

<u>Pronunciation</u>		<u>Structure</u>
	-A-	
ít'è		(H) ¹
ìt'éele		ì-t'ée-le
	-B-	
ée		
ìfù		(L) ¹
-ṭa/-ṭe		('adverbial suffix) ²
ìfùṭa		(L +) ¹
ée ìfùṭála		ée ì-fùṭá-la
	-A-	
àhù		
ghì/ghí/gí/gí		('independent pronoun')
-à/-è		(suffix) ²
àhùghà		àhù-ghì-à
	-B-	
ìdì		(HL) ¹
-m/-mù		(pronoun suffix) ²
ádìm		á-dì-m
m̀m̀á/m̀m̀a		
ádìm̀m̀á		á-dì-m-m̀á

Basic Sentences

<u>Spelling</u>	<u>English</u>
	-A-
ite	to awaken
I teelee?	Good morning. ('Have you awakened?')
	-B-
e	yes
ifu	to go out
-ta	-motion toward, action reaching its goal
ifuta	to come out
E, 1 futala?	Good morning. ('Have you come out?')
	-A-
ahu	body
gi/ghi	you (singular)
-a	this
Ahu gi a?	How are you? ('Your health?')
	-B-
idi	to be (state, condition or permanent place)
m	I
adi m	I am
nma	a well one, a good one
Adi m nma.	I'm fine.

̀̀ke/kè	
kèghí	kè-ghí
-kwé/-kwá	(conjunctive adverbial suffix)
-ní/-nị/-nú/-nụ	(conjunctive adverbial suffix)
kwéni/kwánị	kwé + nị/kwá + nị
kèghíkweni	kè-ghí-kwe-ni
	-A-
ó-/ó-	(pronoun prefix)
ódińmá	ó-dị-ńmá
ìj'è	
nà-/là-/ná-/lá- ³	(preposition)
òléè	
ìj'elooléè	ì-j'è-la-oléè
	-B-
ìcò	
ácòrom	á-còro-m
ìgá	
ácòromị́gáahya	á-còro-mụ-ìgá-ahya
	-A-
-we/-wa/-wè/-wá	(adverbial suffix 'inceptive')
gàwánị	gàwá-nị
	-B-
ódińmá	ó-dị-ńmá

nke	that, the one, of
ke g1	yours
-kwe	and, too, also
-ni	then, in that case
kwen1	and then - (in response to a previous utterance)
Ke ghi kwen1?	And yours?
	-A-
o/q	he, she, it
Q di nma.	(It is) fine.
ije	to be en route to, to go (to)
na	in, on, at, to
ole	which? what?
Ije n'olee?	Where are you going? ('You en route to which (place)')
	-B-
icq/ichq	to want
acqrq m	I want
iga	to go
Acqrq m iga ahia.	I want to go to market.
	-A-
-we/-wa/-nwe/-nwa	start to ----
Gawan1.	Goodbye. ('Go along then.')
	-B-
Q di nma.	Fine.

Footnotes

¹These formulae refer to the tone class of these verbs--which will be explained below.

²Affixes, which cannot occur alone, are not pronounced separately in build-ups.

³The tone of the preposition na/la is the same as the tone of the following syllable.

Note 1.1 The Writing Systems of Igbo and the Transcription Here Employed:

Unfortunately Igbo does not have a single generally accepted orthography. The two systems in use differ primarily in the number of vowel symbols used ('old' orthography uses six, 'new' orthography eight). Furthermore, the tendency has been to write in terms of the Onitsha dialect. This dialect has a number of differences from the Central dialect and lacks several phonemes which the latter has.

Furthermore, neither writing system employs any sign for nasalization of vowels or consonants, or for aspiration. Similarly several letters in common orthographies stand for several different phonemes, doubled sounds are often written single and an apostrophe is irregularly used to represent assimilations. In addition these orthographies fail to mark tone.

For all these reasons it is necessary to employ in these units a transcription to represent the pronunciation of Igbo. An effort is made in this transcription both to represent all the phonemes of the language and to keep as close as possible to the appearance of written Igbo as the student may later encounter it. This latter criterion causes departure from the 'one phoneme, one letter' principle - a number of phonemes are written with di-graphs.

