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The Direct Method

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1436 A.H

2015 A.D

Dedication



To

My Family , My Friends

And My Teachers

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Acknowledgments



I would like to express my thanks to all my teachers in English department for helping me all the time . I also would like to express my thanks to my family who always encourage me .

1. Introduction

The direct method is not new . It's 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 not be conveyed directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids , with no recourse to the student's native language (Diller 1978) .

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 second – ary 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 scuola media . (Freeman , 2011 : 3) .

1.1. General Backgrounds of the Direct Method

The term natural approach (or natural method) was first used in the nineteenth century to describe teaching methods , such as the direct method , that attempted to mirror the processes of learning a first language . The direct method is called by this name because of the fact that the meanings of the target language forms are related directly with the target language and not with the interference of the mother tongue . The approach is also called natural , because learners are expected to learn their second language in the same natural way as they learned their mother tongue . Translation and grammar explanations are not acceptable activities in this method . learners are exposed to sequences of actions , and the spoken form is taught before the written form . (Zaree , 2000:87).

1.2. The Principles of the Direct Method

- 1- The purpose of language learning is communication therefore students need to learn how to ask question as well as answer them .
- 2- Pronunciation should be worked on right from the beginning of language instruction .
- 3- Self – correction facilitates language learning .
- 4- The syllabus is based on situations or topic , not usually on linguistic structure . (freeman , 2011 : 3) .
- 5- Class room instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language .
- 6- Grammer was taught inductively .
- 7- Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught .
- 8- New teaching points were introduced orally . (Richards and rodgers , 2001 : 12) .
- 9- Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught .
- 10- Both speech and listening comprehension were taught .
- 11- Correct pronunciation and grammer were emphasized .

- 12- New teaching points were taught through modeling and practice . (Brown , 2001 : 21) .
- 13- A foreign language can be learnt in the same way as the native language is learnt .
- 14- Language is fundamentally oral. writing is substenary to speech.
- 15- Language learning chievely involves the acquisition of the four skills : listening , speaking , reading and writing . (Al-Hamash , 1985 : 70) .

1.3. Observations of the Direct Method

- 1- The students read aloud a passage about United states geography,
- 2- The teacher points to a part of the map after each sentence is read,
- 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 ,
- 4- The teacher answers the student's question by drawing on the blackboard or giving examples ,
- 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 ,
- 6- Student ask questions about the map,
- 7- The teacher works with the students on the pronunciation of ' Appalachian' ,
- 8- The teacher corrects a grammar error by asking the students to make a choice ,
- 9- The teacher asks questions about the students ; students ask each other questions ,

10- The students fill in blanks with prepositions practiced in the lesson ,

11- The teacher dictates a paragraph about United States geography and ,

12- All of the lessons of the week involve United States geography .

(Freeman , 2011 : 3) .

1.4. The Goals of the 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 (Freeman , 2011:30).

1.5. The Role of the Teacher

Although the teacher directs the class activities , the students' role is less passive than the Grammar – Translation method . The teacher and the students are more like partners in the teaching – learning process . (Freeman , 2011:30) .

Learner roles in an instructional system are closely linked to the teacher's status and function . Teacher roles are similarly related ultimately both to assumption about language and language learning at the level of approach , Some methods are totally dependent on the teacher as a source of knowledge and direction ; others see the teacher's role as catalyst , consultant , guide , and model for learning ; still others try to “teacher – proof ” the instructional system by limiting teacher initiative and by building instructional content and direction into texts or lesson plans . Teacher and learner roles define the type interaction characteristic of classrooms in which a particular method is being used .

Teacher roles in methods are related to the following issues : (a) the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill , whether that of practice director , counselor , or model , for example ; (b) the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place ; (c) the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught ; and (d) the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners . methods typically depend critically on

teacher roles and their realizations In the classical Audiolingual method, the teacher is regarded as the primary source of language and of language learning. But less teacher-directed learning may still demand very specific and sometimes even more demanding roles for the teacher. The role of the teacher in the silent way, for example, depends on thorough training and methodological initiation. Only teachers who are thoroughly sure of their role and the concomitant learner's role will risk departure from the security of traditional textbook-oriented teaching. (Richards, 2001:28).

1.6. The Role of The Student

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. (Freeman, 2011: 30).

The design of an instructional system will be considerably influenced by how learners are regarded . A method reflects explicit or implicit re-sponses to questions concerning the learner's contribution to the learning process . This is seen in the types of activities learners carry out , the degree of control learners have over the content of learning , the patterns of learner groupings adopted , the degree to which learner influence the learning of others , and the view of the learner as processor , performer , initiator , problem solver . (Richards , 2001:28).

