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introduction to Didactics:
A collection of Lessons Destined to Third Year LMD
Students
Semesters V & VI

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I would like to dedicate this work to my family, friends and students

Table of Contents

N°	Title	Page
Lecture 1 Basic Concepts		
1	Introduction	01
1.1.	Learning Theory	01
1.2.	Approach	02
1.3.	Method	02
1.4.	Technique	02
1.5.	The Learning Process Evolution	02
1.5.1.	Learners' Role	03
1.5.2.	Learning Goal	03
1.5.3.	Teachers' Role	04
1.5.4.	Lectures' Focus	04
1.5.5.	Teachers and Knowledge	04
1.6.	Conclusion	04
1.7.	References	05
Lecture 2 Behaviourist Theory		
2.	Introduction	06
2.1.	Behaviourist Approach Development	06
2.2.	Behaviourist Principles	07
2.3.	Behaviourism Concepts	08
2.3.1.	Conditioning	09
2.3.2.	Organism	09

2.3.3.	Reaction	09
2.3.4.	Stimulus	09
2.3.5.	Reinforcement and Punishment	09
2.3.6.	Extinction	10
2.4.	Behaviourist Schools	10
2.4.1.	Classical Conditioning	10
2.4.2.	Operant Conditioning	11
2.4.3.	Thorndike Model	11
2.4.3.1.	Law of Exercise	12
2.4.3.2.	Law of effect.	12
2.4.3.3.	Law of Readiness	12
2.5.	Conclusion	13
2.6.	References	13

Lecture 3 : Learning from Cognitive Perspective

3.1.	Introduction	14
3.2.	Cognitive Learning Theories	14
3.3.	Latent Learning	14
3.3.1.	Cognitive Maps	15
3.4.	Discovery Learning Theory	15
3.5.	Theory of Data Processing	17
3.6.	Conclusion	19

3.7.	References	19
------	------------	----

Lecture 4 : Constructivist Theory

4.	Introduction	20
4.1.	Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	20
4.2.	Bruner's Theory	21
4.2.1.	A Model Bruner's' Theory	22
4.2.1.1.	Phase 1: Constructing the Cultural and Contextual Environment	22
4.2.1.2.	Phase 2 :Staging the Text	23
4.2.1.3.	Phase 3: Modelling and Reconstructing the Text	23
4.3.	Conclusion	24
4.4.	References	24

Lecture 5: Curriculum, Syllabus and Course Book

5.	Introduction	25
5.1.	Curriculum vs. Syllabus	26
5.2.	Curriculum and Syllabus Differences	26
5.3.	Syllabus Characteristics	27
5.4.	Types of Syllabi	28
5.4.1.	Structural (Formal) Syllabus	28
5.4.2.	Notional -Functional Syllabus	29
5.4.3.	Situational Syllabus	30
5.4.4.	Task Based Syllabus	31

5.4.5.	Competency-Based Syllabus (CBS)	31
5.5.	Teaching Materials and Course Book	33
5.5.1.	Course Book Use Advantages	34
5.5.2.	Course Book Disadvantages	35
5.6.	Conclusion	36
5.7	References	36

Lecture 6: Teaching Methods

6.	Introduction	38
6.1.	The Audio Lingual Method (ALM)	38
6.2.	Task Based Method (TBM)	40
6.2.1.	Information Gap Activities	41
6.2.2.	Reasoning Gap Activities	41
6.2.3.	Opinion Gap Activities	41
6.3.	Task Bases Method's Stages	41
6.3.1.	Pre-task Phase	42
6.3.2.	Task Achievement phase	42
6.3.3.	Review Feedback Phase	42
6.4.	The Grammar Translation Method (GTM)	43
6.5.	Total Physical Response (TPR)	43
6.6.	Communicative language teaching method (CLTM)	44
6.6.1.	Characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching Method	45

6.7.	Competency-Based Method (CBM)	45
6.8.	The Silent Way Method (SWM)	46
6.8.1.	Principles of the Silent Way Method	47
6.9.	Conclusion	48
6.10.	References	49

Lecture 7 Communicative Competence and Grammar Teaching

7.	Introduction	50
7.1.	Communicative Competence	50
7.2.1.	Grammatical Competence	50
7.2.2.	Sociolinguistic Competence	51
7.2.3.	Strategic Competence	51
7.2.4.	Discourse Competence	51
7.3.	Grammar Teaching	51
7.3.1.	Inductive method	52
7.3.1.1.	Advantages and Disadvantages of Inductive Methods	53
7.3.2.	Deductive Method	53
7.3.2.1.	Advantage and Disadvantages of the Deductive Method	54
7.4.	Conclusion	54
7.5.	References	55

Lecture 8 Teaching the Receptive Skill: Listening

8.	Introduction	56
----	--------------	----

8.1.	Features of the EFL Listening Context	56
8.2.	Listening Teaching Techniques	57
8.2.1.	Listening Texts	57
8.3.	Listening Skill Lesson Plan	57
8.3.1.	Pre-listening Phase	58
8.3.2.	While Listening Stage	58
8.3.3.	Post-listening	59
8.4.	Practical Example:	59
8.5.	Conclusion	60
8.6.	References	61

Lesson 9: Teaching the Productive Skill: Speaking

9.	Introduction	
9.1	Successful Speaking Activity Characteristics	62
9.2.	Learners Speaking Obstacles	63
9.2.1.	Inhibition	63
9.2.2.	Nothing to Say	63
9.2.2.	Low or Uneven Participation	64
9.2.2.	Mother Tongue Use	64
9.3.	Solutions to Overcome Learners Speaking Obstacles	64
9.3.1.	Group Work	64
9.3.2.	Accessible Language Level	64

9.3.3.	Topic Selection	65
9.3.4.	Provide Instructions and Organization	65
9.4.	Types of Interactions	65
9.5.	Speaking Lesson Plan Model	65
9.5.1.	First stage: Warm Up and Brainstorming	66
9.5.2.	Second Stage: Presentation	66
9.5.3.	Third Stage: Practice	66
9.6.	Practical Example	66
9.7.	Conclusion	67
9.8.	References	68

Lecture 10 : Teaching Receptive Skills: Reading Comprehension

10.	Introduction	69
10.1.	Types of Reading	70
10.1.1.	Intensive Reading	70
10.1.2.	Extensive Reading	70
10.2.	Reading Lesson Plan	71
10.2.1.	Pre-reading Stage	71
10.2.2.	While reading stage	73
10.2.3.	Post-reading stage	74
10.3.	Conclusion	76
10.4.	References	77

Lecture 11: Teaching Productive Skills: Writing

11.	Introduction	78
11.1.	Writing and Speaking Differences	78
11.2.	Writing Skill Lesson Plan	79
11.2.1.	Writing as Product	80
11.2.2.	Writing as a Process	80
11.2.2.1.	Prewriting	81
11.2.2.2.	Drafting	81
11.2.2.3.	Revising	81
11.2.2.4.	Editing	82
11.3.	Conclusion	82
11.4.	References	83

Lesson 12 :Teachers' Feedback

12.	Introduction	84
12.1.	Feedback Definition	84
12.2.	Feedback and Psychometric Tradition	84
12.3.	Constructivist Feedback	85
12.2.	Conclusion	85
12.3.	References	86

Lesson 13: Assessment, Evaluation and Testing

13.	Introduction	87
-----	--------------	----

13.1.	Assessment	87
13.1.1.	Criteria of good assessment	88
13.1.2.	Psychometric Assessment	88
13.1.3.	Assessment for Learning	89
13.1.4.	Formal and Informal Assessment	89
13.2.	Evaluation	90
13.3.	Assessment and Evaluation Differences	91
13.4.	Testing	93
13.4.1.	Types of Tests	93
13.4.1.1.	Objective vs. Subjective Tests	93
13.4.1.2.	Individual vs. Group Test	93
13.4.1.3.	Un-standardized vs. Standardized Tests	93
13.5.	Validity	94
13.5.1.	Validity Types	94
13.5.1.1.	Face Validity	94
13.5.1.2.	Content Validity	95
13.5.1.3.	Construct Validity	95
13.5.1.4.	Predictive Validity	95
13.5.1.5.	Concurrent Validity	95
13.6.	Reliability	96
13.7.	Backwash (Wash-back)	96

13.8.	Conclusion	97
13.9	References	98
	Bibliography	99

Lecture 1 : Basic Concepts

1. Introduction

This course is an attempt to introduce an important module to third year licence students who are not trained to be teachers in the primary stages of the educational system, but due to the huge need of this field, most of our students are recruited as teachers. Of course, the aim of this work is to simplify some concepts and provide students with some basic training in the domain of teaching. This training ranges from the understanding of the theoretical underpinning of the different teaching theories and methods used in the educational system, to the assessment of the students' knowledge. It is also intended to empower students with the necessary know how in both teaching and assessing learners' works. The course starts with the definition of some key concepts that students use when dealing with the teaching matters such as theory, approach, method and technique.

1.1. Learning Theory

A learning theory is a theoretical framework that explains how learners receive, process and retain knowledge during a learning sequence. It also depicts how learners understand and view the world surrounding them. Learning theory also explains how some factors such as the environment, the cognitive processes and the affective side of learners affect the process of learning. A theory is, then, the starting framework which explains learning or teaching process and helps practitioners to approach the issue in a systematic or scientific way. Teachers, then, have to be aware of how learners learn, the content of teaching (what they need to learn) and how they can enable learners to learn (Wilson and Peterson 2006).

1.2. Approach

It is a set of principles, beliefs or ideas about the nature of the language and learning which is translated into the classroom. It is a long term plan of actions intended to achieve the teaching goals. There are different approaches to teaching namely: teachers centered, learners centered or interactive teaching. For instance in a teacher oriented approach, instructors are considered as a reliable source of knowledge and information. Conversely, learners' centered approach focuses on the learners' as active actors who can effect change in their own learning process (Hoque, 20016).

1.3. Method

A method is a systemic way of doing something, it is a planned, and logically organized process that aims at putting into practice a theoretical idea or an approach. It is, then a procedural process. In other words, it relies on clearly defined and articulated procedures to achieve certain teaching tasks (Hoque, 2016).

1.4. Technique

Techniques refer to those specific activities practiced by users of the approach that can be observed and even "counted" by an observer of the activity (Hoque, 2016).

The domain of learning witnessed continuous evolution in terms of conceptualizing the teaching- learning processes and practices.

1.5. The Learning Process Evolution

Learning theories have known a dramatic change from the traditional to the modern practices in terms of the role of learners; the goal of learning; the nature and focus of the learning process (what to teach); and the place and the role of the teachers in the learning equation.

1.5.1. Learners' Role

Traditionally students were viewed as passive elements in the learning process and they were not given any active role. Their only responsibility is to attend the lecture and absorb the information provided by the teachers without affecting the process that they are engaged in. In other words, the learners do not contribute to the achievement of their own learning process. Furthermore, learners, from the traditional perspective, work individually on the learning tasks and the teaching practices do not take into consideration the learners' individual differences. During the traditional era, learners were considered as identical or homogenous entities that have no particular characteristics that may influence their learning performance.

Conversely, modern trend views the learners' roles differently. Unlike, the traditional era, the modern theories consider learners as active elements who affect and alter the information and the data that they are exposed to. Modern practitioners encourage both individual and collective activities which encourage individual initiative and collaborative works.

Unlike the traditional period, the modern practices encourage learners' individual differences, which are no more considered as an obstacle to learning but they are rather precious resources which can bring an additional value to the classroom.

1.5.2. Learning Goal

As far as the goal of learning is concerned, each of the traditional and modern teaching trends has its own focus on what to teach. The former tradition focused on teaching facts and the language procedures. Yet, the recent trend in language teaching

focuses not only on what to teach but also on how and why to teach these ideas, concepts and facts. This shift highlights the learners' processes of analysis and gives importance to complex intellectual work.

1.5.3. Teachers' Role

The role of teachers in the teaching and learning processes has completely changed. Unlike the traditional practices, where teachers were given a simple role of information deliverer, in modern practices, teachers become guides or architects of the learning experience. In other words, they prepare the favourable learning atmosphere and context to optimise the learning success (Wilson and Peterson 2006).

1.5.4. Lectures' Focus

In the traditional practices, teachers do most of the work such as preparing the lecture, explaining the concepts, checking learners' understanding and delivering drills. The lessons were focusing on low-level content and concepts. However, in modern practices, teachers organise classrooms for individual and shared work. Lessons focus on high-level and basic content, elaborated and developed concepts and coherently organized lessons (Wilson and Peterson 2006)

1.5.5. Teachers and Knowledge

In the traditional classrooms, teachers are considered as the main source of knowledge. Conversely, in modern classes teachers know a lot but they are inclined to improve their practice continually (Wilson and Peterson, 2006).

1.6. Conclusion

Learning has always been an attractive field of research which captured the interest of big research minds like Plato, Pavlov Skinner and Chomsky who put forward a batch of

fantastic theoretical frameworks. These models, in spite of their incapacity to provide a comprehensive explanation of the learning phenomenon, have contributed a lot to build up our modern educational system. The theories have progressively shed light on very critical processes of language learning. The present course is centred on three important theories, which marked the modern field of research behaviourist, cognitive and constructivist language theories.

