A Contrastive Study of the Direct Method and Audio-Lingual Method in Teaching English Speaking Skills

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Abstract: **This current study aims to compare the direct and the audio-lingual method to find out which one of them is more useful to teach the speaking skill for college-level students studying general English course at the College of Technology at Arrass, Saudi Arabia. Two classes were selected; the first one was taught by the audio-lingual method while the other one was taught by the direct method. Both groups were tested before and after the study. The pre-test results demonstrated that there wasn't any distinction between the two classes in their speaking competence. The post-test embodied that there was a significant difference in the speaking competence between the two classes. Students who were taught by using the audio-lingual method scored higher grades compared to counterparts in the other class. The results prove that teaching the speaking skill in the framework of the audio-lingual method is better than the direct method.**

Keywords: **Audio Lingual Method, Direct Method, Speaking Skills.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The four language skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important. Individuals who know a language/s are referred to as 'speakers of that language/s, as if speaking included all other types of skills, and many, if not most second/ foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak (Ur, 2006). Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also they understand when, why and in what ways to produce language (Cunningham, 1999).

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves receiving, processing and producing information Brown, 1994, and Burns and Joyce, 1997. Rivers and Temperley (1978) provide a diagram which represents the difference and the relation between the processes skill-getting and skill-using which are the vital parts of learning to communicate (figure 1).
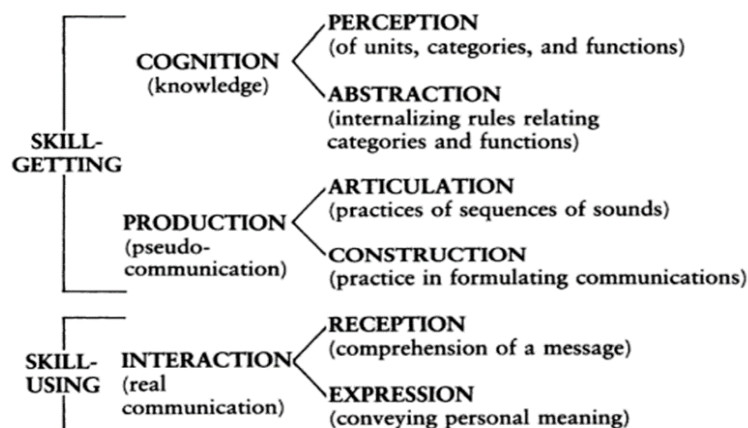

Figure 1: Rivers and Temperley's framework

Rivers and Temperley (1978) make two points about the schema. Firstly, in skill-getting process, students learn to understand the units, categories and functions, in general the rules, of the target language; then, they internalize these rules about the functions and categories. Secondly, in skill-using process, real communication takes place. It consisted of two elements. First reception, the ability to comprehend the message that is told; second expression, the ability to convey the personal meaning, to express themselves.

Rivers and Temperley (1978) contrast two views of language learning, the progressive development view which supports the view that using language can take place merely after the students have learned the grammar and the vocabulary of the language. The second view that has been contrasted by this framework is the immediate communication view which supports the view that the more you are exposed to the language, the more you learn it. It is "speaking skill is developed from. (Bygate 1991: 56)

Littlewood (1981) makes another framework (figure 2). He divides the activities into two, pre-communicative activities and communicative activities, and then subdivides each into two. Thus, he suggests that we need four major kinds of language learning exercises
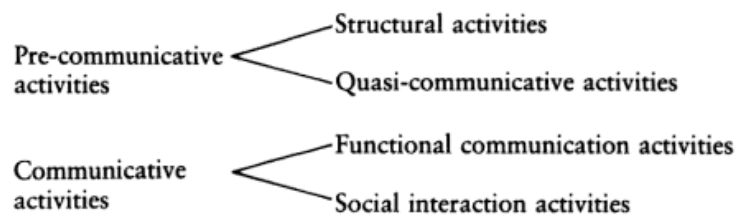

Figure 2: Littlewoods's framework.

