

ELT-29

The English Language Abroad: Extracted from the British Council's Annual Report, 1960–61

Milestones in ELT

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The British Council was established in 1934 and one of our main aims has always been to promote a wider knowledge of the English language. Over the years we have issued many important publications that have set the agenda for ELT professionals, often in partnership with other organisations and institutions.

As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we re-launched a selection of these publications online, and more have now been added in connection with our 80th anniversary. Many of the messages and ideas are just as relevant today as they were when first published. We believe they are also useful historical sources through which colleagues can see how our profession has developed over the years.

The English Language Abroad: Extracted from the British Council's Annual Report, 1960–61

This pamphlet conveys an optimistic view of the expanding role of the English language worldwide, and a view of English language teaching (ELT) as no longer being the 'prerogative of English-speaking countries' alone. The publication is partly a call to action, and partly a description of the British Council's work in ELT at the time. Among other recommendations, the authors call for the creation of a grammar of the current use of English; recognition that the study of English literature cannot be a substitute for learning to use English; and for more teacher training opportunities for 'country nationals'.

The British Council

THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
ABROAD

Extracted from

The British Council's Annual Report

1960-1961

65 Davies Street, London, W.1

The English Language Abroad

“ . . . for the purpose of promoting a wider knowledge of Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the English language abroad . . . ” (From the preamble to the Royal Charter granted to the British Council in 1940.)

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I. THE USES OF ENGLISH ABROAD

THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH in the world today needs no stimulation by the British Council: the problem is how to satisfy rather than to encourage demands for English teaching. There may well be more people in the world who have learnt English as an acquired language than there are who speak it as their mother tongue. Most English is taught by teachers who have

themselves deliberately learnt it, not by native speakers of English. In schools all over the world learning and teaching English is one of the most urgent educational activities, occupying more pupils, teachers and time than any other comparable school subject.

It has been customary to speak of teaching English as a foreign language, often merely to emphasise that the process is by no means the same as teaching it to those who already have it as their mother tongue. More recently, the term English as a second language has been employed to describe English taught or learnt for practical and necessary uses of communication—whether to serve as the language of instruction in education, for specialised studies, or as a *lingua franca* among those to whom English is an acquired tongue. The distinction is important: for example, English in France or Germany is still largely learnt for reasons comparable to those for learning French or German in Britain—as a foreign language, as a humane discipline and as an introduction to a foreign culture. In many countries however, the place of English in education may be more important, and indeed more fundamentally necessary, because it is either the medium of education itself or a necessary link with resources beyond the borders of the country where it is learnt. When it is used thus as a second language English is not necessarily the vehicle of distinctively British or American cultural values; it may well be the means of expressing those of the country where it has been adopted. The educational use of English as a second language today varies from the level of the university to that of the primary school; its social or economic functions range from the needs of internal administration to those of external trade.

II. THE PROBLEM OF STANDARDS

The increasing use of English as a second language raises special problems not only for those who teach it, but for those who are particularly concerned to safeguard its accepted

forms and usage. In becoming a world language English, some say, like any other common currency, runs the risk of becoming worn, debased and subject to counterfeit. Its stamp is no longer authentic; it loses its clarity; it may become unrecognisable. Purists may claim that the quality of the English spoken abroad must necessarily degenerate as it spreads, so that eventually the English of different overseas groups will become unintelligible to other users of English, including the English themselves. Alternatively, some think the potential resources of common communication provided by world-English may shrink to those of a global pidgin—a mere ghost of the English we know.

There is no simple answer to these fears. Obviously fresh dialects of English will arise abroad—as they have always done in English-speaking countries. Standards of acceptable speech will vary—as they do in Britain itself. But if English is learnt for communication and for use by most of the educated people of the world, then it must be fit to serve their purposes. It can only do this by remaining an efficient, adaptable and subtle instrument as widely understood as possible. Its assets may indeed be increased rather than diminished by wider use; overseas varieties of English may continue to contribute to the richness and resources of the language as a whole, as they have done in the past. As far as the written form of the language is concerned, stability seems assured, largely because of the enormous range and depth of British and American literature and because of the vast circulation of books produced in the English-speaking countries. But it is possible that the literature of science and factual information may become of more importance than that of imagination and the arts in acting as a stabilising influence on the written form of English, for criteria of precision and lucidity are here most obvious and necessary for general communication. To this store of written English, which comprises an international heritage of arts and sciences, notable contributions by those who have themselves learnt English as a new language are common and likely to increase.