The alphabet most commonly encountered in Igbo written materials and used in the 'spelling' column of these units is as follows:

a, b, gb (b), d, e, f, g, gh, h, i, j, k, l, m, n,
 ŋ (ñ), o, q, p, kp, r, s, sh, t, u, v, w, y, z, ch (c)
 gw, kw, nw, ny

The 'new' orthography occasionally seen employs also the letters ɛ (for /e/), ɸ (for /ʃ/), ɔ (for /o/) and consistently employs c instead of ch and gb instead of b.

The alphabet used in these lessons employs the sign /' / for aspiration and sub-script marks /, / to represent other departures from the value of the letters in the above alphabet. Our alphabet is thus:

a, b, b', gb, d, d', e, f, g, g', gh, h, i, †, j, j',
 k, k', l, m, n, ŋ, o, q, p, p', k , r, s, sh, t, t',
 †, u, ɸ, v, w, y, z, zh, c, c', gw, gw', hw, kw, kw',
 ŋw, ny

Also employed are the following signs:

/~/ - Nasalization - placed over the first phoneme of a nasalized syllable, i.e. /ñi/. If a syllable commences with a digraph (/kw/ etc.) or a consonant cluster (/hy/ etc.) the nasalization mark is placed over the lower consonant letter, i.e. /kñwa/, /hñfe/, /šhñ/. If both consonant letters are low, it occurs on the first, /gñw'u/. Syllables commencing with a nasal consonant /m/, /n/, /ny/, /ŋ/, /ŋw/ are nasalized throughout and are not marked with /~/.

/´/ - High Tone - placed over the syllabic: /á/, /m´/.

/´/ - Mid Tone - placed over the syllabic: /á/.

/`/ - Low Tone - placed over the syllabic: /à/.

/↑/ - Up-step juncture - a juncture consisting of a raising of the pitch level of the entire utterance.

- Space - indicating juncture between phrases.

Tone is marked only where pitch changes - that is, if a syllable has the same pitch as the preceding syllable within a phrase, no tone mark is employed. Thus:

áçòròmìíjùmífi 'I want to drink water.'

represents a phrase in which the first syllable is high, the second, third and fourth low, the fifth high, the sixth lowered but not low (that is mid), the seventh the same pitch as the sixth (here phonemically high) and the last again lowered - mid. Our marking of tone is thus not strictly phonemic. The phrase is phonemically: /áçòròmìíjùmífi/

Note 1.2 The Phonemes of Igbo:

1.2.1 Vowels:

Igbo has eight vowels in two groups - these groups are the basis for the variations known as 'vowel harmony'.

The eight vowel phonemes are:

	High	Front	Back
Close (tense)		ɪ	u
Open (lax)		ɨ	ʊ
Low			
Close		e	o
Open		a	ɔ

The two groups referred to are the Close Group and the Open Group.

Description of the Vowel Phonemes:

/ɪ/ is a very high, quite tense, front vowel somewhat like the ee of English feet /fiyt/. In the English word there is a glide from the /ɪ/ which we represent by /y/. The Igbo sound is formed without any glide, approximately in the position of the ending point of the English /y/ glide: /'iri/ 'to eat'.

/ɨ/ is a high relatively lax front vowel, more open than /ɪ/ and somewhat like the vowel of English fate /feyt/ but without the glide and higher - toward the vowel of fit /fit/: /'idi/ 'to be'.

/e/ is a lower front relatively tense vowel approximating the vowel of English met /met/ but somewhat higher approaching

the vowel of fate, but, of course, unglided: /éè/ 'coco
yam'.

/a/ is a low more central vowel and is quite lax - much like the vowel of English hot /hat/ but not quite as far back in the mouth. Actually this sound can be approximated by producing a vowel between that of hot and that of hat: /àla/ 'earth, down, country'.

The following back vowels are rounded. Rounding in Igbo is not a pursing of the lips into a fully circular shape but rather a tension producing a more oval shaped opening.

/u/ is a back high rounded vowel higher and more tense than any English vowel. It approximates the vowel sound of English boot /buwt/ but is not glided, being more like the end of the /w/ glide than any other part of that sound: /úyò/ 'house', /írú/ 'to reach' /únù/ 'you (plural)'.

/ɥ/ is a back rounded vowel more lax and more central than /u/. It approximates the vowel sound of English soot /sut/ but is higher and a little more forward in the mouth: /ìkú/ 'to sow' /ìvù/ 'to dig out'.

