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## Characteristics of the Direct method

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### Abstract

The article analyses the most striking features of the Direct Method. The study provides necessary information about the characteristics of the Direct Method comparing it with Grammar-translation, Communicative language teaching, CLIL, and Audio-lingual methods. The Direct method proved to be the second most effective method after CLT as a result of a survey among the students. It has been noted that pronunciation is developed effectively from the start of language learning through the Direct Method while grammar is not taught in detail. The other survey was carried out about the learning environment of the Direct Method that included TV, Radio, Real-world scenarios, classroom. As a result of a rigid analysis about the most productive environment where the Direct method is applied, proved to be Real-World scenario. Besides, the most effective technique of the Direct Method has been conversation practice as a result of a survey among 20 students of the specialty of Foreign language teaching at Nakhchivan State University.

**Key words:** *The Direct method, CLT, GTM, effective language learning, Berlitz method*

### Introduction

The Direct method is a way of language teaching which encourages immersion. The use of native language is ignored while learning a language through this method. It is an interesting fact that this method is applied both in foreign language learning and native language learning. This method is usually applied spontaneously in a natural way. Therefore, the other name of this method is known as “the Natural method”. This method is one of the oldest approaches in language learning. The Direct Method emerged in XIX century as a reaction to GTM which is based on word for word translation. Grammar-Translation Method had been a dominant language learning method by the time the Direct Method was developed in the late 1800s. The students used to learn a language through GTM by translation of texts. By translating the texts,

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the students memorized words and grammar rules of the target language which resulted in a lack of conversational fluency. The Direct Method advocated language learning by thinking and conversing directly in the target language without using mother tongue. Maximilian Berlitz made this method popular by founding the Berlitz Language Schools in the late XIX century. The philosophy lying behind the Direct Method is that language acquisition occurs naturally as if a child learns its first language by listening and speaking. There is no need to translate something and learn grammar rules. The major focus is usually on the development of speaking and listening skills. Initially reading and writing skills are not typically required while learning a language through this method. The students are often encouraged to converse actively. The main purpose of this method is to develop fluency.

Key principles of the Direct method.

No translation from the source to the target language or vice-versa is required. It means that native language is ignored while learning another language. However, it is interesting that the mother tongue itself can also be learnt through the Direct Method. No matter which language you learn, you are encouraged to think in the language you learn. Besides, the learners have to immerse themselves in the target language. The main aim of this method is to establish a direct association between words and meanings in the target language.

Main focus is usually on speaking and listening skills. The Direct Method focuses on the development of speaking and listening skills. Basic goal is to boost verbal fluency while learning a language through this method.

Language teachers use visual aids, realia and the context extensively to help learners acquire new words and phrases which can involve the gestures, pictures and demonstrations in the learning process. The main aim is to make the students understand the meaning without the need for translation.

Unlike in Grammar-Translation Method, grammar is not explicitly taught while learning a language through the Direct Method. Grammar is acquired inductively. Hence, the learners observe and internalize grammatical patterns through exposure to the language in context. Time to time, the learners develop intuitive understanding of the rules.

There is a strong emphasis on pronunciation. Correct pronunciation is prioritized from the beginning of the language learning. The students practice pronunciation through repetition. The learners mimic native speakers through drills making sure that they sound natural.

The language is acquired naturally by mimicking the way children learn their first language. Another name of this type of learning is “pick up a language”. While picking up a language, there is usually no effort to learn a language. Acquisition of the language occurs in a natural and intuitive way which make the learning process more organic and engaging.

Since the method focuses heavily on speaking and listening, students often become conversationally fluent more quickly than with methods that place a heavier emphasis on grammar or writing. The constant practice of speaking with others helps learners feel more confident using the language in real-life situations.

Immersion used in the Direct Method helps students stay engaged. The learners communicate directly in the target language and see positive results from their attempts that can boost motivation and decrease the frustration in language learning which is often caused by traditional methods.

In addition to language learning, it is possible to see the concept of “cultural immersion”.



Learners are exposed to the cultural aspects of the target language through authentic interactions and materials. This cultural immersion provides a deeper understanding of the language and the way of use in various social contexts.