Fears for standards of English—particularly of spoken English—are by no means confined to teachers of English who speak it as their mother tongue. The foreign teacher or learner of English is even more concerned, and searches diligently for criteria of correct English which it is hard to establish. This is one reason why the British teacher of English is so sought after abroad and why his prestige is so high. Those in a hurry to learn English (and it seems as if the whole world is in a hurry to do so) look first to those who speak it as their mother tongue to teach English, to train teachers of English and to provide the materials for teaching English.

All three of these tasks are increasingly specialised. It is by no means true that those who speak English as their own language are thereby well qualified to teach it; specialised training is needed, not only as a teacher but as a teacher of English to foreigners. Training foreign teachers of English is a task which must be undertaken in their own countries, within the educational system which these teachers will serve, though the task is often difficult in places with as yet no accepted pattern of teacher-training. The design and provision of materials to be used by foreign teachers in teaching foreign pupils is an increasingly diverse activity in which these teachers must be involved. Standardized material for export, aimed at the world in general, which does not provide for the special needs of different countries, is less and less acceptable today.

III. WHAT IS MODERN ENGLISH?

The need to teach it as a foreign or second language has exposed more clearly than before the lack of an effective and consistent description of English. Scholars have for some years become increasingly conscious that there exists no adequate statement of the grammar of modern English—especially of spoken English. There is, it is true, a vast collection of material in various grammars, histories and lexicons, but the mere sum

of existing materials and opinions yields no very accurate or indeed very useful account of modern English for teaching purposes. In recent years developments in General Linguistics as a university study have directed the work of scholars and teachers towards the systematic description of the structure of language, spoken as well as written. The impact of modern linguistics on the methods and materials of English teaching has been considerable during the last decade, but no theoretical explanation of language merely in terms of system or structure can be a substitute for a full description of the contemporary English language based on careful observation of it in use. The increasing need to teach English as a foreign or second language has turned the attention of British scholars to the study of contemporary English, while the objective attitude to English which arises from having to teach it abroad may in due course contribute to the improvement of teaching English as a mother tongue in Britain.

The learner of English as a foreign rather than as a second language (in the sense used above) often has as a principal purpose the reading or study of English literature. For this purpose, traditional grammars of English, drawing their prescriptions of correctness impartially from a vast historical reservoir of selected written English—from Shakespeare or Swift, Dickens or Shaw—are sometimes helpful. The literary text can always be pondered and dissected with deliberation. But the learner of English as a second language is more likely to be in a hurry; he will certainly be very much concerned with understanding English speech as well as with understanding the day-to-day written English in textbooks of science, technology, medicine, administration or commerce. A course in literary English (which may have special standards of its own, far removed from the commonplace) backed by a grammar of English which puts the usage of Sir Thomas Browne and Mr. Graham Greene side by side as equally admirable, is not only perplexing but cumbersome in providing what he wants.

It is a truism to linguists that language is first and foremost speech and that written forms are a special convention derived from it. To the overseas learner, the norm of English speech is often the kind which conveys what he wants urgently to learn or understand. It may be that of the radio or television, of films, of lecturers, or even of his own compatriots. He is puzzled if the usage he hears diverges widely from the language he reads, and even more so if he is presented with two mutually exclusive standards—the colloquial and the literary. This problem dogs teachers of English all over the world; it can be eased only when grammarians catch up with the current use of English.

IV. ENGLISH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In countries with the fewest educational resources of their own the demand for English is often most insistent. The uses of English vary, and may require different materials and methods of teaching. Most countries need English for increased technical education or to aid their economic development; others still need English for administration and higher education; for some it is the adopted language of secondary and even primary education. In Ghana or Nigeria for example, it is an accepted language of national unity; indeed within Africa English can now be regarded as an African language and the medium through which distinctively African aspirations and cultural values are expressed—in no sense in conflict with local languages.

If educational systems within the Commonwealth have been committed historically to the use of English and some countries now depend on it for their national development, others outside it have adopted English for no less urgent economic or technical reasons. This is particularly true in the Middle East and South East Asia, where English is the principal language of science, technology and material progress. Newly independent countries particularly, some with a colonial heritage of another

European language, show an interest in introducing or expanding the teaching of English. Demands for more English teaching come from the former French colonial territories in Africa as well as from Indonesia.