/o/ is a back rounded vowel lower than /ɥ/ and quite tense. It approximates the vowel of English oats /owts/ but is unglided and exhibits a much flatter rounding of the lips than does the English sound: /úyò/ 'house', /ókwu/ 'speech', /ég'ò/ 'money'.

/ɔ/ is a back rounded lax vowel considerably lower than /o/ and much like the English vowel in caught /kɔt/: /ò dì/ 'he is' /dòktò/ 'physician', /ákwxkwò/ 'book, paper'.

1.2.2 Consonant Phonemes:

/p/ is an unaspirated sound much like the English p in spot: /épe/ 'orange' /òpí/ 'pipe'.

/p'/ is a strongly aspirated sound much like the p of English pit but more strongly aspirate: /ìp'ya/ 'to whip' /p'èni/ 'penny'

- /b/ is an unaspirated bilabial stop much like the English b in able: /íbá/ 'to grow rich', /ùbé/ 'a cry'.
- /b'/ is a strongly aspirated bilabial voiced stop much like the b in English bet but more strongly aspirated than any English b: /íb'á/ 'to scold', /ùb'é/ 'a pear'.
- /t/ is an unaspirated alveolar voiceless stop much like the t in English stop: /íté/ 'to boil soup'.
- /t'/ is an aspirated alveolar voiceless stop much like the t in tin but more strongly aspirate: /ít'è/ 'to wake up'.
- /d/ is an unaspirated voiced alveolar stop much like the English d in do: /ùdọ/ 'rope', /ídù/ 'to follow'.
- /d'/ is an aspirated voiced alveolar stop which is, however, frequently to be heard as a voiceless variant made by a flap of the tongue against the alveolar ridge accompanied by heavy aspiration: /ùd'ọ/ 'noise, racket', /íd'ù/ 'to sew'.
- /c/ is a voiceless alveolo-palatal affricated stop much like the consonant sound of English itch: /ícè/ 'to think'.
- /c'/ is a strongly aspirated voiceless alveolo-palatal affricated stop much like the first ch in church but more strongly aspirated: /íc'è/ 'different'.
- /j/ is a voiced alveolo-palatal affricated stop much like the dg of English bridge: /íjè/ 'to imitate'.
- /j'/ is a strongly aspirated voiced alveolo-palatal affricated stop much like the g of English gist but more strongly aspirated: /íj'è/ 'to go, to travel'.
- /k/ is a voiceless velar unaspirated stop much like the c in English scat: /íkù/ 'to ring, to knock', /íkè/ 'to harvest', /íkè/ 'to divide'.
- /k'/ is a strongly aspirated voiceless velar stop much like the k in English kill but more aspirated: /ík'ù/ 'to sow', /ík'è/ 'to tie up', /ík'è/ 'bottom'.
- /g/ is an unaspirated voiced velar stop much like the g of ago: /ígá/ 'to go', /ígù/ 'to pull out of water'.

- /g'/ is a strongly aspirated voiced velar stop much like the g of get but more aspirate: /íg'á/ 'to grow', /íg'ù/ 'to count'.
- /kw/ is a voiceless unaspirated labialized (lip-rounded) velar stop much like the qu in squill: /íkwé/ 'to agree'.
- /kw'/ is a strongly aspirated voiceless labialized velar stop somewhat like the qu in quit but more aspirate: /íkw'é/ 'to have a miscarriage'.
- /gw/ is an unaspirated voiced labialized velar stop somewhat like the gw of Gwen: /ígwá/ 'to tell'.
- /gw'/ is a strongly aspirated voiced labialized velar stop with no near English equivalent: /éngw'ù/ 'Enugu (city)'.
- /gb/ is an ingressive voiced bi-labial stop unlike anything in English or familiar European languages. It is formed by a closure of the lips followed by a lowering of the glottis (with the vocal chords vibrating) forming a vacuum in the mouth cavity. When the sound is released air is sucked in through the lips with a slight bi-labial friction making a w-like glide: /égbè/ 'gun'.
- /kp/ is an implosive glottalized bi-labial voiceless stop, resembling /gb/ but formed by closure of the glottis and the lips simultaneously. Lowering of the closed glottis produces a vacuum in the mouth cavity followed with a sharply implosive release: /íkpá/ 'to gather', /ákpa/ 'bag', /ékpo/ 'gong'.
- /t̥/ is an alveolar implosive voiceless stop resembling nothing in English. It is formed by making a closure like that for /t/ or /d/ and simultaneously a closure of the glottis, the lowering of which produces a vacuum so that air is sucked in when the tongue closure is released: /àt̥ó/ 'three', /íf̥ùta/ 'to come out'. The release has voicing - here non-contrastive.
- /ʔ/ a glottal stop which need be written only when it occurs medially as in some exclamations: /éʔè/ 'no'.
- /m/ is a bilabial nasal much like English /m/. It occurs in initial position as a syllabic homorganic with a following /m/, /p/, /b/, /kp/ or /gb/: /éj'èm/ 'I'm going', /mma/ 'good'.

