's Book it states that 'my, his her are pronouns.' This is incorrect. They are possessive adjectives. This mistake stems from the wording in the curriculum, but the textbook authors should know and should correct the mistake.

Overall: From this analysis of Unit 2 it is clear that nearly all of the activities are based on looking at the Pupil's Book, and reading from it. This does not give sufficient change of activities for young learners. Young learners need to be getting up from the desk and doing things as they use the new language. Also the expectation that the pupils can read what is in the Pupil's Book is unrealistic. The pupils could not read similar texts in Kinyarwanda, and so they will not be able to read it in English. Also they are being asked to read many words of which they do not know the meaning, and that is pedagogically unsound.

There are 7 English periods each week for P1, and there are 10 weeks in the first term. The first week of term is taken up with enrolment and little, if any, teaching takes place for P1. The last two weeks of term are used for term-tests. That means the term is reduced to 7 weeks. That gives just 49 periods. Unit 1 and Unit 2 take 50 periods. By the end of the first term, if the Spotlight Book is used and followed, the first two units will have been covered. The pupils may have learned by rote some of the greetings, and they may have learned and understood the nouns for classroom objects, but I strongly suspect that they will not have learned any sentence structures thoroughly, because their meaning has not been shown. Without properly learning sentence structures, which are the backbone of the English language, then any nouns that are learned have nothing to 'hang on to'. The pupils will not have kept up with what is in the book, and so they will enter the second term to continue on this 'roller-coaster' of English language which will get ever more ahead of them.

I expect very many of the teachers will be as 'lost' as the pupils. The language is too advanced, the explanations are insufficient or non-existent, and there are no guides as to how to teach; there are guides as to what to do, but that is different from how to teach it. The Teacher's Guide invites a lot of 'discussion', for instance on page 30 of the Teacher's Guide *'Explanation on the usage of possession. Discussion on how to use 'my' and 'your' correctly.'* This is not how to teach a foreign language to children. This is also encouraging the use of too much Kinyarwanda in the lesson, and pupils do not learn from explanations or translation. They learn from seeing the meaning, from touching things and saying the correct words. 'My' and 'your' are difficult to teach, but with the right guidance and direction it is quite possible to convey the meaning and for the pupils to use the words with meaning and understanding without using one word of Kinyarwanda. By doing the actions and seeing the meaning the pupils will remember it.

ANALYSIS: Unit 3 pages 30-44 Pupil's Book – People at Home and School

The unit starts with two lessons without use of the Pupil's Book. The teacher is to teach six new words, for family members. The pupils are then expected to say such sentences as, *'I have one brother'*, and yet they have not been taught the numbers in English. There is another new structure in, *'My father is called....'*. This is a structure using the passive and is too much for the pupils at this age to cope with. It would be more pedagogically sound to repeat and revise the structures that the pupils have already seen and heard, *'His name is....'* or *'He is....'*.

The teacher has to read a few sentences to the pupils from the Teacher's Guide and the pupils are expected to answer questions which are on page 30 of the Pupil's Book. The first question is, *'How many people are there in the family?'*. This is yet another new structure using *'are there'*. This is difficult and needs time to teach, and especially to teach the pronunciation. 'Are there' must not sound like 'Are they'. The next question is *'What is the name of the school?'* This again is a new structure with *'the....of the....'*. This should be a separate lesson, showing the pupils the use of the definite articles in this sentence structure.

So we have seen in two lessons, or in 80 minutes, that the pupils are expected to learn six new words, a number, a passive structure, and the new structures of *'are there/there are'* and *'the....of the....'*. This is not possible.

The next three lessons are concerned with reading, and sounds and spellings from the pages 30-31 of the Pupil's Book. The Teacher's Guide instructs the teacher, *'In form the learners to settle down because you will read for them a story.'*(sic). This is bad English. The verb to 'inform' is one word, and the verb 'to read' is followed by the object, and so should be 'read them a story.' The pupils are to read the passage aloud, and they have not yet been taught the numbers in English. The reading of *'eight'* is very difficult even for native English speakers of the age of P1 pupils. The passage uses the structure *'She is ten'* and the answer from the Teacher's Guide introduces *'She is ten years old.'* All these new structures are confusing and especially as the numbers have not yet been taught.

The final question on the reading passage, on page 31 of the Pupil's Books is, *'What did you like or not like about the story?'* The pupils have not been introduced to the verb 'to like' and more particularly they have not been introduced to the past simple tense, and especially not in the negative form where the auxiliary verb 'did' is used. In the Teacher's Guide is states, *'Let learners express themselves about the like and dislikes.'* The pupils

cannot possibly do this in English as they have not been taught the words and structure that they would need. Moreover, the reading passage comprises a string of sentences setting out facts about a family. There is nothing to like or dislike. A native English speaker would not be able to say what she/he liked or disliked about the story as it is not really a story but a summary of facts.

The *'Sounds and spellings'* section follows, and again pupils are reading words the meaning of which they do not know, such as *'our'*.

The next exercise is to *'Match the letters with sounds in pairs'* and puts capital letters on the left and the corresponding small letters on the right. The Teacher's Guide says to *'Explain to learners with different between letters and sounds.'* Whilst that sentence does not make sense, it suggests that the teacher is to say there is a difference between the capital letters and small letters, such that the capital takes the letter name and the small letter takes the sound. This is so stated on page 44 of the Teacher's Guide, *'Column A should have the letters (capital) while column B should have the sounds (small letters).'* This is wrong. Both capital and small letters have the same letter name, and each has the same sound.

The next two lessons are concerned with page 32 of the Pupil's Book and is the vocabulary of the six new words for family members. This should have been the first part of Unit 3. The pupils must learn the new words and structures, and then practise them. To have spent 5 lessons using vocabulary and structures that have not been taught is confusing and demoralizing for the pupils, and is pedagogically unsound for teaching children.

Also in the Teacher's Guide are some very stereotypical statements about mothers and fathers which are not helpful in today's society and the emphasis on equality: *'Mothers are very loving and bring up their children to respect others and live in peace. The father is the male parent at home. He maintains discipline and takes care of the children'*.