### **Literature review.**

Prior to writing the article, several related studies with the Direct method were scrutinized. Sociolinguistic phenomena were analyzed in the process of implementation of the Direct method in Moh. Munir's article (Munir, 2022). Smartphone assisted language learning was considered to be a part of the Direct Method in a thesis. (Panadgoo, 2025). The author claims that activity theory with semiotic and technological layers was introduced as a theory which is able to frame smartphone assisted language learning and was used to discuss the pedagogy underpinning the use of smartphone-assisted tasks and activities in the language educational settings of the project. Andi Muhammad (2024) claims that Direct Method improves oral proficiency and listening skills in the short term, it may not be as effective for developing reading and writing skills. It is noted that the Direct Method offers valuable benefits for beginner and intermediate learners, especially in communicative aspects of language. However, it requires supplementation with other approaches to develop comprehensive language proficiency. Ismayilli (2025) underlines that communication skills develop both through the Direct method and CLT. Babayev (2024) notes that as the meanings of the words are not explained in detail, the senses of some unknown words still remain obscure for the learners while learning a language through the Direct method.

### **Methodology.**

A survey was conducted among the second year students of the specialty of "Foreign language teaching" in the faculty of "Foreign languages" at Nakhchivan State University. There were 20 students who were 10 males and 10 females. The students had to choose the most favorite language learning method. There were 5 language learning methods or categories presented to the students. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Grammar-Translation method, the Audio-lingual Method, the Direct Method and Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) were 5 main categories for the students to choose as the most favorite ones.

The other survey was carried out about the learning environment of the Direct Method that included TV, Radio, Real-world scenarios, classroom.

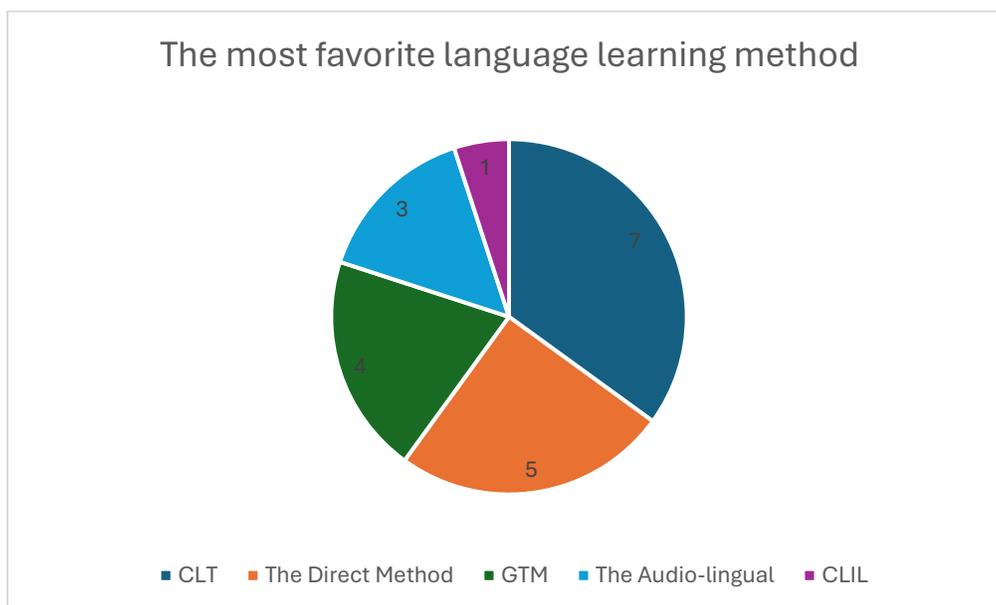
Another survey is to reveal the most effective technique of the Direct Method among the same students. There are 5 categories suggested to the students to choose which include conversation, question/answer exercise, dictation/reading, self-correction, essay writing.

### **Results and data analysis**

The following pie chart shows the number of students in 5 relevant methods.

