



A Sample Reading Lesson

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Most scholars would agree that a good language class is a goal-oriented class, and a goal-oriented class characterizes two main features: objectives and activities. **Objectives** determine the terminal behaviors towards which the class activities are directed. **Activities** refer to various organized drills and guided participation of the learners towards the accomplishment of the desired objectives.

In a typical language-class, a distinction is to be made between broad and specific objectives. The broad objective is the ultimate goal of the class which is achieved through mastering several specific objectives. To illuminate the idea, an example might be helpful. "Reading skill" is considered as a broad objective, of which a good mastery is not possible unless the learner achieves the various components of the reading skill, i.e. verbalization, pronunciation, intonation, stress, comprehension, and new vocabulary satisfactorily. Each of these aspects constitutes a specific objective as far as the pedagogical purposes are concerned, and each specific objective requires special activities and drills to be achieved.

It is assumed in this paper that "reading skill" is usually handled as a general objective in most of the language classes without taking into account any specific objective. In this regard, we postulate at least three essential specific objectives in the teaching of reading. They are (a) verbalization of a given text with correct pronunciation, intonation, stress, and reasonable fluency, (b) comprehension of concepts and ideas of the text, and (c) learning the new vocabulary incorporated in the text. Separation of these objectives means that a language teacher should give equal weight to every aspect of reading rather than value the **meaning** over other aspects. In fact, without mastering all three aspects, mastery of reading will not be achieved.

The main purpose of this article, then, is to propose a "Model" for the teaching of "reading". This model experimentally has proved to be successful both in in-service training programs and in high-school English classes. Although the model is based on the tenets of the audio-lingual method, the author has adapted it to be applicable to a typical English class in Iran.

To illustrate the implementation of this model in an English class, the author will apply it to a reading text as a sample reading-lesson.

The main elements of this model are: (1) objectives, (2) activities, and (3) instructions which are briefly introduced below.

1 - **Objectives.** The objectives of this model are specific such as learning a particular grammatical element, comprehension, new elements of the target sound-system, new vocabulary and so on. However, for the purposes of this article only one aspect of reading, i.e. verbalization and fluency in reading with correct stress and intonation will be focused upon.

2 - **Activities.** Activities refer to a wide variety of oral drills designed to develop the desired terminal behaviors in the students. These activities, which usually are conducted in a sequential order, fall into three stages of (a) recognition, (b) habit-formation, and (c) production.

It should be mentioned that prior to performing these activities, the students ought to be sufficiently motivated in order to follow the exercises enthusiastically. For this reason, we assume a preliminary stage which is hereafter referred to as the "motivation stage".

3 - **Instructions.** The last element of the proposed model is called "instructions". Instructions are appropriate directions which should be carefully and properly given to the class before any type of activity is carried out. The teacher should familiarize

در این مقاله، نویسنده سعی دارد «مهارت خواندن» زبان انگلیسی را برای تدریس مؤثرتر، به سه «هدف خاص» متمایز سازد و بر این باور است که تدریس موفقیت‌آمیز هر یک، مستلزم تمرینات کلاسی و فعالیت‌های آموزشی ویژه‌ای می‌باشد. آنگاه برای منظور فوق، یک «مدل تدریس» پیشنهاد می‌کند که مبتنی بر اصول روش «شنیداری - گفتاری» است، اما برای کاربرد عملی در کلاسهای زبان در ایران جرح و تعدیل یافته است. سپس، نگارنده، چگونگی کاربرد مدل پیشنهادی را (به عنوان نمونه) در تدریس اولین درس کتاب انگلیسی اول دبیرستان نشان می‌دهد تا الگوی روشنی باشد برای دبیرانی که بخواهند این شیوه را برای تدریس خواندن در کلاسهای خود بکار برند.

himself with a number of useful instructions. Good instructions which are usually short, clear, and appropriate should be given to the class exactly at a proper time. Using instructions, the teacher can and should avoid any lengthy explanation. Furthermore, students learn how to do what they practice. They would also be bored by long explanations and may lose their interest.

Based on the foregoing explanations, an outline of the proposed "Teaching Model" follows:

A Sample Teaching Model

I - Specific Objectives

II - Activities

A - Motivation Stage (Instructions and Activities)

B - Main Stages

1 - Recognition (Instructions and Activities)

2 - Habit - Formation

3 - Production

The specific objective we intend to achieve in this sample-lesson, as mentioned before, is the teaching of the first component of the reading skill, namely, reading aloud of a sample text with correct pronunciation and suitable fluency¹. The sample text selected for this purpose is the reading portion of the first lesson of "Graded English 1" being taught at the first grade of high-schools in Iran. The content of the text is about "New Schools". Now it is time to apply the activities of each stage towards the attainment of the assigned specific objective.