The next two lessons are on *'D Language Use'* from page 33 of the Pupil's Book. The set of picture is headed *'One's family'*. This is an advanced language item, referring to a person as *'one'*. As the pictures show *'my mother'* etc. then it would be helpful to know that this is Ivan's family (for instance) and then the pupils could be told that they are Ivan looking at the pictures and talking about his family, and then the use of *'my sister'* etc. could be justified. That is not the case here, and the pupils are asked to read *'This is my sister'* when it is not their sister at all. By reading this, it loses all meaning of *'my'* which the pupils might have gained. The pictures on page 33 then change, and in picture 4 we are looking at somebody else's father, *'This is her father'*, whereas in pictures 1-3 it was *'my mother'* etc. This is confusing.

The next two lessons are from page 34 to the top of page 37 of the Pupil's Book. The first activity is about people at school and the pupils are introduced to *'the head teacher'* and *'the school clerk'* and, from instructions in the Teacher's Guide, to *'the gate man'* and *'the class teacher'*. There is no explanation to the teacher or to the pupils as to why the definite article *'the'* is being used here. This is not something that the pupils will understand, and they will need a short explanation –and I expect that many of the teachers would too.

The song that follows, introduces a new verb with an object, and so you have new vocabulary and a new structure together – *'I love you'* in the sentence *'I love you my brother'*, and then introduces a new tense *'Our father is coming'*. The Teacher's Guide tells

the teacher to sing each line and the pupils repeat. This is rote learning and has no educational value. The pupils will not be able to understand the song as they have not been taught the vocabulary and structures used in it. The book continues with yet another new structure of *'I am ten years old'* combined with *'I am ten'*.

Again, there is too much for young learners: in 80 minutes they have been exposed to 13 new nouns, the definite article, and three new structures. The outcome will probably be that extremely little, if anything, is properly learned or understood.

The next four lessons cover pages 37 to 41 of the Pupil's Book and are concerned with numbers. The first activity is to learn all 20 numbers, 1-20. This far too much all at once. Not only it is too many vocabulary items, but there are difficulties of pronunciation which need time to learn and practise, such as 'three', 'six', 'fifteen' which cause difficulties for Rwandan learners, and the 'teens' which need a long sound.

The next activity expects the pupils to ask and answer questions about classroom objects using the structures, *'How many xxxx do you have?'* or *'How many are there?'* These are new structures using the plural of the nouns and would be better introduced separately and practised separately until they are known.

The pupils then have to play a game of finding numbers from 1 to 10, that start with various letters. The pupils find the numbers which start with 't'. Whilst 'three' starts with 't' it would be better to say it starts with 'th' as that is the sound, and the spelling.

There is then another song which has new vocabulary *'shoe, shut, heap, big, say'* and *'that's'* instead of *'that is'*. This is learned by rote with some actions but the scope for actions is very limited, *'One, two, that's my shoe. Three four, shut the door. Five six a heap of books. Seven eight my big white book. Nine ten, say it again.'*

The next 5 lessons are spent on the single topic of *"How old are you/is she/he?"* That is 3 ½ hours to be spent on a single page of the Pupil's Book and one structure, as the answers in the Teacher's Guide all take the form, *'She is ten'*.

The allocation of lessons to the activities, and the overload of new items in some lessons, indicate that the authors have not taken into account how young children learn, how much practice they need of new items, how much change of activity they need to keep motivated and 'on task' in their learning, and generally how the brains of young learners work.

The *Word Bank* on page 44 of the Pupil's Book is, as in the other Units, not only unhelpful but contains incorrect information. Again, the definitions are far more complicated than the words to be defined. The definitions introduce new vocabulary such as *'parents, children, person'*. For the definition of *'Age'* it states *'... the number of year you have'*. This is not helpful as it will confuse the mother tongue and French which use the verb 'to have' in terms of age, whereas English uses the verb 'to be'. The definition of *'cleaner'* is incorrect as it states it is *'a person who washes a place'*; it is a person who *cleans* a place.

Overall: By this stage in the course it is not clear what proficiency the pupils will have in any area of the language.

ANALYSIS: Unit 4 pages 45-60 Pupil's Book - Clothes and Body Parts

This unit follows the curriculum topic of Clothes and Body Parts.

In the first two lessons the pupils learn eight vocabulary items for body parts. This is a good allocation of time, and is work that is at the correct level for P1 learners. The Teacher's Guide does not tell the teacher to teach the singular items first (eye, ear, knee, shoulder etc.) before the plural forms, and there may well be difficulty for some teachers in pronouncing '*shoulder*'.

The next three lessons start with a *Reading*. As with so much else in this book, this is far beyond the level and ability of the pupils. The teacher is guided to '*Explain to the learners the meaning of any new words*'. Apart from translating the entire passage, I do not know what the teacher is supposed to do. The passage is: '*I have two legs. They take me where I want to go. My hands help to feed me. I write with my hands. I use my eyes to see where I am going. My mouth gives me the taste of good food. I love myself.*' Here we have infinitives, the present continuous, a reflexive pronoun, and new verbs (take, want, feed, write, give) and the new word '*taste*'. This passage would be understood with difficulty by a P3 class. It is unsuitable for a P1 class. The book expects pupils to write answers to questions on the passage.

The pupils then have to match pictures with their initial letter. One of the answers is that '*chest*' begins with '*c*'. Whilst this is strictly correct, it would be much better to say it begins with '*ch*' as that is the sound and the spelling. This is similar to the number game, mentioned above, showing that '*three*' begins with '*t*' instead of '*th*'.

The next few lessons continue with body parts and some items of clothing. However, the '*Practice Activity*' on page 48 of the Pupil's book, has a picture of a boy with lines pointing to the body parts. Line numbered 4 clearly points to his arm. However, in the Teacher's Guide the answer (on page 62) is given as '*hand*'.

The next three lessons cover six and a half pages of the Pupil's Book. There is far too much material for just three lessons, and, again, this shows a lack of planning in the allocation of the time needed for the content. The Teacher's Guide also contains some incorrect cross-referencing to the pages in the Pupil's Book which is not helpful.

On page 52 of the Pupil's Book new vocabulary is introduced, '*a pair of socks/a pair of trousers*', and yet '*shorts*' are not given as '*a pair of shorts*'. These are difficult items as the grammar structure changes depending on whether they are '*a pair of trousers*' which takes the singular, or '*trousers*' which take the plural. This needs to be explained to the teacher so that she/he can be aware of the difficulties when teaching.

