A short critique of the Crescent English Course

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Introduction.

This paper is a short critique of the "Crescent English Course", Pupils Book 2. It falls into two parts. The first is information about the course; its aims, organization and some of its general characteristics. The second part deals with some positive and negative aspects of the book, with examples.

Part 1

The "Crescent English Course", Pupil's Book 2, by Terry O'Neil and Peter Snow is used in elementary schools in Qatar. It was first published in 1978, revised in 1979, reprinted in 1980 and the last revised edition was in 1981.

1.1 Aims

The course is an attempt to present four aspects of language use which characterize in particular the learning of languages when this is done successfully in a 'natural' situation. These four aspects are communication, individualization, socialization and enjoyment. (See App.1).

1.2 Organization of the book

The book is divided into units, which are divided into steps and these are

divided into stages. (This division is only clear in the Teacher's book, but not in the Pupil's) At the beginning of each step there are three headings: aim, language and materials. (see App. 2).

1.3 Some general characteristics (see App. 3).

The "Crescent English Course" has an audio–lingual approach: listen, speak, read and write. Under the "Listening and Speaking Skills", there are four main points.
1. Introducing new vocabulary
2. Listening comprehension (illustrated below)
3. Selective comprehension
4. Oral performance.

The reading skills in this course book include:
1. Single words and short utterances
2. Comic strips
3. Narrative (which will be referred to later)
4. Following instruction and understanding sings
5. Supplementary reading.

There is an attempt to improve writing skills and nine stages have been suggested for this in the Teacher's book.

Part 2.

This part deals with a critique of both reading comprehension, mainly 'Narrative' and of listening comprehension.

2.1 Reading 'Narrative'

Unit (6), step 19 (see App. 4).

The specific aims of this step are "to practise writing and reading" and "to complete the project". These two aims are added to the aim of the reading narrative in general which is mentioned under "Narrative" in the Teacher's book. This aim is described as follows: "Reading stories gives practice in following the logical sequence of events"

2.1.1 The passage and its discourse features (see App. 5)

We will first start by identifying what kind of reading passage it is.

According to Widdowson (1978:89–91), this will be termed "Simple Account/Narrative". It contains a general topic of discourse which may be more acceptable to the learners than very specific topic. The topic here which is a trip has nothing to do with the title "Bill's diary". The setting is established by the use of pictures and words, e.g. "today, lovely day, at 10.30, at about 9 o'clock" and so on. The participants are shown in pictures, yet they are not identified in any way, i.e., the reader does not know which is "Bill", "Sam" or "Peter".

The text is from "Bill's diary"; students should be told this fact, since here we have different relationships. At this point, to make the pupils follow the short narrative logically, we can provide the learners with a simple scheme[1] representing these different relationships:

	I	II	III
	1st person	2nd person	3rd person
	Describer	who receives the description	who/what is described
In this text	"Bill"	"the reader"	"The trip"

The learners have to understand the different relationships, so that when they come across the reference pronoun "I" in the second line they can interpret it as Bill, which is given information from the title. "Sam" and "Peter" being given are pronominalized as "they" in the second paragraph and as "we" including "Bill".

Although the reader does not know the relationship between "Sam", "Peter" and "Bill", they will be classified as Bill's friends. Such classification is due to the learner's knowledge of the world, i.e., people go out with friends, not with strangers.

The use of difiniteness here as in "the hills" refer to a particular thing in mined of the addresser who is Bill. The addresser assumes that the

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1. This scheme is based on Widdowson (1975:93), Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature. Longman.

addressee can identify the particular referent the addresser has in mind, so he uses the definite article. Chafe (1976:39) suggests that we refer to such kind of definiteness as "identifiable".

From the local interpretation, the reader will relate "my house" to Bill. The reader has already created a mental model in his mind. It is not that he has to refer back to "I" and then to "Bill". The conscious capacity is very limited; as new ideas come in old ones leave. Halliday and Hassan's (1979:Chpter 2) view of the addressee referring back in a hierarchical way to previous information in the text till s/he reaches the first mention of the reference; is certainly a hard task, especially if the addressee is a listener not a reader (who has the advantage of looking in the text).

The use of an anaphoric "it" in line (18) seems to emphasize the writer's interest to help the pupils to understand not just separate sentences but the meaning within and between sentences or phrases. For example, "It was really great", the pronoun does not simply refer to the "river", but to the "swimming in the river". The writer uses "it" as an extraphoric reference in line (22) . The empty "it" should be explained for the pupils.

Other cohesive links such as conjunctions are also used. For example, addititive conjunction as "and, and then" and adversative conjunction as "but". There is also lexical cohesion, namly reiteration as: "today, day, walk, we, bus, small twon, some, all, took, and got".

The writer uses logical coherence, starting from general e.g. "It was a lovely day", and "we had a terrific time" to specific details, e.g. "They came to my house about 9 o'clock", "we saw a lot of birds" and so on, The readers are told first things first as "They came to my house", "then we got a bus to a small town" and so on.