- /n/ is an alveolar nasal much like English /n/ but farther forward against the teeth. /n/ occurs as a syllabic in initial position before consonants (in which position there is no contrast between /n/, /ny/ and /ŋ/): /nà/ 'and', /nnà/ 'father'.
- /ny/ is a palatal nasal resembling the /ny/ of English canyon. As a syllabic before palatal stops it is written n: /ényì/ 'friend', /ónye/ 'person', /n̄jókù/ (a proper name).
- /ŋ/ is a velar nasal like the ng of sing. We write the syllabic before velar stops /ŋ/: ñga 'place, spot', /íŋù/ 'to drink', /ŋkwù/ 'oil palm'.
- /ŋw/ a labialized velar nasal which does not occur as a syllabic (hence is probably to be interpreted as a cluster of /ŋ/ plus /w/): /íŋwè/ 'to have', /ŋwóke/ 'male', /ŋŋwáanyị/ 'woman'.
- /f/ is a voiceless labio-dental fricative much like English /f/: /ífù/ 'to go out'.
- /v/ is a voiced labio-dental fricative much like English /v/: /ívù/ 'to dig out'.
- /s/ is a voiceless alveolar grooved fricative much like English /s/: /àsáà/ 'seven'.
- /z/ is a voiced alveolar grooved fricative much like English /z/: /úzò/ 'road', /ízù/ 'to buy'.
- /sh/ is a voiceless palatal fricative much like the sh of English shame: /shínì/ 'shilling'.
- /zh/ is a voiced palatal fricative much like the ge of English beige: /èzhí/ 'compound, yard, household'.
- /gh/ is a voiced velar fricative unlike any English sound. It is formed by a near closure between the back of the tongue and the velum with weak friction: /ghị/ 'you (singular)'.
- /h/ is a voiceless pharyngeal fricative much like the English h in hold but with more friction: /áhù/ 'body'.
- /hw/ is a voiceless labialized pharyngeal fricative much like the sound used by some English speakers in when or where: /áhwà/ 'name'.

- /r/ is a flap of the tongue against the alveolar ridge close behind the upper teeth - quite unlike English /r/ but resembling the common American pronunciation of the t in water. There is a slight hint of a lateral release of this sound with a result that it often sounds to American ears like an l of some kind: /'íri/ 'to eat'.
- /l/ is an alveolar lateral much like English /l/: /òléé/ 'what, which'.
- /w/ is a labial glide much like English /w/: /gàwánɿ/ 'go along then'.
- /y/ is a palatal glide much like English /y/: /úyò/ 'house'.

Note 1.3 Tone:

Every syllable in Igbo has a pitch known as its tone. The actual absolute pitch of syllables, of course, varies with different speakers, styles of speaking and different positions in a phrase. What is important to the system of Igbo is the pitch of a syllable relative to that of adjacent syllables.

Igbo has three significant relative pitch levels - tones:

High / ' /
 Mid / ' /
 Low / ` /

Following silence (at the beginning of a tone phrase) the first tone of the phrase is high or low:

/íj'è/ 'you are going' /ìj'e/ 'are you going'

After a low tone the tone of the next syllable may be low (same as the preceding syllable) or high. High tone following low tone is never as high as a preceding high tone:

/ìj'e/ 'are you going?' /àhù/ 'body, health'

After any non-low tone the ensuing tone may be one of three possibilities: equally high: /áhya/ 'market'; low: /dòktò/ 'physician'; or somewhat lower - that is mid: /ít'è/. Mid tone

thus follows either high or mid tone as a step down from the preceding, but does not follow low tone.