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Lecture 2: Behaviourist Theory

2. Introduction

Behaviourism is a theory which views learning as a mechanical process shaped by the surrounding environment. From behaviourist standpoint, nothing distinguishes people's learning capacity prior their exposure to the language input. Furthermore, learning is the result of the conditioning and the stimulus response mechanism. The desirable behaviours are reinforced by rewarding the user while the adverse behaviours are eliminated by punishment (Erişti and Akdeniz cited Kaya, Z, & Akdemir, S. 2016) Yet, behaviourism is the result of a long philosophical tradition which marked the 20th century, and it is a scientific attempt to explain how learning takes place in both animals and humans.

2.1. Behaviourist Approach Development

In the early 20th century behaviourist approach put forward introspection as a scientific method to study feeling and they adopted scientific procedures used by other scientific disciplines such as physics or natural sciences. Psychology, then, gained more credit as a rational discipline that uses introspection as a method to study the inner world such as feeling and conscious in the same way as physics does to study the outer world (Erişti and Akdeniz as cited in Kaya and Akdemir 2016). Of course, this development does not eliminate all the problems related to introspection's weak validity and questionable objectivity.

Furthermore, psychology has also been influenced by the development of functionalism. The idea behind factionalism is that the concept of conscious is not only a structure but it is also recognised as a process that allows human being to adapt to the environment. Another important development at that time was the emergence of some

studies related to animal psychology. This discipline was the result of the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution which claimed that the environment influences both animals and humans. The latter adapt through changes to survive and thrive in their environment.

Behaviourism, then, went through three important phases. In his pioneering article Watson laid the foundation of behaviourism. This era lasted until 1930, he believed that science had to **deal with observable behaviours**. The second phase is the new behaviourism which is shaped by the works of Edward Tolman, Edwin Guthrie, Clark Hull and B.F. Skinner and it lasted until 1960s. The major contributions of this era are the introduction of some ideas and concepts such as the main interest of psychology was learning. The second key idea is that learning **is behaviour** which **can be explained by the principles of conditioning**. Psychology, then, has to conform to the principles of functionalism and the concepts that cannot be defined functionally cannot be studied. Yet, the last stage is called social behaviourism which lasted until 1960 and its main leaders are Albert Bandura and Julian Rotter. This new trend tried to dilute some of the dogmatic ideas of early behaviourists' positions such as the neglect of cognition's contribution in the process of language learning. In spite of their divergence, the different behaviourist schools agree on a set of principles that their theory is built on. Thus, what are the philosophical principles of behaviourism?

2.2. Behaviourist Principles

The behaviourist theory is based on a set of principles which are summed up as follows.

1. Both humans and animals learn in the same way. This is why; behaviourists use a generic term that is **organism** which refers to both of them.

2. Behaviorists' studies were carried out with animals because the latter do not suffer from some factors that may alter their experiments' results such as psychological or social factors.

3. Human mind is a tabula rasa. In other words, it is like a blank sheet which is totally shaped by the surrounding environment.

4. Learning can be examined by focusing on **measurable** and **observable** events such as physical subjects.

5. Behaviorists believe that some human psychological qualities such as feeling, idea and motivation cannot be observed or measured directly. So, they cannot be handled and studied scientifically.

6. Principles of learning are based on the connection between stimulus and reaction.

7. Behaviourists use the term conditioning rather than learning. Accordingly, organism is conditioned (to give a certain reaction) by environmental stimuli in learning. So, such kind of learning takes place out of the organism's control.

8. Learning is said to take place only when there is a change in one of the observable behaviors of the organism. If there is no change in the behaviour, it is clear that learning does not take place.

In addition to those principles, behaviorism uses a set of concepts that explain the process of learning new behaviors.

2.3. Behaviourism Concepts

The behaviourist approach introduced a set of concepts which constitute the pillars of the theoretical framework such as conditioning, organism, reaction, stimulus, reinforcement and punishment.

2.3.1. Conditioning

Behaviourist approach claims that learning takes place through conditioning which occurs in a way that an organism matches a certain stimulus around with a certain reaction. When a reaction is associated with a stimulus apart from a stimulus that naturally moves itself, it is said to be conditioned. Conditioning can be divided into two types namely: classical and operant. Classical conditioning states that a neutral stimulus is matched with an unconditioned reaction while operant conditioning states the possibility of an organism to display certain behaviour again through reinforcement.

2.3.2. Organism

Behaviourist approach prefers using a more general term, organism instead of human or individual. This concept refers to both people and animals.

2.3.3. Reaction

Behaviourist psychologists are also called S-R theorists. In this relationship, Reaction is a behaviour displayed by the organism to a Stimulus.

2.3.4. Stimulus

Stimulus is composed of changes in the internal and external states that move the organism. For a great part of behaviourist approach, this change of state is mostly external. They may not deal with internal changes of state.

2.3.5. Reinforcement and Punishment

Behaviourists believe that behaviours are either reinforced or eliminated. The desired behaviours are reinforced by rewarding and the non satisfactory ones are eliminated by the means of punishment.

2.3.6. Extinction

The non desired behaviours which are not repeated tend to fade and extinguish through time. In fact, the behaviours are not reinforced because they do not correspond to what the teaching process wants and they consequently disappear gradually. As explained earlier in this lecture, behaviourism is marked by some important schools.

2.4. Behaviourist Schools

The main leader of behaviourism is undoubtedly the classical Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936) who founded the classical behaviourism; He was followed later on by other researchers who focused the theory to the human learning processes such as Skinner operant conditioning and Thorndike theory.

2.4.1. Classical Conditioning

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936) is a psychologist who built a mechanism for dogs' mouth salivation and a three storey Tower of Silence. In this tower, the rooms are isolated in way that does not allow any interference of external noises. The aim of this tower is to ensure that the reactions of dogs are only due to the stimulus that they have been submitted to.

Pavlove conditioned the dogs to the sound of the ringing bell. In fact, organisms display reaction to certain natural stimuli such as dogs' salivation to the sight of food. Yet, through his experiment, dogs were exposed to the ringing bell which was introduced in parallel with the serving of food. Through repetition the dog was able to associate the ringing bell sound to the natural stimulus (food). In the second phase, Pavlove rang the bell and did not serve the food, the dog reacted by salivating and this shows that the dog made an association between the ringing bell and the food serving. Through repetition, the dog did no more salivate and this new behaviour faded and extinguished.

The experiment is a proof that conditioning allows the modification of the animal behaviours or what the behaviourist called learning behaviours. Classical conditioning can be used for shaping behaviours of both humans and animals.

2.4.2. Operant Conditioning

Burrhus Frederick Skinner (1904-1990) is one of the prominent figures of behaviourism. He invented what was called Skinner box, crib and teaching machines. Unlike the other behaviourists, Skinner was interested in the results yielded from experiments. He supported the idea that humans are blank sheet or tabula rasa and he denied any contribution of any internal process (cognition) in the learning behaviours which are shaped by the environment only. Furthermore, Skinner is strongly convinced that human behaviours are predictable and explained by scientific rules.

In Skinners' opinion most human behaviours are operant and researchers have to find how these behaviours can be conditioned and extinguished. In his experiment on mice, Skinner noticed that mice were able to make a link between food serving and the activation of a food serving lever. Indeed, skinner put some mice in a maze which was equipped with a mechanism (lever) that drops food when activated. Skinner noticed that the mice were running in different directions without any clear aim. The mice, then, accidentally activated the lever and food was dropped. The mice through repetition made a link between the lever activation and the food dropping. After that, mice behaviour changed and they started activating the lever more and more rapidly.

2.4.3. Thorndike Model

Thorndike also presented his model which claimed that most animals were able to learn under the following three laws namely: exercise, effect and readiness laws.

2.4.3.1. Law of Exercise

Law of exercise is based on two components: the rule of usage and the rule of not using. On the one hand, the rule of usage claims that learners' responses are reinforced by the continuous provision of stimuli. On the other hand, the rule of not using is based on the idea that when a response is not provided to a given stimulus, the power of the connection decreases. It is also worth mentioning that time span that separates the stimulus from its response is of critical importance. When the time duration that separates stimulus from a response is important, the connection between them become less powerful and the opposite case is also true.

2.4.3.2. Law of effect.

This principle is based on the claim that learning happens when the stimulus generates a satisfactory response. Then, learning depends on the degree of satisfaction of the reaction. If the stimulus generates an unsatisfactory response, learning will not occur.

2.4.3.3. Law of Readiness

It claims that people degree of satisfaction with the learning process depends on their readiness to do actions. When learners are ready for an action, they will get satisfied with the learning experience and the connection will be powerful. On the contrary, carrying out actions for which a person is not ready will be just like a punishment or a burden.

Thorndike reviewed his theory and made some changes and amendments after 1930. The modifications concerned the law of effect and the role of punishment in learning. Accordingly, it is claimed that while rewarding strengthens the connection between stimulus and response, punishment generates the opposite effect. In other

words, it weakens the stimulus response connection. Furthermore, according to Thorndike, punishment does not imply forgetting behaviours, but just suppressing them.

2.5. Conclusion

Behaviourism is the first theoretical framework that tried to apply the scientific rules to explain the human learning process. Indeed, this theoretical framework applied the scientific rigor to explain how human observable behaviours are developed through the process of imitation, repetition, reinforcement and extinction. In spite of its real contribution to lay the foundations of scientific approach to human learning process, its neglect of the contribution of the cognitive aspects of the learners in the learning process led to its rejection and replacement by other theories that highlighted the active role of the learners in their own process of learning.

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Lecture 3: Learning from Cognitive Perspective

3.1. Introduction

After a long era of considering students as passive factors who were not given any active role in the process of their own learning, researcher started to consider active role that learners can play in the process of building their knowledge. The central idea behind behaviourism is that learning is the result of conditioning. In other words, it is training an organism to respond to a stimulus; however, this theory vanished gradually and was replaced with theories that gave importance to the role of the mind in the process of learning. This revolution in the domain of education is what we refer to as the cognitive theories that present “models for making sense of real life experiences.” (Wilson and Peterson PP 2, 3)

3.2. Cognitive Learning Theories

There are many cognitive theories which try to explain the role of mental processes in the learning process. The present lecture tries to introduce briefly some of these theories such as latent learning, discovery learning and theory of data processing.

3.3. Latent Learning

Unlike the previous theories, which highlighted the critical role of conditioning as the ideal way of learning, the theory of latent learning developed by Edward Chance Tolman (1886-1959) claimed that the process of learning was related to complex mental processes, not simple mechanic of stimulus-response process.

Tolman conducted many experiments on mice running in mazes in order to explain and highlight the importance of reinforcer on mice learning. It explains how mice find their ways in a complex maze system. Thanks to these experiments Tolman proved the possibility of learning in the absence of rewarding. Thus, mice through trials

were able to find their way via the complex maze structure. These studies paved the way to the development of the latent learning theory.

Furthermore, these findings were also valid for humans who learn every day while walking through the same streets or taking the train... etc. People learn the place of the main buildings, streets...etc. According to Tolman, learning appears as the result of the need to find out an object or a building. One of the contributions of cognitive theories is the concept of cognitive maps. Thus, what does the cognitive map mean?

3.3.1.Cognitive Maps

From Tolman's point of view, mice were able to find their way in such complex labyrinth because they developed a cognitive map. The latter is a schema of spatial relations. In other words, it is the representation of the space surrounding the organism and the position of the different elements constituting the place where the organism moves. Thus, learning is not just a chain of stimuli and responses, but the result of constructing a cognitive map of the environment where the organism evolves. Information about where and how to go to a given place is acquired through this map. The next section deals with another cognitive theory which is the discovery learning.

3.4. Discovery Learning Theory

The modern cognitive theories, such as the discovery learning, are compatible with the natural side of human beings who are naturally endowed with the curiosity to explore and discover their surrounding environment. This is why, both society and the business world are looking for students who have acquired problem solving skills and are able to interpret and evaluate data at their disposal.

Both Bruner and John Dewey, before him, laid the ground to the discovery learning theory. The latter requires learners to put the ideas and information together when they interact with others, and to build up their knowledge through the exploitation

of their previous meaningful experiences. This principal is the proof that the meaningless and mechanical behaviours resulted from the conditioning processes are inferior to the behaviours which are developed from meaningful experiences. From Dewey's point of view, children are not simple passive receivers of information but they are real active participants in the learning process.

Furthermore, Jean Piaget rejected the behaviourist iconic principle that claims that learners are **tabula rasa** i.e. an empty container which is predisposed to be filled with information from the environment. On the contrary, he asserts that learners are able to build up meaningful information by their own will.

Indeed, Piaget consolidated the cognitive position towards learning and rejected the fallacious assertions of the behaviourist tradition. Indeed, Piaget found out that learners are individuals who constantly create and test their hypotheses about the world that surrounds them. These findings are the proof that children are not passive elements but they are actively participating in the building of the learning information.