In pre-communicative activities, the teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or skill which compose communicative ability, and provides the learners with opportunities to practice them separately. The learners are thus being trained in the part-skills of communication rather than practicing the total skill to be acquired". (Littlewood, 1981:85).

Communicative Activities, on the other hand, require the learners to use his previous knowledge "pre-communicative knowledge" into the full activity of communicating meaning. Bygate, (1991).

Skehan (1998) distinguished three aspects of the speaking process: (1) fluency; (2) accuracy and (3) complexity. This may also involve a greater willingness to take risks, and use fewer controlled language subsystems. When it comes to second/ foreign language learning; speaking has occupied a peculiar position throughout much of the history of language teaching, and only in the last three decades has it begun to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning and testing in its own right, rarely focusing on the production of spoken discourse (Bygate, 2002). For many students, learning to speak competently in the second language is a priority. But learning to speak is a complex task as has been explained earlier. Methods of teaching English have developed rapidly, especially in the previous 40 years. To help improve students' oral abilities linguists have employed lots of teaching methods; The direct method and the audio-lingual method are two of the most famous teaching methods which have been used to teach speaking specially when it comes to second/ foreign language context. Each one of these methods has a different focus or priority (table 1), but both has proven their usefulness in this area.

Table 1. Direct Method Vs. Audio-Lingual Method

Method	Focus	Characteristics
Direct Method	Everyday spoken language	learners learn by associating meaning directly in English
Audio-Lingual Method	Sentence and sound patterns	Listening and speaking drills and pattern practice only in English

The Direct Method:

The Direct Method was established in Germany and France around (1900). It appeared as an answer to the grammar translation method. It is a method for teaching foreign languages that uses the target language, discarding any use of mother tongue in the classroom.

The direct method is based on the direct involvement of the student when speaking, and listening to, the foreign language in common everyday situations. Consequently, there is lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation, and little if any analysis of grammar rules and syntax. The focus of the lessons is on good pronunciation, often introducing learners to phonetic symbols before they see standard writing examples.

The principle of direct method is establishing a direct bond between the English word, phrase or idiom and its meaning. The principle of direct bond implies that the mother tongue of learner does not intervene. The learner tries to understand the foreign word or expression as it stands, without learning over the native language. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Beckenham and Rivers, (1968), Stern, (1983), Vietor, (1882), Brown, (2000).

Features of the Direct Method:

1. By this method, it is possible to establish a direct association between the experience and expression, which should be one of the features of direct method.

2. There should be no use of mother tongue. It should be reduced to a minimum or almost the hearing and speaking of English.

3. The third quality of this method is that every sentence, which is complete, is a unit only; it is a means of expressing ideas.

4. The direct method emphasizes the oral aspects of teaching. Spoken words should be made the basis and as far as possible the medium of instruction.

5. In the direct method grammar is taught inductively rather than deductively.

6. There is a focus on everyday vocabulary.

7. Visual aids are used to teach vocabulary.

8. Attention is placed on the accuracy of pronunciation and grammar.

9. A systematic approach is developed for comprehension and oral expression. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Beckenham and Rivers, (1968), Stern, (1983), Vietor, (1882), Brown, (2000).

Advantages of the Direct Method:

One of its positive points is that it promises to teach the language and not about the language. More advantages can be listed as follows:

• It makes the learning of English interesting and lively by establishing direct bond between a word and its meaning.

• It is an activity method facilitating alertness and participation of the pupils.

• It is the quickest way of getting started; In a few months over 500 of the commonest English words can be learnt and used in sentences. This serves as a strong foundation of further learning.

• Due to application of the Direct Method, students are able to understand what they learn, think about it and then express their own ideas in correct English about what they have read and learnt.

• It is a sound method as it proceeds from the concrete to the abstract.

• This method can be usefully employed from the lowest to the highest class.