In an Igbo phrase, then, there is a pattern of pitch levels declining throughout the phrase - not steadily but in steps - each time the pitch goes from low to high the new high is a step lower than a former high. Similarly one or more mid tones may occur producing with each a step down from the previous tone. Igbo is thus a 'terraced tone language', as are a number of other African languages.

Changes of tone pattern from the 'basic' tone of an Igbo word are frequent and usually indicate something about the grammatical structure.

Note 1.4

a) Compare the forms:

áḍìmmá	'I'm fine.'
óḍìmmá	'It is fine.'

The portions of these utterances which differ are á----m in the first compared to ó in the second. These portions refer to first and third person singular respectively. We call a- and o- 'pronoun prefixes' and -m a pronoun suffix and we do not mark tone on these forms when we cite them since their tone changes with different types of utterance.

Thus third person 'subject' is represented by a pronoun prefix o (which is pronounced also o in accordance with the rules of vowel harmony).

Similarly first person singular is represented by a pronoun prefix a (or e with different vowel harmony) and by a pronoun suffix m.

Note the first person singular prefix and suffix in:

ácòròmìgàahya

Here the first person pronoun suffix is /-mì/. Actually this

form represents an 'assimilation' of the vowel of $\boxed{/m\dot{y}/^1}$ 'I' to the following vowel. The prevalence of such assimilations in Igbo is the principal reason why there are four columns in each dialogue - the left hand column representing the common pronunciation, the left-center column giving an analysis of the utterance in terms of a more basic shape of each unit in the utterance and the right-center column giving the spelling.

The first person 'subject' form, then, is:

a----m or e----m

before following consonants and

a----m\dot{y}- or e----m\dot{y}-

before following vowels (the hyphen indicating assimilation to the following vowel).

The third person subject' form is a pronoun prefix:

o or ɔ

b) Compare the forms:

ìt'éele 'Have you awakened.'

ìf\dot{y}\dot{t}ála 'Have you come out.'

These two forms illustrate the pronoun prefix for 'you' (singular) which corresponds to the independent pronoun form ghí or ghí . In these two utterances these prefixes are low in tone in affirmative questions.

The second person singular subject form is:

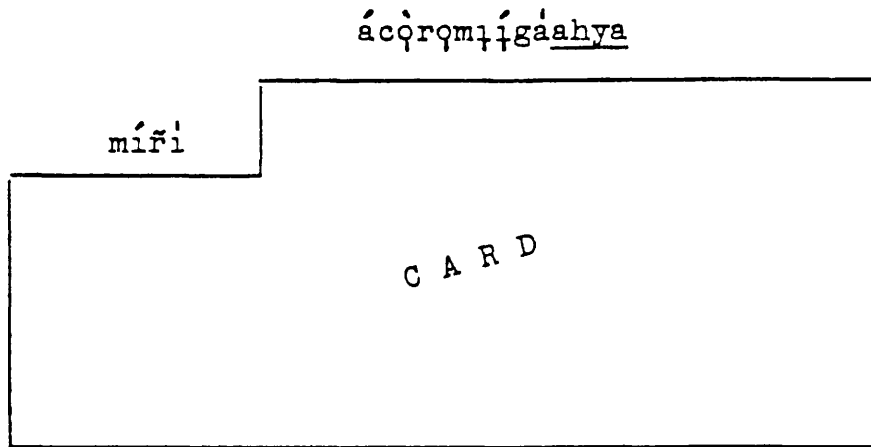
i or ɨ

Instructions for Use of Drills

The drills provided in this course are generally of the pattern - substitution variety. The format of visual presentation

¹When new forms are introduced at any point in these units except in basic dialogues, they are enclosed in boxes.

