

A TEACHING MODEL

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The teaching of English as a foreign language has not been successful in schools in Iran because of some impeding factors. One of the most influential factors is believed to be the teaching strategies and instructional traditions employed by the teachers.

The fact is that the English teachers either are not familiar with scientific methods, or they cannot apply them in the classroom effectively even if they are very well informed. Thus the outcome of the teaching of both groups are inevitably the same. It is obvious that knowing

about the methods does not necessarily secure their adequate application. That is, knowing about approaches is necessary but not sufficient for effective teaching.

To help teachers to use methodic techniques in EFL classes properly, a "Teaching Model" has been developed. The Model has been experimented within the last few years in about fourteen in-service training programs in several provinces of Iran. Furthermore, it has been practiced in the "teaching - practice courses I and II" at the University for Teacher Education in Teheran.

The "Teaching Model" in question is flexible enough to be used in teaching at the elementary stage audiolingually and at the intermediate and the post-intermediate levels cognitively. In other words, its teaching efficiency ranges from pure habit-formation approach to cognitive-habit approach. The application of the functional or communicative approach, however, is to be left for the high-school graduates who enter the advanced language learning programs for different purposes.

The purpose of this paper, then, will be to introduce the "Teaching Model" which has adopted many techniques from audiolingual and cognitive approaches and has been adapted to the teaching of English as a foreign language in the guidance and high schools in Iran.

It is postulated that in a typical and desirable TEFL class at elementary or intermediate level the objectives of teaching would be either to develop a specific language skill such as (1) listening comprehension, (2) speaking, (3) reading comprehension, (4) writing; or to teach a language component of the target language, namely, (5) pronunciation, (6) structure, and (7) new vocabulary. Learning each and any of these seven language skills or components can be regarded as a teaching objective.

More specifically, in each class period the elements of one or more objectives of the type mentioned above, are supposed to be taught by employing certain activities in such a way that these objectives are achieved by the learners as new behaviours. If the procedure of the class is

so, the language class is legitimately a goal-oriented class. In such classes, the teacher has to get the learners to perform some proper and pre-determined activities. This can be handled by the intermediation of some short and clear informative expressions or orders to which we refer as "directions (or instructions) hereafter. The objective taken up as a teaching aim is by itself part of a broader goal or portion of the language. Thus each objective is called a "specific objective", and the procedure of the instruction in this way is referred to as **microteaching**.

The **specific objective**, the **predetermined class-activities** and the **relevant directions** are the backbones or the building blocks of the Teaching Model in question. By having these main elements at disposal, we can depict our model in an alphanumerical form as follows:

A Sample Teaching Model

- I. Specific objective
- II. Activities
 - A. Pre - instruction or Motivation Stage (direction & activities)
 - B. Instruction Stage
 1. Recognition (directions & activities)
 2. Manipulation (directions & activities)
 3. Production (directions & activities)
 - C. Post - instruction or Reinforcement Stage (directions & activities)

As shown above, this model consists of two main parts: (I) a specific objective and (II) a set of activities. The **specific objective** is what the teacher intends to teach, and the activities are a series of technical and pre-determined practices which should be given by the teacher and performed by the students in order that the objective may be achieved as a new linguistic behaviour at the end of the class period. At any time of teaching, only one specific objective can be handled by this model. The next objective can be taught sequentially but not simultaneously.

Activities. The activities incorporated in the model are functionally of three general distinctive types classified as A, B, and C. They are presented on the basis of the priority of their applications.

A. Pre - Instruction Activities. The first type of activities

is regarded as pre-instruction activities as they are used at the very beginning of the teaching task with the intention of: prompting the learners' inclination and of arousing their curiosity towards the objective. These kinds of activities can also be called motivation activities because they are particularly used to attract the attention of the learners towards the class and to help them concentrate on the lesson. They can also be called pre-instructional as they somehow are related to the preparatory stage of the teaching and not the teaching objective itself.

In this stage, regarding the type of objective, the teacher can stimulate the class and orient the students towards the subject matter. Usually personal and individual questions of interest, pictures, realia, short and clear stories, contrastive situations and other types of instruments can be used to motivate the class. In this presentation I don't intend to demonstrate the application of the different stages of the model here as it requires a class session of workshop type. However, it is worthwhile mentioning here that creating motivation is a matter of personal taste for every teacher. It relates to the creativity and the innovation ability of the teachers most of whom would find it safer to ignore, especially those who do not follow this model. There are still a few English teachers who manage the class by demanding the students to be quiet and only listen to the new lesson. These types of preparatory ventures are of course disappointing rather than stimulating which make the students remain passive and nonassertive.