Still within these three lessons, is the introduction of the present continuous tense. This follows the curriculum, and uses '*wearing*' as the verb with which to introduce this tense. This is not the best verb to use, as the meaning of the tense which is, '*an action taking place at the time of speaking*' is not seen by the pupils. It would be hard for the pupils in P1 who have seen present simple tenses so far, to understand why '*is wearing*' is used instead of '*wears*'. Any introduction of a new tense should very clearly show its use and meaning. This is now compounded as the pictures in '*What are they wearing?*' on page 53 of the Pupil's Book actually show children '*putting on*' clothes as opposed to '*wearing*' clothes. Whilst introducing the new tense the authors also introduce new vocabulary (*jacket, scarf, kanzu*). The three lessons are now complete, and it is expected that the pupils will be saturated with so many items and structures that they are unlikely to have learned much, or even any, of it.

The next seven lessons cover just three pages of the Pupil's Book. The pupils are now given instruction about the singular and the plural and the structures used for each. This is better late than never, but in fact, it might be too late for many pupils who are so confused that explanations now are beyond comprehension.

There is further confusion on page 56 of the Pupil's Book where '*a pair of my shorts*' is on the same page as '*a blue pair of shorts*'. At this beginner-level it is important to introduce one thing at one time, and to practise it thoroughly before another item is introduced. The position of the adjective is, indeed, interchangeable, but for learners only one structure should be given. The most common structure is 'a pair of my shorts/a pair of blue shorts'. In amongst this, another difficult structure is introduced – the apostrophe for possession, as in '*Amina's hand*'. This is another very difficult structure, and even native English-speaking children find this difficult. P1 learners are not going to understand this or learn it properly at this stage in their studies, especially with so many other structures and new words in these lessons.

These seven lessons continue with more work on the present continuous tense. The problem here is that the same verb is used throughout, '*wearing*'. As noted above, this is not the easiest or most obvious use of the present continuous tense, and so using other verbs in other contexts would have helped to give the meaning to the pupils. This is likely to become another exercise in rote learning, '*She is wearing.....*' without the full meaning being understood. That means that the learning is not embedded, and without being embedded the structure cannot be transferred for use with other vocabulary.

Two lessons are allocated for '*My Word Bank*'. As in other Units, this is a mini-dictionary. The definitions are far more complicated than the words themselves, and in most cases a simple drawing would reinforce understanding of the word. For example, '*Ears -what we use to hear what one has to say.*' That has sub-clause and the advanced use of 'one' to refer to a person. '*Sweater – another name for a jumper*' – and yet 'jumper' has not been taught. Other definitions also run into problems of gender stereo-typing: '*Trousers – a man's long short*'; '*Shorts - a boy's clothing*'; '*Shirt – a boy's top.*'

Overall: This unit has far too many structures introduced together and too quickly. It cannot be stressed enough how young learners need one thing at a time, and then to practise that one thing many, many times. Within that practice they need different activities, and to see the meaning, and so use the item with meaning preferably when they are doing some action to help them remember. It is likely that the pupils will learn some of the parts of the body as they will have had physical activity in touching those parts while saying the target language. So far the course seems to spend too much time with the pupils sitting at their desks looking at the Pupil's Book. This should be one of many different activities.

ANALYSIS: Unit 5 pages 61-77 Pupil's Book – Likes and Dislikes

This unit is for *Likes and Dislikes*. This follows the curriculum. This is very difficult to teach. For the present simple tense there is no activity that the pupils can be doing while they speak the words; as that would need the present continuous tense. On top of that '*like*' is difficult, but not impossible, to teach the meaning. I expect translation will be adopted, and that is not how children learn.

The first two lessons start with a discussion about food and what the pupils like and dislike; this can only be in Kinyarwanda as the unit has not been taught and, therefore, the pupils

have no English for food items nor do they know the verb 'to like'. There is then *Oral Work* or reading the poem; '*Fish is nice. Fish is yummy. I like fish in my tummy*' etc. In the Teacher's Guide the teacher is told to '*demonstrate some of the actions they should do, like putting food in the mouth or rubbing the stomach happily*'. If the pupils do the action of putting food in their mouth then that would describe 'I am eating'. The other way to look at this is to think what are the teachers going to do when they teach 'I am eating'? You cannot have the same action for two structures with quite different meanings/uses.

The next two lessons include the Reading; '*Ntampaka's mother is Mrs Mukunzi. She cooks rice and fish. Ntampaka is happy. He likes rice. Mr Mukunzi likes fish and rice. Mrs Mukunzi puts bananas on the table. Everybody likes bananas.*' This short reading puts together, all at one time, two new vocabulary items, and three different structures. The pupils have not been introduced to the verb '*to put*' nor to '*bananas*'. The structure using the preposition of place '*on the table*' has not been taught, and the verb structures '*I like*' but '*he likes*' have not been taught. This, again, is far too much for P1 pupils to understand and learn. There is no guidance in the Teacher's Guide to teach these specifically. The final sentence is very confusing as '*everybody*' would denote a plural, and indeed could be replaced by '*they*', but '*everybody*' takes the singular form '*likes*' and not the plural form '*like*'. This is an unnecessary complication at this stage. The *Reading Activity* on page 62 of the Pupil's Book uses the question form, which adopts the auxiliary verb '*do*', and so makes yet another complication for the P1 learner, all in two lessons.

The next two lessons are concerned with vocabulary of some food, and learning numbers 21 to 27.

The pictures of food contain both countable and uncountable items. This is not drawn to the attention of the teacher. Of course, the uncountable and countable structures are not suitable to be introduced to P1 pupils, but if they are to be used then their attention should be drawn to the fact that you can count bananas, for example, and that you cannot count rice. These structures are used in the next lessons as the pupils see '*This is rice*' and '*these are bananas*'. The explanation is, therefore, crucial, but pedagogically this is yet more 'overload' for P1 learners.

Counting the dots on page 63 of the Pupil's Book is difficult as they are purple dots on white paper. The dots can be seen to 'move'. This is why white paper is not recommended for use with children, and any children with dyslexia or bad eyesight will be affected by the purple dots on the white background. In any event counting 21 or 27 of any item is not a usual activity. The pupils could be encouraged to use their learning from mathematics and to count in 'twos'. This activity might be too advanced, as it will depend on how far they are with their studies in mathematics. If the pupils are fully conversant with 'place value' (tens and units) in Kinyarwanda then this exercise is alright, but if this goes ahead of their Kinyarwanda studies then it will be a detrimental activity.