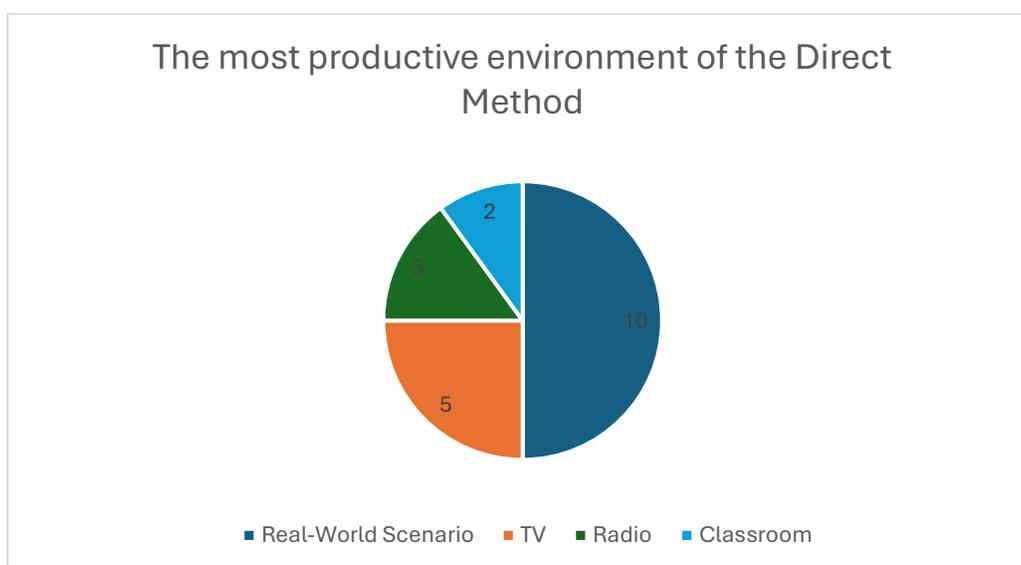


Pie chart 1. The most favorite language learning method.



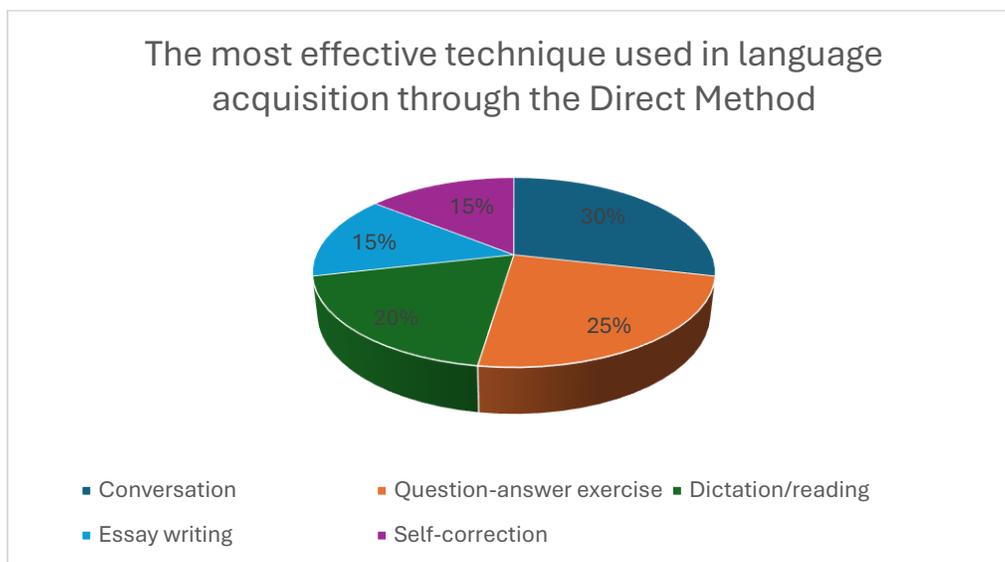
As seen from the pie chart given above, it is possible to see that the most favorite language learning method was the CLT according to 7 students which made up 35% of the total. The CLT was followed by the Direct Method with 5 students comprising 25%. The third most favorite language learning method was GTM with 4 students. The number of the students who chose GTM was 4 making up 20%. The Audio-lingual method seemed to be less favorite according to the students' choice. Only 3 students' favorite language learning method constituted 15%. Only one student presumed that CLIL is the most ideal language learning method that had to be applied in language learning process. Learning through CLIL made up only 5%.

