

Pedagogical repertoire of a model language Teacher

J.O. BABALOLA (Ph.D)

*Department of Arts and Language Education
Faculty Of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado- Ekiti, Nigeria*

Correspondence:

Awodun, Adebisi O.
Department of Physics, College of Education,
Ikere- Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, Phone No: 08038527974,
E-mail : bisawoideas@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines the expected traits of a language teacher especially in a multilingual society. The peculiar linguistic attributes are scrupulously considered as each letter of the word TEACHER is used to bring out the required linguistic pedagogical culture. The common occurrence of students' mass failure in English language as witnessed in the various competitive examinations and the rapid decline in the quality of teachers in charge of the subject in schools bring to the fore the concern for its pedagogical appraisal especially in the area of teachers' preparation for the sensitive job. The work is expository as some common factors were brought out and used to treat the expected teachers' behavior in language teaching activities. The writer's exposure and experience in the job supply the root for all the issues raised in the work. Based on the considered factors, it is recommended that the personnel that handle the training of teachers in the higher institution must be exposed to the real practical aspect of the work. Through this, well trained, brilliant, interested and committed individuals will be discovered on the field to take care of students who opt for teaching career in the colleges of education and in the faculty of education in the universities. When the stream is progressive and hard work is rewarded, teachers will be dedicated to work and be related to stand up as models to the students.

Key Words: Trainer, evaluator, administrator, counselor, harvester, expert, researcher

1. Introduction

Digging deep into the well of knowledge remains impossible without a teacher. An individual who is barren of knowledge lives in darkness. He misses opportunities and abuses privileges. Development is low or stagnant in a nation where teachers are novice. Trusting the young ones on the inexperienced, ill-trained persons could be seen as the worst a people could do to his generation. In Nigeria, teaching is seen as a casual job- the job of the frustrated and the poor. It is not seen as a noble profession. A profession according to the dictionary definition is "a job that needs a high level of education". A professional has what it takes to break the frontier of knowledge for advancement in his career. He is trained to administer resources at his disposal and to source for the vital required ones that may not be readily available. A problem, to a professional, is a tonic for progress; without limitation and challenges, man will not think/labour to discover the natural riches that are available in the environment.

In the issue of language, good and appropriate orientation is expected to be made available to the users of a particular language especially in a multilingual universe to solve all related language problems. Language is a strong weapon that is majorly used to train, trim and transform human behaviour. It is therefore quite very imperative to give adequate attention to its teaching through the provision of the right model. The model that

enhances better development of the language of communication as it serves as the major tool used to keep record, store knowledge, subdue and refine the users' world either in science, technology and medicine as packaged in the culture of the people.