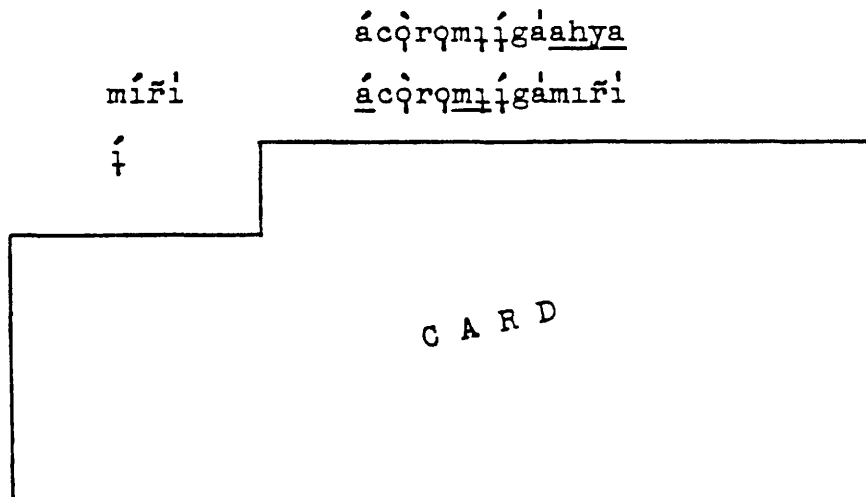
is of two columns (occasionally more) with a 'key word' or phrase on the left, the complete utterance on the right. These columns are so arranged that a 4 x 6 index card suitably notched may be used to cover the response exposing the key word and the pattern sentence thus:



The part of the utterance for which the key word is to be substituted is underlined. Thus in the sentence above, mííí is to be substituted for ahya. The student is thus expected to produce the utterance:

áçòròmíígámííí

After having said this sentence to his or his teacher's satisfaction, the student slips his card down a line thus:



exposing the correct response (which he compares with what he has just uttered), and a new key word, í, which he is to substitute, in this example, for a----mí, producing the sentence:

íçòrìíçámíí

This process is continued until the exercise is finished.

In class with a teacher this process is intended to be done completely orally, with the teacher giving the key word orally and the student producing the response without reference to the printed material.

The tapes which accompany the course are designed with sufficient time between the utterances for the student to produce the utterance after the key word is pronounced and also to repeat the utterance after the recorded voice. Thus this drill as done with the tape should go like this:

Tape Voice	ácòròmííçáahya
Student	ácòròmííçáahya
Tape Voice	ácòròmííçáahya
Student	ácòròmííçáahya
Tape Voice	míí
Student	ácòròmííçámíí
Tape Voice	ácòròmííçámíí
Student	ácòròmííçámíí
Tape Voice	í
Student	íçòrìíçámíí
Tape Voice	íçòrìçámíí
Student	íçòrìíçámíí
Tape Voice	ùçáahà
Student	íçòrìíçáùçáahà
Tape Voice	íçòrìíçáùçáahà

Student ícòrɪ́ígàn̄gáaḥà
 Tape Voice ́
 etc.

Drill 1.1

Useful words:

yá	'he, she, it' (independent pronoun corresponding to the pronoun prefix <u>o</u> or <u>o</u>)
mụ́	'I'
òwere	Owerri, the name of a city
míří	water, stream, body of water, rain
n̄ga	place
áḥà	that
n̄gaáḥà	there

a) Variation Drill on a Basic Sentence

	Word or prefix for Substitution - 'Key Word'	Sentence - 'Pattern'	
1.		ácòrɪ́m̄ígáahya	á-còrɪ́-mụ́-íga'-ahya
2.	míří (water)	ácòrɪ́m̄ígámíří	á-còrɪ́-mụ́-íga-míří
3.	́	ícòrɪ́ígámíří	í-còrɪ́-íga'-míří
4.	n̄gaáḥà	ícòrɪ́ígán̄gáaḥà	í-còrɪ́-íga'-n̄ga-áḥà
5.	́	ó-còrɪ́ígán̄gáaḥà	ó-còrɪ́-íga'-n̄ga-áḥà

- | | | | |
|----|---------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 6. | òwere | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-òwere | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-òwerre |
| 7. | á----mụ | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-òwere | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-òwerre |
| 8. | áhya | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-ahya | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-ahya |

b) Variation Drill on the same sentence with pronoun substitutions given in 'basic' form - the student is to produce the proper pronoun prefix/suffix:

- | | | | |
|----|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-ahya | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-ahya |
| 2. | míří | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-míří | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-míří |
| 3. | yá | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-míří | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-míří |
| 4. | òwere | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-òwere | ó-còrọ́-í-gá-òwere |
| 5. | ghí | í-còrọ́-í-gá-òwere | í-còrọ́-í-gá-òwere |
| 6. | ngááhà | í-còrọ́-í-gá-ngááhà | í-còrọ́-í-gá-ngá-áhà |
| 7. | mụ | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-ngááhà | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-ngá-áhà |
| 8. | áhya | á-còrọ́m-í-gá-ahya | á-còrọ́-mụ-í-gá-ahya |

