



جامعة تكريت

كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

المرحلة الثالثة

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The Direct Method

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Introduction

As with the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method is not new. Its principles have been applied by language teachers for many years. Most recently, it was revived as a method when the goal of instruction became learning how to use another language to communicate. Since the Grammar-Translation Method was not very effective in preparing students to use the target language communicatively, the Direct Method became popular. The Direct Method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed. In fact, the Direct Method receives its name from the fact that meaning is to be conveyed directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids, with no recourse to the students' native language. We will now try to come to an understanding of the Direct Method by observing an English teacher using it in a scuola media (lower-level secondary school) class in Italy. The class has 30 students who attend English class for one hour, three times a week. The class we observe is at the end of its first year of English language instruction in a scholar media.

Principles

1 The students read aloud a passage about the geography of the United States of America. Reading in the target language should be taught from the beginning of language instruction; however, the reading skill will be developed through practice with speaking. Language is primarily speech. Culture consists of more than the fine arts (e.g. in this lesson we observed the students studying geography and cultural attitudes).

2 The teacher points to a part of the map after each sentence is read. Objects (e.g. realia or pictures) present in the immediate classroom environment should be used to help students understand the meaning.

3 The teacher uses the target language to ask the students if they have a question. The students use the target language to ask their questions. The native language should not be used in the classroom.

4 The teacher answers the students' questions by drawing on the whiteboard or giving examples. The teacher should demonstrate, not explain or translate. It is desirable that students make a direct association between the target language form and meaning.

5 The teacher asks questions about the map in the target language, to which the students reply in a complete sentence in the target language. Students should learn to think in the target language as soon as possible. Vocabulary is acquired more naturally if students use it in full sentences, rather than memorizing word lists.

6 Students ask questions about the map. The purpose of language learning is communication (therefore students need to learn how to ask questions as well as answer them).

7 The teacher works with the students on the pronunciation of 'Appalachian.' Pronunciation should be worked on right from the beginning of language instruction.

8 The teacher corrects a grammar error by asking the students to make a choice. Self-correction facilitates language learning.

9 The teacher asks questions about the students; students ask each other questions. Lessons should contain some conversational activity—some opportunity for students to use language in real contexts. Students should be encouraged to speak as much as possible.

10 The students fill in blanks with prepositions practiced in the lesson. Grammar should be taught inductively. There may never be an explicit grammar rule given.

11 The teacher dictates a paragraph about United States geography. Writing is an important skill, to be developed from the beginning of language instruction.

12 All of the lessons of the week involve United States geography. The syllabus is based

Reviewing the Principles

Now let us consider the principles of the Direct Method as they are arranged in answer to the 10 questions posed earlier:

1 What are the goals of teachers who use the Direct Method?

Teachers who use the Direct Method intend that students learn how to communicate in the target language. In order to do this successfully, students should learn to think in the target language.

2 What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students?

Although the teacher directs the class activities, the student role is less passive than in the Grammar-Translation Method. The teacher and the students are more like partners in the teaching–learning process.

3 What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

Teachers who use the Direct Method believe students need to associate meaning with the target language directly. In order to do this, when the teacher introduces a new target language word or phrase, he demonstrates its meaning through the use of realia, pictures, or pantomime; he never translates it into the students' native language. Students speak in the target language a great deal and communicate as if they were in real situations. In fact, the syllabus used in the Direct Method is based upon situations (for example, one unit would consist of language that people would use at a bank, another of the language that

they use when going shopping) or topics (such as geography, money, or the weather). Grammar is taught inductively; that is, the students are presented with examples and they figure out the rule or generalization from the examples. An explicit grammar rule may never be given. Students practice vocabulary by using new words in complete sentences.

4 What is the nature of student–teacher interaction? What is the nature of student–student interaction?

The initiation of the interaction goes both ways, from teacher to students and from students to teacher, although the latter is often teacher-directed. Students converse with one another as well.

5 How are the feelings of the students dealt with?

There are no principles of the method which relate to this area.

6 How is language viewed? How is culture viewed? Language is primarily spoken, not written. Therefore, students study common, everyday speech in the target language. They also study culture consisting of the history of the people who speak the target language, the geography of the country or countries where the language is spoken, and information about the daily lives of the speakers of the language.

Reviewing the Techniques

there are answers to the 10 questions with which you agreed? Then the following techniques may also be useful. Of course, even if you did not agree with all the answers, there may be some techniques of the Direct Method you can adapt to your own approach to teaching. The following expanded review of techniques provides you with some details, which will help you do this. • Reading Aloud Students take turns reading sections of a passage, play, or dialogue out loud. At the end of each student's turn, the teacher uses gestures, pictures, realia, examples, or

other means to make the meaning of the section clear.

- **Question and Answer Exercise** This exercise is conducted only in the target language. Students are asked questions and answer in full sentences so that they practice new words and grammatical structures. They have the opportunity to ask questions as well as answer them.
- **Getting Students to Self-correct** The teacher of this class has the students self-correct by asking them to make a choice between what they said and an alternative answer he supplied. There are, however, other ways of getting students to self-correct. For example, a teacher might simply repeat what a student has just said, using a questioning voice to signal to the student that something was wrong with it. Another possibility is for the teacher to repeat what the student said, stopping just before the error. The student then knows that the next word was wrong.
- **Conversation Practice** The teacher asks students a number of questions in the target language, which they have to understand to be able to answer correctly. In the class we observed, the teacher asked individual students questions about themselves. The questions contained a particular grammar structure. Later, the students were able to ask each other their own questions using the same grammatical structure.
- **Fill-in-the-blanks Exercise** This technique has already been discussed in the Grammar-Translation Method, but differs in its application in the Direct Method. All the items are in the target language; furthermore, no explicit grammar rule would be applied. The students would have induced the grammar rule they need to fill in the blanks from examples and practice with earlier parts of the lesson.
- **Dictation** The teacher reads the passage three times. The first time the teacher reads it at a normal speed, while the students just listen. The second time he reads the passage phrase by phrase, pausing long enough to allow students to write down what they have heard. The last time the teacher again reads at a normal speed, and students check their work.
- **Map Drawing** The class included one example of a technique used to give students listening comprehension practice. The students were given a map with the geographical featu