[5] identifies three sets of language teachers who are involved in language pedagogy in schools without a balanced training in the art. The three categories according to him include: language instructors with experience, teaching in their countries of origin but have little or no training in teaching approaches; professionals in other fields who are native speakers of the language but are not trained as teachers and graduate students (or well educated individuals) who have extensive knowledge of language, literature and culture, but are not trained as language teachers. The concept of training cannot be waved aside in the issues of acquiring the needed skills for good performance. In all the three issues raised above, the key players remain amateur or quack because specific training in the art is lacking. The theory of nurture is quite relevant in developing a standard winsome model. Most teachers, according to [6], believe in the importance of modeling especially in reading but most teachers do not model reading. A language teacher who wins the attention of the learners is addicted to good standard performance in the major skills of language output (speaking, reading and writing). The learning styles consider the learners' characteristics and instructional strategies [7], these strategies are structured appropriately by a trained teacher. [4] submits that teaching strategies represent conditions required for acquisition of knowledge and skills. According to [13] tasks that test children's language comprehension, production or imitation skills are employed in experimental studies. The concept of linguistic market place as perceived by [12] is the use of language in the "give-and-take of social interaction". Language does not exist in isolation. It is a tool used to define everything about man and it takes on symbolic value. Therefore a language teacher stands as a reference point of this symbolic value utility of a language: he mentors the learners on the various utility values of the language as it is obtainable within the speech community. Language acquisition/learning has been considered as a process of imitation and reinforcement. [11] views the stream of language acquisition/learning through the input (primary linguistic data--adult speech), LAD (Language Acquisition Device – general language learning principle/grammatical knowledge) and the output (child's speech). The teacher plays the role of a leader while the learners constitute the group to be trained, evaluated and counseled through the appropriate leadership style [2]. Effective leaders must possess necessary skills, characteristics and traits in order to tremendously help the members of the group to acquire the required behavior. [11] considers such traits to include: empathy, courage, accountability, dependability, stewardship, loyalty, emotional stamina, physical stammered timing, self-confidence and the likes. A language teacher in this regards must appreciate the language, value it and be committed to the proper teaching of it. He must be tenacious and through the way he manipulates the various skills of language expressions, the beauty of it is made prominent. Some children's language developments are delayed due to some psychological, social or linguistic backgrounds. Their medical history does not suggest any biological accident or mal functioning of any of the speech apparatuses. In cases of this nature, the teacher as a well-trained language expert must be concerned and search for the fundamental causes that may resident in the language environment. Teachers of the right model are quite dynamic "adapting their styles to suit the demand of the occasion" [10]. The concept of group process or group dynamics, as Nicky further puts it, deals with such items as morale, influence, participation, conflict, leadership struggle, competition and so on. Good close interaction with individual members of a group helps the teacher to apply the appropriate method and approach to really help in the process of learning a language. [1], in support of this, believes teachers' interactions with students are related to teachers' perception of student' communication skills as they operate in a particular speech territory. A teacher is conscious of the basic fact that peoples' communication is affected by the social, physical and religious conditions in the environment. [9] say that "the environment in which people communicate frequently contributes to the overall outcome of the encounters. Teachers should know that individuals are "different in rate, speed and ultimate level" as far as their second language acquisition/learning is concerned" [3]. The

differences are due to the cognitive, affective and social factors underlying second language acquisition, Ellis further suggested.

Language is a form and a forum of communication. Language teacher, through his activities, should create language awareness even before communicative task and this claim aligns with [8]. He believes that “communicative language learning that relies exclusively on task without language awareness is not effective”. An effective language teacher that serves the right model understands the structure, the culture and the appropriate nurture of the target language of communication.

The job of a Teacher in language Pedagogy

Who is a teacher in a serious consideration of it? The letters that constitute the word TEACHER will be examined to portray the size and the stature of an approved teacher. The consideration of each item goes beyond theory of a mere academic exercise but a deep assessment of the expected traits of persons that can change the world within the limited interactions in a classroom situation.

Teacher as a trainer

A teacher is a TRAINER. He is a person that has been thoroughly groomed in the technicalities of language use. He has the right approach to impact the needed skills in the learner. Training entails DRILLS. It is the practical inculcation of the right linguistic skills and attitude in the learners. The language skills are all practical skills: listening skills inclusive. The four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are made pragmatic through the right training.

A visit to a typical Nigerian schools, will establish the fact that teachers of language do not demonstrate enough practical skills in the teaching of the language. Acceptable standard in the use of it is rarely witnessed. Language does not dwell on the note of theory. In all the recognizable skills for its demonstration, it occurs on the realm of pragmatics. Learners are trained on the best ways to use language for polite request, for command, for clear interrogation, to express wishes and desires, for prayers and many more practical utility values of the language of communication. Language is used to reveal mood through the manipulations of different tones. A language teacher designs a programme that exposes the learners to various domains of language use. No speaker has the perfect articulation of the sounds of a language without good training through the right model; therefore, teaching a language involves a rigorous training as the language of communication is used to define our real and imaginable worlds. An unspoken language is a dead language. The more a language is used the more proficient the users become and the more such a language grows.

A language teacher remains a coach in this regards. Linguistic attritions are flushed out through the rigorous training he gives to his students and the right expected language tone is developed through a well-informed scheme of operations. Though the number of different languages spoken by man on the surface of the planet earth is infinite, man has the capacity to learn any language exposed to him in his environment. The ability to acquire the tools of any language is given to any normal man by nature. The acquisition does not occur without the right nurture through imitation. This suggests that learners of a second language cannot perform well without the right model. The model as earlier suggested is the teacher who puts the language on natural plane through which the learner’s natural abilities are stimulated by the right nurture in order to build up and develop the acceptable language behaviour. Abnormal linguistic stature can only be controlled and corrected through the ingenuity of a well-informed language teacher. It is therefore crystal clear that not just any educated individuals can be drafted to the classroom to operate in language classes. A person who will take on the assignment must possess the professional stamina that will support him adequately in the field of training; otherwise, the school system will continue to turn out the worst products.