2. The Application of the Direct Method

The five hypotheses of Krashen's theory of language learning have many implications for language teaching. Some of these implications are listed below.

1. As much comprehensible input as possible must be presented to the students in a language learning class. What the teacher says must be understandable by his students.
2. Whatever helps comprehension is important. Visual aids are useful, as is exposure to a wide range of vocabulary rather than the study of syntactic structure and rules.
3. The focus in the classroom should be on listening and reading; speaking should be allowed to emerge as students come to realize that they are at a point in their learning where they can easily say what you mean.
4. In order to lower the affective filter, students' work should center on meaningful communication rather than on form; input should be interesting. It should contribute to a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Students will not learn if they are not affectively

ready , even through they cognitive abilities may be strong .
(Zaree , 2002:92) .

2.1. Language Skills are Emphasided

Vocabulary is emphasided over grammar . Although work on all four skills (reading , writing , speaking and listening) occurs from the start , oral communication is seen as basic . Thus the reading and writing exercises are based upon what the students practice orally first. Pronunciation also receives attention right from the beginning of acourse . (Freeman , 2011:31) .

2.2. Comparison Between Grammar – Translation Method and Direct Method

| Grammar . T . Method | Direct Method |
|---|---|
| <p>1- A fundamental purpose of learning a language is to enable students to read literature and write it .</p> <p>2- The teacher is authority in the classroom . it is very important that students get the correct answer .</p> <p>3- It is possible to find native language equivalents for all target language words .</p> <p>4- It is important for student to learn about grammar or form of the target language .</p> | <p>1. The purpose of language is communication therefore students need to learn how to ask questions as well as answer them .</p> <p>2. The teacher should demonstrate , not explain or translate .</p> <p>3. The native language should not be used in the classroom.</p> <p>4. The syllabus is based on situation or topics , not usually on linguistic structure .</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>5- Deductive application of an explicit grammar rule is useful pedagogical technique .</p> | <p>5. Grammar should be taught inductively . There may never been an explicit grammar rule given .</p> |
| <p>6- The primarily skills to be developed are reading and writing .</p> | <p>6. Speaking is an important skill , to be developed from the beginning of the language instruction .</p> |
| <p>7- Language learning provides good mental exercise .</p> | <p>7. Learning another language also involves learning how speakers of that language live .</p> |
| <p>8- Little attention is given to speaking , and listening and almost none to pronunciation .</p> | <p>8. Pronunciation should be worked on right from the beginning of language instruction .</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>9- An important goal is for students to be able to translate each language into the other .</p> <p>10- It is an important for students to learn about the form of the target language .</p> <p>(Freeman , 2011:28)</p> | <p>9. An important goal is for students to be able to speak in target language .</p> <p>10. Self – correction facilitates language learning.</p> <p>(Brown , 2001 :73)</p> |
|--|---|

3. Techniques of the Direct Method

Techniques may also be useful . of cours , even if you did not agree with all the answers , there may be some techninques of the direct method you can adapt to your own approach to teaching . The following expanded review of techninques provides you with some details which will help you do this . (Freeman , 2011:30).

3.1. Reading Aloud

Students take turns reading sections of a passage , play , or dialog outloud . 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 . (Rivers , 1973 : 56).

3.2. Question And Answer Exercis

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 . (ibid , 30) .

3.3. 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 student 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 knows that the next word was wrong .(Freeman , 2000 : 30) .

3.4. Conversation Practice

The teacher asks students a number of questions in the target language , which the students have to understand to be able to answer correctly . In the class 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 . (Finocchiaro , 1987 : 8) .

3.5. Fill in the Blank 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 ; further more , 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 (Rivers,1981:35).

3.6. Dication

The teacher reads the passage three items . The first time the teacher reads it at anormal 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 anormal spped , and students check their work . (internet).

3.7. 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 features unnamed . Then the teacher gave the students directions such as the following , find the mountain range in the west . write the words " Rocky Mountains " across the mountain range . He gave instructions for all the geographical features of the united states so that students would have a completely labeled map if they followed his instructions correctly . The students then instructed the teacher to do the same thing with a map he had drawn on the blackboard . Each student could have a turn giving the teacher instructions for finding and labeling one geographical feature . (Harmer , 2007 : 6) .

3.8. Paragraph Writing

The teacher in this class asked the students to write a paragraph in their own words on the major geographical features of the united states . They could have done this from memory , or they could have used the reading passage in the lesson as a model . (Freeman , 2011:30) .

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that the direct method is one of the methods that is used for teaching foreign languages : The direct method is not new , 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 to communicatively . 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 . Classroom environment should be used to help students understand the meaning . The teacher should demonstrate , not explain or translate . It is desirable that students make a direct association between the target language and meaning . 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 list .

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