In the same vein, Vygotsky highlighted the importance of cultural and social effects when learning. Indeed, he put forward a learning model under the name of **Zone of Proximal Development** (ZPD) that explains how learners with the help of a more experienced person such as parents or instructors succeed to internalise information and tackle very complex tasks that they cannot solve alone.

According to Vygotsky in order to optimise the students' learning potential, we need, first, to determine the place of the students on the learning process continuum. Second, we have also to organise and structure the students learning environment, so as to provide them with richer learning experiences and hence strengthen their learning in the classroom. In order, to put the discovery learning theory into practice, we need first to:

1. Allow students to have more active roles by engaging in problem solving skills and risk taking. The learners in this situation have to test their hypotheses about the learning tasks instead of having passive role and absorb the provided knowledge without understanding it.
2. Furthermore, learners learn at their own pace and the sequencing and frequency of the activities is adjusted to the students' need and interests. Learners, then, become more responsible of the own learning.
3. Finally, students have to use the provided knowledge to develop new knowledge and find solutions to problems that emerge in new situations.

Unlike conditioning, discovery learning focuses on the process that leads to generation of the new processes. It highlights the importance of understanding, interpreting and analysing information. Moreover, failure or error making is a natural part of the learning process. On the contrary of behaviourism, discovery learning, considers failure as an important step that may allow a better understanding of learning by reassessing the approaches to deal with these tasks.

3.5. Theory of Data Processing

Theory of data processing has been proposed by George A. Miller (1920) and based on Edward C. Tolman's (1886-1959) sign and latent learning theories. It postulates that learning is the result of complex mental processes. This is why, it is considered as a cognitive model.

From data processing theory, learning is based on information treatment, processing, transfer and storage in our memory. It attempts to explain (1) how the information is perceived by our sensory organs; (2) how it is transferred to the memory for storage and (3) how it is retrieved and exploited by learners.

It also proposed a model of information processing which is composed of three stages

- (1).information stores
- (2).cognitive processes
- (3).executive cognition

Information store represents the initial stage where the information is stored. It is composed of three different types of memory. Information stores are the first elements of data processing model and they refer to the places where information is stored. It is composed of three different memory types: namely (a) sensory record, (b) short-term memory (processor) and (c) long term memory.

The information is perceived by the sensory organs such as our eyes (sensory memory). Then, the raw information is treated by the processing memory which retrieves, orders and gives them sense by linking them to information stored in the long term memory. Finally, the information is transferred into the long term memory to be stored with the help of meaningful codes. Long term memory is composed of three parts: First, semantic memory: it amasses verbal information such as concepts. Second, recollectional memory: it is in charge of stocking and memorising places and temporal events with heavy emotional load. Finally, operational memory: it memorises skills and procedural information.

The cognitive processes, such as attention, perception, repetition, coding and retrieving, are responsible of transferring information from one memory to another. These processes are sometimes conscious or subconscious. The learner can also eliminate information through forgetting. Finally, executive processes or executive cognition maintains a harmonious processing of information between information store and cognitive processes.

3.6. Conclusion

The new cognitive learning theories were put forward as a response to the weaknesses of the behaviourist perception of the learning process. They emphasised the importance of both cognition and active learning in the process of building up knowledge. In spite of their influence on the teaching practices, new models of learning appeared to highlight another important aspect that contributes to the construction of knowledge namely constructivism.

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Lecture 4 : Constructivist Theory

4. Introduction

Constructivist theory views learning as an active process that takes place in a specific context. It is, then, a process of learning and not acquisition. Unlike behaviorists who believe that learners are tabula rasa, the constructivists' advocates postulate that learners come to the classroom with their own interpretation of the learning process and the world, a personal experience and specific cultural background that influence their learning process. The main constructivist theories are Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Bruner's theory

4.1. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD theory claims that the cognitive development potential of learners is limited in terms of time duration. This limitation is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The latter refers to the gap that exists between what learners can achieve alone and what they can accomplish with the help of a more knowledgeable person such as a teacher. It is important to mention that ZPD highlights the significance of social interactions to optimize the learning potential. In other words, the more learners take advantage of their teachers' assistance the more they learn and expand their knowledge.

The theory of Vygotsky is based on the idea that **“If a teacher is only concerned with what students can already do with language i.e. with their existing level of independent performance, then the students will never progress”**. Conversely, **“If a teacher supports students so that they move through the zone of proximal development to their potential level of performance, real learning and progress is possible”** (Feez & Joice, 1998).

Furthermore, Vygotsky also believes that that input alone cannot ensure students to reach their learning potential. The only way to achieve this potential is the collaboration between students and teachers. In this perspective, teachers' role has also changed, instructors from constructivist point of view play a vital role because they guide and support students while learning.

4.2. Bruner's Theory

Bruner (1960) introduced the idea of spiral curriculum to help practitioners organise the teaching programmes around a set of basic concepts, principles and values that a given society considers as the goals to be attained by its members. Bruner observed that highly complex concepts such as mathematical or philosophical idea are taught in a spiral form. Bruner's idea is explained as follows. Ideas are first introduced in simple and intuitive way to allow the learners to get familiar with the new concepts. Then, the same concepts are reviewed and revisited a second time to allow learners to anchor and reconstruct them in their mind in more formal way. Finally, learners connect the new concepts to other knowledge that the learners have already learnt.

The second major concept of Bruner's model is scaffolding. It refers to the students and teachers interaction and the nature of the aid (scaffolding) that the instructors provide to students to help them overcome major obstacles facing them while solving the learning tasks.

From Bruner's' point of view, this collaboration between the teachers and the students is developed through four main stages. The first phase is the students' entry level. During this stage, the instructors submit the students to tests to identify their knowledge level before engaging in any teaching action. The reason behind this test is that learning

process, being an active one, starts from what the students already know to explore what they do not know.

In the second phase, the teachers intervene to support their learners to achieve the learning tasks. The teachers have to guide students to shift focus from broad cultural context to more specific context. In simpler words, the learners who use language in specific context have to take into consideration the language field, the audience and the language medium (written or spoken).

The third phase is characterised by teachers' gradual withdrawal of their support to the students as the latter gain more and more autonomy and knowledge. Teachers, then, become facilitators and help students by encouraging; monitoring their performances; and providing feedback on their productions.

The last phase gives the students the opportunity to perform alone and the teachers' contributions are reduced to a minimum.

4.2.1. A Model Bruner's' Theory

The following presents an example of how teachers can exploit Bruner's theory in their classes. This model tries to introduce letter writing to students.

4.2.1.1. Phase 1: Constructing the Cultural and Contextual Environment

The teachers contextualise the writing activity of a letter model. The teachers start the activity by asking questions to investigate students' prior knowledge about types of letters, their forms, purposes...etc. Then, the teachers write all the students' answers on the board. Then, instructors introduce a model of the target letter; ask the students to read it and highlight the key words and the language specific structures and functions.

4.2.1.2. Phase 2: Staging the Text

During this stage the teachers highlight the different parts of the text (letter). They have to separate the different parts of the letters such as introduction, body and closing.

In the introductory part, the teachers have to ask questions about what they have to start with when they write a letter. The students have, for instance, to provide answers such as sender's name address, date...etc

4.2.1.3. Phase 3: Modelling and Reconstructing the Text

First, the students **analyses the structures** and **the language features** of the targeted model and compare it with other models. The teachers support the students who work on the letter model by asking questions about the field, participants, circumstances, tenor and politeness markers. First, the text's field is concerned with the purpose of the letter for example a job application letter. Second **participants**, the students look for who writes the letter? To whom does the writer write? Third **circumstances**, the writers look for where does the writer write? Fourth **tenor**, it refers to the power relationships for instance, applicant and employer. Finally, the students sort out the **politeness markers** such as sincerely yours ...etc

Second, the students in collaboration with their peers work together to reconstruct the letter and the teachers reduce their collaboration gradually as the students' master structures of the model more and more. Third, the students build up their own models independently and teachers monitor and provide feedback on their performances. Finally, the students are asked to assess what they have learnt and try to connect it to other knowledge in similar contexts.

4.3. Conclusion

The constructivist learning theory highlights the importance of teachers' students' cooperation to build up knowledge. The main claim of this theoretical framework is that the students who work alone cannot achieve the ultimate goal of mastering higher order skills and competencies. This is why; the teachers' help is salutary because teachers will surely accompany learners on the learning route. They also help them overcome difficult learning tasks and obstacle to become autonomous learners.

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Lecture 5: Curriculum, Syllabus and Course Book

5. Introduction

Curriculum and syllabus are two close concepts that are wrongly mixed up and used as synonyms but they actually refer to different ideas. In spite, of their differences, curriculum and syllabus are founded on the different learning theories that try to explain how human beings learn languages. Consequently, there are as many different types of curricula and syllabi as there are learning theories. Yet, what are the main differences between curriculum and syllabus?

5.1. Curriculum vs. Syllabus

Curriculum, as Klein (1990:46) defined it, is a public, political statement of the vision and intentions of teaching. Stern (as cited in De Villiers 1997) points out that 'curriculum' is used to indicate either a programme of studies of an institution, or to indicate the substance of what is taught in a given subject. For the latter the defining of objectives, determining of content and some indication of progress are included (1993:21). However, a syllabus is defined by Widdowson (1984) as "...a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning." (Widdowson, 1984:26 as cited in De Villiers 1997)

A syllabus is, then, an official pedagogical document which includes all the aspects that should be covered **in a particular subject** such as writing or speaking for a semester of a whole year. This document is designed by a group of teachers. While constructing a syllabus; teachers try to include all the basics of that subject in one document which

adheres to coherent theoretical framework and methodological approach. This document is public and available for both teachers and students to allow all the participants to work on a coherent document and attain clearly defined objectives. Thus, what are the main differences between syllabus and curriculum?

5.2. Curriculum and Syllabus Differences

The following table sums up the main features that make a difference between the concepts curriculum and syllabus.

Curriculum	Syllabus
General: standardized description for the main study units of the educational institution the whole university	Detailed: content plan for a particular subject such as writing or speaking
Mandatory and global strategy, with almost no space for alterations in implementation	Highly flexible and may even change during the study process based on professor-student verbal agreements.
Prescriptive: it recommends what to teach	Descriptive : it describes what to teach
Focuses on the result of the study program as a product. Plans the course's outcome, the quantity, and forms of academic works necessary	Day-to-day operations in class

to complete within the course.	
It lasts until the end of a course	For a semester or year

Table 1. Curriculum and syllabus differences

However, in spite their technical differences both of them are designed to structure the teaching practices and facilitate the process of teaching for instructors and learning for students. They both ensure that teachers use their teaching content and time efficiently. In spite of their diversity in terms of theoretical underpinnings and their objectives and content, all syllabi share some common features that are summed up in what follows.

5.3. Syllabus Characteristics

1. It announces the basic principle of the theory and approach that the syllabus designers used to organise and select the content or the objective of the course.
2. A syllabus both guides and directs teaching as an accountable act for a limited period.
3. A syllabus can be adjusted and negotiated.
4. A syllabus states the course's aims and objectives.
5. It determines the course content and its grading.
6. It proposes assessment methods.

A syllabus aims at both organizing the relationship between teachers and learners and define both sides' duties and requirements.

5.4. Types of Syllabi

As we can see language teaching syllabi reflect the different theoretical principles that shape and guide the teaching practices to facilitate both teachers and students work. This is why; there are different types of syllabi which highlight specific aspects of language structure or learning processes which are believed to have a critical importance in language learning. In spite of their diversity, these syllabi are a clear evidence of our progressive understanding of the different learning variables and processes and their intricate relationships and contributions to teach a foreign language.

5.4.1. Structural (Formal) Syllabus

It is one of the earliest syllabi that highlighted the importance of teaching language form and structures such as the grammar of the target language. It teaches nouns, adjectives, relative clauses, and tense... etc. The theory behind structural syllabus is that that grammatical or structural side of any language is the most useful aspect to be learnt and taught. This syllabus gave birth to teaching methods such as grammar translation method, audio lingual method etc.

The content of this syllabus is graded from simple grammatical notions to the most difficult ones. It is believed that simple concepts were easy to learn while complex concepts are considered difficult to learn. It was also believed that the overall learning of a language is the result of learning the different parts that constitute it.

In order to organise the content of a structural syllabus Michael (West as cited in Hossain 2015) proposed the following criteria.

1. **Frequency:** To select the most frequent lexis (words) used in given language.
2. **Range:** To choose genre of text where a given grammatical structure appears.
3. **Availability:** The search for situations where a given structure is required.
4. **Familiarity:** It is to include the most familiar vocabulary.
5. **Coverage:** To select the vocabulary that covers a larger range of other words.
6. **Learnability:** It is to select the easiest items to learn.

However, the structural syllabus was rejected in the 1970s on the basis of a set of theoretical arguments. First, the structural approach misrepresented the complexity of language phenomenon. In fact, language mastery does not rely on the learning of smaller aspects of the structure but it includes more complex processes such as cognitive processes, maturation ...etc. Language acquisition is not linear but global one. In other words, language should not be taught in isolation but it should be dealt with as a global phenomenon and in context. Another syllabus model is notional-functional syllabus.