B - Instruction Stage. In this stage, the teacher takes up the specific objective he intends to present, and applies to the three various types of activities in a sequential order. In this stage, the sequencing of the activities is really a key concept. The activities (whose special qualifications will be described later) are to be carefully distinguished and handled in a very due time, because each one follows the other and reinforces and complements it. In other words, a sort of sequential order exists among the activities of this stage which requires that each one precede another and serve as the basis for it.

may be used professionally or clumsily by different teachers. The general pattern of "directions" however, is similar to polite requests. Some examples of the prevalent oral directions, especially used in elementary and intermediate levels are as follows:

Please, listen to me carefully!

Repeat after me, please!

Please, look and listen!

Look and say twice, please!

Repeat after me, and change the sentence with the given words!

Come to the blackboard, please!

Close your books, please!

Please, open your books to page 10!

Read the first paragraph, please!

I say the first type, you say the second type! (for transformations)

Please, read silently for comprehension questions, etc.

As the above mentioned directions reveal, the number and types of the directions can be numerous according to the kinds of activities. However, it should once more be emphasized that the "directions" ought to be short, clear and in a polite form in order that they can be readily understood by the learners who should respond to them instantly. "Directions" should also be pleasant and appealing enough for the learners to obey and follow and to evoke their interest and eagerness. What, if the teacher gives harsh and insulting directions? It is obvious that the learners will be resentful and displeased, thus, a negative attitude will unconsciously be developed in them which psychologically prevents them from following the teacher's directions, that is, the co-operation between the teacher and the learners will be weakened.

Polite, pleasant and enjoyable directions with kind tone and serious manner would foster and enhance the students' inclination towards the class activities and secure their active and voluntary participation. So the modal verbs such as *must*, *have to*, *should*, *ought to*, *are to*, etc. should carefully be avoided in giving directions especially when they are used in high school classes. Some teachers, unconsciously, have got used to addressing their classes with directions of the

following types:

Now you must repeat after me!

You should listen to me carefully. Very carefully!

Don't speak, and pay attention to me!

I give you sentences one by one and you must change them into past tense!

These kinds of teachers should notice that the students are not their slaves. The classroom is not a military field and the learners are not blind obedient soldiers to be treated in such a way; on the contrary, they are very sensitive, impulsive and expectant creatures.

What Are Activities?

What we have so far called activities in the description of the "Teaching Model" specifically refers to the activities of a typical TEFL classroom in which both the teacher and the students are involved in order to achieve a certain objective in the learners. So the activities are, in fact, elaborated techniques from different methods and approaches which are scientifically structured and are also based upon some linguistic and/or psychological theories. These particular activities are technically and specifically called **drills**.

"Drills" are pre-determined mechanisms which are scientifically organized to be offered by the teacher in due time and to be performed by the language learners in order to accomplish a specific objective, namely, a language skill or a linguistic component. Some of the most prevalent and known drills for elementary and intermediate levels are as named below:

replacement or substitution drill (single or multiple slots)

transformation (or inversion) drill

completion drill (which is at least of three main types) such as: fill in the blanks with:

(a) the missing words

(b) the proper forms of the words in parentheses

(c) a word or a phrase selected from the list
choice drill (Yes/ No; True/ False; Correct/ Incorrect; One/ Two etc.)

multiple choice drill

matching drill

The next activity, then would be achieved readily only if the previous one has already been accomplished well. This is why these activities are numbered and appropriately named as (1) recognition, (2) manipulation, and (3) production. Due to the importance of these activities, they will be briefly explained below:

B. 1 Recognition. Through recognition type of activities, the teacher introduces the content of the specific objective to the students. That is, he exposes the learners to the problem in question orally and they are supposed to recognize the linguistic problem auditorily and distinguish it well. The sense modality involved, then is mostly hearing and sometimes it is accompanied by seeing. This activity is also called "introduction" and for sound elements it is particularly called "discrimination". These activities, no matter what they are called, are all of receptive characterization.

B. 2 Manipulation. The next type of activities in the instruction stage is the manipulative activities. The student is supposed to utilize the language problem he has already recognized or has already been introduced to. Of course, he cannot use it by himself. For this particular reason, the teacher gets him to repeat after him by modeling the exact language element. The teacher helps him by producing a model and the learner tries to imitate it as carefully and properly as possible. These kinds of activities are styled by some other names depending the way they are approached. The names are such as: repetition, reproduction and mim-mem (mimicry and memorization).