The pupils then practise '*this is*' and '*these are*' with different food items. On page 64 of the Pupil's Book, there is a drawing of a whole, uncooked fish. It is written, '*Is this fish? Yes, this is fish*'. However, it is 'a fish'. It does not become 'fish' until it is cooked, or cut up into pieces ready to be cooked. Also the picture of 'fish' on page 65 of the Pupil's Book is indecipherable. There is then an added complication as one picture shows and is labelled '*loaves of bread*' and another picture shows one loaf of bread and labels it '*bread*'. Again there is no explanation about things being countable or uncountable, nor that all

uncountable things can be made countable by putting them into measured units, containers, packets etc. This is beyond the level of the P1 learner. This unit should only use countable items which could then be used in singular and plural.

'Talking about likes and dislikes' follows, and two lessons are allocated to just over three pages of the Pupil's Book. The first example is *'I like oranges. I dislike beans.'* This is not usual English. The negative form, *'I do not like'* would be used instead of *'I dislike.'* The pictures on page 65 of the Pupil's Book give no indication of the meaning of 'like' or 'dislike'. The teacher is told *'to explain what is a 'like' and a 'dislike'*. This itself is difficult language for the teacher, as it changes the verb into a noun. The teacher is not guided *how* to teach or to how to *show* the meaning of 'like' and 'dislike' and so it is more than likely that translation will be used. This is not how children learn, and if they could act 'like' and 'dislike' it would be fun and memorable. Then the question form is introduced, which uses the auxiliary 'does', and the third person singular is introduced which adds the 's' to the main verb. There is no mention of these in the Teacher's Guide as being new structures and so needing to be taught. The authors seem to assume that the pupils will just pick this up. They will not. These new structures need teaching and practising.

There is then a counting exercise, in which the pupils are expected to count 28, 29, and up to 35 different items. This will be difficult as young learners will lose their place and will not be able to count such small items. Also, they are probably sharing books and that will make any counting even more difficult.

'Let's Talk' is another activity within these two lessons. This shows a pie-chart and from it the pupils are to answer, *'How many pupils like eggs?'* The pupils will not have been introduced to pie-charts in their mathematics, and such a diagram will be too 'abstract' for children of this age. P1 learners are still in the 'concrete' stage of their learning.

The final section of these two lessons is *'Tell the colours'*.

So in just two lessons, or one hour and twenty minutes, the pupils are introduced to the verbs *'to like'* and *'to dislike'*, to all parts of that verb from *'I like'* to *'they like'*, and to the negative form and question form. Not only are they introduced to the negative form but the full form of *'do not'* and *'does not'* is not written for them, and only the contracted forms *'don't'* and *'doesn't'* are used. This is, yet again, far too much for children of this age to learn or understand.

There are two lessons on counting with some revision of colours.

Then there are three lessons, *'Language Structures'*, on the present simple tense, and the teacher is instructed to *'explain how we form the present simple tense and how to use it'*. There is no further explanation. How to form the present simple tense is something the teacher can teach, but how to **use** the present simple is very difficult indeed. The present simple tense is used by the speaker because he or she wants to express fact. It is, therefore, what the speaker sees as fact, at the time of speaking. For teaching English as a foreign language, the use or meaning is broken down into several categories, such as 'daily activities/routine actions' and 'future timetabled events'. It is a difficult tense to teach to young learners, because of the lack of activity; if there is activity then the speaker would be using the present continuous tense. It is, therefore, very important to give learners the 'time marker' so that they can use the tense correctly. Any introduction of the present simple tense should be for 'everyday' activities so that the learners can understand that use. To use verbs such as 'like' and 'love' which can have no 'time marker' but simply represent the

speaker's idea of 'fact' is a very difficult for both teacher and learner. The curriculum has too much emphasis on the present simple tense, and this is where a lot of the learning will go astray.

There are then more lessons on the plural forms, and the introduction of the negative '*No, they are not*' More counting follows, with the pupils expected to count up to 50 dots, which, with the colours contrasting on the white page, is not at all easy.

Writing is the penultimate lesson, and pupils are to rearrange words to form a correct sentence. These are difficult for P1 learners, as there are too many different structures. One jumbled sentence is, 'do food like you What?', which is particularly difficult as it is alongside, 'like fish you Do?', and so these two question forms will probably cause confusion for these young learners.

The final lesson is another '*My Word Bank*' which has complicated definitions of simple words, which could very easily be defined by a picture.

Overall: This Unit is taking the pupils near to the end of Term 2. That term has 15 weeks, but with end of term tests it will be reduced to a maximum of 13 weeks of teaching, or 91 periods of English. Each Unit has 25 lessons, and so Term 2 will be long enough for 3 Units, and part of a fourth Unit. So, in Term 2 Units, 3, 4, and 5 will covered. The pupils have now been introduced to many new structures, with not enough practice for those structures to make sense or be learned. This problem partly stems from a Topic-based curriculum, and also from the authors of this book overloading the lessons with too many new items at once. There are only a few activities which do not require the pupils to sit with the text book, and those activities would nearly all be conducted in Kinyarwanda as the pupils do not have sufficient English to be able to carry them out. For example, on page 80 of the Teacher's Guide, '*Encourage learners to say in their groups how bananas are prepared for cooking. Show the learners green and yellow bananas. Ask the learners to say how the two types are eaten.*' Much more educational and fun, would be for learners to come to the front and pretend to eat different foods, and so a pupil pretending to eat a banana would act how tasty it was. Then the other pupils could make the sentence in English, "X likes bananas". Or the pupils could pretend to eat food and the other pupils could try to guess what the food is. This would have meaning, and would be fun and memorable. The authors do not give evidence of any classroom experience with young learners learning a foreign language.

ANALYSIS: Unit 6 pages 78-90 Pupil's Book – Classroom Objects and Personal Belongings

The first lesson is *Oral Work*, and there is a picture of a pencil and rubber, and they are talking to each other. The pencil says, '*Children like me. I write everything for them.*' The rubber says, '*No, they like me. I rub every wrong thing they write.*' This, yet again, is language that the pupils do not know. They have not learned personal objects 'me' and 'them', they do not know 'everything' or 'thing', and they do not know 'rub' which in any event should be 'rub out'. When so many words are not known by the reader the text will not be understood. In the Teacher's Guide it states on page 94, '*Learners discuss how a pencil and rubber help them in class.*' I am not sure that much can be discussed even by a fluent native speaker, and the learners would have to discuss in Kinyarwanda as their English is not sufficient to discuss this.