V. ENGLISH AS A TECHNICAL MEDIUM

Where English is required principally as an aid to material and economic progress, traditional associations between the English language and British institutions, English literature or cultural values may be regarded as largely irrelevant, or if pressed, be consciously rejected. Teaching English under these circumstances particularly in some foreign countries calls for a certain delicacy of approach to preclude any suspicion of cultural dominance. This could easily arise from the use of material still based on the assumption that the teaching of English is an aspect of the projection of British political influence. The airways pilot (to whom English is an international language of air communications), the NATO soldier or sailor (who learns English as a common military language), the African politician at the United Nations Assembly, the scientist at an international conference, the merchant, businessman and technician, all require English for their special professional use because it is a world language. The kind of English they need, and the level of proficiency they must have, depend on the uses to which they wish to put it.

The reasons for learning English are thus determined by the pupil rather than by the teacher, who is dependent on the pupil's motivation for any success in his teaching. The spread of English in the world is less the result of any carefully devised teaching policy than of selective, deliberate and planned learning to suit varying needs. Such an interpretation—that the materials to be used and skills to be taught abroad should be determined by what people wish to learn, and not merely by what we like to teach—reflects a sound educational principle, but involves the concept

of English taught as a politically and culturally neutral means of communication. This may seem strange or even faintly alarming to those English-speaking peoples who have for long been accustomed to regard their language as an expression of their own national development.

One sharp difference between the status of English in Europe and in the developing countries of Africa, the Middle East and Asia should be remembered. Europe can translate: often Asia and Africa cannot. The English scientific treatise can be translated adequately into French, German, Spanish or Russian—it cannot so easily be put into Arabic, Urdu or Yoruba—let alone into the many tongues with no established literary forms. This factor affects both the way in which English must be taught—as a new language which may convey a first acquaintance with new concepts—and the later follow-up through the supply of books in English.

VI. EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS: TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING MEDIUM

Educational problems arising from the increased use of English overseas are formidable. The countries which most need English to secure their development are usually those least able to supply their own need, not only of teachers of English, but of sufficient teachers of any modern subjects. Where more teachers are most required the economic or social status of teachers may often be lowest. It is misleading to assume that the solution is merely to inject a supply of trained English teachers into educational systems otherwise assumed to be self-sufficient. Often the educational systems themselves require more fundamental aid. As the need for higher education grows, as new universities and technical colleges are founded, so the demand for English expands. This comes not only from countries where English is the accepted medium of all higher education but increasingly from those

where the use of English is required especially for studies such as science, technology or medicine.

The problem is of particular concern to India where many subjects at universities are still taught in English. Formerly the use of English as the language of teaching all subjects in secondary schools imposed certain standards of English proficiency, quite independently of the formal teaching of English in English lessons. Today only the English lessons survive to equip the future student of science or technology for advanced studies through an English medium. These lessons alone are often inadequate as a preparation.

In Commonwealth Africa the problem of English for university studies has been partly solved, or perhaps masked, by retaining and increasing the use of English as a medium in schools. There English remains an integral part of education because of its use for teaching all subjects in school. Yet there is always the danger of a gulf between the formal study of English as a subject and the use of English as a medium, even in Africa, so that one does not sufficiently help the other.

In Asia and Africa teaching English in schools ought to be, and indeed must be, the work of nationals of the countries where they teach. The regular employment of a large proportion of expatriate teachers of English in schools becomes less and less possible as education expands—if only on the ground of expense. But the numbers of local teachers properly equipped to teach English may be comparatively small, and any expansion of education further increases responsibilities laid upon them. The recent report on education in Nigeria* shows particularly how economic expansion may depend on more English teaching, and how local resources may be inadequate to the task. In many countries the mere economic value of knowing English well may further deplete English-teaching resources: existing or potential teachers of English are often attracted away from schools

* *Investment in Education*. (Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, 1960.)

to better-paid jobs open to them in other occupations where a principal qualification is a knowledge of English.