• Through this method, fluency of speech, good pronunciation and power of expression are properly developed.

• It is a natural method which teaches language the same way the mother tongue is acquired. Only the target language is used and the learning is contextualized.

- Its emphasis on speech made it more attractive for those who have needs of real communication in the target language. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Beckenham and Rivers, (1968), Stern, (1983), Vietor, (1882), Brown, (2000).

Disadvantages of the Direct Method

Disadvantages of direct method are listed below:

- There are many abstract words which cannot be interpreted directly in English and much time and energy are wasted in making attempts for the purpose.

- This method is based on the principles that auditory appeal is stronger that visual. But there are children who learn more with visual than with their oral- aural sense like ears and tongue.

- The method ignores systematic written work and reading activities and sufficient attention is not paid to reading and writing.

- Since in this method, grammar is closely bound up with the reader, difficulty is experienced in providing readers of such kind.

- There is dearth of teachers trained and interested in teaching English in this method.

- This method may not hold well in higher classes where the Translation Method is found suitable.

- In larger classes, this method is not properly applied and teaching in this method does not suit or satisfy the needs of individual students in large classes.

- This method is expensive. It is depends upon the use of expensive aids such as projector, language laboratory, linguaphone etc.

- This method is useful in early stage. It does not work well in higher classes. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Beckenham and Rivers, (1968), Stern, (1983), Vietor, (1882), Brown, (2000), Berko, (1958).

Audio Lingual Method

The Audio-lingual Method appeared because of the need to possess good oral and aural mastery of a foreign language during and after World War II. This method according to Stern, (2001) was the outbreak of World War II, which created the need to post large number of American servicemen all over the world.

It is a method of foreign/second language teaching which emphasizes the teaching of listening and speaking before reading and writing. It uses dialogues as the main form of language presentation and drills as the main training techniques. Mother tongue when using this method is discouraged in the and rarely used in the classroom, although the use of the mother tongue in the classroom or materials is not as restrictive as it is in the direct method. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Lightbown, and Spada, (1999), Long, M. H. (1983), Prator, and Celce-Murcia, (1979) Rosansky, (1975), Spolsky, (1989), White, (1989).

Features of The Audio-Lingual Method:

1. Importance is given to correct pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.

2. Language according to this method can be broken down into three major component parts: (the sound system, the structure and the vocabulary).

3. In the Audio-Lingual Method, the only authority for correctness is actual use of native speakers.

4. Learners can learn to speak and understand a language only being exposed to the spoken language and by using the spoken language.

5. Grammar should never be taught as an end but only as a means to the end of learning the language.

6. According to the Audio-Lingual Method, the use of the students' native language in class should be avoided or kept to a minimum in second language teaching.

7. The structures to which the students are exposed to should always sound natural to native speakers.

8. All structural material should be presented and practiced in class before the students attempt to study it at home.

9. Language learners can comprehend the foreign language when it is spoken at normal speed (like natives) and concerned with ordinary matters.

10. Language learners can write with acceptable standards of correctness on topics within their experience. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Lightbown, and Spada, (1999), Long, M. H. (1983), Prator, and Celce-Murcia, (1979) Rosansky, (1975), Spolsky, (1989), White, (1989).

Advantages of The Audio-Lingual Method:

1. Listening and speaking skills in this method are emphasized.

2. Dialogue and speaking tasks can be explained with or without demonstration.

3. Is is practical especially in a large-scale teaching contexts.

4. Correct pronunciation and structure are emphasized and acquired.

5. Correction, response and feedback can be done immediately.

6. The audio-lingual method encourages students to produce lots of sentences on the target language.

7. It is a teacher's center approach thus teachers can easily conduct all the activities and prepare them as they like in the teaching context. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Lightbown, and Spada, (1999), Long, M. H. (1983), Prator, and Celce-Murcia, (1979) Rosansky, (1975), Spolsky, (1989), White, (1989).