5.4.2. Notional -Functional Syllabus

This syllabus is based on two important concepts that are believed to play an essential role in learning a language namely notions and function. Thus, sets of functions are used by learners to perform communicative actions such as informing, greeting apologizing directing etc. Furthermore, notions refer to some ideas such as length, depth, colour, time, space and so on.

Functional notional syllabus is a synthetic syllabus; it is deeply engrained in the idea that the mastery of a language is achieved through the internalisation of correct habit-forming practices of parts of skills. Due to its focus on functional structures, this syllabus is considered as synthetic one. The grading and the sequencing of its content is not a priority because its main focus is the learning of the communicative functions of the language.

In spite of its valuable contribution such as allowing learners to master authentic language expressions and functions, notional-functional syllabus suffers from a serious drawback. The notions and the functions of the language are taught in isolation far from the real practical use in real conversation (analytic situation). Thus, learners taught with such syllabus are incapable to exploit the accumulated knowledge in realistic situation. The next type is situational syllabus.

5.4.3. Situational Syllabus

Situational syllabus is based on selecting a set of realistic or imaginary situations in which actors simulate a true life scene. In these situations language is adapted to the specific activities and settings. This type of syllabus tries to answer three main questions: (1) who uses the language to participate in the scenario; (2) what are the activities that are simulated in a particular activity? (3) Where do the events take place? The language of situational syllabus is based on a set of functions which form a larger piece of discourse and occurs in a particular situation such as booking a room, seeing a doctor, or having job interview. It is also important to mention that the language functions are practiced through dialogues use. The next syllabus is task based one.

5.4.4. Task Based Syllabus

A task based syllabus is another type of syllabi that focuses on setting a batch of tasks that the learners have to perform with the target language. The tasks aim at developing language competence and allow learners to develop the different processes that allow their accomplishment. They also give the learners the opportunity to use a variety of linguistic forms, functions and skills in a spontaneous and unpredictable way. Among the activities that the task targets are, for instance, apply for job, order a meal... etc.

In addition, the focus of task based syllabus is evidently the concept of task which is defined by **Prahu** (1987:24) as “An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process, was regarded as a task.”

The difference between the situational and task based syllabus is that the former is product centred where the situations are predefined. Yet, the task based syllabus develops the processes and competencies to perform the tasks. The next syllabus is competency-based type.

5.4.5. Competency-Based Syllabus (CBS)

CBS is based on measuring learning outcomes in terms of a set of competencies Schenk (as cited in **Richards2013**). It is also inspired from task based teaching and the task is at the heart of this teaching process. It is also based on students' capacity to develop competencies or skills and perform tasks likely to be used outside the class in real life context. This type of syllabus considers the learning goals as the precise measurement of

knowledge and skills or competencies attained by the learners at the end of a particular learning episode.

Richards (2006) also believes that this syllabus equips learners with the competencies that they can use to survive in real life situation. Learning, then, is not limited to the internalisation of theoretical knowledge about the language but what students can do with it (know-how). Such competencies can be used in real life situations such as shopping, writing a job application letter...etc

Competency based syllabus, as explained by [Aurebach](#), displays the following main features:

1. Enabling the learners to cope with the real world difficulties and requirements in an autonomous way. Thus, the focus of teaching is geared towards these skills and communicative functions required in particular situations.
2. Focus is on performance centred teaching or what can students do with the language and not the forms of that language.
3. The results of teaching can easily be assessed by both teachers and learners because the learning objectives to reach are clearly defined.
4. Assessment is conducted continuously. First, students are pretested to determine the skills that they already know and what needs to be taught. After instruction, the learners are tested again to confirm whether they have acquired the targeted competency or not (quantification).

The concept of competency, then, is a key notion that competency based syllabus is based on. Thus, what does competency mean? Competency is the internalisation of knowledge

skills and abilities that can be demonstrated by the learners and can be measured by the teachers who quantify the behaviour Mrowicki (1986).

Another important question that CBS raises is the role of both teachers and learners in its theoretical framework. Thus, what are the roles of both teacher and learner in this type of syllabus? Teachers are no more the source of knowledge, but they have the role of guides who assist students to acquire these desirable objectives. Their role is to give learners instructions and be sure that every task's requirement is understood by learners.

The students' role is to perform the different tasks and make sure that they can do something with that language not just learning about it. Learners are expected to transfer the competencies that they learnt in class to real life situation.

Another key concept that teachers have to pay attention to is "course book". The following section defines the concept and displays the main advantages and disadvantages of using a course book in their classes.

5.5. Teaching Materials and Course Book

A course book refers to the textbook that each teacher and student is provided with. It includes the materials to use and reflect the syllabus taught in a given school or a country. Unlike the public school, where the use of course books is compulsory, some particular situations such as teaching a group of adult learners or learners with specific needs puts the teachers in a real dilemma of whether to use or not a course book. Indeed, some teachers are sometimes tempted to design and produce their own teaching materials to customize their lecture to their particular needs. However, the use of a course book presents a set of

undeniable advantages that will surely convince novice teachers to avoid risk taking and use a reliable teaching materials source.

5.5.1. Course Book Use Advantages

According to Penny Ur (1996) the course book use presents a set of advantages.

1. Framework

The use of a course book provides both teachers and students with a clear and structured framework. In fact, the teaching actors know what they do in structured way.

2. Substitute of a Syllabus

A course book reflects the content of a syllabus and, thus, its use allows teachers to cover all the content of a syllabus.

3. Readymade Texts and Tasks

A course book provides a variety of texts and tasks which are designed by experts and are appropriate to the learners' level. Such type of exercises saves time and effort to allow teachers to accomplish other tasks.

4. Economy

It is the cheapest way of providing teaching materials to your learners. If the teachers do not use a course book, they will have to prepare photocopied materials, audio or video materials which are more expensive than the use of a course book.

5. Guidance

A course book is a good guide to novice teachers who are sometime unsure of their knowledge. Thus, a course book provides precious guidance and support.

6. Autonomy

Students, who use a course book, become less dependent on their teachers' guidance. In fact, students can work alone by following the course book structure that starts with a lesson explanation, examples and exercises.

5.5.2. Course Book Disadvantages

However, in spite of its advantages, course book presents some limitations; in this perspective Penny Ur (1996) listed the following drawback of a course book.

1. Inadequacy

Every class and every student presents particular needs and characteristics that course books cannot respond to. Course books are designed to a particular learning level and sometimes some classes find it too difficult or too easy. Thus, using a course book can sometimes be inadequate to the students' level and needs.

2. Limitation and Over Easiness

Sometimes a course book can limit both students and teachers to a structured program. Thus, teachers' creativity is limited and students may find it boring and tiresome.

In spite of these limitations, a course book is a valuable source of teaching materials which is carefully designed by experts to suit the level and the needs of the majority of the learners. It is also a good guide to novice teachers who will, otherwise, need time and effort to produce their own materials and with the risk of missing important aspects of the teaching syllabus. A course book is just one example of the teaching materials, teachers can also use extra materials, photocopied exercises, video and audio tracks...etc

5.6. Conclusion

The field of EFL teaching went through a rich and flourishing period, where many researchers and practitioners strived to put forward a set of syllabi in the perspective of facilitating teachers and students' effort to teach and learn English. In spite of their weaknesses, especially their unidirectional nature, that is their tendency to focus on one or few aspects of a language such as grammar, notion, function or task as the key to develop English language mastery. They are still of precious value as they have paved the way to a more comprehensive and exhaustive understanding of the way we learn languages. They have also developed a plethora of teaching methodologies and techniques that modern teachers can make appeal to. Furthermore, the lecture has also introduced an important source of teaching materials namely the course book. It has attempted to show their main advantages and disadvantages. The next lecture will, then, deal with teaching methods.

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Lecture 6: Teaching Methods

6. Introduction

The development of teaching methods is the result of the evolution of the different learning theories and their subsequent syllabi. Indeed, English teaching methods have been proposed to put into practice the different theoretical models that were put forward to teach English language. We will notice throughout the following overview of the different teaching methods that they proposed a set of techniques to put into practice the theoretical principles in the classroom. The subsequent overview may allow a better understanding of the contribution of each method to the development of the modern classroom practices and teachers-learners roles.

6.1. The Audio Lingual Method (ALM)

The Audio Lingual Method, also known as the New Key Method or Army Method, is based on a behaviorist theory. The audio-lingual method focused on oral practices of listening and speaking. Language is learnt by constant reinforcement. However, just like in the army when someone behaves badly (or in this case the bad use of English), he/she receives a negative feedback and the contrary happens when a student demonstrates a good use of English. ALM is taught in a laboratory because it focuses on audio aspect of the language (listening and speaking). The audio-lingual method is inspired from the behavioral psychology which claims that learners can learn a set of behaviors through the process of conditioning. Language is also considered as any other behavior and it can also be changed or altered at will through the process of stimulus–response (see conditioning processes (see chapter 2 p. 09))

In order to achieve its goals, the audio-lingual method prohibited the use of the learners' mother tongue (old habit) in the classroom and encouraged the use of the target language (new habit). It also made appeal to a set of techniques that emphasized memorization and repetition. Mimicry, memorization and drills are the main techniques to practice language in the classroom. ALM also utilized dialogues as a best way to present language forms.

The audio-lingual method emphasized the teaching of listening and speaking as a priority and reading and writing come to practice what has been taught with the former skills. ALM's objective is to allow students to master the language pronunciation and language fluency. Yet, the biggest difference between the Audio Lingual Method and the Direct Method is their teaching focus. While The Direct Methods focused on the teaching of vocabulary, the Audio Lingual Method focused on specific grammar teachings.

The use of different types of drills allowed teachers to practice the grammatical forms in a mechanical way by using some techniques such as question-answer drills or dialogues. The drills present a variety of ways to practice language forms. For instance:

A teacher can use

1. **Repetition:** the teacher utters an utterance and the student repeats it.
2. **Replacement:** a teacher provides a word in a given example and the student replace it with another word in a new sentence.

E.g. a. Teacher says: "I did my home works last week."

b. Student says: "I did them last week."

3. **Restatement:** a teacher provides a sentence and the student rephrase it.

a. Teacher: “ask your classmate to keep quiet!”

b. Student: “keep quiet!”

4. Inflection: It refers to a word which is used in another form

E.g. Teacher: “I bought a car.”

b. Student: “I bought cars”

The teachers in, ALM, are the center of the class because they represent the model to imitate and the ones who monitor the different teaching activities. However, this method did not encourage the development of communicative competence as it teaches languages forms in a fragmented and de-contextualized way. The next method is the task based method.

6.2. Task Based Method (TBM)

Task based method is an offshoot of the communicative approach and it is a student centered method. Task based method focuses on completing tasks based on learners’ previous knowledge of English language. TBM uses language in an authentic and meaningful way. These tasks prepare the learners to cope with real situations or assignments in real life situations. In spite of its minor focus on grammar, teachers have to prepare the grammatical forms and the vocabulary needed in particular projects before engaging in the new tasks. TBM is interested in developing some communicative strategies and it gives impotence to spontaneous and creative use of the language to develop fluency on the expense of accuracy. As its name suggests, TBM’s core concept is the task. Thus, what does the concept of a task mean?

The idea behind task is any activity that learners are expected to achieve either individually, in pairs, or in groups. These tasks are accomplished through co-operative

and meaningful interactions. TBM is based on three types of tasks: information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap activities.

6.2.1. Information Gap Activities

The basic idea behind such activity is to allow learners to ask for information, clarification and negotiate meaning. In other words, it enable learners with the capacity to transfer information. In concrete terms, the learners may organize a party where they book a place in restaurant, check for accommodations and invite the guests. All the aforementioned situations involve an exchange of information where learners may face misunderstandings that need to be settled.

6.2.2. Reasoning Gap Activities

As its name suggests the students are required to exploit available data and make decision and choices that are based on the way they understand and perceive a situation.

6.2.3. Opinion Gap Activities

Such kind of activities involves the development of the student capacity to express their personal preferences, opinions and feelings in a specific context. For instance, they can participate in debates and discussions. The difficulty with such activities is the subjectivity of the teachers' evaluation of the students' outcome. Indeed for each question, there are right and wrong answers and in order to increase the objectivity of the evaluation of the students' performances, assessors are expected to set some criteria to their tests such as the production size (number of sentences); particular tense; or other language forms. These criteria may give the assessor a better profile of the targeted answers. Task based method is achieved through a set of stages.

6.3. Task Bases Method's Stages

Task based method is put into practice through a set of stages. Although we can find differences in terms of number of stages, from one model to another, TBM is

generally developed through three main phases: pre-task activities, tasks and feedback stages.

6.3.1. Pre-task Phase

During this stage, the instructor introduces the task to the learners by giving them some written instruction or by providing a model of an expected task accomplishment.

6.3.2. Task Achievement phase

During this stage, the students work, in small groups or in pairs, about a given task. The students may ask for help and the teachers' role is to guide and assist them when necessary. The objective of this stage is to encourage students' language fluency because accuracy is not a priority.