The writer assumes that the readers still have the mental model of a lovely, sunny day, till they are told differently. So he draws the reader's attention to a change in the weather by using the adverbial expression "then suddenly", to emphasize a change which is not expected.

This text has a lot of implicit information which although not explicitly expressed can be interpreted through the coherence elements. For example, "We didn't have our coats with us and we got wet", will be interpreted as

"having no coats and walking while it is raining causes them to be wet". The reader draw inferences from their knowledge of the world, so they will interpret "... I think I've got a cold" as "... he got a cold because he didn't have a coat and he was wet". Although the information of causality is not expressed explicitly with cohesive ties as "because of", it is understood.

In line 27, there is the deictic item "now", which is related here to the first person, 'Bill'. The readers should be encouraged to distinguish three periods of time:

1. "now" referring to the time of the writing of this specific event in the diary. The learners' attention could be drawn to the tense difference. Only the last paragraph is written in the present tense. (It would be helpful in the last paragraph for the pupils to have a picture of Bill in his bed, writing his diary rather than the picture of the three participants walking in the rain).

2. The second period of time is expressed by the past tense. It is when the three boys made their trip.

3. The third period is related to the readers: the time of reading the text.

2.1.2 Procedure (see App. 4).

A. Pre-reading task

Any writer presupposes in his readers a certain area of background knowledge and counts on the use of this knowledge in the comprehension of the text. It is already known, of course, that the greater the reader's background knowledge, the more he will be able to use strategies of prediction and guessing and the more easily he will understand the text. It follows that the reader who lacks the appropreiate knowledge will have difficulty with the text (Swaffer, 1988). Many of the pupils in Qatar do not keep diaries, so the teacher would have to explain to them what keeping a diary entails. One suggestion is to ask the pupils to keep a diary for a week before giving them this text.

In the teacher's book, the teachers are told to ask the learners to do the following activity: "to make a project of their own trip". Such a strategy

suggest is somewhat doubtful. The activity the learners do before being exposed to the text may help them a bit to understand the concept "diary". On the other hand if they do the text first, they would possibly gain the vocabulary which would help them with the workshop exercises. (Notice that, strangely, the title of the project "our trip" does not appear in the reading passage). May this not mislead the reader? Of course the expression "walking in the hills" which is mentioned in the text could be interpreted as going on a trip. However, we have to bear in mind that they are children of 11−12 years old, therefore they should be given more explicit guide lines.

The learners are not given a purpose for reading the task. From the project of the lesson we could stimulate a motivation, e.g. "we are going to read about a trip in order to complete the project of our trip", or something similar. It is a suggestion which the pupils may reject saying "But we do not want to read about such a thing". Still such a purpose is better than nothing at all.

B. Lexis

Although understanding vocabulary items is of prime importance in reading, learners should not be given the meaning of the words before reading the text (as is the practice in this course). Rivers (1968:259−209) feels that students should be encouraged to make intelligent guesses about word meanings and therfore readers should not contain glossaries. New vocabulary should not co−occur with difficult structure and certain amount of vagueness in guessing the meaning of words must be accepted. Learners will understand the difficult words better if they try to predict or to guess their meanings. Giving them the meaning probably results in the learners forgetting it very easily, as they have not made any effort in learning it. If they cannot guess the meaning from the text, teachers can illustrate the meaning by simple examples. This could be left to the teachers and not as this course does by telling them exactly how to illustrate the meaning. The learners could be given the equivalent words in Arabic, but only after failing to predict the meaning from the text or from simpler examples. In this way the use of the text will be an attempt to teach reading strategies not just to contextualize vocabulary and structure.

C. Comprehension Questions

The pupils are asked to find answers for certain questions, while reading the text for the first time. This means drawing their attentions to specific information and ignoring others. Such a technique is useful only when we are looking for certain information. However, usually when we read we do not have specific questions to answer. Here it is more or less scanning for certain information which is one kind of reading skill. Scanning does not necessarily mean interpreting the meaning of the passage.

At this level, the learner, I think, should be asked to read the passage as a total entity. S/HE will not understand all the words nor all the information in the text, but with the help of the pictures, the learner will be able to understand what the passage is "dealing with".

Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 are direct reference questions. On the other hand, question 1, "Who went to the trip?" is an inference question, which requires the reader to understand the relationship between (I): the narrator and the writer of the diary; "Bill". The pupils cannot answer this question just by referring to the second sentence, e.g. "I went walking with Sam and Peter".

Question 7, "Why did they get wet?", cannot be answered by referring to one or two sentences. The learner cannot rely only on cohesive links to give a good answer. The reply, for example, "We did not have our coats with us and we got wet" does not make any sense. Meaning here does not exist ready made, but has to be worked out. The readers are given clues and they have to interpret the meaning from these clues. The writer here relies on common sense and knowledge of the world. The reply from this question should refer to the rain, e.g. "They were walking without coats in the rain" or "It was raining".