Underlying such administrative problems are others which are more technical. The tradition of teaching English as a foreign language sometimes provides little guidance in materials or methods for the urgent tasks of teaching *through* English. The lack of a description of modern English, to provide a clear analysis of the language structures and mechanisms to be learnt, has already been mentioned: the relative importance of these elements in relation to specialised uses of English—especially for science teaching—also needs to be determined. Furthermore, there is a lack of agreed objective criteria of what constitutes skill in the use of English. The superficial study of English literature, popular because of the convenience of set-books for examinations, has often been accepted as a substitute for learning to *use* English. (This is not to deny the value of the proper study of English literature, but rather to deplore its shallow treatment.) Examinations appropriate to one country have frequently been transplanted to others where they are less valid, often because of their prestige or because no local standard was acceptable. They have remained established with little change because local educational research into their efficiency and validity either has not been possible or has not yet been accepted as sufficient reason for change. The force of public examinations within any educational system staffed by poorly-trained or ill-educated teachers is particularly strong; not only do such examinations determine the syllabus and dictate the method, but they may cement the learning, teaching and administrative processes of education into an almost immovable obstruction to beneficial change. Examination syllabuses can become a vain substitute for education when around them harden the vested interests of pupils, teachers and parents and of textbook writers and their publishers. The English examination overseas carries a heavy and increasing weight of responsibility.

VII. TEACHER-TRAINERS

Behind the desperate shortage of competent English-teachers is the lack of teacher-trainers. Teacher-training has neither the prestige nor the international convertibility of university teaching; it is often harder work and requires wider yet more specific local experience. It requires adaptability to observed educational needs, enormous patience to deal with the many student teachers who accept a training course *faute de mieux*, and sustained qualities of leadership and enthusiasm.

It is with teacher-training that Britain and other English-speaking countries can help most overseas. British teachers obviously cannot be provided in sufficient numbers to aid appreciably in staffing schools: they can more effectively be deployed in training teachers in overseas countries. It must however be understood that more is required than native ability in English and experience of teaching in Britain. In addition to special knowledge of language teaching techniques appropriate to the country concerned, a trainer of teachers must have had experience at first-hand of the schools for which he trains his students. There is as yet no established method of training teacher-trainers: they are often expected to emerge fully armed by a process of natural selection from the ranks of experienced and successful school-teachers whose personal talent has been reinforced by a self-imposed discipline of study and observation. Children can be taught, teachers can be trained according to established patterns; but there the chain ends. Who trains the trainers—and how are the trainers of trainers produced? In theory they should be generated by the local or national systems which they serve; in fact they cannot be for many years to come because expansion is too rapid and teachers too few. In this problem lies a special challenge to Britain.

VIII. ADULT LEARNERS AND EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUES

If the teaching of English abroad in formal education, both in schools and in universities, has often shown a lack of clear purpose to determine materials or methods, the needs of the adult learner, in a hurry to learn English for limited practical purposes, have exposed even more the need for special techniques. Conventional textbooks and graded reading-material, as well as the methods of teaching used with adults, often derive from those designed for more leisurely use with children. This is not surprising, for the professionals in the field of language-teaching have most often been teachers of children or trainers of teachers for work in schools.

Teaching adults who are receptive and who demand quick results readily encourages experiment with new media and techniques of teaching which may also be relevant to children, although properly evaluated research often lags behind practice. The use of language-laboratory methods, where individual tape recorders are used by students under the central control of a teacher who regulates the supply of recorded material for practice, is being widely developed, especially by United States agencies. It is however expensive and not always suitable for general use in schools. Audio-visual methods combining films or film strips and recordings are being used. Television is a medium for English language teaching whose potentialities are now being explored by the British Broadcasting Corporation and the British Council: it may become of great importance. Films for language-teaching can be of great help both to the highly competent and also to the comparatively inexperienced teacher if they are carefully designed for their respective users; the Council is also active in this field. Sound-broadcasting as a language-teaching medium has long been used, most notably by the BBC, but can be still further exploited as new radio networks are established.

The use of every new medium for teaching brings new problems. Teachers may have to be re-trained to use new apparatus. It is not a simple matter of feeding known and tried material into new mechanical or electronic devices which in turn painlessly inject it into receptive pupils. Language learning always remains principally the affair of the pupil, and the precise conditions under which he learns must be continuously analysed in terms of human motivation, ability and behaviour. Language-teaching involves applied psychology as well as applied linguistics; it cannot be replaced by applied electronics. Increasingly it demands a deeper understanding of the functions of the language in the society in which it is taught.