6.3.3. Review Feedback Phase

It is at this stage that the students present their work to their peers, and at this moment learners have to pay attention to the accuracy of their productions. The teachers' feedback comes as a support to polish learners' productions.

Task Based Method presents a set of advantages. It can help learners gain more autonomy by developing more authentic language competence as the learners use the language when the need of a particular situation arises. Task based method also provides learners with the opportunity to work in group and develop more cooperative and communicative competences. It is also an ideal method for large classes' management. The next method is grammar translation method.

6.4. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

Just like its name suggests, this method of teaching English focuses heavily on both grammar and translation. This is the traditional or ‘classical’ way of learning a language and it is still commonly used when learning some languages. Some countries prefer this style of teaching and the main idea behind this method is that the students learn all grammatical rules and become able to translate a number of sentences. This method is useful for those students who wish to study literature at a deeper level. The next method is the total physical response.

6.5. Total Physical Response (TPR)

Developed by James Asher, TPR is based on the idea that learning is best achieved by doing repetitive series of actions. It focuses on aural comprehension and the rest of learning comes later on as a natural result. In class, teachers give instructions to the learners by using the target language and body movement. It is, then, this coordination between language and physical movement that gave its name to the method.

Through its focus on aural skills, the learners passively learn the target language form, Grammar, then, is not formally taught but it is internalized through language input and the main teaching focus is centered on *verbs of command*. For instance, a teacher may ask a student “**Open** the door!” or “**Sit** down”. These instructions are reinforced with physical body movement which allows teachers to provide instructions without running a risk of using the learners’ mother tongue.

Asher developed TPR thanks to the observation of young children who learn their mother tongues. He made some hypothesis about language learning. First, language is best learnt through the combination of physical movements and language. Second, the right hemisphere is responsible of the physical actions and it, hence, contributes to the

internalization of language. Finally, learning takes place in stress free environment. The primary focus of learning is listening and students are not forced to speak. Indeed, Asher follows the natural route of language acquisition, where children acquire understanding before production. The students, then, acquire gradually enough language forms until they can speak spontaneously.

Furthermore, in this method the teachers are in the center of command and they are the only ones who decide what students hear. Finally, error making is considered as a part of the learning process and teachers are advised to overlook beginners' inaccuracy and gradually correct the errors as they have more mastery over the language. The next method is the communicative language teaching.

6.6. Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLTM)

The aim of this method is to enable learners with the capacity to communicate effectively and accurately in realistic circumstances. In order to achieve this objective, the method highlights the teaching of some linguistic functions such as complaining, thanking, inviting ...etc.

The CLT method is the result of the rejection of the audio-lingual method and the emergence of certain specific needs with the arrival of waves of immigrants to European common market. The council of Europe investigated the different learners' needs in a variety of linguistic situations, the council also investigated the way native speakers express themselves in a variety of language contexts. Researchers started to use these studies as the basis for designing teaching methods, and materials based on authentic language to meet learners' needs in their realistic life context.

6.6.1. Characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching Method

CLT method does not favor one skill over another but it gives them the same importance and they are introduced from the initial stages of a lesson delivery. Unlike the former teaching methods, CLT does not teach the grammar of the target language in a traditional way that is the predefined order. Indeed, teachers have to introduce these grammatical functions as the need arises. For instance, the use of the imperative form is introduced accordingly with needs of an activity which involves instructions or commands.

Another striking feature of CLT is development of interaction between users of the target language. It seeks to develop readers and writers capacities to encode and decode written messages and it encourages speakers-hearers capacity to decipher aural-oral communication. In order to achieve this objective, CLT uses a set of techniques such as role play, working in pairs or in groups and sharing information. One of the common activities that develop communicative competence is asking students to talk about their future plans. The following method is the competency-based one.

6.7. Competency-Based Method (CBM)

The Competency-Based Method is based on an approach which encourages students to build up linguistic competencies or skills that help them survive in real life contexts. Thus, learners have to be aware that what they learn will help them improve and facilitate their lives. For instance, immigrants need such kind of skills to live and work in English speaking countries such as the USA. This method is also useful in the case of vocational schools.

CBM is based on learners' needs analysis. Thus, language aspects such as grammatical functions, forms, vocabulary are organized on learners' needs. Furthermore, learners use their language outside the classroom. Interaction, group and pair work are the main technique used to promote and simulate communicative activities or realistic use of the target language.

CBM allows a wide-ranging set of materials especially for students who are enrolled in vocational schools. For instance, teachers can give instructions to build greenhouse or simpler objects like changing car spare parts. The next method is the silent way.

6.8. The Silent Way Method (SWM)

The silent way method was introduced by the European educator **Caleb Gattegno** in the early 1970s. He also introduced a famous teaching technique based on using colored sticks (Cuisenaire rods). Indeed, Gattegno taught the reading skill by associating sounds to particular colors code. This method makes appeal to particular teaching materials: colored Cuisenaire rods consisting of the Fidel charts, sound-color chart, and word charts.

First, the Cuisenaire rods are wooden sticks, and come in ten different lengths, but identical cross-section; each length has its own assigned color. These rods are used in different ways and give the teachers the possibility to introduce some language structures of functions. Teachers can use them to introduce prepositions, for instance *the green rod is next to the white rod*. Second, the sound-color chart is a set of blocks of colors. Each color is associated with a particular sound. This technique allows teachers to point to different sounds. Third, the word charts uses the same color system to refer

to functional vocabulary, in which each color corresponds to the words' letters and shows how it is pronounced. English language is represented with twelve word charts containing a total of five hundred words. The Fidel charts are based on the same color block system and displays a set of ways in which sounds are spelled and pronounced.

This method is called the silent way because it encourages teachers to limit their intervention in the classroom to a minimum and leave enough space to students to work hard, take control and effect change in their own learning process. Taking this responsibility allows the students to gain more and more autonomy. The role of teachers, then, is to facilitate the process of learning. Silence and the use of gesture are the main technique to encourage students to be active and creative. For instance, teachers can help students to pronounce words by mouthing them or by using gestures and avoid vocalizing.

The silent way encourages the teaching of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary in meaningful context. The teachers rarely make appeal to formal tests to evaluate their learners' performance but encourage students to correct their own goofs.

6.8.1. Principles of the Silent Way Method

The silent way method is based on the following principles:

1. The focus of the silent way is on how learners learn and not on the method of teaching.
2. Learning process is the result of practice and error making in which students experiment or test their hypotheses about language phenomena, evaluate their works and make conclusions.

3. Learners use their previous knowledge to solve learning problem.
4. Learners are in the heart of the learning process. Teachers are expected to stay silent and they have to set the learning objectives, design the materials and monitor the learning process by observing learners and judging their performances.

This method focused on what is to be learnt and the teachers give them what they absolutely need to enhance their own learning. Teachers, in the silent way, focus on teaching pronunciation, word stress and intonation. Furthermore, the role of the teachers is to observe and stay neutral, avoid praising or criticizing the students initiatives. Teachers are expected to encourage continuous improvement. The teachers have also to set clear and attainable goals. Students, on their part, rely on themselves to solve language problems and may also work in pairs or in groups to enhance their cooperation and avoid harmful competition.

6.9. Conclusion

In spite of their diversity, all these methods are unidirectional. In other words, they tend to focus on one or few aspects of a language and claim that the focus on these aspects is the best way to develop language proficiency. However, as a teacher you have to use the best aspect that can facilitate your work in class and this method is called eclectic method. Of course, becoming eclectic teacher needs long years of experience and accumulated knowledge.

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Lecture 7: Communicative Competence and Grammar Teaching

7. Introduction

The present lesson introduces two important concepts that play a critical role in the teaching practices namely communicative competence and grammar teaching. It is important to mention that communicative competence came as reaction to Chomsky's competence-performance distinction. The second concept is grammar teaching. Indeed, grammar role in teaching a foreign language has radically changed as it shifted from the main goal of teaching to just an aspect of the modern teaching programs and practices.

7.1. Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence was coined by Dell Hymes (1966) as a reaction to the inadequacy and its limitation of Chomsky's competence-performance distinction. Chomsky made a clear distinction between ideal speaker-hearer competence and performance. The former concept refers to the abstract tacit knowledge that native speakers possess and which allows them to perceive correct and incorrect language forms. Yet, performance is the actual use of the language. However, Hymes and later on Canale and Swain developed another concept which is communicative competence. This concept includes both knowledge of the language and its performance. Indeed, Canale and Swain's model is based on four sub-competencies namely grammatical, sociological, and strategic and discourse competencies.

7.2.1. Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence refers to the language grammar that includes lexis, phrases, and sentences, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the learners' production. In other words, it deals with all the rules of the language grammatical forms.

7.2.2. Sociolinguistic Competence

It refers to the appropriate use of the language socio-cultural rules. In other words, it looks for the capacity of the learner to deal with the speech setting, the topics and language communicative functions in various situations.

7.2.3. Strategic Competence

It is the capacity of the learner to overcome language breaks and misunderstandings. For instance, the students have to be able to repeat, reformulate ask for clarifications...etc

7.2.4. Discourse Competence

It deals with the capacity of producing coherent and cohesive texts. In simpler words, this competence looks for the capacity of producing logically organized and well articulated texts. It also looks for students' capacity to use cohesive connectors in both speaking and writing.

7.3. Grammar Teaching

Teaching languages has always collocated with the teaching of their grammar. The first teaching methods were centered on teaching the grammatical forms of the language because it was deeply believed that the mastery of those grammatical structures is the only way to master these languages. This is why; those methods such structural, direct, and army methods were based on practicing grammatical forms through mechanical drills.

However, the place of grammar in the subsequent developments of the teaching syllabi regressed and other aspects of language were given more importance such as functions, notions, tasks and competencies. In spite of its apparent regression, grammar

teaching has just witnessed a change in terms of its teaching methods. Indeed, the new methods did not eliminate the teaching of grammar from their goals, but brought new philosophical approaches to the way of inculcating grammatical rules to the learners. Some methods such as communicative or competency based methods rejected the rote learning of grammar and believed that grammar should be taught in context. This objective is achieved through simulating authentic situations where grammatical forms and functions are utilized. Among the teaching methods that were proposed to inculcate grammar to learners are the inductive and deductive teaching methods.

7.3.1. Inductive method

It is also called the “E.g.- rule” method. The teachers provide a set of examples and through explanations and observations the students infer or induce the rule. For instance if you start your lecture by providing the following examples

1. I take the best decision.
2. You drive your own car.
3. We play tennis.
4. They do their exercises.

But

1. She takes the best decision.
2. He drives his own car.
3. She plays tennis.
4. He does his home work.
5. It plays with a ball.
6. She washes her car.
7. He watches his best film.
8. The teacher assesses his students works.

From the previous examples the student will easily understand that the present simple is formed as follows:

- a. I, you, we, they+ verb stem

But with the personal pronouns she he and it the rule changes

- b. She, he, and it + verb stem + s
- c. Or;

She, he, it + verb stem+ es in the case of verbs ending with ch, o, sh, ss or x

It becomes clear that the students with the help of their teachers may induce the rule, and even the exceptions to the rule. Hence, the learners understand the way grammatical rules work.

7.3.1.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Inductive Methods

This method is a good solution to motivate learners to participate in class by involving them to observe and deduce the rules. Furthermore, the teachers may help students learn and understand what they learn. This process, therefore, fosters learning capacities. However, this method needs both teachers and students cooperative effort to participate in class but this process is time consuming.

7.3.2. Deductive Method

It is also called the “rule - E.g.” method. The teachers who use the deductive method start their lecture by presenting the grammatical rule to the students and provide exercises to explain it.

For instance the teacher may deliver a lesson on the use of many and some. The teachers start by writing the rule on the board.

Rule 1: Many + countable nouns

For example many tree(s), many teacher(s) many pen(s)..etc

Rule 2. Some + uncountable nouns

For instance, some bread, some milk, some juice... etc

The teachers then provides exercises or drills to practice the rule

For instance: fill the gap with many or some

1. I give him() tomatoes
2. The wants ()water
3. He needs () colors for his painting

7.3.2.1. Advantage and Disadvantages of the Deductive Method

This method is a suitable way to save time and practice a lot but the mechanical use of this method encourages rote learning on the expense of understanding the principles on which the rule is based. It is, sometimes, a boring method because students are not involved in the process of learning and they are just expected to respond mechanically to these exercises.

7.4. Conclusion

It is important to mention that both communicative competence and grammar play an important role in the teaching practices and they are the foundation stones of modern teaching practices. The following lectures will introduce the four important language skills namely listening, reading speaking and writing. It is important to mention that this separation of the four skills does not always represent the real use of these skills. Indeed, the four skills are integrated in a subtle way in every day communication. How can a person speak without listening to his or her addressee? The same phenomenon is also true with the writers need to read the instructions before responding in a written form. This is why; modern teaching materials or syllabi present the skills in rather an integrative way. Thus, the present course presents the skills in as separate entities just to facilitate the explanation of the skills' nature and features to our learners.