The next three lessons cover the *Reading and Sounds and spellings*. The reading, yet again, contains structures and words that are not familiar to the pupils, '*My class is very big. We have many desks and chairs in our class. The pupils sit on chairs. We use pencils to write in*

our books. At the front, there is a blackboard. Mr. Rusanganwa is our teacher. There is a big table and chair where he sits.' Unhelpfully, in the picture there is no chair. The pupils do not know 'very big', 'on chairs' 'at the front' 'where he sits'.

The questions on that *Reading* are similarly beyond the language ability of the pupils, 'What is found in your class?' - that uses the passive form of a verb the pupils do not know. 'Where do pupils sit?' – the pupils have not been introduced to the question word 'Where' and nor have they learned the prepositions of place to be able to answer the question. The final question, 'Do you love your class?' is an odd question, and the pupils have only seen 'love' in the very complicated 'My Word Bank' of the last unit.

The Teacher's Guide does nothing more than tell the teacher that the pupils will *read the passage, and will discuss the questions before writing answers*. This is far too ambitious, and if the pupils do read the passage then that is no test that they understand what they are reading. For a pupil to do anything without meaning and without understanding the meaning means that she or he is not learning the language.

The *Sounds and spellings* section, perpetuates the idea that capital letters have the name of the letter and that small letters have the sounds. The pupils then read the sounds of the five vowels, and then read four words. The fourth word 'door' does not use the sound for 'o' that the pupils have just said when saying the five vowel sounds. This is confusing, and the words to be read after the vowel sounds, should be words that use those sounds.

The next three lessons cover page 80 of the Pupil's Book and are on *Vocabulary*. This section follows good methodology, in that the teacher introduces the words and their pronunciation before the pupils open the Pupil's Book. However, the teacher is not instructed to repeat the words often enough for the pupils to be able to hear the word enough. It is suggested that the teacher says the word, then writes it on the blackboard and then gets pupils to say the word after her/him. Young learners imitate, and so they need a thorough 'modelling' of the target word. They need to hear the word about four to six times before they themselves can attempt to say it. Three lessons is devoted to this, and yet there are only six items, and none of those is a new item. This is possibly the result of a book having seven authors, or being written in a committee. Revision is good, but to have three lessons devoted to just nouns, and not one single sentence structure is not sound language teaching.

Language Use on page 81 of the Pupil's Book introduces prepositions of place. Just two lessons are allocated to this, and other work on the plural form. Again this is a mis-match of lesson allocation. The section introduces six prepositions of place, and in the Teacher's Guide (page 100) a seventh 'near' is introduced. Not only are these prepositions introduced, but they are introduced with new vocabulary items (*piece of chalk, tree*). The golden rule of one new thing at one time is broken, and will lead to overload and confusion. Picture 3 shows a box of chalk with most pieces in the box, but two pieces are not in the box. The picture states, 'The pieces of chalk are in the box.' That is not true, as it depends on which pieces of chalk you are talking about. When teaching a foreign language, especially to children, the meaning must be crystal clear.

The teacher is given no guidance on the difficulties of 'behind' and 'in front of', as these depend on where the speaker is standing, and also items, such as a chair, have a front and a back, and that can make a difference to the preposition of place used. This is not easy, and the teacher really needs some detailed instructions and guidance.

For the *Practice Activity* on page 82 of the Pupil's Book, some of the answers given are incorrect, and incomplete. For instance, the bookshelf is not '*behind the classroom*' as that denotes that something is outside the classroom. It is 'at the back of' the classroom, but that has not been taught, and so the only answer can be that the bookshelf is 'on the wall'. The chair is 'behind the table' and yet that answer is not given.

Within the two allocated lessons there follows number work, with three new items of vocabulary, '*dustbins*' '*cupboards*' and '*sharpeners*' and each of those has potential pronunciation difficulties. So, whilst this would have been good revision of the structure 'There are.....', it is complicated and compromised by new vocabulary.

The next section, taking three lessons, is *Talking about possession* and uses the structures '*Whose..?*' and the possessive apostrophe. This has some sound methodology and the guidance to the teacher would produce a well-staged lesson.

Language Structure follows, giving further practice in using prepositions of place. However, three of the four pictures used to illustrate the prepositions are not very good. The first picture really shows the dustbin 'in front of' the wall, and not 'next' to it. The third picture shows a clock on the wall, but is labelled that the clock is '*in*' the classroom. This is too early to show this use of '*in*'. The fourth picture is incorrect as the broom is not 'behind' the door. It would have been 'behind' the door when the door was closed, but the door is now open and the broom is not 'behind' the door. This is very unhelpful to teacher and learner alike.

The next four lessons look at *Possessive form* again. This is exactly the same activity as before.

The next three lessons are devoted to more work with plural forms, *How many are there?* on page 88 of the Pupil's Book. This is good revision and practice, and the learners are given practice in writing numbers up to twenty. The *Writing* section and *My Word Bank* complete the Unit. Yet again, the words being defined could be done so with a picture, rather than the complicated written definitions which use vocabulary and structures which are unknown to the learner.

Overall: This Unit does not present quite so much overload, but with the lack of guidance in the Teacher's Guide and some errors in the Pupil's Book problems might arise, which will affect the full understanding and meaning of the new language.

ANALYSIS: Unit 7 pages 91-104 Pupil's Book – Home

The unit starts with '*Oral Work*' for two lessons, and, yet again, this is beyond the level of the pupils: '*I miss the fresh air. My home in the village. The green trees with fruits. I miss playing on grass. No noise like the city. I miss my home in the village.*'

The pupils do not know '*miss, fresh air, home, fruits, playing, grass, noise, city*' and whilst they know the word '*like*' they have only seen it as a verb and so this use (which actually should be 'as in' instead of 'like') is new to them, and will be confusing. Some of the sentences are not complete sentences. The teacher is then instructed, on page 114 of the Teacher's Guide, to ask the pupils to '*recite and act out the poem*'. I am not sure what actions could accompany this poem. The pupils will be reading and reciting this as an act of rote learning, and that has no pedagogical place in language learning.

'Reading', and *'Sounds and spellings'*, are allocated three lessons.

The reading is beyond the understanding of the pupils as it contains all the nouns/vocabulary they are going to learn in this unit. The pupils are expected to read this aloud, and yet there are new, difficult words such as *'kitchen'* and *'cupboard'*. There is also the word *'own'* as in *'..has his own bedroom'* which is difficult, new word. In the questions on this reading, is *'What did you like or dislike about the story?'* No native English speaking child would be able to answer that question, as it is not a *'story'*, and, as such, there is nothing to like or dislike. This is a series of statements. A *'story'* must have events and happenings. The *'Spelling game'* that follows consists of jumbled letters that the pupils must put in order to form a word. However, three out of five of these are new words which the pupils have not yet learned! The definitions which explain each word also contain vocabulary which the pupils do not know.