Disadvantages of the Audio-Lingual Method:

1. The behaviorist approach to learning which this method rely on is discredited, and many researchers have proven its weakness.

2. This method does not pay sufficient attention to communicative competence.

3. According to method, only language form is considered on the other hand, is neglected.

4. Equal importance is not given equally to the four basic skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading)

5. This method is a mechanical one is since it demands pattern practice, drilling, and memorization over functional learning and organic usage.

6. When applying this method the learner is in a passive role; the learner has little control over his learning. Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Lightbown, and Spada, (1999), Long, M. H. (1983), Prator, and Celce-Murcia, (1979) Rosansky, (1975), Spolsky, (1989), White, (1989).

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, vast amount of researches on the effectiveness of both methods of teaching has been carried out. When it comes to the direct method; Apriandi, (2012) tried to find out if using direct method was going to improve the speaking skill of 19 students studying at the second grade of MTS Muslimin Campakamulya Cianjur.. The results of the research showed that the mean score of pre-test reached 43,5 while the mean score of post-test was 82,3 and t-obs was 14,22. The t critical value with degree of freedom (df) 18 and significance level at 5% was 2.101. Based on the data analysis that he reached, he believed that teaching speaking using direct method was effective and it has improved the students' speaking ability.

Husein, (2014) in his paper aimed to examine the effectiveness of using the direct method on his tenth-grade students who enrolled at vocational high school in Bandung. In his research, he tried to find if there was a significant difference between two groups: experimental group (given the treatment of direct method) and control group (not given the treatment of direct method). Furthermore, he used a questionnaire to figure out students' responses toward the use of direct method. The findings shown that the use of direct method is effective in improving students' speaking skill. It can be seen from the significant value that does not exceed the level of significance (<0.005) and there is significant

difference between post-test means for experimental group (65.3) and control group (54.3). The computation of effect size shows "large" effect (0.81) for the use of direct method. In addition, the students give positive responses toward the use of direct method in their classroom.

Jaelani, (2012) tried to find if teaching speaking using the direct method was effective to increase the students speaking skill. He applied a quantitative method and posttest only control group design. The research design described the differences between students who were taught through direct method with students who were taught speaking without direct method. The population in this research was SDN 3 Ciharashas consisted 415 students and the sample was 4th grade consisted of 42 students which were divided into two classes. To analyze the data, the researcher used t-test formula. The results of this research showed that: mean score of experimental group was 79,2 and mean score of control group was 66,8. The t-observed was 5,69and the t-tablewith df = 40 and level of significance at 0,05 (5 %) was 1,68. The hypothesis of this research was approved because the t-observed was higher than t-table (5,69>1,68). It also meant that teaching speaking using direct method was effective to increase the students speaking skill.

Researches has also been carried out to tackle the effectiveness of employing the audio-lingual method in different teaching contexts. Setiawan, (2011) for instance, tried to find the effectiveness of audio-lingual method to improve students' oral past tense to his tenth grade students of SMA Kesatrian 1 Semarang. The objectives of this study were to implement the audio-lingual method in grade X.4 students of SMA Kesatrian 1 Semarang in teaching learning process and know the extent of using audio-lingual method improves the oral past tense of SMA Kesatrian 1 Semarang students. The research was conducted in two cycles which consisted of six meetings that covered a pre-test, cycle 1 test and a post-test. The instruments he used were tests, field notes, and a questionnaire. To analyze the data, the researcher used the marking scale of Hughes (2003) to assess the students' speaking performance in dialog. The result of this study showed that the students' oral past tense of SMA Ksatrian 1 Semarang improved after being given the treatments by using single slot substitution drill and transformation drill. The mean score of the pre-test was (55.25), the cycle 1 test (65.40), and the post-test (76.03). Furthermore, he added that the students' behaviors in receiving the materials in teaching learning activities and performing the oral past tense were also significantly progressing. Setiawan, (2011) proposed at the end of his research that the audio-lingual method is one of the effective methods to improve students' oral past tense.