The questions are related to the sequence of paragraphs in the text, i.e. the first question could be answered from the first two lines and the second question is answered by referring to the third line and so on. This may be justified by the course's aim of reading narrative in general which is to give "practice in following the logical sequence of events". The questions are in the same logical sequence as the events in the text. One possible way of dealing with testing the learners' ability to understand the text is by asking them to match the pictures with their related paragraphs.

2.2 Listening Comprehension

Unit (5), Step (4). (see App. 6).
(We will deal mainly with the third conversation on page 5)

2.2.1 The text and its discourse features (see App. 7)

This dialogue is an example of an idealized, primarily interactional speech. It is a short turns conversation. There is a lot of agreement between the two participants, e.g. "It's lovely", "It's terrific", "But you can't ride...", "No, I cant't" "and you haven't.." "No I haven't". Both participants are co-operative which is a characteristic of "Keeping the conversation going". The function of the language here is phatic. Although the material has tendency towards polite, formal code, the text contains expressions which are commoly used in spoken English, e.g. "Hi", "Hello", the use of ellipsis as "No, I have't", "No, I can't" and so on.

The use of pictures helps in establishing the setting of this piece of discourse. It also conveys some paralinguistic features, e.g. raising the hand for greeting, smiling and turning the head when hearing his name being called.

There is a lot of cohesive grammatical relations in this text. For example, conjunction as "but", and, "so"; reference as the anaphora "it" in "It's lovely", "It's terrific" and verbal ellipsis as in "No, I can't" and "No, I haven't" and so on.

The speaker's use of "that motorbike", includes the status of definiteness in what it conveys and it also includes an indication of why the speaker expects the hearer to be able to identify the referent: its closeness to the speaker and hearer. It is an example of heuriotic strategy through which the hearer expects the "motorbike" they are looking at, i.e. the nearest motorbike.

In this text there is a deictic expression: "here". This refers to the place where this situation occurs and not to reader's place. The pupils' attention should be drawn to the difference of the two situations which have two different settings. The readers' place and time and the participants' place and time.

2.2.2 The authenticity of the text

Porter and Roberts (1981) listed thirteen linguistic features which "give away" the non-authentic materials used in ELT courses. These features are intonation, received pronunciation, enuciation, structural repetition, complete sentences, distinct turn-taking, pace, quantity, attention signals, formality, limited vocabulary, too much information and mutilation. Brown (1980-83) mentioned the use of proper names as another feature to be added to the previous ones.

There is an attempt to overcome the previous mentioned features. However, there are still some features in the text which make it "unreal".

a. The use of proper names as when Nabil says "Hallo, Fuad". The first mention of the proper name in this text seems suitable when Fuad says "Hi, Nabil". The addresser calls the addressee's name in order to draw his attention.
b. There is no interruption, the listener waits for the speaker to finish speaking before he begins.
c. In this text both speakers say an approximately equal amount.
d. At the beginning of the dialogue we can hear the noise of a passing car, but this is the only instance of background interference.

2.2.3 Procedure

Some people would claim that it is not pure listening comprehension, because the pupils follow the dialogue in their books with the pictures helping them to set up the scene. However, such a text, with the use of visual aids is a good technique especially for beginners.

The title which is expressed as a question can be a motivation for the pupils. People listen with a purpose, otherwise they will just hear without paying any attention to the message. So the pupils are asked to answer the question which is the title of the text. Most of them will not be able to answer but the more they become exposed to the data, the more their listening ability will improve.

The Crescent Course is an attempt at an integrated approach. The dialogues introduce different roles for the pupils. Teachers are asked to let

pairs of pupils read (see App. 6). Furthermore, I think the materials could be used for oral performance. Teachers can get their pupils to act out the dialogue, using paralinguistic vocal features, i.e. intonations, pauses, pitch span and so on. (cf. Brown, G. 1977), as well as other paralinguistic features, e.g. gestures and facial expressions. Such features provides important information about the speaker's apparent illocutionary intention which is particularly important in the interpretation of primarily interactional speech.

2.2.4 The Questions

Five questions are suggested for the teachers. The last question : "How much does the motor-bike cost?", which Fuad seems to answer in his utterance "And you haven't got 500", gives us an idea about the writer's presupposition of what his addressee does or ought to do. Although the information is not given explicitly through words, i.e. "The motor-bike costs 500", it is shown in the picture and implicitly understood.

The instructions in the teacher's book emphasize the acceptance of short answers for the suggested questions. However, the answers to the questions are listed in the teacher's book as if teachers in that sense have to accept only "correct answers" and not "reasonable answers", For example, the second question in the form "What was Nabil looking at?" has only one answer. If a pupil answers with "He is looking in the window", such an answer will be corrected as wrong. The difference is in the phrasal verb "look at" and the intransative verb "look". A suggested form of the previous question would be "What was Nabil doing?", to which both answers will be acceptable, e.g. "He was looking in the window" or "He was looking at the motor-bike".

