

Pedagogy and Curriculum Innovations

Third Year 2020-2021

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First Semester

Week 2:

Lecture 2:

The Direct Method



Introduction

As the Grammar-Translation Method failed to prepare students to use the target language communicatively, the Direct Method flourished as its goal of instruction concentrated on learning how to use another language to communicate. The Direct Method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed. In fact, it 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.



DM: Principles 1

1. 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.
2. Objects (e.g. realia or pictures) present in the immediate classroom environment should be used to help students understand the meaning.
3. The native language should not be used in the classroom.
4. 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. 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.



DM: Principles 2

6. The purpose of language learning is communication (therefore students need to learn how to ask questions as well as answer them).
7. Pronunciation should be worked on right from the beginning of language instruction.
8. Self-correction facilitates language learning.
9. 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. Grammar should be taught inductively. There may never be an explicit grammar rule given.
11. Writing is an important skill, to be developed from the beginning of language instruction.



DM: Principles 3

12. The syllabus is based on situations or topics, not usually on linguistic structures.

13. Learning another language also involves learning how speakers of that language live.



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.

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.



What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

1. Students need to associate meaning with the target language directly. To achieve this
2. When the teacher introduces a new target language word or phrase, he demonstrates its use with realia, pictures, or pantomime; he never translates it into the students' native language.
3. Students speak in the target language a great deal and communicate as if they were in real situations.
4. The syllabus 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).



What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

5. 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.

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.



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.



What areas of language are emphasized? What language skills are emphasized?

Vocabulary is emphasized 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 a course.

What is the role of the students' native language?

The students' native language should not be used in the classroom.

How is evaluation accomplished?

Students' performance might be evaluated by interviewing them orally or by asking them to write a paragraph about something they have studied.

How does the teacher respond to student errors?

The teacher, employing various techniques, tries to get students to self-correct whenever possible.



DM: Techniques 1

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.



DM: Techniques 2

Getting Students to Self-correct

The teacher 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.



DM: Techniques 3

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.



DM: Techniques 4

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.



DM: Techniques 5

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.



DM: Techniques 6

Map Drawing

The students are given listening comprehension practice. The students are 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 board. Each student could have a turn giving the teacher instructions for finding and labeling one geographical feature.



DM: Techniques 7

Paragraph Writing

The teacher asks the students to write a paragraph in their own words on the major geographical features of the country they are exploring its geography. They could have done this from memory, or they could have used the reading passage in the lesson as a model.



DM: Merits (Advantages) 1

1. The focus is on Oral Practice. Therefore, the pronunciation improves.
2. In teaching vocabulary such as words, idioms, this method is good.
3. As there is direct relation between thought and expression, it helps the learners in having good fluency. Using direct method, a teacher helps students having good command over English.
4. In this method, the teacher proceeds from particular to general and from concrete to abstract.



DM: Merits (Advantages) 2

5. It makes the teaching English easier and more pleasant. A teacher uses various images/ pictures to illustrates his/her point.
6. This method creates the suitable environment for learning English Language.
7. As the unit of speech in Direct Method is a sentence, students learn to speak complete sentences without any hesitation. So they get confidence with command over good English.



DM: Demerits (Disadvantages) 1

1. Owing to over-emphasis on oral practice, the other skills namely reading and writing are ignored to a great extent.
2. Average and below average students, especially from rural background, find difficulty to grasp the things taught via this method.
3. This is an expensive method as the teacher is to use some aids for teaching.
4. For this method, competent teachers must be there. But there is the dearth of good English teachers in the country. Incompetent teachers can't use this method successfully.
5. In the early stage of learning, this method is completely unsuccessful.
6. The background at home must also be foreign language friendly for this method. The students whose parents can speak English well get more benefit from this method.