Language teacher as an evaluator

On a general note, a teacher is trained as an expert in his field equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out meaningful evaluation. Evaluation involves correct measurement and accurate assessment. A reasonable judgment cannot be carried out without a good evaluation because evaluation entails value judgment. It is an exploration through which comprehensive investigation is carried out on how different aspects of a system work. A language teacher is trained on how relevant data could be collected through a well-designed instrument. The instrument must be valid measuring exactly what is designed to measure and apart from its validity, it must be reliable. Its reliability ensures its consistency when such an instruments is applied on the same sample at different time and places.

A teacher who is deficient in evaluating procedure, grope in darkness and cannot put together a relevant appropriate classroom programme for the learners. Evaluation points to where a teacher goes. It produces a dynamic academic programme that benefits the students and the society. Time, money, material and energy will be wasted where a teacher cannot carry out good evaluation. A good language teacher cannot introduce a new topic without discovering the present situation of things with the students. Good evaluation produces good judgment. While test is a popular instrument in the hands of many teachers for evaluation, a good language teacher knows the right type of test to use in a particular peculiar situation. He knows when to use the popular achievement test or proficiency test, or diagnostic test or aptitude test. He does not make the wrong choice. An experienced language teacher knows that he has many other viable instruments apart from test to evaluate the student's language situation so that necessary remedial language programme can be put in place.

In our schools today, rarely can one come across a teacher who uses other instruments like interview (apart from admission and offer of appointments), questionnaire and 'opinionaire' to collect the needed information from the students in order to assist them in their academic concerns. There are some language-learning problems that mere conducting tests cannot provide the teacher the needed facts that can help proffer solutions to some common language problems a learner has. Test may be blind to some vital variables that affect the student's academic performance. Discovering the peculiar language situation of each learner may be necessary before any formal school test. Such variables include the background- home, social, religious, biological, cultural, health, and interest of the learner.

Teacher as an administrator

A teacher is an administrator. He does not only handle files and some other educational tools but contend with different variables and character traits of the students who are direct recipients of his teaching efforts. Material resources are adopted and adapted as the situations require. All the educational inputs made available for technical processes require the expertise of a well-trained language teacher. Enough learning resources can be made available, if the individuals at the centre of affairs are quark and incompetent, all investments towards qualitative and quantitative education would be a waste. Teacher is at the centre of executing educational programmes. He manages money, materials and men that are available for educational programmes. He improvises where the required materials are not available. He presides over time and divides this into spaces. He studies the season and plans the curriculum in a way that conforms to the prevailing weather. He is not oblivious of the dynamics of the larger society. In the real sense, the curriculum represents the culture of the society. The teacher in the school system is the "Daniel" of the day that can give accurate interpretation to the terms in the contents of the document. Errors of misinterpretation result into wrong administration. The training given to qualified teacher enables him to understand the nature and the state of language in the society. The role of the language of wider communication and its utility values in the language community are properly identified. The proper identification helps the teacher to plan adequately for the student's right exposure to all the components of the language that can produce well informed and mature users of the language. The teacher as a

language administrator is not blind to the needed resources that can promote the learning of a language and the peculiar linguistic traits in a particular language environment.

Teacher as a counsellor

In a multilingual environment, each of the languages in the environment is assigned roles. The roles assigned to each must not be ambiguous. None of the languages is allowed to play ambivalent roles. The distinction between one and the other must be clear and definite. Which one is major according to the role it plays and which one is minor according to its utility values. There is a major problem of language adoption in a multilingual state. Which one of the languages can be chosen as the national language? In Nigeria for example, there are more than 600 different languages and each of the languages struggling for recognition. The people of different ethnic clans are infested with “linguisticparonia”. Suspicions of one clan dominating the other with the adoption of the national language pervade the linguistic atmosphere. The endo-glossic language purists aggressively clamour for the language of the environment while the exo-glossic language adherents passionately preach in favour of the language of neutral stand. In this situation, the students may be confused. It is the job of a seasoned language teacher to technically design a language counseling therapy that can help the language learner to make a wise choice in the face of such a compromising linguistic situation. A language teacher should, by his experience and training, understand that it is useless fighting for a language of superior stand. A language of superior utility value surges to a global linguistic lime-light while the one with low and narrow coverage as regard its daily relevance to vital sectors of language use may gradually fade into complete extinction.