The next two lessons are for *'Vocabulary'*. There is a picture of a village and a photograph of Kigali city. The teacher is directed, on page 116 of the Teacher's Guide, to *'engage the learners in a discussion based on the pictures... the learners should describe the pictures... and talk about their homes.'* These discussions would have to take place in Kinyarwanda as the pupils have not yet learned the vocabulary to describe a village or a town.

In *'Language Use'* three lessons are allocated for the pupils to be able to say *'I live in a town/village/city'* and *'He/She lives in ...'* Etc. This is revision and use of the forms of the present simple tense, but the meaning is not clear. In other words, it should be clear why the present simple tense is being used, as opposed to any other tense, and this meaning is not clear. It is difficult to make it clear from verbs such as *'like, love, live'*.

'Describing a house and its rooms' has two lessons allocated to it. This heading is difficult as it uses *'its'* in the possessive sense. It is hoped that the learners' attention will not be drawn to this. In this section the learners learn the names of rooms in a house. There is then a floor-plan on page 95 of the Pupil's Book, and the pupils are directed to draw their own floor-plan of a house. This exercise may be difficult for the pupils as it is an *'abstract'* exercise, and some of the pupils' brains may not have yet developed to be able to work with abstract concepts.

'Things found in rooms' takes another two lessons, and new vocabulary is introduced. One of those is *'knife'*. In the next activity the plural *'knives'* is used. There is no instruction to the teacher about this. One item of vocabulary is *'kitchen things'* which is not very easy to understand. The exercise that follows is revision of the prepositions of place but it is mixed with new vocabulary if *'forks, knives, spoon, water, bucket, pot, fire'*. Whilst it could be argued that the pictures show the items, there are too many new items to make the exercise pedagogically sound. The next exercise on page 99 of the Pupil's Book has items numbered on a picture and the pupils are to write the names of those items, with words listed at the top. These are all new vocabulary apart from one item. *'plates, floor, cooking stones, stove, sauce pan'* (which should be on word, saucepan). In the Teacher's Guide there is a mistake for one of the answers: what should be *'floor'* is given as *'mat'*. This is unhelpful to the teacher who is already struggling.

In *'Language Structures'* the pupils are to use the negative forms of the present simple. All of the examples are given in the contracted form, *'don't, doesn't, isn't'* and the pupils should know the full form and be encouraged to write it.

The *'Writing'* section is to take two lessons. The teacher reads a text and the pupils draw the room which is described. This is not only difficult for learners at this stage, but there is vocabulary in the text which is new to the pupils: *'My room has a bed. It has a small table. There's a lamp on the table. There's a clock on one wall. I put my clothes in a big wardrobe. There's a mat near my bed.'* The pupils do not know *'small, clothes, big, wardrobe'* and so they will be unable to perform the task. Also as they have had no guidance in when the definite article *'the'* is used, they might not realise that there is only one table in the room.

'My Word Bank' forms the last lesson, and is, once again, incomprehensible for the level of the learners.

Overall: This unit has tried to incorporate some revision and re-use of language learned. However, this good intention has been marred by using too many new vocabulary items. The rule of *'one thing at one time'* for beginner learners really does need to be heeded if any successful language learner is to take place.

ANALYSIS: Unit 8 pages 105-115 Pupil's Book – Domestic Animals

'Oral Work' takes the first two lessons, and can, presumably only be conducted in Kinyarwanda as the pupils' English will be inadequate. The Teacher's Guide instructs that the learners will sit in groups and *'discuss the animals'* and from the Pupil's Book on page 105 the learners are to *'talk about which animals are kept at home' and 'what they eat'*. As the pupils have yet to be introduced to the new vocabulary in this unit then the only language to be used in these two lessons is Kinyarwanda.

The *Reading* and the comprehension questions on it take three lessons. The teacher uses the pictures in the Pupil's Book page 105 to teach the new vocabulary, *'rabbit, hens, cows'*. However, there is no picture for a *'cat'* *'dog'* or a *'donkey'*, and yet those words are in the *Reading*, and *'hens'* are not in the reading. The reading has other new words which the pupils have not learned, *'keep', 'rats' 'away' 'protects' 'milk' 'carry' 'heavy loads' 'very nice' 'enjoy' and 'very helpful'*. With all this new vocabulary the pupils will not be able to understand the reading. Yet again, this is meaningless exercise for the pupils, and, as such, will not help to progress their language learning, and will not provide any motivation for them to learn.

'Sounds and spellings' follow with some pronunciation and writing, and with a song, to take up one lesson. The song is *'Old MacDonald had a farm'* and the pupils will, no doubt, enjoy that song. However, within that song the hens make the noise *'quack'* which is not correct. It is ducks which *'quack'*, whereas hens *'cluck'*. The song has *'woogh'* for the sound of a dog. That word is incorrectly spelt and it should be *'woof'*.

'Vocabulary' takes two lessons, and this really should have been the first section of the Unit. It has clear pictures for each animal, and from those pictures the learners would easily learn the names for the animals. From the Teacher's Guide on page 134, it becomes clear that this

is the first time in the unit that the teacher actually teaches the meaning and pronunciation of the vocabulary to the learners. This indicates that the previous six lessons were using Kinyarwanda, rote learning, and mechanical writing, instead of any real teaching of English.

The learners learn *'eat'* and *'drink'* together with new vocabulary for the food that each animal eats or drinks; *'leaves, vegetables, hay, grass, worms.'* This is a lot for young learners to learn. The final activity of these two lessons is to make the noises of the animals. There is no guidance in the Teacher's Guide and yet the noise of a rabbit is to be made.

There are then two lessons for gap-fill activities.

'Language Use' takes two lessons and is revision of the verb *'to have'*, and introduces the shortened answer, *'Yes, we do'*. This also revises the singular and the plural, and the negative. Yet again, the full form of *'do not'* is not shown, and the learners only see *'don't'*.

'Food for animals' follows, and has pictures which show clearly the food and drink that was introduced in the *'Vocabulary'* section above. Those pictures should have been shown when the words were introduced. There is no pedagogical reason why these pictures are presented three lessons after the words were introduced. The authors seem to disregard the need for learners of P1 age to *'see'* the meaning and to have as much *'concrete'* or *'semi-concrete'* things to assist in their learning.

