

Direct or Natural Method

When the various demerits of Translation-cum-Grammar method were realized, direct method came as a reaction. It is also known a Natural method or Reformed method. This method originated in France in 1901. From Germany came its principles. This method was approved and spread by International Phonetic Association of France. It is based on this Philosophy:

“Fluency in reading and facility in writing follow fluency in speech.”
Kittson says, “Learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning and to write it.”

Meaning

It was realized that the foreign language should be learnt as the child learns his or her own mother-tongue. The mother-tongue is learnt in a natural environment where the learner experiences what he learns in a natural environment. When the mother asks the child, "इस प्याले में दूध पियो", she is not telling the meaning of 'प्याला'. Instead, the child the child himself interprets that the thing which is containing milk is 'प्याला'. In this way an association is formed between word meaning and child's experience of the cup. If we teach English by making associations between word and experience of the learner without the help of the mother-tongue, that is called Direct or Natural method. For instance, the teacher wants to teach the meaning of 'I am sitting'. He should not tell the students its meaning in the mother-tongue, but by sitting himself or asking the students to sit, the meaning should be clarified.

Felix Franke says, "The moment a concept (meaning) and foreign word are intimately brought into contact without the intervention of the native word, we have the direct method."

In the words of *H. Champion*, "To teach directly is to establish a direct or immediate association between experience and expression, between the English word, phrase or idiom and its meaning."

P. Gurrey defines this method as, "The fullest application of the method is the associating of a complete thought expressed in words with the real experience that would give the occasion and impulse for the thought."

In *Webster's New International Dictionary*, this method is defined as, "Direct method is a method of teaching a foreign language, especially a modern language through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself without use of the pupil's language, without translation and without the study of formal grammar. The first words are taught by pointing to objects or pictures or by performing actions."

Thus this method is based on one principle which is, in the words of *Kirkman*, "The principle is that a foreign word or wordgroup should be associated with its meaning directly—in other words without the habitual intervention of the native speech."

Main Characteristics

This method has following characteristics—

(1) In this method a direct bond is created between word and idea, word and experience. This type of association is the key to understand the meaning. It needs a full entextual situation, e.g., for teaching the meaning of tomato, tomato itself is needed.

(2) Instead of word, sentence is the unit of teaching, *Champion* rightly says, "The direct method follows the principle that the unit of speech should be the sentence not the word. It is a sentence that the child learns to talk, or at any rate in groups of words that imply a sentence."

(3) Audio-visual materials is used extensively to explain the meaning.

(4) Much stress is put on speech because direct association can be made by oral teaching only, as pointed out by *Kittson*, "Learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning and to write it."

(5) The use of mother-tongue is not allowed, *O' Grady* say, "In Order to form the direct bond between thought and expression, no use of mother-tongue is to be made, so that the habit of thinking in the foreign language may be formed as early as possible." Some scholars think that when it becomes very essential, only then mother-tongue should be used. *O' Jespersen*¹ says, "Translation ought to be used sparingly and at all events, it is not necessary to translate whole connected pieces, but merely a word or at the very most, sentence now or then."

(6) In this method grammar is taught inductively, *i.e.*, indirectly. Unlike Translation-cum-Grammar method, rules of grammar are neither taught nor stressed. It is assumed that learners will themselves infer the grammatical rules. *H. Champion* says, "The learning of grammar is not a pre-condition of learning the language, In the direct method, learning precedes grammar." *Kirkman* opines, "It may, in fact, be said frankly to ignore grammar." Therefore, in this method, grammar is not an end in itself. *Champion* says, "In the direct method, grammar is not regarded as an end in itself but as a means to an end, as a guide to enable the pupil to correct the errors of language."

(7) These two maxims are profusely used : (a) From simple to complete and (b) From concrete to abstract.

(8) Vocabulary is taught after following the principle of selection and gradation.

(9) According to *H.E. palmer*, in this method pronunciation is taught systematically on a more or less phonetic lines.

(10) Much question are asked by the teacher. For example, when the teacher is teaching—I have put the pen on the table. He can ask these question :

(a) What is in my hand ? (Holding a pen)

(b) What am I doing ? (Putting it on table)

(c) What have I done ? (After Putting it on the table)