A - Motivation. The activities for motivating the class takes different forms. It is a matter of personal taste and innovation of individual teacher rather than a set of fixed rules. For the purposes of this sample - lesson, however, two different drills are selected as follows:

Drill A. The teacher asks a few personalized questions from the students. The questions should center around relevant facts about the "new school"

of the students and should be thoughtfully prepared in advance. Before starting the drill, giving a suitable instruction should never be forgotten. The appropriate instruction for this purpose may be a statement like, "Please, answer to my questions about yourself!". Then for each question he addresses a student. Questions such as followings are suggested here.

- 1 - What is the name of your last school?
- 2 - What is your new school called?
- 3 - Is your new school far from your house?
- 4 - How do you come to school every morning?
- 5 - Do you like your new school?
- 6 - Why do you like your new school?
- 7 - What subjects do you study?
- 8 - What subject do you like most?
- 9 - Would you like your English teacher to speak English in class?
- 10 - Do you like to learn to speak English?
- 11 - Why is the English language useful for a student?
- 12 - have you seen any old friends in this school?
- 13 - Is there any play-ground in this school?
- 14 - What kinds of laboratories are there in this school?

Drill B.

In this type of drill the teacher tries to motivate the students by describing a picture from the book which illustrates a relevant teaching situation. For this purpose, he may give the following instruction: "Open your books at page two, and look at the picture!".

Then he explains the picture by using sentences similar to the following ones:

- 1 - That man sitting at the table is Mr Saba.
- 2 - That woman is Mrs Saba.
- 3 - The boy standing between Mr and Mrs Saba is their son.

- 8 - There are only four members in this family.
- 9 - They are all looking at a book.
- 10 - They are also talking about the new school.

Now the class is supposed to be prepared for the new reading lesson, and then the teacher starts with the main stages of the activities as follows.

B - 1. Recognition

This stage places a great emphasis on the auditory discrimination of the new sounds, stress patterns, intonation variations of the sentences in the text, and the fluent verbalization of the text. Without this stage, students will not be able to master the correct pronunciation. At this stage, the students should be exposed to the linguistic materials by the ear but not by the eye. Now, the teacher provides an instruction such as, "Please, close your books and listen to me carefully!"

The teacher then reads the lesson sentence by sentence. If some sentences are too long, he reads them in thought groups (clause by clause or phrase by phrase) but not word by word. It should be noted that the teacher himself ought to be capable of reading the text with correct stress and intonation, accurate pronunciation, and reasonable speed. His voice should be loud enough so that all the students can hear him clearly. He should frequently look at different sections of the class and observe every individual as though he is directly communicating with him.

The teacher may give a summary of the reading text instead of reading through it particularly when the text is rather long. He may, meanwhile, make use of a large picture for illustration purposes.

B - 2. Habit-Formation

Achieving a desired behavioral objective is, in fact, forming a new habit which requires much repetition. The teacher, however, is responsible to allocate enough time and energy on giving suitable and sufficient drills in this stage. Kenneth Chastain (1971 P.245) on this respect maintains, "This mouthing of sounds and manipulation of the forms is necessary 'fundamental' stage before going on to 'real' language practice."

By sufficient repetition, students will acquire not only a habit of verbalizing the materials offered to them but also a good retention of them. This is why this series of activities is referred to as mimicry-memorization activities.

In order to conduct repetition drills, the

teacher usually gives the class a simple instruction similar to this one, "Repeat after me, please!". Then he reads the text to the students in thought groups, and the students will repeat in chorus. The teacher should have a good control on individuals to make sure that everyone repeats loudly and properly.

Sometimes one or some of the advanced students may be assigned to do the reading activity instead of the teacher. This may create some variety and prevent the class from losing its spirit and interest.

B - 3. Production

The activities in the former stages were nothing but preparations for this stage. In this stage, the students can accomplish the desired objective of language usage, namely reading aloud with proper pronunciation and acceptable fluency. Now, the students should have opportunity to read the text and practice it freely. For this practice, the teacher may use such an instruction, "Please, open your books at page one!"

Then the teacher asks a student to read the first six to eight sentences (or the first paragraph as the text may require). Meanwhile, he corrects the student's mistakes, if any. The advanced students are preferable to read before the weak ones to facilitate the class participation. The teacher, however, asks other students to continue reading one after another until he makes sure that they can read fluently.

The teacher may also promote the learning by asking the students to read the text silently by themselves and prepare them for a fast-reading contest which may be held on the same day or in the next meeting. A reward such as a good grade or a book could be very effective in this case.

1 - The teaching of the "new vocabulary" and the "comprehension" components have been disregarded in this article since each one is a separate specific objective and requires a special sample-lesson.

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