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Lecture 8: Teaching the Receptive Skill: Listening

8. Introduction

Listening is a difficult if not the most difficult competence that students face when engaging in learning a foreign language. Indeed, students, generally, have difficulties to adapt their ears to new sound patterns, intonations, word stress, particular pronunciations, regional varieties ...etc.

Furthermore, some syllabi attempt to train learners to acquire the ability to understand native like speeches. Thus, the aim of this lesson is to understand the difficulties that learners face when exposed to native like speeches and how teachers can help them overcome these difficulties. The lecture also introduces a model of a lesson plan to teach listening skill.

8.1. Features of the EFL Listening Context

Penny Ur (1991) claims that real listening is based on informal and spontaneous spoken language. Thus, this language is characterized by a set of features.

- a. **Brevity of chunks:** In real life situations speech is divided into very short chunks of speech which do not exceed few seconds.
- b. **Pronunciation:** Words pronunciation is often different from the transcribed forms for instance “orright” instead of “all right” (see Ur 1991: 106).
- C. **Vocabulary:** Informal language may display different vocabulary forms.
- d. **Grammar:** Informal language is often ungrammatical.
- E. **Noise:** Sometimes native speakers tend to produce intelligible noises that a listener has to ignore or guess their significance through contextualization of speech.
- F. **Redundancy:** Spontaneous speech is usually characterized by the speakers’ repetition of the same idea under different grammatical forms. Speakers tend to

paraphrase sentences or makes appeal to reformulations such as I mean, that is to say...
etc.

J. **Non repetition:** In normal conditions a piece of discourse is heard once, but the listener can rely on the redundant feature of speech to understand the piece of discourse. The listener can also ask for repetition if the need is felt.

8.2. Listening Teaching Techniques

In the classroom teachers can use listening texts, and ongoing listener responses and Ur (1996) claims that each technique presents some advantages and disadvantages

8.2.1. Listening Texts

When using less recorded texts you will surely avoid any technical problems such as breakdowns, extra expenses ...etc. You can also adapt the pace of speech to your students' needs. However, this technique suffers from a set of drawbacks. First, many teachers, especially novice ones, may feel unconfident about their ability to speak like native speakers do. Second, students may also feel that they are not exposed to a variety of accents and voices. Third, students may also find some difficulties such as misunderstanding sounds, misunderstand fast and natural speech and they need to listen to speech chunks many times. Teachers can also use readymade recordings which are designed by experts and reflect native like accents and pronunciation.

As we can see listening presents a real challenge to both teachers and students because it presents a set of obstacles that characterize the target language. The following section, then, presents a model of a lesson plan that teachers can use to teach listening skill.

8.3. Listening Skill Lesson Plan

The following listening lesson model is based on three stages: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening.

8.3.1. Pre-listening Phase

During this stage the teachers focus on preparing students to listen the targeted piece of discourse. However, the success of this preparatory stage requires the following conditions to meet.

First, teachers have to motivate their students by selecting texts that interest them. Second, these topics have to be contextualized to reflect the linguistic features such as vocabulary colloquial expressions...etc of those topics. Finally, teachers have to prepare their students to the targeted topic by teaching student and making them familiar with it. In other words, students should be introduced to new lexis and culturally laden expressions that will facilitate their understanding of audio or video tracks.

8.3.2. While Listening Stage

When we listen to something in our everyday lives we do it for a given reason. Students in a classroom also need a reason to listen to the selected piece of speech. Raising students' interest into the selected topic will certainly focus their attention.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, EFL learners may find some listening topic difficult due to vocabulary, speech pace, and accent differences. Thus, students may need to hear the listening sample more than once.

Peachey (2019) a teacher trainer proposed a set of tasks to facilitate the listening track. The tasks should be graded, and teachers should start from the easiest tasks to more difficult ones.

In the first phase, teachers can introduce some activities and prepare the students to the listening task by asking simple questions to explore students' familiarity with the

targeted topic. For instance, teachers may introduce topics related to natural phenomena such as hurricanes or technological disasters such as nuclear explosions. The second step requires more effort on the part of the listeners who are going to provide more detailed answers about their understanding of the topic. In the last stage, students are asked to provide their own interpretation of the issue.

Of course, teachers have to keep in mind that listening to piece of discourse in a foreign language context is not a simple issue. Learners, as we explained earlier have to cope with a set of language and culture difficulties. This is why; our teachers have to assist learners to overcome these difficulties. Another important issue that teachers have to take into consideration is that the students' responses have to focus on the content and the language form.

8.3.3. Post-listening

Post-listening allows teachers to work on two different aspects namely content and language form. The former aspect is very important because it represents or encapsulates the objective of the lesson. During the post-listening stage, teachers' check students' understanding of the topic and their capacity to decode the listening messages. They can also take position with or against the opinions presented in the listening track, or use again the information to express other ideas on their own.

The second aspect tackles the language form used in the spoken track and allows teachers to practice some grammatical forms and functions such as tenses, verb forms ...etc.

8.4. Practical Example: The following is an application of Nik Peachey ' s model to a story

- **Pre-listening**

- Learners brainstorm types of stories
- They are, then, invited to narrate one of their preferred stories and tell the

whole class about what they liked or disliked about it.

- **While Listening**

First, students have to tell their pairs which type of stories it is. Second, students can reorder sentences to reconstruct the story. Third, the teachers can use the story text to practice some grammatical forms or structures.

- **Post listening**

The teachers can ask students to provide their opinions and express their positions concerning the story's ideas, opinions and moral values...etc.

8.5. Conclusion

It becomes evident that listening competence is not easy to master especially in the foreign context where the learners face different types of difficulties that may range from language form to the cultural distance. However, a good understanding of these difficulties may allow teachers to prepare their lessons to help students overcome them.

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Lesson 9: Teaching the Productive Skill: Speaking

9. Introduction

Speaking skill is an important skill because many learners intuitively associate the mastery of a foreign language to the mastery of the speaking skill. However, the teaching of the speaking skill is more complex than it may seem because the foreign language context requires much more effort on the part of the learners who are supposed to overcome a set of obstacles such as unfamiliarity with the target language culture, grammar, pronunciation...etc The following lesson presents some difficulties that foreign language learners encounter, suggestions to overcome these difficulties and a lesson plan model to teach this skill.

9.1. Successful Speaking Activity Characteristics

What are the characteristics of a good speaking activity? Penny Ur (1991), in his seminal work, identified a set of characteristics that allow teachers to organize a successful activity.

1. First, learners participate by speaking a lot. The time allotted to the speaking activity should allow learners to take a lion's share of the lecture time. The teachers have to limit their interference in the speaking activity to the minimum and give the students enough time to participate in the different activities, debates or dialogues.

2. Second, participation is even. In other terms, the discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative learners and everyone in the classroom is given the chance to participate in the discussion.

3. Third, motivation is high. In other words, the discussion topic is interesting and everyone is trying to contribute to the debate.

4. Finally, language is of an acceptable level. The discussion is conducted with an acceptable level in terms of fluency and accuracy, and the language is fairly understandable and relevant to the topic.

However, according to Penny Ur (1991), few speaking activities succeed to meet all these criteria. Thus, what are the obstacles that prevent both teachers and students from organizing such successful activities? In the same vein, Penny Ur sorted out a set of obstacles that prevent both teachers and students from organizing successful activities.

9.2. Learners Speaking Obstacles

The speaking obstacles may range from psychological factors which affect learners such as inhibition to linguistic or socio-cultural reasons such as lack of knowledge about the topic, insufficient language mastery...etc.

9.2.1. Inhibition

Unlike the other skills, speaking require a speaker's exposure to an audience. This is why; speakers are put under a terrible psychological load. Speakers are usually scared to misuse the foreign language, make mistakes and lose face. Students are, then, afraid of peers' criticism or they are shy.

9.2.2. Nothing to Say

Even when your students are not suffering from inhibition, they may not participate in the debate because they just do not have anything to say. It is important to mention that some topics require a solid cultural background about the target language culture. However, in some contexts, this culture is very distant from some students and

the lack of knowledge in such particular situation may prevent students from expressing their opinions.

9.2.2. Low or Uneven Participation

In large classes, students have few opportunities to speak and when they have it the time duration of the lecture is too restricted. Consequently, students are generally given a short time span to speak. The situation becomes worse when the class is dominated by a talkative minority.

9.2.3. Mother Tongue Use

In some classes students tend to use their mother tongue because it is easier to do so and difficult to keep talking in the target language.

It is clear that students suffer from many obstacles that prevent them from speaking fluently in their classes. Yet, there are some solutions that can attenuate the negative effect of such problems.

9.3. Solutions to Overcome Learners Speaking Obstacles

Students' reluctance to speak in class is due to a set of interacting factors and teachers can use the following techniques to overcome these obstacles.

9.3.1. Group Work

The use of group work can help inhibited learner to overcome their shyness and fears. Small groups' organization allows a better use of lectures' time. Of course teachers will not be able to control all the learners' individual performances but group work allows these shy students to participate in solving speaking tasks.

9.3.2. Accessible Language Level

Teachers are expected to help students speak by providing tasks with accessible language level. Such activities allow students to speak fluently because the language

simplicity will not deter them from using the language fluently. To use this technique, teachers need to prepare students to the speaking activity by teaching the difficult vocabulary or expressions that are needed to achieve these tasks.

9.3.3. Topic Selection

Teachers have to select speaking topics which interest students and, hence, increase their motivation to participate in the classroom activities. However, bad choices of the topic can cause students reluctance to participate in the class debate.

9.3.4. Provide Instructions and Organization

Each discussion is preceded by clear instructions of how the debate is conducted. Teachers also can appoint someone to monitor the discussion and remind their peers of the importance of using the target language to develop their opinions.

9.4. Types of Interactions

There different speaking activities and teachers can use them to simulate real life dialogues or interactions. Teachers can, for instance, rely on interactional talks which are culturally based speeches where an individual interacts in a conversation. Interactional activities are based on students' level of proficiency and background. One of the best examples of interactional speeches is the role play technique. Teacher can also use a set of techniques such as role play, dialogues, plays and simulations.

9.5. Speaking Lesson Plan Model

The following lesson intends modestly to promote learners' communicative competence in terms of fluency and accuracy. Learners have to be able to use language by pronouncing the words appropriately, using grammatical forms correctly and interact with others. It is important to mention that this example is just a sample of the variety of lesson plans that teachers can make appeal to.

9.5.1. First stage: Warm Up and Brainstorming

Teachers can use audio or video materials to expose the learners to a speaking model. The teacher will allow the students to focus on language patterns that can be reutilized later on when replicating their own dialogues. At this stage, the teachers can distribute cards which provide instructions and guidelines to the subsequent phases.

9.5.2. Second Stage: Presentation

The presentation stage starts after the presentation of the dialogue sample. The students, then, take their cards and follow the instructions to build up utterances. The students who work in small groups can simulate dialogues to check the grammatical correctness of their productions and the coherence of their ideas.

9.5.3. Third Stage: Practice

During this stage, students start playing the different roles that were predetermined by the scenario and follow the instructions in the cards. The learners will play the roles by performing dialogues which allow them to practice some targeted grammatical structures or vocabulary ...etc.

9.6. Practical Example

For instance students can simulate a shopping activity that follows

Shopkeeper: Can I help you?

Client: Yes, I am looking for a pair of trainers.

Shopkeeper: What size are you?

Client: Size 7

Shopkeeper: How about this pair?

Client: It is a nice model. Is it available in bleu?

Shopkeeper: Of course, here you are!

Client: Can I try it on?

Shopkeeper: Of course you can! How does it fit?

Client: It is the right size I'll have it, please

Shopkeeper: OK, how would you like to pay?

Client: Do you take credit cards?

Shopkeeper: Yes, we do.

Client: Here you are!

Shopkeeper: Thank you and have a nice day!

Client: Thank you, goodbye.

These activities will certainly help learners to practice many language structures and forms and they will also allow learner improve their accuracy and fluency and overcome their shyness and low confidence. The teachers can also ask students to simulate dialogue in hotel, restaurant, at the doctor ...etc

9.7. Conclusion

Speaking is clearly both important and difficult skill to tackle in a foreign language context. However, a thorough understanding of this learner's need and a good preparation of the lesson will certainly help students to master this competence. The next skill is reading comprehension.

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Lecture 10: Teaching Receptive Skills: Reading comprehension

10. Introduction

Reading is the capacity of decoding and understanding written messages. The students, who can utter sounds which correspond to the language alphabet, but are incapable to understand the meaning of the words or the sentences that they utter, are not reading Penny Ur (1991). Understanding and extracting meaning or messages from a piece of written discourse is the objective of the reading activity. Unlike what most people think, the process of reading is intensive. Readers use a set of mental schemata that allow them to decode what the writers of the texts have encoded. Frequently students have to guess meanings, substitute words that they do not understand, analyze the text and all these processes render reading an extremely active process.

For many learners beginning to read in foreign language involves learning a new system of written symbols. It is, then, preferable to start by teaching learners some basics about the spoken characteristics of the target language. This will allow them to understand rather than deciphering symbols. This recommendation is very pertinent with beginners who started to learn English language for the first time Penny Ur (1991).