IX. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The countries of the world that wish to learn English turn to English-speaking nations for help—to Britain, the Commonwealth, and the United States. Britain has unique experience of English teaching abroad within the framework and needs of formal education. India and the colonies presented and kept the problem before Britain from the nineteenth century onwards. Perhaps because of this experience, British teachers occasionally show some reluctance to adopt unreservedly newer or untried techniques of language-teaching which do not conform at first sight to their established educational principles. The deeper implications of teaching English abroad are remembered, and remain valid today—that all teaching, whether of children or of adults, is part of a process of developing personal and individual ability through a human relationship between teacher and pupil. The educational responsibility of the teacher is in no way diminished because he is a language-teacher; rather it may be increased. British theoretical studies in English language teaching have steadily developed over the years from experience

in many countries. They have formed the foundation of an impressive body of teaching materials and techniques, exemplified in a great number of courses used throughout the world and by the practice of many British and overseas teachers specifically trained to use them, notably at the Institute of Education in the University of London. Within the Commonwealth outside Britain there are important resources. Australia and more recently New Zealand have shown their concern by establishing centres of training and research, while the work going on in India and in many Commonwealth university departments and institutes of education will be of great relevance to other countries.

America, with its vast resources, its prestige and its great tradition of international philanthropy, no less than because it is the largest English-speaking nation, is one of the greatest English-teaching forces in the world today. Teaching the world English may appear not unlike an extension of the task which America faced in establishing English as a common national language among its own immigrant population. The American English-teaching effort overseas is increasing rapidly, often closely linked with the provision of economic aid to under-developed countries. Backed by the great academic resources of American universities, notably in linguistics, new techniques are rapidly exploited. In many countries the British Council finds itself working side-by-side and in collaboration with American agencies. The field is too large to be competitive; for some years the Council has had a working agreement with the United States Information Agency to permit and encourage fruitful co-operation and it regularly exchanges technical information with agencies in Washington. American theoretical studies and British pragmatism can be to a large degree complementary in adding to a common fund of English-teaching skill.

But teaching English to the world is by no means exclusively the prerogative of English-speaking countries. As a world language English may be taught by the nationals of many non-English-speaking countries, not only to their own compatriots.

Certainly the widespread ability to read English has meant that books in English from the Soviet Union and China have appeared in immense numbers in many countries. Books in English follow the spread of the language; the Council's work in teaching English is succeeded by its further task of aiding the flow of British books and periodicals to the English-reading public of the world.

In spite of the international nature of English, and in spite of the fact that English must be mostly taught and learnt without any direct contact with British teachers, the link with Britain remains and is probably inherent in the language. Whoever learns to speak modern English or to read it has potential ties with Britain today; he is thereby better equipped to understand the values for which Britain stands and to ponder them. English teaching may be an aspect of aid given principally for the internal benefit of the receiving country, but it may also be the channel of friendship and understanding. The prestige of British teachers remains high, not merely because they teach English, but because they often show the sense of vocation which is essential to effective educational aid.

X. THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ENGLISH TEACHING IN INSTITUTES

Within the vast and complex pattern of English teaching abroad the Council has tried to deploy its resources to suit varying needs. To some degree it has been involved in all the problems sketched above. Its earlier work was largely through British Institutes providing direct teaching of English, mostly to adults. This type of work in Europe, in Latin America and in some Middle East countries, is quite independent of the educational system of the countries concerned, providing English in response to individual rather than official or government requirements.

Approximately 100,000 students were attending institute classes in 1961. Many institutes still flourish under direct Council control. In some countries locally-managed institutes are supported by Council staff, as in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and the Turco-British Associations in Ankara and Istanbul. In other countries, such as Finland, the Council recruits the British staff who are locally employed.

EDUCATION OFFICERS AND TRAINING OF LOCAL TEACHERS

In recent years, especially in countries where English has the function of second language, the Council has appointed Education Officers available for work within existing or developing educational systems. For example, in Burma, Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrein, Ghana and Nigeria there are now Council officers equipped to supply specialised educational assistance or advice. All over the world Council staff have established close connections with ministries of education and universities. In one country the Council was invited to provide the secretary to a national commission on education; in others its officers help in planning or administering teacher-training projects. To develop and extend such relationships it is essential to have staff ready on the spot with relevant training and experience, so that effective aid can be given without delay when it is requested.

