

Tikrit University

Collage of Education for Humanities

English Department



Techniques & principles in language teaching

Third Year

The Audio – Lingual Method

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Audio-Lingual Method (ALM):

The Audio-Lingual Method is a language teaching approach that emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, influenced by behaviorist psychology. This method primarily relies on repetition and practice of language patterns, particularly in listening and speaking.

Definitions:

1. **Audio-Lingual Method:** A method of language teaching that focuses on the repeated practice of language patterns through listening and speaking. This method avoids direct translation and explicit grammar instruction, using repetition and drills to internalize phrases and structures.
2. **Behaviorism:** A psychological theory that emphasizes learning as a result of responses to stimuli, where behaviors (such as language patterns) can be shaped through reinforcement and repetition.

Core Principles of the Audio-Lingual Method:

1. **Learning Through Imitation:**
 - Students learn language by imitating the language models presented by the teacher. The focus is on repeating phrases and structures without much explanation or translation.
2. **Repetition:**
 - Repetition is the core element of this method. Students repeat sentences and language patterns many times until they become ingrained in their memory.

3. Immediate Error Correction:

- Teachers correct students' mistakes immediately to prevent the formation of incorrect language habits. This correction helps students internalize the correct forms and avoid reinforcing errors.

4. Focus on Listening and Speaking:

- The method prioritizes speaking and listening over reading and writing, particularly in the initial stages of language learning. The goal is to develop oral proficiency before moving on to reading and writing skills.

5. No Translation:

- The Audio-Lingual Method avoids translating between the students' native language and the target language. Instead, students learn through direct exposure to the language, which reduces the influence of their first language on the learning process.

6. Use of Drills:

- The method employs various drills (like substitution drills, transformation drills, and chain drills) to practice specific language structures. These drills are designed to reinforce language patterns through repetition and variation.

7. Structural Grammar Focus:

- The method emphasizes learning grammar structures through practice rather than explicit grammar rules. Students are expected to internalize grammatical patterns by using them in context.
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Techniques of the Audio-Lingual Method:

1. Repetition Drills:

- The teacher presents a sentence, and students repeat it several times. This helps students internalize the structure and pronunciation of the language.

2. Substitution Drills:

- In these drills, students replace a word or part of a sentence with a new word or phrase, maintaining the structure of the original sentence. This helps students practice sentence structures with variations.

3. Transformation Drills:

- Students practice changing a sentence from one form to another. For example, changing an affirmative sentence into a negative or a question. This helps in reinforcing understanding of grammatical structures.

4. Chain Drills:

- Students form a chain by each student repeating a sentence and then altering it in some way (e.g., by answering a question or changing a word). This encourages interaction and communication in the target language.

5. Dialogue Practice:

- Students engage in dialogues, practicing set conversations to internalize language patterns. These dialogues often reflect everyday situations, such as ordering food or asking for directions.

6. Minimal Pair Drills:

- This technique focuses on practicing sounds that are similar but different in meaning (e.g., "bit" vs. "beat"). It helps students improve pronunciation by differentiating between sounds that are often confused.
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Criticism of the Audio-Lingual Method:

1. Limited Focus on Communication:

- Critics argue that the method places too much emphasis on mechanical repetition and lacks a focus on real communication. It doesn't adequately prepare students for spontaneous, real-life language use.

2. Overemphasis on Pronunciation:

- While pronunciation is important, the method often neglects the development of other skills, like reading and writing, in the early stages of learning.

3. Boring for Students:

- Some learners find the repetitive drills dull and uninspiring, which can reduce their motivation to continue learning.

4. Cultural Context Neglect:

- The method doesn't integrate cultural knowledge into the learning process, which is important for language use in real-world contexts.