There are then exercises using the present simple tense with *'eat'* and *'eats'* which is good revision of the form of the present simple tense. However, as this use of the present simple tense does not show *'every day'* or *'routine'* activities, then it is doubted that the full meaning of the present simple tense will be understood. The pictures show the animals eating and drinking, and are far more suited to use with the present continuous tense. The pictures would more naturally and fluently in English be captioned as, for example, *'The donkey is eating grass'*.

The next two lessons are for *'Talking about animals we like'*. The picture of an animal links to the picture of a person. The pupils are to *'say what they like'*. There is no guidance in the Teacher's Guide as to what the pupils should say. This structure is difficult. The answer either needs the use of the definite article, such as *'Christella likes the cat'*, or it needs the use of the plural, such as, *'Christella likes cats'*. The likelihood, without any explanation, is that the pupils will say, *'Christella likes a cat'* which is not good English. One of the jumbled sentences in the next *'Practice Activity'* is, similarly, incorrect, as *'I like a cow'* is not a fluent English sentence.

The next four lessons are for *'Language Structures'*, and this is for the present simple tense. There is not enough in the Teacher's Guide on pages 143 and 144 to enable a teacher to fill four lessons, and there is a very general instruction, *'Explain to learners what present simple tense is'* (sic), and yet there is nothing that explains to the teacher what the present simple tense is. As mentioned above, the present simple tense is a difficult tense as it is used when the speaker, at the time of speaking, sees something as fact.

The final three lessons are for the *'Writing'* activity which is another gap-fill exercise, and *'My Word Bank'*, which, again, has definitions which are far too complicated for the learner.

Overall: Whilst this unit has attempted to consolidate the use of the present simple tense, there is still too much over-load for the young learners. Any revision or consolidation is marred by new language items being introduced at the same time. At this stage of learning it is so important to work on one thing at one time.

ANALYSIS: Unit 9 pages 116-130 Pupil's Book – Daily Routine

The 'Oral Work' is the song '*This is the way we wash our face, wash our face*' etc. The Teacher's Guide instructs the teacher, '*Let the learners act out some of the actions as they sing*'. This, of course, will negate all meaning. If the learners are doing the actions at the time of speaking then they should only be using the present continuous tense, and not the present simple tense. This is of fundamental importance, and this confusion of doing an action whilst using the present simple tense will severely affect the learners' understanding.

The '*Reading*' yet again uses language items that have not yet been taught; in this case the time, such as 9.30 and 8.00. In the questions on the reading there is '*What do they take for breakfast?*' To use 'take' in this meaning is difficult. The pupils already know the verb 'to have' and it would be better English to ask, '*What do they have for breakfast?*'.

In the Sounds and spelling section, the gap-fill exercise has 'g-t up' and 'dre-- up'. The use of 'dress up' is unnecessary and very misleading. In this context it will be mistaken for meaning the putting on of clothes, whereas it means something quite different; the putting on of clothes to impersonate someone or something, very often by children pretending to be adults.

'*Vocabulary*' on page 118 of the Pupil's Book is the most extraordinary section, and it could only be designed to confuse every learner. The pictures are captioned with the present continuous tense '*doing homework, brushing teeth*' and yet the Teacher's Guide on page 152 tells the teacher '*Explain to the learners that cleaning the teeth is an activity that is done every day.*' This section seems to treat the present simple tense and present continuous tense as meaning the same. This is incorrect. Also the picture in number 4 shows a boy putting on a shirt, and yet the caption is '*wearing a shirt*'. The meaning must be 'seen' and this shows an incorrect meaning.

The '*Language Use*' that follows is similarly very confusing. The heading is '*Things we do every day*' and immediately underneath that is, '*What are they doing?*'

However, the presentation of the present simple tense here with the 'time marker' '*every day*' is the first really useful teaching of the tense. It starts to give one of main uses of the tense, and is a meaning and use that the pupils can begin to understand. It is a pity that the authors did not put this part of this unit at the very beginning of their book. They have followed the curriculum in sequence, which is not necessary, and this use of the present simple for 'every day activities' is what would give the meaning of the tense to the pupils.

Only two lessons are allocated to the extremely difficult topic of '*Telling the time*'. The time telling uses '*o'clock, half past, quarter past, quarter to, twenty-five past, ten to, twenty to*' etc. This is quite ridiculous for learners at this age. They have not mastered telling the time in their mother-tongue, they have not studied fractions in mathematics, and they will certainly not understand the complication of, for instance, the English 'seven o'clock' being the Kinyarwanda '*saa moya*'. This is the greatest over-load so far in the whole book, and can only lead to utter confusion on the part of the pupils.

'Describing daily routines' uses specific times to show daily routines. However, the 'Practice Activity' that follows again uses the present continuous tense to suggest activities. There is no guidance in the Teacher's Guide, and so this activity will give the pupils the idea that present continuous tense has the same use or meaning as the present simple tense. It has to be stressed that young learners need to see and act the meaning of what they say or read. That meaning has to be as clear as possible. This unit has only muddled and confused.

The 'Language Structures' on page 126 of the Pupil's Book, again confuses the meaning. The second picture, captioned, 'Mrs Ngabo buys new clothes' is, in fact, a picture of Mrs Ngabo 'buying' new clothes. This also introduces new vocabulary, as does the 'Practice Activity' that follows, which is not helpful at this stage.

The 'Writing' on page 129 of the Pupil's Book is a 'matching' activity of putting the sentences with the pictures. This is a good activity.

'My Word Bank' is unhelpful; it has a most confusing definition of 'quarter' as 'Fifteen minutes past or to time', and defines 'Past' as 'Later than something (time)' which is not correct, as the time is not a comparative structure.

Overall: This unit could have been the unit which finally gave the pupils the meaning of the present simple tense, as daily routines are one of the uses and meanings of the tense. However, that opportunity is missed by the extraordinary use of the present continuous tense which is shown to be used as an alternative to the present simple tense. It is a completely different tense with its own uses and meanings, and so its inclusion will only confuse.

ANALYSIS: Unit 10 pages 131-142 Pupil's Book – Storytelling

This unit uses the past simple tense, and yet the Teacher's Guide does not mention this.

The 'Oral Work' has mistakes of punctuation, and has very little meaning: 'How good it is. To tell a story. Your story, my story. Our story it is. A story we love.' (sic).