The aim of this step is "to give further practice on continuous time". It is not clear, however, how they do it. Is it just by exposing the learner to the data and then asking them two or more questions containing the continuous form? Such a method, presenting the pupils with the text and then requiring them to answer questions about it, appears to be essentially a "testing" situation not a "teaching" one.

The teacher needs to introduce the setting, the characters and what the passage deals with i.e. "the topic". This could be doen by playing the tape and asking: How many characters are involved?, What are they talking about? etc.

3. Conclusion

It seems that a lot of the materials in this textbook are useful for the pupils and are appropriate to the course's aims. The approach, however, is purely communicative. Learners need rules in their 'input' especially because they are learning the language in a foreign language context. The effect of explicit rules and instruction on the rate of second language acquisition is provided by Long's(1983) review of the studies which have addressed what effect instructions has. Long(op. cit.: 374) concludes "there is a considerable evidence to indicate that SL instruction does make a difference". Ellis (1984:20) asserts that "although instruction has a positive effect on rate, it has no effect on route". The approach and the materials could be improved using the suggestions that have been mentioned.

NOTE:

The following materials are from:
Teacher's Book 1, (1977).   Pupil's Workbook 1, (1977).   Pupil's Book 2, (1981).   The (1977) edition of both Teacher's Book and Pupil's Book have been split into two books in the (1981) publication. You will notice that I have been able to use the (1981) edition for only Pupil's Book2. Please note that the following changes are therefore required in the teacher's notes I have appended.   a) Page 147, step 19, «Language», instead of «fantastic» and «super» now read «lovely» and «terrific».   p) Page 147, step 19, «Materials»: instead of «Pupil's Book pages 64 and 65 , now read» ...pages 39 and 40».   c) Page 117, step 4, «Language»; instead of «Adnan» and «Tariq», now read «Fuad» and «Nabil».   d) Page 117, step 4, «Materials»: instead of «Pupil's Book pages 43 and 44» now read «..... pages 3 and 5».

Introduction

I BACKGROUND

The CRESCENT ENGLISH COURSE is based on the current appreciation of the communicative nature of language and on an understanding of the implications this has for teaching and learning.[1].

Language is first and foremost a means of communication. When a child speaks the child is using language to do things: to greet a friend, to invite someone to give instructions, to offer an apology or to perform one of the hundreds of functions for which we use language. This course seeks to provide opportunities through activities for pupils in the classroom to communicate with one another and with their teacher in a meaningful and natural way. The typical classroom with its fixed rows of desks, with the teacher traditionally positioned at the front of the class confronting rows of children, does not provide for communication easily to take place. These materials seek to encourage alternatives to this arrangement. They also incorporate a syllabus which reflects the communicative function of language, something which is largely ignored by most current language syllabuses based as they are on the grammar of the language.

The next most important thing about the use and learning of a language is that it is an individual process. Almost all the language a child hears and speaks is of importance to him as an individual. The typical classroom situation described above leads the individual pupil to be treated not as an individual but as just one member of a group. It is difficult if not impossible for a pupil to ask a question or put forward an individual opinion. When a pupil does speak it is usually in answer to a question to which the questioner

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1. This section is based on Dr Neil Bratton: 'Foreign Language teaching – Why do we Fail' English Language Teaching for the Arab World: London Workshops: Summer, 1976. ELTA/OUP 1976.

(the teacher) already knows the answer. In this way neither the communicative function of language nor the individual requirements of the learner are recognized or fulfilled. These materials, by their organization and content, try to overcome these drewbacks.

The third important aspect of language is that it is used, and should therefore be learnt, in a social context. We use language to establish and maintain personal relationships with other people. In order to do this we have to learn which kind of language is appropriate with which people in which situation. In learning our first language we do this by trial and error and have plenty of opportunity to discover which kind of language helps us succeed in a social context.The traditional classroom, however, provides very little occasion. The materials on the other hand can be, and have been, designed to provide socialization through group work and to provide situations in which the learner's imagination can find a variety of topics and settings and in which he or she can play different roles.

The fourth aspect of language use is that in its natural form it is something which we enjoy. It is the medium of games and of making friends and learning how to use it should be fun. The materials therefore, try to make this enjoyment possible by being attractive and amusing and by creating an atmosphere of relaxation as opposed to the stress which characterizes so much classroom work.

To summarize, then, there are four aspects of language use which characterize in particular the learning of languages when this is done successfully in a 'natural' situation. These four aspects are communication, individualization, socialization and enjoyment. The materials embody the principles and the teachers notes which follow are designed to enable you, the teacher, to put the principles into practice.

I TEACHER'S BOOK .

