**Word Study**

**Introduction**

What might the children have done before you do Word Study? Well there might be several different scenarios. You might already have done the Story of Communication and Signs. You might not. They might have come from the Casa knowing about word study and you might just pick it up from there. But there is the possibility you might do the Story of Communication and Signs, and some work on the History of Language, and then you get to Work Study. Just to put things in context for you.

Word Study is literally that – a study of words. When you get the Table of Contents, what’s down there is exactly what it is. We aren’t trying to create fancy titles. One of the trainers used to say just memorise your Index and you’ll be fine.

The Word Study Introduction comes first. The work that comes here is based on the natural development of children and follows the spontaneous work already begun by the child. But in terms of Elementary what we are going to do is this. First we are going to examine the structure of words. We are going to analyse words according to features not accessible to the senses. We are going to classify words according to miscellaneous features, in this case structure. And we are going to explore the relationship between words. And in terms of that exploration, what are the children going to discover?

Well, they are going to discover that you can add to words and you get something that is quite similar but still different. By adding bits at the end, and at the beginning, or in the middle, or joining them together, you get something different. You can in a sense play with words. Think of how language grows. Think of all the words invented in relation to space. For example, the word ‘televise’ in relation to television. Or the word ‘photographer’ – that didn’t exist.

The nature of the work is manipulative. It calls for reasoning and use of the imagination. But what you’ve got to remember is that these children already have the language. They have absorbed it. They don’t have the whole of vocabulary but they have absorbed their language in its grammatical perfection. The materials provide stimulation and satisfaction because they render concrete the grammar that already exists.

Affixes: suffixes and prefixes

What exactly is an affix? It is something you put with a root word, which changes its meaning. The addition at the end is called the suffix and the addition at the beginning is called the prefix. What interests second plane children is that both the suffixes and prefixes come from old English, from Greek and Latin.

For example, we are going to introduce the concept of the root of a word later on this course. Where did this particular word come from? So we always give them the etymology – polygon comes from *poly*, which means many, and *gonia*, which means corner. Multiple comes from *multus* which means many and *plus* which means fold. Etc.

Most affixes don’t stand alone but they do have an implication on meaning. For instance if you put “a” onto something – accept, arrive, assume – it usually means to.

These exercises are all manipulative, and they appeal to the reasoning mind. So we use charts, and we also use coloured moveable alphabets. **This is an exploration of the language the children already have**.