Anggraeni, (2007) tried to explain the effectiveness of audio-lingual teaching as an alternative method in improving the students' speaking achievement. The researcher designed a quasi-experiment using pre-test and post-test. The population of his study consists of forty first year student of Junior high School of SMP Negeri 2 Pemalang. The sample of this study was class VII E. The result of this study revealed that the post-test scores were better than the pre-test scores. The mean of the pre-test scores was 11.18 while the mean of the post-test scores was 19.25. The difference between the two means was 8.56. The result of applying one sample t-test revealed that the obtained value (15.03) was higher than the t-table value (2.02). It means that there is significant difference in grade of speaking test achieved by the students after they have been taught using Audio-lingual Teaching Method. The writer suggests that the Audio-lingual Method is one of the most effective method as to increase students' enthusiasm in learning English.

Faridatusolihah, (2008) aimed to find out whether or not teaching English speaking using audio lingual method was effective to improve the students' speaking ability. The research used quantitative method and non-equivalent groups pretest-posttest design. The population of this research was 84 of the second grade students of Junior High School 1 Cisalak Kab.Subang while the sample was entire population, divided into two groups (2A as experimental group and 2C as control group). Each of them consisted of 42 students. The data of his research were collected by giving pretest and posttest to the student's sample. The collected data were analyzed by using t-test formula. The results of the data analysis showed that: the mean score of posttest of experimental group was 8.0476, the mean score of posttest of control group was 6.47, the tobs was 3.13, the tcrit value at the significance level 0.05 with degree of freedom (df) 82 was 1.67. Based on the data analysis above, the alternative hypothesis was accepted because the tobs was higher than tcrit (3.13>1.67). It also meant that teaching English Speaking using Audio Lingual Method was effective to improve the students' speaking ability.

As has been suggested at the beginning of this section, a clear majority of researches suggest that both methods are useful and using them will eventually result in an improvement to the students' speaking abilities.

III.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

Is there a statistically significant difference between the subjects' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the audio- lingual method?

Is there a statistically significant difference between the subjects' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the direct method?

Is there a statistically significant difference between the groups' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the teaching method?

IV.   METHODOLOGY

Participants

120 full-time students participated in the present study during the university year 2016. They were enrolled in their first year of a two-year program offered by Arrass college of technology, Saudi Arabia. Their age ranged from 19 to 22 years. The mean length of time they studied English was 9 years. As native speakers of Arabic, they learned their English exclusively in a classroom environment, thus having little opportunity to speak in English for communicative purposes outside the classroom setting. This sample represented a homogeneous group (one control group and two experimental groups) in terms of their schooling history and their English proficiency level.

The speaking test:

The speaking test was designed and developed by the researcher, and includes oral questions and evaluation rubrics. The oral questions consisted of three types of questions:

1. Biographical such as "What do you think about your college?" and "How large is your family?

2. Opinion questions such as: "From your own point of view; what is the best way to study for the exams? "What are the problems that face students in your country?

3. Guided questions such as "What is your dream? Why? "Have you always wanted to join a technical college?

The participants were pre and post-tested orally, and were then tape recorded by two EFL teachers who evaluated them after each session according to an evaluation scheme presented by the researcher. The evaluation rubrics for the speaking test were adopted from The IELTS exam. Before discussing the remaining parts of this paper I have to mention that the speaking test, the rubric and the pedagogical tasks have been validated by a panel of experts in this field.

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to investigate the differential effectiveness of teaching methods (the direct method and the audio-lingual method) on students' speaking skills. The results are presented in this section according to the research questions. The first research question aims to find if there is a statistically significant difference between the subjects' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the audio-lingual method. To answer this question the means, and the standard deviation for the pretest and the first and second posttest have been calculated, then t-test was performed to determine the differences of these means (table 2).