A national language in a multilingual society recognizes the diverse cultures of the different speakers and the reflection of this is glaring in the use of it by different users. Whatever language we use to express our idea, the level of competence in the language brings out the speaker cultural identity without any ambiguity. The note of global mutual intelligibility remains the concern of the language teacher. If the whole world speaks the same language, the delivery records infinite variations from nation to nation and from an individual to another individual according to: age and experience, profession and vocation, environment and weather, religion and peoples’ definite peculiar way of life. A language counselor should help the learner of a particular language understand that any normal human being has the potential and the capacity to learn human language. No human language is difficult to learn. The differences in structural pattern do not constitute any obstacles to gain access into the perfect use and manipulation of the codes. It is a common experience, in Nigeria for example, that many students have been frustrated in their quest to move forward educationally and to function effectively in the society as a result of their failures to pass English language at credit level in O’level examinations. Some who cheat to have the required credit pass in the language as a school subject are restricted in the free flow in the academics world because of their inability to manipulate the codes of the language. Language phobia grips the students and unnecessary fear is generated. It is high time language teachers delivered the students in our schools from this slavery. The essential aspect must be taught and attention given to the practical utilization of languages according to the roles given to them in a multilingual environment through the right exposure. The utopian language delivery of the classical scholars should not be the primary consideration of the language examiners’ desire in the assessment of students’ language attainment but the global mutual intelligibility which is the ultimate target of language use in the society of men.

Teacher as a harvester

Teacher stands and occupies a privileged position in the business of passing knowledge to those that crave for it. He functions as a coach as well as a referee that decide the players who score viable and acceptable goals in the field of play. He evaluates and hinges his decision on empirical study. Decisions on who to move to the next class are made by teachers based on his discovery of the linguistic potentials of the students. A good

teacher knows his students intimately and understands their different linguistic attainment in their course of study. All the students cannot belong to the same group: it is not possible! Each student's linguistic developmental graph is monitored for proper grouping. The concept of group method of teaching can only be done by a teacher with seasoned and well committed pedagogical culture. He decides the materials that stream to a class, the ones that befit B, C and D classes based on the individual language competence and language performance. The harvest instrument as earlier explained may not be test only but by other means of interaction through which some linguistic potential are discovered upon which the foundation for counseling therapy is placed. The body of knowledge is made robust when appropriate selections are made. A harvester separates the viable grains from the 'invalid' crop. Some 'intercropping' idea may be so jejune which do not significantly contribute to linguistic growth. These are slightly considered while those that bring many gains to language development are emphasized. Language potential varied from person to person. Some are naturally talented in oratory while some are gifted in writing. The two productive language skills maybe differently natured than nurtured in different individuals'. A harvester identifies this and designs a suitable programme for individual based on these traits. On a general note, a teacher as a harvester determines the appropriate field of calling for his students through which they can realize their potential and be practically relevant in the society. The school has failed the society because of the poor harvesting mechanism. The operators (teachers) could not develop a wholesome model that is capable of supplying the needed nutrients that can feed the system. The negative outcome of this is unbalanced growth in the entire sector of the society system.

On the other hand, the school remains the scion of the larger society. The parameter of measuring the successful individual has been misplaced in the society. The required and necessary tools to effect tested rewarding and acceptable harvest are not made available. Anyway, the concern of this paper is not, on the primary note, to look at the structures of the society and how they affect education but to examine the expected behaviour of a model teacher taking for granted that the stage is set for meaningful pedagogical adventure. Therefore, a model language teacher must understand his role as a harvester. The onus lies on his shoulder to tell the society the characteristics of different products of the school and the proper ways of engaging them in the society. Proper dispensation of this task makes a teacher an honourable harvester.