In order to allow teachers to use their reading activities successfully Penny Ur (1991) presented the following recommendations.

1. Allow students to get enough reading experience through giving them the possibility to choose their own reading texts and time to read them.
2. Make sure that the vocabulary is accessible to the students and that the remaining words can be either guessed or safely ignored.
3. Give interesting tasks before engaging in the reading tasks in order to motivate and prepare students to read.

4. Encourage understanding and students' ability to read with a minimum understanding of words or information.

5. Provide your learners with a variety of text genres to give them an idea of this diversity.

Moreover, there are different types of reading and the following section explains some of them.

10.1. Types of Reading

When referring to reading, teachers have to be aware that there are two types of reading activities: intensive and extensive ones

10.1.1. Intensive Reading

Such a type of reading involves the students' effort to look for details with a specific teaching aim. It also involves doing activities and tasks and developing their reading sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, identifying the text genre and characteristics, tenses and grammatical function... etc.

For instance, in such intensive reading activities students are required to reorganize a set of scrambled sentences to reconstruct a paragraph; filling gaps, scanning a text to find topic sentences or headings for each paragraph...etc.

10.1.2. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is the students' activity which involves reading huge amount of reading materials from different fields of interest. Unlike, the former situation, the students read for the pleasure and choose what they read.

10.2. Reading Lesson Plan

To teach reading skill, practitioners, generally, go through three main stages, of the lesson. However, this does not mean that the teachers cannot organize their reading lessons in different way. The first step, in teaching reading, is the pre-reading stage, then, teachers move to the while reading stage and finally they end with the post-reading phase. However, what does each stage involve? The following will provide a brief overview of each stage objective and support the explanation with an example of a reading activity.

10.2.1. Pre-reading Stage

The pre-reading stage aims at establishing the purpose of the reading activities. It also enriches students' vocabulary repertoire by introducing new words linked to the targeted topic. Finally, it explores the learners' prior knowledge about the targeted topic. Furthermore, there are some techniques that teachers can use to stimulate students' curiosity about the targeted topic.

First, teachers can use: “KWL chart”, which is a set of columns that students fill with: (1) K column is filled with what students already **know** about the topic. (2) W column involves what the students **want** to know about the topic. Finally, (3) L column targets what the learners have **learnt** from the topic. The following is a sample of K-W-L chart

KWL chart	Title/ <u>Stonehenge</u>	
K what I know	K What I want to know	L what I learned
1.It is big 2. It is monument made of stone 3.The stones are arranged in a circle 4.Some of the stones are curved	1. Where is the Stonehenge? 2. Who built Stonehenge? 3. When was Stonehenge built? 4. Why was Stonehenge built?	1. Stonehenge is in southern England. 2. Nobody is sure who built Stonehenge. 3.It was build thousands years ago. 4.It may have been a place for heeling the sick or a shrine to the dead
▼		
Categories of information I expect to use		
1.Purpose of Stonehenge 2.History of Stonehenge 3.Structure of Stonehenge		

KWL Chart Adapted from Read Naturally (2021)

Second, teachers can also use a video recording to present the topic in very interesting way. Third, another simpler technique which does not require any specific equipment is a “true or false” exercise. The teachers can provide a set of statements or information about a given topic and students have to answer by true or false.

Of course these techniques are just a limited set of possible ways of preparing students to read and teachers may rely on their creativity and use other techniques of their own that they may find more suitable to their classes or students need. The following example illustrates a possible way of presenting the pre-reading stage of a reading activity.

First the teacher can ask the students to guess the answers to the text questions before reading it. This technique motivates the learners to read and use their previous background knowledge to answer the questions as illustrated by the following example provided by Penny Ur (1991).

Task 1: the teacher reads the following questions about the targeted text's topic.

1. Where was Jane walking?
2. What did she hear behind her?
3. What was her necklace made of?
4. What did the thief steal? (two things)
5. What did he do next?

When given the questions and without reading the text, the students brainstorm and imagine the events of the story. Students can figure out that the text is dealing with one of immoral actions which is mugging. This conclusion is obtained by analyzing the vocabulary presented in the questions such as “walking behind her”, “necklace”, “thief” and “steal”. With the help of their teachers or peers, students can reconstruct an image of what happened to Jane. However, as we have explained earlier teachers can prepare students to this activity by explaining difficult words. This preparation will surely help students better understand the text. After the pre-reading stage, the teachers can move to the next stage which is while reading.

10.2.2. While reading stage

Task 2: Reading the text

As Jane was walking down the street, she heard someone walking quietly behind her. She began to feel afraid. Suddenly a large hand touched her neck: her gold necklace broke and disappeared. In another moment, her bag too was gone, and the thief was running away.

(Cambridge university press 1996 in Penny Ur)

It is at this stage that the text is introduced to the students and the focus of this phase is to read; understand the text and answer the questions related to the reading comprehension activities. The students can also confirm the predictions or hypotheses that they made during the pre-reading stage, and they can gather and organize the text's information. Readers also identify the topic sentence of each paragraph, in the present case it is one short paragraph, distinguish the general idea from the secondary ones and find the texts connectors.

Furthermore, students have to confirm their hypotheses about the topic by using two important reading techniques to locate and identify ideas namely skimming and scanning respectively. Thus, what do these concepts mean?

a.Skimming

Skimming is when students move their eyes quickly over the content of a text to find general or broad idea.

b.Scanning

It is the ability to read carefully a text in order to find details, for instance, the type of jewelry, where the event took place, and the type of assault (mugging) ...etc

10.2.3.Post-Reading Stage

After pre-reading and the while reading stages, students move to the post-reading stage. The final phase of the reading lesson is an excellent opportunity to introduce some activities and other skills such as speaking or writing. Indeed, teachers have to give this stage a significant importance because they can use the text to practice some

grammatical forms or expanding students' vocabulary repertoire. Teachers can use a fill in the gap activity to reinforce those aspects of the language proficiency.

Yet, post-reading activity can also be an opportunity to explore students' critical thinking about the topic of the reading activity. For instance, it may look for how students perceive moral values. This stage involves more than the understanding of the topic and answering the related questions as students at this stage may analyze critically the text.

Teachers may also use a set of techniques to probe students' critical thinking, and improve their reflection on the topic. Students can engage in a creative reading activity where the topic of lecture is the basis for more creative topics such as poetry, short story writing ...etc

1. Areas of Interest

This technique promotes students interest in a particular area of the targeted topic.

2. Finding Related Topics

It is an activity that allows students to expand their knowledge and widen their perspectives by allowing them to find links between these different fields.

3. Graphic Organizer

It is an excellent technique that teachers can use to help reader visualize the information provided in the reading text. However, this technique needs some training to teach students how to use it. In fact, graphic organizer is a type of mental map that students use to organize information. Students can express huge amount of information or data in precise and clear way. It also helps teachers promote students critical thinking by

learning how to compare, contrast, describe, classify, sequence, and establish cause – effect relationship ...etc.

4. Alternative Reading Activities

- a. Teachers can ask their students to summarize the text in one or two sentences.
- b. Instructors can ask students to continue the story by imaging the ending.
- c. Teachers can provide a text with grammatical errors that students have to correct.

10.3. Conclusion

Teaching reading skill, as we have seen, is not an easy task. It is a skill that may allow teachers to teach grammatical function, new vocabulary as well as important cultural issue related to the target language. Reading skill is, then, an opportunity to explore all those issues through creative and varied techniques which will surely help students overcome the difficulty to read and understand materials written in the target language.

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Lecture 11: Teaching Productive Skill: Writing

11. Introduction

Writing is a central skill to both teachers and learners. Indeed, many teachers highlight the importance of students' written competence especially when evaluating their productions. Teachers give a prominent place to students' written accuracy and consider it as a critical criterion to accept their performances even in modules where the content is supposed to be of an essential role. For instance, it is not unusual to see teachers highlighting the importance of the language form in modules which are supposed to primarily evaluate content such as linguistics, phonetics or even civilization.

Writing skill has also known many attempts to provide theoretical and methodological frameworks that can explain how competent writers, actually, write. They provide techniques that can help instructors teach this skill to students who face many obstacles on their way ranging from language difficulties to culture distance.

11.1. Writing and Speaking Differences

In order to understand the sources of students' problems when writing in an EFL context, Penny Ur (1991) highlighted the differences that exist between spoken and written discourse. In fact, novice students usually do not make a clear distinction between spoken and written production. This is why; the following section provides the salient differences between the two communication modes.

1. Permanence

Unlike spoken text, written discourse is stable and fixed. It does not change and the readers can get access to it at any time or place they want. Spoken form is fleeting

and moves on real life time. The listener follows the speaker's speech pace and may interact with him or her by interrupting or asking for more clarification and negotiation.

2. Explicitness

The written text is explicit because the writers have to make clear the context and the due references. Writers may use pictures, graphic, and colors ...etc to clarify the ideas. Speaking, on the contrast, is conducted in real time situation and, hence, most the information is inferred.

3. Density

The information, in the written texts, is presented in a dense way. However, speaking speech is diluted and the information is repeated, reformulated and redundant.

4. Detachment

The writer is detached in time and space from the reader. Conversely, speaking takes place in an immediate interaction and gets immediate feedback.

5. Organization

A written text is a well organized piece of discourse and writers use standard and formal language, The authors, indeed, have ample time to rewrite, revise and edit their productions before submitting their best version to the readers. Speaking, however, is generally a spontaneous and improvised production with less formality.

11.2. Writing Skill Lesson Plan

The following is a attempt to provide a sample of a writing skill plan. It is of course a possible way to present the lesson and teachers are free to adjust or reorganize it at their will.

11.2.1. Writing as Product

Writing practice went through two main phases namely the product and the process eras. During the fifties and the sixties of the 20th century, both researchers and teachers viewed writing as product. Indeed, this approach to writing was the result of the influence of the psychometric tradition that believed that students write by imitating the competent writers' model. Teachers were used to provide students with a model of a writing genre such as description of an object or a process, comparison, cause effect...etc. Then, in the classroom, the teachers analyze the text in terms of structure, topic sentence, supporting sentences , conclusion, connectors, tense, grammatical functions, verb forms...etc After such descriptive and explanatory work, student imitate the model to construct their own works.

11.2.2. Writing as a Process

However, this tradition suffered from a set of drawbacks that pushed researchers to question its validity. Indeed, many researchers who observed how competent writers write found that they go through a complex process that starts from prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Thus, writing in an appropriate way cannot be limited to the act of imitating a model, it is rather a complex process that allows students to generate, mould, refine their ideas and finally polish their written productions.

The modern views of writing practices, then, focus on teaching the processes that lead to the final products. The following lesson plan is based on this process writing stages.

11.2.2.1. Prewriting

During the prewriting stage, students brainstorm ideas and explore the most interesting ones that will become the basis of the written productions. Students, then, think about their target audience and the objective of their writing. At this stage students can use a set of techniques to widen their vision of the topic.

You can find very interesting ideas anywhere provided that you pay attention to what you see, read or hear. For instance, you can use one of the widespread electronic platforms such as internet, social media, and blogs or simply read a newspaper. These different sources of information may allow you share ideas with other people and you can use some of them in your productions. Students can also use charts of questions about the topic for instance who, what, where, why, when...etc. This technique allows students to explore the topic from different perspectives.

11.2.2.2. Drafting

Drafting is the second step in the writing process. During the drafting stage, students put their thoughts into words phrases and sentences. At the stage writing accurately is not a priority; students have to focus on formulating or reformulating their idea to give them a concrete existence. It is also important to mention that the drafting phase does not involve the production of one draft but students are encouraged to produce as many drafts as possible.

11.2.2.3. Revising

Revising is one of the most important stages of the writing process, revising has not to be mixed up with editing. Revising involves the reassessment of parts or the whole production in terms of ideas' appropriateness. Students, during the revising stage,

check the coherence, the order and suitability of the ideas. In other words, the students have to check whether their ideas, found in the prewriting stage and drafted in the drafting phase, are appropriate and organized correctly. You can use some questions that will surely guide you through the process of revising. Does my production make sense? Does it address my audience appropriately? Are my ideas presented in a logical way? ...etc. After producing a satisfactory draft, the students can move to the editing phase.

11.2.2.4. Editing

The editing stage is the phase when students polish their productions from language mistakes. The students can use a checklist of elements that should be respected in a good production. When you edit your production you have to check that the words are well spelled, punctuation and capitalization is appropriately used and the text is free from grammatical errors.

11.3. Conclusion

As explained before, writing is an interesting skill as it has a prominent place in our educational system. This is why; teachers have to give it a particular importance. Teachers have to teach the process that leads to the production of a good written composition. It is important to provide and train our learners to some techniques that will help them generate ideas, draft, revise and edit their works appropriately. It is also important to teach the features of each writing genre to enable our students to write appropriate works that correspond to the native language audience.