1 Organization

This is divided into Units.
Units are divided into Steps.
Steps are divided into Stages
Tere are seven Units in all, each of which is intended to provide material for 3 teaching weeks. At the beginning of each Step there are up to 3 headings:
Aim
Language
Materials

(a) Aim

This gives the main part of the lesson. For example: to teach greetings and simple introductions (Introductory Period Step 1)

(b) Language

Here are listed the new words introduced in the Step

(c) Materials

Here are listed the detials of books, cassettes, wallsheets and so on that are required for the Step. Also listed are details of any other materials such as paper, string, coloured pens or specially—made items, such as the clock in Unit 2.

Teaching language skills

Traditionally one has thought of language teaching in terms of the four language skills: listening, reading and writing. While the following paragraphs take the skills one by one, it should be realized that these four skills are not separate. They must therefore be taught together in an integrated way. You should try to lay emphasis on language activities that concetrate on a mixture of the skills. The following notes take some aspects of the skills in turn.

I LISTENING AND SPEAKING

1 Introducing new vocabulary

(a) Use the following well-known methods to explain the meaning of new words and short utterances:

   acting and mime

pictures, objects and blackboard drawings

translation

(b) When using language drills you should move from an artificial to a more natural use of language. The following examples make this clear:

Type I: Repetitive practice

keep the artificial nature of this type of drill to a minimum by linking it to an activity. For example:

   What's the time?

   It's (four) o'clock.

Pupils use their own clocks made in the classroom. (See Unit 2 Step 4.) In this way the pupil's attention is focussed on the meaning of the language.

Type II: Drills and games

Drills can be linked to various forms of guessing games, for example in Unit 2 Step 56. Here the pupils are mainly concerned with winning the game — and to do this — they need to use the language they have just learnt. The focus of attention is the game and the use of the language has become more natural.

Type III: Communication drills

Language usually involves making a choice among different options, so drills must allow pupils a choice of response. Special communications drills have been prepared using diagrams to practise this choosing of responses, as, for example, on Pupil's Book page 32. In this activity' the focus of attention is on the decision as to which response to make, so that attention to the language itself is secondary. The diagrams are drills, as they can be followed through several times with different choices made and different dialogues built up.

(c) In using the language they have learnt, pupils again progress from the less meaningful to the more meaningful, from the controlled to the uncontrolled. This is done through developing the drill material, through role–playing exercises, and through different activities.

  (i) Drill material – Type I. The language is produced automatically. The pupils concentrate on the game they are playing, for example:
     What's the time, Mr Wolf? (Unit 2 Step 5(e))

  (ii) Pupils choose parts of drill type III and use them to make their own dialogues, as in Pupil's Workbook page 26. Role–playing exercises. Pupils act out the roles of characters from their books, using the language they have learnt. The language is controlled, but they have a choice of which utterances to use and therefore of which actions to perform.
     For example:
        What's the matter?/ What's wrong?
        You've cut your finger/ hurt your ear/ etc.
        (Unit 3, Step 5, extension materials).

  (iii) More developed role play. Pupils take the parts of different characters, and, using the language they have built up, they develop the characters beyond what appears in the pupil's Book. For example:
        Pupil's Book page 46 'The Hunt'
        The story contains only three utterances:
        Look out, Karn.
        Thanks, Min.
        Have some berries.

Using the context of the story, and drawing on their imagination, pupils should be able to make up dialogues of this type:

> Karn. Let's go hunting.
> OK.
> Have you got your spear?
> No' I can't find it
> It's over there. Under the tree.
> I've got it.
> Come on then. Let's go.

and so on. (See Unit 5 Step 11, extension⋅materials).

(iv) Activities designed to produce language use that is totally functional and therefore meaningful. For example, in making the fishing game, Pupil's Workbook page 37, this language might be expected:

> Can I have the string?
> Give me the scissors, please.
> I want two paper clips, please.
> I can't do this.
> What are you doing?
> I'm cutting out the fish.

and so on. The focus of attention is on the activity. To the pupils, the purpose of the exercise is to make the fishing game. They are not aware that it has been designed to get them to use language in a meaningful way.

2 Listening comprehension

General comprehension of recorded material. Use well–known methods such as:

(a) Questions and answer round class to check their understanding.

(b) Ask questions about a recorded passage to which the pupils can be expected to know the answers. These should be simple questions about facts in the passage.

(c) Ask questions that test whether pupils can understand the meaning of the question, and give the answer, by working from the context. With this type of question, work from the known to the unknown, from the more simple to the more difficult. For an example of this type of questioning, see Unit 1 Step 17, Extension material.

(d) Ask questions that test whether pupils can give in a few words the general meaning of a passage which contains a large amount of familiar language material. (See Unit 5 Step 4, the questions related to Pupil's Book pages 43 and 44)

3 Selective comprehension

This technique is designed to train pupils to select a limited amount of information from a passage of english. You should ask two or three questions immediately before playing the passage and then immediately after playing it. You should not try to teach the whole passage. The pupils will not understand most of what they hear – this has been done to hide the answers to the questions, and so to encourage the pupils to listen very carefully for familiar language (see Unit 2 Step 6).