To meet the increasing demands, the Council has also become more closely involved in large scale schemes to train teachers or prepare trainers of teachers, to carry out programmes of research in materials and methods, and to prepare textbooks in response to specific local demands. The most notable examples are in India and Pakistan. The Central Institute of English at Hyderabad, financed by the Indian Government and the Ford Foundation, is partly staffed by Council officers working together with Indian staff. Here courses are

provided for the staffs of Indian training colleges. Council officers are also on the staff of the Language Teaching Institute at Allahabad; in Madras they are closely concerned with a scheme whereby secondary-school teachers are not only re-trained for their own work but are also equipped to train primary-school teachers.

In Pakistan, at the Language Unit of the University of the Punjab in Lahore, Council-recruited staff partly financed by the Ford Foundation are engaged in research and the systematic preparation of teaching materials. In Karachi, Dacca and Peshawar Council Education Officers are deeply involved in plans adopted by the National Education Commission for the general reform of English teaching and the production of new teaching materials.

The Council also organises and helps to staff summer schools and refresher courses especially for teachers of English. In 1960-61 fifty-three such courses were held in countries abroad. Another sixteen were held in the United Kingdom, ten on a multi-national basis and six to meet the special needs of individual countries—France, Germany, Iraq, Poland, the Soviet Union and Turkey. In addition many overseas teachers of English come to Britain under the auspices of the Council to study English or English-teaching, either through formal courses at universities or by shorter visits or study tours.

RECRUITMENT TO OVERSEAS UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS

Parallel with its work through institutes and Education Officers, the Council helps to fill posts in universities abroad, either by seconding its own officers or by subsidising and recruiting British staff on contract. For example, there are such teachers in English departments of universities in Iceland, Greece, Poland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Libya, Iran, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and Japan.

Assistance and support is also given to British-type schools

overseas, especially in India and Pakistan, in Latin America and in the Near and Middle East. This assistance includes the recruitment of headmasters and teaching staff.

To help in providing the human resources to meet these demands, the Council also awards postgraduate studentships to United Kingdom graduates to train for teaching English abroad. Twelve such studentships were awarded in 1960-61. The Council has also established its own training centre in Madrid, which is neither too remote nor too expensive for the purpose, and both its own recruits and postgraduate students from the Universities of London and Leeds are able to obtain overseas teaching practice there as part of their training.

More, of course, needs to be done, and there is a fund of experience and of goodwill as well as a great educational tradition in Britain which, if co-ordinated and applied with skilful economy, can have increasing influence. To make the best use of these, there is a need to enable a far greater number of teachers to make a permanent and progressive career in teaching English abroad than the Council's establishment at present allows. It is necessary to offer young graduates security and continuity with reasonable chances of promotion if they are to accept the long specialised training necessary to equip them for teacher-training posts. It is equally necessary to be able to retain experienced men and women who have successfully held English-teaching posts overseas. These are problems which are at present engaging the Council's attention.

The different aspects of the Council's work, through institutes, through general educational help and through direct participation in educational reform and language-teaching projects, together with continuous aid in staffing academic posts, represent a progressive professionalisation and specialisation of Council activities—always in response to demands. They show a corresponding need for more advanced training of its officers to equip them for their tasks. Increasingly these officers have to work as

technical-assistance experts, and thus require a higher level of training in education, linguistics and the English language in relation to overseas needs than was formerly necessary.

EXAMINATIONS

The Council has a special interest and responsibility in the administration of the Cambridge Examinations in English—designed to assess the English of foreigners. In 1960 about 38,000 students, many prepared by Council teachers, sat for these examinations at home and abroad. These students represent, however, only a very small minority of those who potentially may come to Britain for higher education. The great majority of students of English abroad take far less suitable and valid examinations, which in many countries the Council is professionally concerned with improving.