Teacher as an expert

A professional is not an expert by training alone but also by exposure and experience. There is a problem with teachers' preparation in Nigeria. The procedure of becoming expert in the field of teaching is not well structured. Producing an individual who will stand to channel knowledge into and develop the gift in peoples' life goes beyond casual five or four years training in the college or in the university. The development of cognitive domain seems to be the only focus in the scheme of producing teachers to teach our children in the present programme of teachers' preparations. The field interaction to develop other domains for effective delivery is poorly considered. Expertise cannot be gained only on one domain. Affective and psychomotor domains are enhanced and developed through meaningful exposure. This entails well organized, goal oriented activities in the real world. Actual participation in the real natural system grooms and produces competent and efficient individuals in their various fields of concern. Through actual practice, a professional discovers the essential hidden and unpopular principles that lubricate the operational arrangement and management of his chosen career. An amateur or casual operator in a system is oblivious of such nitty- gritty.

A teacher interacts with learner's in an independent natural manner. He is a teacher in principle and in practice. As an expert, he understands the psychology of human development and human social interlock. A person is not a teacher alone on paper by academic decoration but by actual molding and production of individuals that hold their posts in the society. Now in the realm of producing teachers who will go to our schools to develop the young ones, persons that will do this must, as a matter of compulsion, have practiced in the field for a minimum of five years before they should be considered qualified for the modeling of teachers'

teaching behavior in the primary and secondary schools. In a clear language, lecturers/teachers in the Colleges of Education and Faculty of Education in all the Nigerian Universities should emerge from the secondary schools after a minimum of five years teaching experience plus other necessary qualifications. This system will produce the best of the practicing teachers who have the needed and required experience and exposure in the higher institution where teachers are being produced. A person may have first class, master and Ph.D., this will not be enough to retain such person in the Faculty of Education as a lecturer. He should go to the field and practice before he can find himself in the lecturing business in the College or in the University. Expertise surfaces through actual practice and undocor exposure and experience.

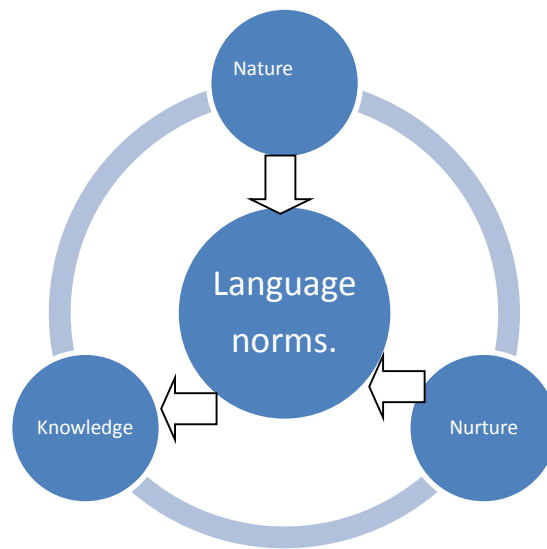
Teacher as a researcher

A living practicing teacher is hungry for knowledge. The urge to do things better is quite active. If language is dynamic, language teacher cannot be less. As many developments unfold on daily basis in human world, the language of communication must always respond to such knowledge explosion. The dimensions of psycho and social linguistic tendencies are critically observed, investigated and scholarly experimented through rational formation of hypotheses: the result of this must be able to answer all questions generated on the teaching, learning and acquisition of language. This is a daily assignment of a living language teacher who is groomed to have a positive impact in our world.

If knowledge grows as observed, the language must grow because we use language to describe growth in any aspect of man's activities. The problem of language endangerment is quite acute in a multilingual society as a result of the limited vocabulary bank to describe new developments in the ever changing scientific modern world. Language teacher are cut at the right sizes to solve the problem of language. How can the endangered language be helped and reserved? What are the real causes of the death of a language? What are the dynamics of human language? It is true that indigenious language preserves culture and retains individual and national identities. The aboriginal language projects the uniqueness of a people. Such a language must not be allowed to die. The natural language tools must be activated and made to capture the social linguistic network. This calls for a rigorous research activities by the language teachers.

A well-focused research ambition identifies and analyzes the problem and breaks the frontier of knowledge by providing practical solution through a reasonable compromise. A local language can grow to international status and respond favourably to the challenge posed by timeless revelations in science and technology if the natural tool of language is used to manipulate the social language paraphernalia.