4 Oral performance

This takes the form of rhymes and songs learnt and then recited or performed by the pupils.

(a) When saying these rhymes and songs the pupils will be practising English rhythm in natural way.

(b) The pupils will learning songs and rhymes which are an important part of the English cultural background, and which are known by most native English–speaking children.

(c) Pupils will enjoy performing the songs and rhymes, getting satisfaction both from the fact that they can perform them and also from recognizing in some songs language they have already learnt, as in the song 'You can't catch me'. (Unit 3 Step 11).

(d) Finally pupils should be encouraged to continue classroom activities outside the classroom – 'What's the time, Mr Wolf (game) and 'You can't catch me' (song and game) are well suited for the playground.

II READING

Pupils will proceed as follows:
Recognition of single words/ short utterances
– comic strips and narrative

– following instructions/ understanding signs

– explanatory passages (later in the course)

The following set out these stages in more detail

1 Single words and short utterances

(See above paragraphs on Flashcards.)

2 Comic strips

Seeing words and pictures together makes it easier for pupils to remember and use the language. Speech bubbles in the comic strips show direct speech. Pupils read exactly what characters say and they can then use this as a basis for role play. Later in the book captions are used as well as speech bubbles. In this way direct speech is linked to narrative.

3 Narrative

Reading stories gives practice in following the logical sequence of events. Direct speech is included in the stories and again provides a basis for extended role play.

4 Following instructions/ understanding signs

The importance of this lies in the practical task and the direct evidence of comprehension. If the task is performed then the instructions have been understood. Group work is useful in this respect.

5 Supplementary reading

This provides an apportunity for pupils to read English books other than their Pupil's Book or Pupil's Workbook. The aim of supplementary reading is to give the pupils a taste for reading and to do that the pupils must enjoy themselves.

(a) This part of the course should be very much in the hands of the pupils themselves. Two pupils should be chosen to run the class library – to check books out and in . At this early stage, it would probably be better to let three or four pupils have one book between them. In this way, they can help each other. However, if a particular pupil wants a book to himself, let him have it.

(b) The main aim is to allow pupils to enjoy the books. If they wish to discuss the story in Arabic, let them do so.

(c) Pupils have to learn to choose books that suit them. If a pupil choose a book and wants to return it a few minutes later, because he does not like it, let him do so. Let him choose another book. Do not force him to read a book he does not want to read.

(d) Let the pupils know that you are there to help them if they need help. But do not move round the class asking questions about what they are reading. Let them work by themselves, and only offer help if they ask for it.

(e) Set an example. While the pupils are reading their books, you read whatever you want to read – in English.

(f) Encourage pupils to take books home with them.

III Writing

In the early stages pupils must learn to form letters by making correct pen movements. For example, they must learn to write the letter 'o' by making an anticlockwise pen movement. From this, pupil's must be encouraged to form the habit of moving their pens from left to right and not from right to left, as in Arabic. To this end practice material is provided in the Pupils Handwriting Books 1A, 1B, 1C. This materials should be done in class under the teacher's close observation, not as homework. The Pupil's Workbook also contains material. Pupils will progress from controlled pen movemwnts in making patterns and copying letters and words to writing closely guided compositions. Copying tests whether they can recognize letters and reproduce them. In guided composition pupils will construct sentences from given components' and then arrang the sentences in sequence. The stages are:

(a) Copying the lines and shapes which go to make up letters. (see Pupil's Handwriting Books.)

(b) Doing exercises and playing games which encourage pupils to develop the habit of moving their pens from left to right.

(c) Copying letters to make words – the pupils see pictures and dotted outlines of words. (See Pupil's Handwriting Books and Pupil's Workbook page 1.)

(d) As (c) but without dotted oulines.

(e) Copying words to make sentences – the pupils see pictures. (See Pupil's Workbook page 3.)

(f) Guided composition. Pupils construct sentensces. They look at pictures and are told how many letters there are in each word.

(g) Constructing short dialogues from scattered components. (See Pupil's Workbook page 24.)

(h) Constructing longer dialogues. Here there is only one correct order of sentences. Pupils are told how many words there are in each sentence. (See Pupil's Workbook page 38.)

(i) Simple narrative. There is some guidance for pupils' but they can make up their own sentences. (See Pupil's Workbook pages 33 and 34.)

STEP 19

Aim 1 to practise writing and reading

       2 to complete the project

Language a bus, a cold, a diary, a party, people, a town, fantastic, wet, started, really (adj.), Suddenly, a long way

Materials Pupil's Book pages 64 and 65; Pupil's workbook p 50; crayons

(a) Ask the pupils to complete Pupli's Workbook p 50. They will need crayons to complete the map.

(b) Explain the words 'suddenly', 'a cold' in preparation for the reading passage (Pupil's Book pages 64 and 65).

suddenly:

Use the story of Karn and Min to explain this. Say 'You remember, one day, Karn was in the forest when suddenly he saw a tiger.' Mime surprise. 'Min saw the tiger and suddenly the tiger jumped.' Mime surprise. Write the word on the blackboard. Give other examples. Say 'Sad Sam was at home when suddenly his friends came.'

a cold:

explain by miming sneezing and wiping your nose and drawing a thermometer on the blackboard showing 40°C.