Drill 1.2 Phonetic Drills on Vowels /ɪ/, /ɨ/, /u/ and /ʉ/

a) /ɪ/ initially before various consonants

íbè	to cry	íj'è	to be en route to
íb'ò	to accuse	íkpe	judgement
ígbo	Igbo	írí	ten
ídè	to write	ìs'ó	five
íd'òwe	to discard	íshí	head
ífè	to pass	ìte	pot
ígùzo	to stop	ít'è	to awaken
íghé	to fry	ívu	load
ífé	Ife (place)	íwe	anger
íhũ	face	íyí	stream

ízu	week	íkwe'	to agree
ízhì	to deliver (message)	ínwé'	to have
íce'	to await	ínyé'	to give
ígwe'	bicycle		

b) /ɪ/ finally

íbi	to live	íshì	head
dí	husband	ítìì	to put into
jí	yam	íyì	stream
mířì	water	ózhì	message
p'èni	penny	ényì	friend
írì	to eat		

c) /ɪ/ initially before various consonants

íbò	to break (of day)	ílà'	to go home
íb'à	to go in	ímù	to give birth to
ígba'	to run	ínò	to stay
ídì	to be	ípà	to carry
íd'à	to fall	íkpo'	to call
ífù	to go out	írù	to work
íga'	to go	ísì	to say
íg'ù	to read	íshì	to lie
íghà	to lie	ívù	to dig out
íhò	to choose	íwù	to be
íjù	to ask	íyò	to sift
íkò	to cultivate	ízù	to buy
ík'ù	to sow	ícò	to want

íc'á to be ripe ìhŵà to be pleasant

ìgwà to tell ìkwù to pay

/ɪ/ finally

ìdì to be àshì a lie

sì that ñtākírì small

kwánì and then m̀m̀íí wine

ányì we ñkuzhì teaching

/u/ initially

ùb'é pear ùnù you (plural)

ùgbúa now ùrù gain, benefit

údi Udi (place) úyò house

ùjíshì nighttime úkwu big

únèfè banana

/u/ finally

nsògbú trouble úkwu big

írù to reach ìgbù to kill

ùnù you (plural) ìkù to dip up

ívù to be fat tútu before

jùunu June ìzù to meet

cúkwu God ìgwù to swim

/ɥ/ initially

ùbòcì day ùkó scarcity

ùgbọ powered vehicle ùm̀ù offspring

ùfọ̀dụ some ùkpa type, brand

ùghá falsehood ùfá sleep

ùt'út'ù	morning	ùc'á	white
úzò	road	úkwo	foot, leg
úcó	sweet	úgwò	debt

h) /ụ/ finally

ífù	to go out	ínù	to drink
íg'ù	to read	ìkpù	to entertain
ìhù	to see	òfù	work
ìjù	to ask	ìwù	to be
ìkù	to knock	ìzù	to buy
ìk'ù	to sow	ìgwù	to finish
ìmù	to learn	ìkwù	to pay
ìnù	to hear		

Note 1.5 Assimilation

Note these utterances as they appeared in the Pronunciation and Structure columns:

àhùghaà	àhù-ghì-à̀
òlòót'u	òléé-ot'u
òléébìj'è	òléé-ebe-ì-j'e
j'òót'uoma	j'èé-ot'u-oma

The differences between the representations of these utterances in the right-hand column and in the left are largely matters of vowel assimilation although there is also represented a tendency for a three-vowel sequence to contract to only two in length.

Assimilation is very widespread in Igbo and tends to take place from left to right (on the written page) the first-occurring sound tending to assimilate to the following one.

The above paragraphs speak of a 'tendency' to assimilate since no broad generalizations can cover the varying degrees of assimilation which occur. In general, high vowels assimilate less readily than low ones, with /ì/ rarely assimilated at all. However, this matter of assimilation is not entirely one of phonology since expected assimilations can be observed not to take place for no other apparent reason than that the meaning of the resultant utterance would be ambiguous. Until more research has been done on this matter the student is advised to imitate assimilations as marked in the lessons and heard from the teacher and to note that failure to assimilate correctly marks halting and labored style but does not usually inhibit communication.