B. 3 Production. The third activity, namely, the production implies that the learner can use the language he has already manipulated by himself in conversation, in response to any suitable stimulus or in an appropriate situation. "Production" is the most important part of instruction stage if it is successfully attained, but not the final one of the teaching task. It is, however, the ultimate goal of the language lesson. When the learner can produce the objective satisfactorily as a newly formed habit or linguistic skill, it is believed that the instructional stage has been

fulfilled. However, this newly acquired behaviour may fade out or weaken gradually after a while if it is not maintained firmly and renewed frequently. The model has been accommodated with the next stage in order to cope with this problem in learning.

C. Post-Instruction or Reinforcement stage

In this stage, the teacher prepares some spiral and recursive usage of the problem in different types of activities for the learners to practice the newly learned language problem more as reinforcement activities in order to stabilize the new behaviour in the students and make it penetrate in their minds. In this regard, a series of activities which are neither preparatory nor instructional referred to as post - instruction activities, are used. They will be explained more, later.

Directions

We have so far discussed the "specific objectives" and the types of activities. The third significant element of the "Teaching Model" is the "directions" which has been left to be explained here. Directions are short and clear orders or instructions which are supposed to be given to the learners immediately before any activity or practice.

The teacher of the type of the language class we described here is in fact a co-ordinator of the language learning in the classroom. He has to get the language-learners to do pre-structured activities in a technical way and in a very precise order in chorus, groups, pairs or individuals so as to establish new linguistic behaviours in them. So the learners need to be instructed carefully and directed adequately in this stage of the classroom. They wait for the teacher's directions about "what to do" and "what not to do".

In fact, it is the teacher who assigns what activities should be performed at what time, by which students, and in what sequence. The teacher guides the class by employing the proper "directions". Although the directions are more or less cliché forms for many different activities such as recognition, manipulation or production; they

composition drill etc.

Sometimes the name of activities are also given to the drills and thus we will have drills labeled such as:

discrimination drill	production drill
cognition drill	oral drill
listening drill	writing drill
repetition/imitation drill comprehension drill etc.	

An important point about activities to be mentioned here is that activities can be used for different purposes, at least for three distinctive goals, which are (1) to teach a new objective, (2) to stabilize and reinforce what has been taught before, and (3) to measure the achievement of the learners. So the same activity will be used for three different purposes and consequently will be called or named by three different labels. If it is used to teach a new objective for the first time, it is named "a drill"; if the same mechanism is employed for a special practice to reinforce what has already been learned, it is called "an exercise". And finally if the same technique is used for evaluating the achievement or the aptitude of the learner, it will be named "an item" or a test item.

Now that we have explained the three main elements of the "Teaching Model", that is, the specific objective, the activities, and the direction, we are in the position to briefly point out some general implications of the model. This model has been proposed so as to teach any of the seven objectives. (To observe a complete example of the application of this model see Vossoughi, H., "A Sample Vowel - Lesson" in Roshd No. 4 V1. I Summer 1985, 1364 and also see Vossoughi, H., "A Sample Reading - Lesson" in Roshd serial No. 7 Summer 1986, 1365)

The model is also advantageous enough to be used in teaching English to the students in elementary level up to the post intermediate stage not only audiolingually but also in the cognitive-habit approach. When it is used in elementary stage especially for guidance school learners, it is usually used through audiolingual approach. Thus the short directions are the only tools to give the students practice and have them learn to use the language. They learn the system through

using it. Language learning is accomplished inductively and some brief explanation about the rules may be given to the class after the students have mastered the use of the rules.

The procedure will, however, be reversed for the high - school students who are in the intermediate and post - intermediate levels. The model can be used to teach them cognitively. The teacher gives some short explanation about the specific objective and about the rules involved before any activity is handled. In this way, the knowledge or the rules about the objective will be given to the students in the target language first and then the learners - with some previously acquired competence - will start to practice the use of the language. So they proceed to learn the language inductively. The applicability of this model can best be demonstrated when we try to use it in teaching the usual lessons of the graded textbooks of guidance and high schools. It is about 10 years that we have employed it for this purpose. Most of the student - teachers and many of the trainees of in - service programs have learned it and have been content to handle it in their classrooms.

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