The 'Reading' follows on page 131 of the Pupil's Book, and is titled in the present simple tense and yet is told in the past simple tense. All the verbs, apart from two, used in the Reading are irregular in their past forms and the majority of them are new vocabulary. One verb is also used in the negative form of the past simple tense. There is little chance that the pupils will understand this Reading. A first use of the past simple tense should use verbs that have a regular form in the past simple tense so that pupils can see the pattern of how the tense is formed. To use new verbs is ignoring the golden rule of one thing at one time.

The 'Vocabulary' section on page 133 of the Pupil's Book is quite difficult as it is matching the beginning of a word to its ending, and on top of that the layout and colours are so distracting that it makes the exercise nearly impossible. Within this section there is another story or reading, again using the past simple tense with irregular verbs.

'Language Use' on page 136 of the Pupil's Book shows four pictures. The pupils are to talk about them and make sentences. The Teacher's Guide provides sample answers and they are mixed using present simple and present continuous, 'The children are playing football, The family eats together everyday'. This means that the pictures are not clear enough. If you can use more than one tense, then the meaning is not clear. Each tense has its own meanings and uses.

'Language Structures' on page 138 of the Pupils' Book has a heading '(i) Present simple tense', but what follows is a *Practice Activity* using the past simple tense. This is explained in the Teacher's Guide, as that the first part is to be oral work using the present simple tense, and then the pupils use their books for the *Practice Activity* in which they see the past simple tense. However, the Pupil's Book should not be misleading, and the way it is laid out is misleading.

The next section is '(ii) Connectors of time', and the teacher reads a story which is not printed in the Pupil's Book. That story uses new vocabulary and new structures, and so will be extremely difficult for the pupils to understand; '*Once upon a time, there lived a girl called Nirere she lived in Kinunu. She did not have a father. She did not have a mother. She went to school. After school, she became a lawyer. Finally she helped many people in Kinunu.*' (sic). The use of connectors is not entirely correct. The use of 'after school' really has the meaning of 'at the end of the school day'. The meaning meant here would be conveyed by saying 'after finishing school'. The use of 'finally' is not correct either. Here the correct word would be 'eventually'. This story does not show clearly the use of connectors, and so the pupils are left gaining no real language skills. The '*Practice Activity*' on page 139 of the Pupil's Book is clearer, and gives a better understanding of the use of connectors. If the pupils are to learn the use of connectors, then they would need many more examples and much more practice than is given.

There is another story, again in the past tense, but with new vocabulary, new structures and the past continuous tense. This is far too much for pupils of this age and at this stage. The story has accompanying pictures, '*Neza was sent to the shop. Her mother gave her money and a basket. Then, she met her friends. They began She threw the money and basket under a tree. Next, her mother looked for her. Neza was playing. Mother took the basket and It was getting dark. The andwere missing. They went home. They felt bad. Mother t-ld Neza to be a good girl. Neza said sorry.*' (sic) The connectors used in the story are forced and are not fluent English. To 'begin + verb+ing' is a new and complicated structure. The past continuous, '*was playing, was getting dark, were missing*' is a brand new tense. There is nothing in the Teacher's Guide about the introduction of this new tense.

'*Writing*' comprises a gap-fill exercise for the days of the week, and then an exercise to put sentences in the correct order. This is very difficult, and the sentences set out could, in fact, be in various orders, and still make perfect sense. This exercise would be challenging for native English speakers of this age.

The final activity in the unit, and in the book, is '*My Word Bank*' which, yet again, has definitions that are far beyond the language ability of the pupils.

Overall: This unit is full of very difficult material, and the teacher is not guided in it. The pupils will not learn the past simple tense from this unit, and will be over-loaded, confused and lost.

CONCLUSION

The book follows the curriculum. My analysis of the new competence based curriculum for English P1 to P4 is set out at the end of my paper, 'Teaching and Learning English in Primary Schools in Rwanda'.

Spotlight's 'strapline' or motto is 'Spreading Light'; their English for Rwanda Primary Schools Book 1 does not live up to that message.

Each unit begins with Oral Work and Reading that is beyond the level of the learners. The method adopted of introducing the new language and structures before they are properly taught, drilled and practised is very misguided for young, child learners.

Young P1 learners are still in the 'concrete' stage of their cognitive development; they learn by seeing, touching and doing. It is good pedagogical practice in foreign language teaching and learning for the learners to say everything with full meaning attached to it, and for the learners not to say anything the meaning of which they do not know.

Each unit develops to teach the language items or structures, and to provide practice for the learners. However, rather than follow the rule of one thing at one time, there are too many new items of language or new structures introduced at every stage. This is overload for the young learners, and severely distracts from any items being mastered.

Young learners thrive on success. If they can master basic sentence patterns, then they can speak English with meaning. They will enjoy this achievement, and that success will motivate each learner to learn more in order to be successful again. Success can only come if the learner really understands the meaning, and that meaning has to be seen, with real objects and actions. The Spotlight book does not seem to recognise this part of a child's learning. However, the curriculum's emphasis on the present simple tense is not helpful. Good authors would have put Unit 9 of the curriculum, Daily Routines, ahead of Unit 5, as 'daily routines' or 'habits' give the pupils a real meaning and use of the present simple tense. Other uses of the present simple tense denote 'fact' as the speaker perceives it at the time of speaking and are, therefore, far more difficult for a young learner to understand.

There are far too many mentions in the Teacher's Guide of 'discuss', and the only language in which to discuss is Kinyarwanda, as, by very definition, the young learners' English is extremely limited. To take time discussing in Kinyarwanda in an English lesson, does not help the pupils to learn the basic sentence patterns and structures which they should master in their first year of learning English. After all, these pupils have just three years in which to learn the structures of the language before all their lessons will be in English in P4.

The Teacher's Guide is lacking full support for the teachers, and, particularly there is no help for the teachers in the use or meaning of tenses, and their formation. In addition, the language used in the Teacher's Guide is advanced, contains mistakes, and is, overall, not used with the level of the majority of Lower Primary English teachers in mind.

By the end of the first year of learning English I am concerned, based not only on my years of experience in East Africa but also on my direct experience in government primary schools in Rwanda, that the learners will not learn the basic structures of the English language which they need at this initial stage. The overload of far too much vocabulary and too many

structures does not enable any language to be thoroughly practised and learned. Without that, the pupils will not benefit from feeling a sense of success, and without success they will not be motivated to learn further. On the contrary, I expect that the pupils will be confused, with some bad language habits formed, and with a strong feeling that English is a difficult and boring subject.

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