(c) Ask pupils to open the Pupil's Book at page 64 and to fing the answer to these questions:

1. Who went on the trip?
2. Where did they go?
3. How did they get to the small town?
4. When did they get there?
5. What did they eat and drink?
6. What did they do in the river?
7. Why did they get wet?
8. Where's Bill Now?

The above are only examples of possible questions. Ask the questions one by one as the pupils find the answers to them.

OUR trip

This is what we did.

8.00 We got up.

9.00 —————————

10.00 —————————

11.00 ————————— .

12.00 —————————

1.00 —————————

2.00 —————————

3.00 —————————

4.00 —————————

5.00 —————————

6.00 We all came home.

These are the people who went.

————————— —————————

————————— —————————

————————— —————————

and me.

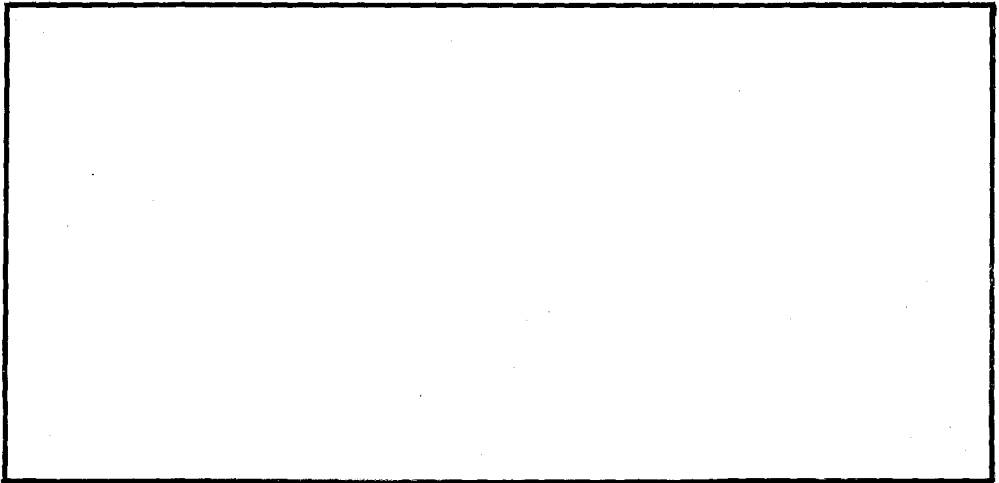This is what we took to eat and drink.

1 —————————

2 —————————

3 —————————

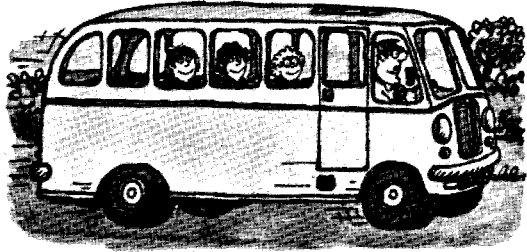4 —————————

5 —————————

This is where we went.

Bill's diary.

1. Today was a lovely day.
2. I went walking with Sam and Peter
3. in the hills, and we had a terrific time.

4. They came to my house
5. at about 9 o'clock,
6. and then we got a bus
7. to a small town.

8. We all took something to eat
9. with us. Sam took some apples.
10. I took some sandwiches
11. and Peter took some fruit
12. and lemonade.

13. The bus got to the town at 10.30.
14. We walked a long way
15. and saw a lot of birds.

16. Then we found a river
17. to swim in.
18. It was really great!

19. At 2 o'clock we had lunch.
20. We were all hungry
21. and ate all the food.
22. Then suddenly it started to rain.

23. We walked back to the small town
24. and got the bus home.
25. We didn't have our coats with us
26. and we got wet.

27. Now I,m in bed
28. and I think I,ve got a cold.
29. But it doesn,t matter.

Unit 5

Suggested lesson plan

Lesson 1	Step 1
Lesson 2	Steps 2 and 3
Lesson 3	Steps 4 and 5
Lesson 4	Step 6
Lesson 5	Steps 7 and 8
Lesson 6	Step 9
Lesson 7	Step 10
Lesson 8	Step 11
Lesson 9	Steps 12 and 13
Lesson 10	Steps 14 and 15
Lesson 11	Steps 16 and 17
Lesson 12	Step 18

(The greater part of this unit is revision of the year's work to date.)