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Lesson 12: Teachers' Feedback

12. Introduction

Feedback is tackled as a separate lesson because it is a valuable tool for teachers' information transfer. There is no doubt that teachers' knowledge of the target language is an important factor to teach a language especially in foreign language context, as students rely a lot on their teachers as a reliable source of information. However, transmitting information depends a lot on the quality and the use of appropriate feedback type. Teachers who ignore the functions and purposes of the different feedback type will certainly fail to reach their teaching objectives. This is why; the present lesson is a brief and modest introduction to feedback types and purposes.

12.1. Feedback Definition

Feedback is the teachers' comments that are used to help students along their learning route. These comments are used either to adjust or comfort the students' learning decisions. However, feedback is based on the learning theory that teachers adopt. This is why; we can distinguish two main eras of feedback delivery namely psychometric and constructivist ones.

12.2. Feedback and Psychometric Tradition

Psychometric tradition is based on quantifying the learners' performance. Hence, most of the feedback provided is numerical that is grades and marks. However, this tradition was rapidly criticised because marks have little pedagogical interest Davies (2007). Practitioner dissatisfactions with psychometric tradition led to a new perception

of feedback. Indeed, feedback shifted from quantification to assessment practice that encourages learning success.

12.3. Constructivist Feedback

Unlike the psychometric tradition, the constructivist theory believes that learning is an active process where the learners play a critical and active role. Teachers help students along the learning process via different types of feedback. However Brunner (2000) believes that feedback implementation is better achieved when the learner is conscious or aware of the source of the error.

12.4. Conclusion

There are two types of feedback: on the one hand, there is numerical feedback presented in the form of grades and marks which characterised the summative assessment practices or assessment of learning. On the other hand, there is an alternative form of teachers' comments that aims at helping and guide students to improve their performances which is labelled formative assessment or assessment for learning.

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Lecture 13: Assessment, Evaluation and Testing

13. Introduction

The present lesson tackles an important aspect of teaching process namely assessment of the students performances. Indeed, assessment and teaching are closely linked and one cannot exist without the other. However, the domain of assessment is so complex and technical that the present lecture is considered as a brief overview of some issues and concepts that may provide our students with some key elements that will help them read further works easily. Assessment evaluation and testing are usually used as synonyms but, in fact, each concept refers to a particular measurement type and has a particular aim and modus operandi.

13.1. Assessment

Assessment is derived from the Latin word “assidere” which means “to sit with”, it is then an act of doing something **with** and **for** the learners.(Green,1999). Assessment is a process that aims at gathering and analyzing information from various sources to allow decision makers develop a clear and thorough understanding of the learners’ knowledge and competencies that they have acquired during a learning episode. Assessment includes all the tasks, and activities that are administered by the teachers or undertaken by the students and the resulting feedback that can serve subsequent improvement of their learning process. (Huba and Freed, 2000)

Brown (1990) defines assessment as a series of measures utilized by assessors to determine the characteristics of learners or a group of learners by collecting and interpreting information about their level of achievement of the learning goal. Assessment is also used to identify learners’ weaknesses and strengths to reorient or

readjust the teaching practices. In this perspective, Brown (1990) believes that assessment covers four components:

1. Ongoing process of measuring learning progress.
2. Increasing the learners' progress.
3. Assessing the process of learning, teaching methods or syllabus.
4. Classifying students' capacities in comparison to the group.

13.1.1. Criteria of Good Assessment

Yet, good assessment is based on the respect of certain features. Thus, what are the criteria of a good assessment? The following is a summary of the main features of a good assessment.

1. Good assessment is set on clear purposes, goal and criteria.
2. It is yielded from a variety of measurement sources.
3. It should be based on valid and reliable measures.
4. It is an ongoing (continuous) process not episodic (at the end of the teaching period).
5. It is based on formative feedback and reflection.

13.1.2. Psychometric Assessment

Assessment is an important tool in the teaching learning process. This is why; this concept has been viewed differently from various theoretical frameworks. Assessment from psychometric point view or assessment of learning was considered as summative process. It means that assessors' interest is geared towards the focus on the results obtained by the students at the end of the teaching episode. Summative assessment is represented by well known examinations such as midterm exams, baccalaureate ...etc. However, this kind of assessment has been criticized by researchers and practitioners because they are very useful for ranking and classifying students performances but they

have little or insignificant pedagogical effect on students' subsequent learning process.

Thus, what are the advantages of summative assessment?

1. They help decision makers or practitioners to know the level of the students before entering a course.
2. They provide valuable information about the learners' needs.
3. It is the best way to classify and certify students' performances.

However, on the pedagogical level, summative assessment's disadvantages outweigh their advantages. Consequently, what are the disadvantages of summative assessment? Summative assessment limits the potential of students learning, as it focuses on the grades or the marks yielded by the tests. Thus, it relegates the pedagogical objective of learning to secondary position and denies any potential development of the students' performances. Those drawbacks paved the way to the emergence of radically different assessment practices i.e. the assessment for learning.

13.1.3. Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is an ongoing process that utilizes the teachers' feedback for subsequent improvement of the students' learning effort. Indeed, assessors' practices, that use feedback to improve the weaknesses of the students' performances, are considered as formative assessment. Hence, what are the advantages of formative assessment?

1. Assessment for learning promotes learners' knowledge potential.
2. It is used as a basis for subsequent remedial work.
3. It provides students with their real level and position on the learning continuum.

Like any other assessment procedure, assessment for learning also suffers from a set of disadvantages.

1. It is a time consuming assessment procedure. Teachers need to devote time for each student by providing customized feedback and this requirement is difficult to meet in large classes and under the pressure of reaching the objectives of the syllabus.
2. It needs well trained teachers. This leads to another important issue which is teachers' training and preparation for both teaching and assessment. It is important to give teachers' training an important place in the professional preparation of our teachers.

13.1.4. Formal and Informal Assessment

Assessment can be formal or informal. Informal assessment is conducted without any formal protocols. The teachers assess their students while teaching. It is also a procedure which is integrated with the rest of the teaching activities. Such type of assessment is less threatening, less stressful to the students and performs the formative functions of assessment. Unlike informal assessment, formal one is conducted officially and publically such as midterm examinations. They have great motivation on students and increase stress due to their high stake nature and their role in decision making. Most of such formal assessment is summative.

It is also important to mention that formative assessment does not refer to a particular type of tests, but it is the function of a test that makes it formative. In other words, any test can be transformed into formative one provided that its results are used to engage in a remedial work. The next basic concept is evaluation

13.2. Evaluation

Evaluation is the most blurring concept and it is defined as a systematic and continuous process of collecting evidence about learners' progress and achievement about learning

on the basis of which decision makers form judgments and make decisions. Evaluation is a source of value judgment. It is a helpful tool to guide both teachers and students about the process of teaching and learning effectiveness. It is also very helpful for the planning, administration and the improvement of teaching curriculum. Evaluation, then, has a set of goals: it facilitates learning, identifies learning and teaching problems, evaluates teaching and learning effectiveness, helps practitioners make decisions and improves teaching syllabi or curriculum. Furthermore, according to Kizlik (2010) evaluation basic components are:

1. Stating clearly the purpose of the curriculum or educational system.
2. Gathering pertinent data relevant to students' learning progress.
3. Interpreting and analyzing the information and make them accessible to learners.
4. Ensure good classroom management and take sound decisions about students' performance.

13.3. Assessment and Evaluation Differences

All in all, the following table sums up the main differences between assessment and evaluation.

Assessment	Evaluation
It is the process of collecting, reviewing and using data, for the purpose of improving learners' performance.	It is a process of making judgment on students' performances on the basis of defined criteria and evidence.
Assessment has a diagnostic role as	Evaluation plays a judgmental role as it

it attempts to find areas of potential development.	aims at yielding an overall grade
Assessment comments and feedback on learners' achievements aim at providing remedial work to improve their subsequent performances.	Evaluation determines the extent to which the preset standards are met or not
Assessment has a formative aim that is to improve learners' performances.	Evaluation aims at judging the learners' performance and the learning process. This is why; it is summative.
Assessment focuses on the learning process.	Evaluation focuses on the product.
In assessment, the feedback is based on observation of positive and negative points.	In contrast, evaluation feedback relies on the level of quality as preset standard.
The reflective nature of assessment relationship between the assessor and the students is based on internal, mutual, shared and agreed upon criteria.	However, evaluators and learners' relationships are based externally prescribed and imposed standards.
Assessment criteria are set cooperatively by both teachers and students.	Evaluation criteria are imposed by the evaluator
Assessment and Evaluation differences (Weir & Roberts, 1994; Howard & Donaghue 2015; (Kellaghan & Stufflebean 2003):	

13.4. Testing

A test is an instrument or an activity which is used to yield information and data about learners' ability to perform on a specific task. It is destined to measure a test taker's knowledge, skill, aptitude and performance in different fields and topics.

13.4.1. Types of Tests

The following presents some types of tests namely objective vs. subjective; individual vs. group tests; and un-standardized vs. standardized.

13.4.1.1. Objective vs. Subjective Tests

An objective test is a test paper and pencil test where the students' performance can be compared and quantified to get a numerical score. It is considered as objective because it expects convergent and precise answers. The students are not given a room to provide loose and ambiguous answers. Conversely, subjective test are the ones which give the students the room to provide personal, customized and divergent answers such as essay writing. In such situation the assessor will face obstacle to score the students performance because it does not fit in particular answer model.

13.4.1.2. Individual vs. Group Test

Individual test is administered to one student at a time and group test is delivered to a group of learners.

13.4.1.3. Un-standardized vs. Standardized Tests

Un-standardized tests refer to tests prepared by a teacher for his or her classroom use but these particular tests do not have established norms for scoring and interpreting the results of the learners' performances. Unlike the former tests, standardized ones are prepared by experts in the domain of test design, they are built on scientific norms and designed to elicit students' performances under strict and uniform testing conditions,

procedures. It is also provided with a well designed method to quantify and classify students' performances.

In addition, a good test is supposed to respect a set of criteria namely: validity, reliability, feasibility and transparency

13.5. Validity

A valid test is the one which measures what it is designed to measure. A valid test measures the content which is targeted by that test. For example, a test of speaking is supposed to test the speaking ability of the student, if the teachers test their students speaking competence through a written medium, we can say that the test is not valid. Furthermore, a valid test measures what the students have been taught. Thus, if a test includes aspects that have not been taught, we can also say that it is not valid.

13.5.1. Validity Types

The previously simplified definition of validity actually hides complex set of aspects such as face validity, content validity, construct validity, concurrent validity and predictive validity. A good test should display most of these validity aspects; otherwise, it will become unreliable measurement tool.

13.5.1.1. Face Validity

Face validity refers to whether the form of the test is appropriate or not. For instance a writing test is supposed to be provided in written form and not multiple choice questions. When you look at this test you will surely find a question and space where students are expected to write their written compositions sentences, paragraphs or essays.

13.5.1.2.Content Validity

We say that a test respects the content validity aspect when it respects the content of the teaching syllabus. Indeed, one cannot imagine a test delivered by teachers which does not respect the content or the goals of their teaching program. If a delivered test does not test the content taught by the teacher, we say that it suffers from the lack of content validity.

13.5.1.3.Construct Validity

A test that respects the construct validity is the one which is built on the principles of the teaching theory adopted by teachers. In other words, we cannot imagine a test which is based on psychometric teaching principles (memorization, imitation and repetition) to assess a communicative or task based activity that looks for reflective, communicative and problem solving competencies. In such situations the test cannot reveal what we expect from students because its construct validity is incompatible with the teaching principles.

13.5.1.4.Predictive Validity

It is the capacity of the test to predict the performance results of the students in a particular situation.

13.5.1.5. Concurrent Validity

The capacity of the test to give similar results provided with other tests. In other words, the test results are confirmed with concurrent tests.

It is clear that validity is both important and critical to ensure good assessment procedures. However, a test is also supposed to be reliable, thus, what does reliability mean?

13.6. Reliability

Reliability of a test refers to the consistency of the results generated by the test outcomes. In other words a consistent test provides stable results even when students are submitted to a test twice. In other words, their performance will not vary significantly. Another important issue in assessment, in general and testing in particular, is the concept of backwash effect

13.7. Backwash (Wash-back)

Backwash is considered as an important concept in the domain of testing. It is believed that tests have either positive or negative effect on learners and on the learning process. It is “used to refer to the way a test affects teaching materials and classroom management (Hughes 1989 as cited in Taylor 2005).

Backwash is considered as either beneficial (positive) or harmful (negative). Backwash effect is positive when the test, for instance, is utilized in an appropriate way, or for instance, when a speaking activity is designed to meet the requirement and the expectations of the students. Such kind of activities has to take into account the students’ learning level, interests and usefulness. However, backwash effect generates a negative perception when the tests do not measure what that they are administered for. One example of these tests is a test of writing competence which is assessed by using a fill in the gap or multiple choice questions. Thus, such tests, then, are designed to assess aspects related to the content or grammar but they do not test the writing competence and the students’ motivation may consequently decrease.

13.8. Conclusion

In spite its importance assessment is not given the real place in the teachers' training courses. Teachers training to assess evaluate and test students' performances will certainly increase the reliability of the measurement and help decision makers to take the appropriate decisions to adjust the learning process in order to promote learning success.

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