Language pedagogy does not emerge from a novice and cannot be successfully manipulated by him. Research makes a language teacher a good trainer, reliable evaluator, seasoned administrator, a compassionate counselor, a wise harvester, a scrupulous expert and a meticulous commendable researcher. Language education programme will remain in a state of flux if through research investigations are not encouraged especially in its teaching adventure. Research endeavour makes language teaching interesting as the appropriate methods are discovered and adopted. Learning a second language is made less cumbersome when the right atmosphere is generated through a well programmed research outfit. The port of natural linguistic supply controls language insight; this is nurtured adequately when research discovery prunes and refines language utility at different linguistic dimensions. Language is natural to man, its naturalness provides activities to be nurtured; nurture promotes knowledge while knowledge prunes nature. The pruning remains the outcome of research and this has a remarkable effect on language use. The postulation is demonstrated by the diagram below:



The language norms at the centre is the domain of language use. A normal individual possesses the natural linguistic endowments and these are exposed to manipulations as practiced in a particular language territory. The response to the said manipulation builds up knowledge that culminates in the individual linguistic stature. Research therefore operates at a critical point of nurture. This means that without rigorous research activities, linguistic knowledge will not be built up and language norms (the stature of the speaker) remains limited and local; stagnant and substandard; retrogressive and ridiculous. This can be suicidal in the modern world of progressive scientific activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are essential traits expected to be possessed by a professional of any callings. Average demonstration of these by individual in his field of endeavour makes him a model: anyone who is barren of these expected attributes has therefore nothing to show as a model: such persons remain professional misfits. There are expected professional behaviour from teachers who model the lives of the young ones. The young ones who are thirsty for knowledge to discover their bearings in the competitive challenging world. A language teacher who will make a difference in the positive hemisphere must have been addicted to the culture and ethics of the language. His experience and exposure assist him to demonstrate good mastery of the structure of it and his ability to provide good nurture to the language must not be in doubt. This expected linguistic learning outcome seems to be absent in our schools. Training programme for language teachers need to be revisited and reviewed in line with the dynamic nature of language. Teachers' preparation procedure must not be based on only one domain (the cognitive domain) which is only measured in the present system by pencil and paper assessment. The mode is further devastated by examination fraud going on in schools. The teacher must be allowed to mentor students in the field and advancement in the job be based on commitment and visible contributions to a better use of the language which build up the body of knowledge in the society. Lecturers who will train teachers in our Colleges of Education and Faculty of Education in our Universities must be discovered right on the field in the primary and the secondary schools. Facilities are needed in our schools to assist the teaching of the language. Well equipped language laboratories as a necessity, must be provided and must not be considered as a luxury. Language on the plane of nurture is a habit formation and all those paraphernalia that can enhance the formation of the require habits must be made available.

Reference

[1]. David, W.C. (2004). "Psychology of Language". *Wadsworth/Thomson Learning*. U.S.A.

- [2]. Devito, J. A. (2002). "Essentials of Human Communication". Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
- [3]. Ellis, R. (1997). "Second Language Acquisition". Oxford: DUP.
- [4]. Gaynes, R. (1985). "The Conditions of Learning". New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- [5]. Heather, C. (2012). The University of North Carolina at Chapel hill UNC School of Education.
- [6]. Jason, K. (2009). "Teachers' Modelling: its impact on an extensive reading programme". National Institute of Education. Nanyang Technological University Singapore.
- [7]. Keefe, J.W. (1991). "Learning Style; Cognitive and thinking skills". Reston, V A: National Association of Secondary School Principal in *Journal of Language and teaching research*, 3(1).
- [8]. Lowe, M. (2005). *The shibboleths of TEFL: Sense and Nonsense in Language Teaching*. Modern English Teacher.
- [9]. Mark, L. K.& Judith, A. H. (2002). "Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction". Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, USA.
- [10]. Nicky, S. (2004). "Mastering Communication". Palgrave Macmillan.
- [11]. Roberts, W. (1987). "Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun". New York Warner.
- [12]. Ronald, W. (2010). "An Introduction to sociolinguistics". Wiley Blackwell, U.K.
- [13]. William, O., John, A. & Francis, K. (2011). "Contemporary Linguistics: an introduction". Longman Pearson Educational Limited, England.