Table 2

Test	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	Degree Freedom	Sig
Pretest	40	2.4	.62			
Test-1	40	4.5	.67	-12.84	29	<0.0005
Test-2	40	4.1	.77			

The results that can be seen from the previous table show that there was a statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the three means in favor of the posttests. This result which goes along with what have been mentioned by Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Lightbown, and Spada, (1999), Long, M. H. (1983), Prator, and Celce-Murcia, (1979) Rosansky, (1975), Spolsky, (1989), White, (1989) and others which argue that using the audio-lingual method has improved the speaking skills of the students. It also supports the previous findings mentioned in literature which suggest that the audio-lingual method has a positive impact and using it could improve the speaking abilities.

The second research question aims to find if there is a statistically significant difference between the subjects' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the direct method. To answer this question the means, and the standard deviation for the pretest and the first and second posttest have been calculated, then t-test was performed to determine the differences of these means (table 3).

Table 3

Test	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	Degree Freedom	Sig
Pretest	40	2.4	.62			
Test-1	40	4.5	.67	-12.84	29	<0.0005
Test-2	40	4.1	.77			

The results that can be seen from the previous table show that there was a statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the three means in favor of the posttests. This result which agrees with what have been mentioned by Richardson, (1983), Richards, and Rodgers, (2007), Beckenham and Rivers, (1968), Stern, (1983), Vietor, (1882), Brown, (2000) and others which suggest that using the direct method has improved the speaking skills of the participants. It also supports the previous findings mentioned in literature which suggest that the direct method has a positive impact and using it could improve the speaking abilities.

The final part of this section will concentrate on the third research question which aims to find if there is a statistically significant difference between the groups' mean scores on the English-speaking skills test due to the use of the teaching method. Means and standard deviations for each group in both tests (post-test 1 and post-test 2) appear in table 4. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect for the teaching method, ($F_{(1,27)} = 174,942$, $p < 0.0005$). The test by the group was not significant ($F_{(2,27)} = 1.482$, $p = 0.254$). Independent t-tests were performed on the data of each group for each test. In the immediate retention test (post-test1), t-tests revealed that the participants' scores in the first group (where the audio-lingual method has been adopted) were significantly higher than those of the second group (where the direct method has been employed): ($t = 8.033$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.0005$), and those of the third group (the control group): ($t = 13.311$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.0005$); the second group scores were also higher than the third group: ($t = 3.501$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, in the delayed retention test (post-test2), participants of the first group outperformed their colleagues in the second group: ($t = 5.793$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.0005$) and the third group: ($t = 8.359$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.0005$). The second group scores, however, were significantly higher than those of the third group: ($t = 2.726$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.05$). This indicated that the direct method was superior to other teaching methods.

Table 4

Groups	Tests			
	Post-test (1)		Post-test (2)	
	M	SD	M	SD
(1) Audio- lingual method	4.5	.67	4.1	.77
(2) Direct method	3.4	.58	3.2	.99
(3) Control group (communicative method)	2.33	.54	2.55	.62

These results also prove that employing these methods have a positive effect on the students' speaking abilities. The results also prove that the audio-lingual method has a greater better effect on the students' speaking abilities when compared to the other teaching methods. These results go along what has been mentioned in the literature such as Setiawan, (2011) Anggraeni, (2007) Faridatusolihah, N. (2008) which suggest that this teaching method improves the students' speaking abilities and has a positive impact in their speaking in the foreign language.

VI. CONCLUSION

The conclusion which emerges from the previous discussion suggests that using the audio-lingual method results in a better improvement in student's speaking abilities. Nevertheless, it should be noted that all of the methods discussed in this paper helped improving the speaking skills of English as a foreign language students. Investing in any of them in such a learning context will probably improve the students' speaking abilities. However, it is worth mentioning that employing any teaching method, including the ones discussed here takes patience and hard work from both students and teachers.

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