STEP 1

...Aim to perform an activity which:

1 gives enjoyment

2 gives practice in following instruction

Language fishing rod, game, paper–clip, ruler, string, second, thick, thin, more than, bend, x times

Materials Pupil's Workbook page 37; ruler; string; paper–clips; scissors; paper

a) This exercise contains a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary, which is explained by diagrams. It is not a reading passage and should not be treated as one; do not try to 'teach' the new vocabulary. The purpose of the exercise is to explain to the pupils how to make a simple fishing game. They use the language they already know combined with diagrams to make the equipment. If they succeed, they will gain satisfaction from having handled an unfamiliar operation following instructions in an unfamiliar language. This is sufficient.

b) Since the pupils should hear the seconds of the unfamiliar

words, begin by demonstrating the objects needed to make the game, naming them in turn: a ruler, a piece of string, ten paper-clips, scissors, paper. Then demonstrate how to make the fishing rod and the fish, once.

Talk your way through it, but do not practise the language.

c) Pupils make their own kits, following the instructions in their Workbooks. Move round the groups as they do so, giving help where needed.

d) Pupils use the kit they have made in a competition to see who can catch the most fish within a given length of time. When the time is up question some of the pupils on their 'catch'.

Teache How many fish did you catch, Jalal?

Jalal (I caught) five.

Pupils then question each other.

STEP 2

...Aim to revise present perfect tense and present simple tense

Activity. Pupils act out 'What's the matter?' situation. Other pupils guess, as in Unit 3, Step 5 (Extension material).

STEP 3

...Aim exploratory reading

Language Dad, river, any, crying, go fishing, let, staying, take, won't

Materials Pupil's Book page 42; tape section 34; flashcards Proceed as in Unit 4, Step 17 a) and b).

STEP 4

...Aim to give further practice on continuous time

Language motor-bike, questions, a record, lovely, new, terrific, asking, borrow, cost, go away, leave...alone, may I? talking, so...

Materials Pupil's Book pages 43 and 44; tape section 35

a) Listening comprehension, tape only. There are three bands on the tape, corresponding to the three conversations in the Pupil's Book, page 43 and 44.

1 Play band 1 while the pupils listen.

2 Pupils open their books, page 43. Play the tape twice again, while the pupils follow in their books.

3 Ask questions on what they have heared. Pupils keep their books open as you ask the questions. Look for short answers – they are more natural.

Who is Saad?	(He's) Noura's brother.
What was Noura writing?	A letter.
Who was she writing to?	(Her friend) Jane.
Did Saad ask a lot of questions?	Yes, (he did).
Was Noura angry?	Yes, (she was).
What did Noura want Saad to do?	To stop asking questions.
	To leave her alone. or
	To go away.

4 Pairs of pupils read, taking the parts of Saad and Noura.
5 Follow the same procedure for bands 2 and 3 of the tape and conversations 2 and 3 in the Pupil's Book.

Suggested questions for conversation 2.

What did Anna want?	(Aisha's) (a) record.
Has Aisha got it?	No, (she hasn's).
Who did she give it to?	(To) Salwa.
When did she give it to Salwa?	Yesterday.
Where did Amna go?	To Salwa's house.

Suggested questions for conversation 3.

Who did Adnan meet?	(He met) Tariq.
What was Tariq looking at?	A motor–bike.
Where was the motor–bike?	- In the window.
Can Tariq ride a motor–bike?	(No), he can't.
How much does the motor–bike cost?	500.

Bring matches and a knife or pictures of a knife and a fire for Step 7

STEP 5
Aim to practise writing
Materials Pupil's Handwriting in their Handwriting Books.

Bring matches and a knife or pictures of a knife and a fire for Step 7

Why is Nabil looking in the window?

Fuad: Hi, Nabil.

Nabil: Hallo. Fuad.

Fuad: What are you doing?

Nabil: I'm looking at that motorbike.

Fuad: It's lovely.

Nabil: It's terrific.

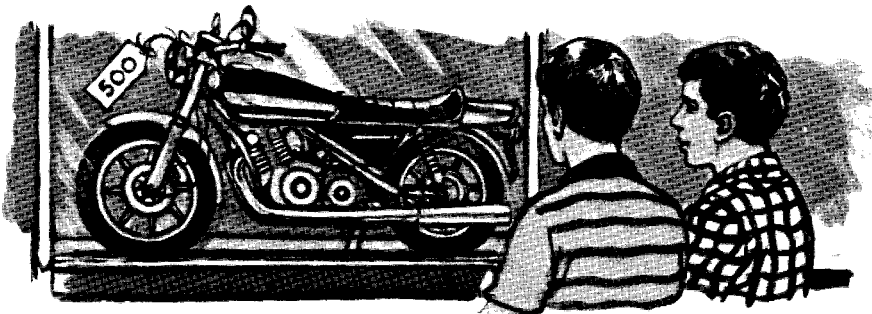Fuad: But you can't ride a motorbike.

Nabil: No, I can't.

Fuad: And you haven't got 500.

Nabil: No, I haven't

Fuad: So what are you doing here?

Nabil: I,ve toled you, I'm looking in the window.

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Abbreviations for Journals

ELTJ – English Language Teaching Journals

TE SOL Q. – Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages Quarterly.