Pie chart 2. The most productive environment where the Direct Method is used.



The second pie chart shows the number of students who were suggested to choose the most productive language learning environment among which we can see Real-world scenario, TV, Radio and Classroom. Half of the students thought Real-World Scenario to be the most effective language learning atmosphere through the Direct Method which made up 50% of the total space in the pie chart. 5 students chose TV as the most productive environment that made it second biggest category after Real-World scenario. TV comprised one fourth of the pie chart making up 25%. After the category of Radio with 3 students, only two students considered classroom to be the best place for effective language acquisition which accounted for 15% and 10% respectively.

Pie chart 3. The most effective technique of the Direct Method.



As obvious from the third pie-chart, conversation technique occupies the biggest portion in the pie-chart. 6 students out of 20 chose conversation as the most effective technique in language learning through the Direct Method which made up 30% of the total. It is followed by 5 students who thought question-answer exercise was the second most effective technique in language acquisition. This comprised 25% of the whole pie chart. The third biggest portion belongs to dictation/reading category that occupied one fifth of the pie chart making up 20% of the students. The smallest portions referred to essay writing and self-correction categories whose percent was the same making up 15% for both.

## Discussion

Along with advantages, the Direct Method also has some disadvantages. The following challenges have been listed below;

There is limited focus on reading and writing skills. The Direct Method's emphasis on speaking and listening can sometimes come at the expense of developing reading and writing skills. While the method can be very effective in developing oral fluency, it may not provide enough practice in literacy skills, which are essential for a comprehensive language education.

For beginners, especially those who are completely unfamiliar with the target language, the lack of translation can make learning feel overwhelming. It can be difficult for students to understand certain



vocabulary or grammatical structures if they have no point of reference, particularly in the early stages of learning.

The Direct Method demands that teachers be highly skilled in managing the classroom without relying on the students' native language. Teachers need to be adept at using visual aids, gestures, and contextual cues to facilitate understanding, which can be challenging for less experienced instructors.

Some learners, particularly those who prefer more structure or who are accustomed to grammar-focused learning, may struggle with the Direct Method's more fluid and immersive approach. It's also more challenging in large classrooms where individual attention is harder to provide.

### Modern Applications and Adaptations

Despite some challenges, the Direct Method continues to influence language teaching today, particularly in conversational classes or immersion programs. Many language schools around the world use variations of the method, often blending it with other techniques to create a more balanced approach. For example, some instructors may introduce grammar instruction or writing tasks at later stages of learning to complement the focus on speaking and listening.

The Direct Method also plays a role in the development of modern language learning technologies. Interactive language apps and software often incorporate elements of the Direct Method by focusing on listening, speaking, and repetition in context, creating opportunities for immersive, real-world language practice.

The Direct Method has some techniques that have an indispensable role in effective language acquisition. The following techniques of the so-called methods are popular:

a) Conversation – the students have a chance to converse by asking and answering questions. They express their attitude or opinions in conversation club which enables a teacher-learner or learner-learner interaction. They discuss interesting topics with their classmates or teachers. In this way they develop their speaking skill and critical thinking abilities.

b) Question-answer exercise- as seen from the title, the teacher poses questions and the students answer them. This is thought to be the second most effective technique in language acquisition.

c) Dictation/reading – the teacher reads a passage aloud and the students either write a dictation or they take turns to read sections of a passage or a dialogue.

d) Essay writing – the students are asked to write an essay (Mithuja, 2009).

e) Self-correction – the student makes a mistake and the teacher gives a chance to the student to his/her own mistakes.

### Conclusion

The Direct Method offers a dynamic, communicative approach to language learning that prioritizes immersion, active engagement, and natural acquisition. While it may not be perfect for every learner or every context, its emphasis on speaking, listening, and using the language in real-life situations provides valuable benefits, particularly for learners seeking conversational fluency. In a world that increasingly



values communication in multiple languages, the Direct Method remains an influential and effective tool in the language learner's toolbox.

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