LIBRARIES AND TEXTBOOKS

Reference has already been made to the need overseas for books in English. The Council's library services are well known: from the libraries in its direct control throughout the world there were issued in 1960 two and a quarter million volumes to the English-reading public. Presentations of books and periodicals to selected institutions, the organisation of book exhibitions (notably of books on English teaching) and in some countries arrangements for long loans of textbooks, are all examples of this important service. Textbooks for the teaching of English are being written in increasing numbers by individual Council officers with experience in the subject and issued by publishing firms. The Council continues to help in the selection of titles for inclusion in the Government's low-priced books scheme, more fully described in last year's Report.

INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Since 1946 the Council has published and distributed *English Language Teaching*, the only British periodical exclusively devoted

to problems of teaching English overseas. This has achieved an international reputation and an influential circulation. Now with its authority established in the English-teaching and English-learning world, it has come of age and is published as an independent journal by the Oxford University Press, although the Council continues to be associated with its direction.

Although the Council does not normally undertake long-term research into the linguistic and educational problems of language teaching, it may second its officers for the purpose to universities at home as well as overseas. Its function is certainly to stimulate research where most needed and to make available its resources for the collection of data for research workers. It has aided, for example, the collection of facts and figures for the World Language Survey, and recently the library and records of its Education Division in London have become the nucleus of an English Teaching Information Centre. This centre has now begun to collect and co-ordinate experience and information about all aspects of teaching English as a second or foreign language. It is hoped to make available, not only within the Council itself, but also to other interested individuals and organisations, an increasing amount of factual information for research workers and teachers, and to be able to present a continuous appreciation of English teaching not only as it exists but as it is required throughout the world. The first issue of a new publication for this purpose, *English Teaching Abstracts*, appeared in July 1961.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Council inherits a great tradition of English teaching—in Asia and Africa spanning two centuries—to which the Indian Education Service, the Colonial Service, the Christian Missions and individual teachers of all subjects in English abroad have contributed. Nor should the rôle of British publishers be forgotten. Their enterprise has often made the design and supply of good teaching materials possible, not always without financial risk.

The teaching of English now demands co-operation over a still wider front. The world-wide interests of the Council lay upon it the task of making needs known which it can only to a very small extent satisfy from its own resources. It can however help to stimulate appropriate research and training schemes in the United Kingdom with a view to producing more expert teachers and trainers of teachers of English. It can do this through the unique relationship with United Kingdom universities which it maintains through its advisory committees. In the teaching of English abroad, its English Studies Advisory Committee plays a most important part and brings together eminent university representatives of the disciplines of English Language and Literature, Linguistics and Education. In December 1960, at the suggestion of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, the Council convened in London a conference on university training and research in the use of English as a second/foreign language. This conference, attended by representatives of departments of English, Linguistics and Education in United Kingdom universities, made three important recommendations: that Britain could help overseas universities and training colleges by direct subsidy and by subsidising British staff appointed to them; that a world-wide career service for British experts in English teaching must be created; that United Kingdom universities must increase their training facilities for teachers and trainers of teachers of English overseas. It made detailed suggestions for staffing the university departments concerned and stressed the need for an information centre to act as a clearing house for research data.

In January 1961 the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, convened by the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee, met at Makerere College, Uganda under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael Grant, Vice-Chancellor of the Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Council's Executive Committee. Its recommendations covered the whole field of English teaching in relation to

the needs of the Commonwealth: they stressed the necessity for more and better-trained teachers at all levels, for close co-operation between Commonwealth countries and with the United States, for rethinking of tests and examinations, for more research and for the establishment of a Commonwealth English Language Information Centre.

In June 1961 an Anglo-American Conference on English Teaching Abroad was convened at Cambridge by the Council. This was the successor of others held at Oxford and in Washington in 1955 and 1959 and was attended by representatives of the principal American agencies concerned with English teaching abroad and of British and American universities. The conference recommended more effective means for the co-ordination and interchange of information both internationally and regionally between British and American authorities, and drew attention to a number of outstanding technical problems of teaching, the training of teachers and the preparation of materials, which are increasingly of common interest.

Such conferences and their recommendations have helped to crystallize and confirm the Council's own growing experience and understanding of the place of English teaching in the world, and the measures which can be taken to further it. They help to chart the course and determine objectives.

In its task of promoting a wider knowledge of the English language abroad, the Council must seek and contrive the most effective patterns of co-operation both with the countries receiving its services and with those which offer similar assistance. This is an inevitable result of the world-wide growth of English as an international language and one of the inescapable responsibilities of this country.

