

Week 5-6: The Audio-Lingual Method & Controlled Games

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about the Audio-Lingual Method. This method emerged from increased attention to foreign language teaching in the United States toward the end of the 1950s. It is based on the idea that students acquire the target language through conditioning and habit formation.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the Audio-Lingual Method and its techniques and principles.

Learning Outcomes

- **Principles:** Students will be able to describe key principles of the Audio-Lingual Method such as its goal, conditioning, and habit formation.
- **Techniques:** Students will be able to describe and express their thoughts about the predominant techniques used in an Audio-Lingual Method lesson.

Key Vocabulary

- Structural linguistics (p. 35)
- Behaviorism (p. 35)
- Conditioning (p. 35)
- Reinforcement (p. 35)
- Habit formation (p. 35)
- Contrastive analysis (p. 41)
- Minimal pair (p. 41)
- Phoneme (p. 41)
- Overlearn (p. 43)
- Structural patterns (p. 43)
- Imitation (p. 45)
- Drill types: backward build-up (expansion) drill, repetition drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple-slot substitution drill, transformation drill, question-and-answer drill (pp. 47-48)

Understanding the Audio-Lingual Method

- 1. What is the goal of the Audio-Lingual Method?
- 2. What is conditioning? How did conditioning influence the Audio-Lingual Method?

Experience

- 3. Consider the Audio-Lingual Method video, the sample lesson in the textbook (pp. 35-42), and the observations and principles of the Audio-Lingual Method (pp. 42-46).
 - a) Match the drill types below with their description.

Drill Type	Description
Backward build-up drill	A student answers a question from the teacher, and then asks that same question to a neighboring student, who answers, and so on.
Repetition drill	Students repeat the teacher’s model as accurately and quickly as possible.
Chain drill	Students listen as the teacher models a question-and-answer exchange, then answer the teacher’s questions using the same pattern.
Single-slot substitution drill	Students repeat a sentence by replacing a word or phrase with a cue provided by the teacher.
Multiple-slot substitution drill	Students change one sentence type into another.
Transformation drill	Students repeat phrases one-by-one from the end of the sentence until the entire sentence is repeated
Question-and-answer drill	Students repeat a sentence by replacing a word or phrase with various cues provided by the teacher.

- b) The teacher almost always says a word, phrase, or sentence immediately before the students say it. Why?

c) Describe the minimal pair activity on textbook page 41. Do you think this activity would be useful for Korean learners of English? Why?

d) To what extent do the students take the initiative to speak during the lesson? That is, do they decide when they will speak and what they will say, or does the teacher, or is it a combination of the two? Why is it that way?

e) What is the role of the teacher?

f) What is the role of the students?

Reviewing the Techniques

4.1 What drills could be used with the following dialog?

1. **SAM:** Lou's going to go to college next fall.
2. **BETTY:** Where is he going to go?
3. **SAM:** He's going to go to Stanford.
4. **BETTY:** What is he going to study?
5. **SAM:** Biology. He's going to be a doctor.

4.2 Now use those drills to practice the dialogue with your classmates.

The Audio-Lingual Method

Introduction

The Audio-Lingual Method, like the Direct Method we have just examined, is also an oral-based approach. However, it is very different, in that rather than emphasizing vocabulary acquisition through exposure to its use in situations, the Audio-Lingual Method drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. Also, unlike the Direct Method, it has a strong theoretical base in linguistics and psychology. Charles Fries (1945) of the University of Michigan led the way in applying principles from structural linguistics in developing the method, and for this reason, it has sometimes been referred to as the ‘Michigan Method.’ Later in its development, principles from behavioral psychology (Skinner 1957) were incorporated. It was thought that the way to acquire the sentence patterns of the target language was through **conditioning**—helping learners to respond correctly to stimuli through shaping and reinforcement, so that the learners could overcome the habits of their native language and form the new habits required to be target language speakers.

In order to come to an understanding of this method, let us now enter a classroom where the Audio-Lingual Method is being used. We will sit in on a beginning-level English class in Mali. There are 34 students, 13–15 years of age. The class meets for one hour a day, five days a week.

Experience

As we enter the classroom, the first thing we notice is that the students are attentively listening as the teacher is presenting a new dialogue, a conversation between two people. The students know they will be expected eventually to memorize the dialogue the teacher is introducing. All of the teacher’s instructions are in English. Sometimes she uses actions to convey meaning, but not one word of the students’ native language is uttered. After she acts out the dialogue, she says:

'All right, class. I am going to repeat the dialogue now. Listen carefully, but no talking please.

Two people are walking along a sidewalk in town. They know each other, and as they meet, they stop to talk. One of them is named Sally and the other one is named Bill. I will talk for Sally and for Bill. Listen to their conversation:

SALLY: Good morning, Bill.
BILL: Good morning, Sally.
SALLY: How are you?
BILL: Fine, thanks. And you?
SALLY: Fine. Where are you going?
BILL: I'm going to the post office.
SALLY: I am, too. Shall we go together?
BILL: Sure. Let's go.

Listen one more time. This time try to understand all that I am saying.'

Now she has the whole class repeat each of the lines of the dialogue after her model. They repeat each line several times before moving on to the next line. When the class comes to the line, 'I'm going to the post office,' they stumble a bit in their repetition. The teacher, at this point, stops the repetition and uses a backward build-up drill (expansion drill). The purpose of this drill is to break down the troublesome sentence into smaller parts. The teacher starts with the end of the sentence and has the class repeat just the last two words. Since they can do this, the teacher adds a few more words, and the class repeats this expanded phrase. Little by little the teacher builds up the phrases until the entire sentence is being repeated.

TEACHER: Repeat after me: post office.
CLASS: Post office.
TEACHER: To the post office.
CLASS: To the post office.
TEACHER: Going to the post office.
CLASS: Going to the post office.
TEACHER: I'm going to the post office.
CLASS: I'm going to the post office.

Through this step-by-step procedure, the teacher is able to give the students help in producing the troublesome line. Having worked on the line in small pieces, the students are also able to take note of where each word or phrase begins and ends in the sentence.

After the students have repeated the dialogue several times, the teacher gives them a chance to adopt the role of Bill while she says Sally's lines. Before the class actually says each line, the teacher models it. In effect, the class is experiencing a repetition drill where the students have to listen carefully and attempt to mimic the teacher's model as accurately as possible.

Next, the class and the teacher switch roles in order to practice a little more: The teacher says Bill's lines and the class says Sally's. Then the teacher divides the class in half so that each half on their own gets to try to say either Bill's or Sally's lines. The teacher stops the students from time to time when she feels they are straying too far from the model, and once again provides a model, which she has them attempt to copy. To further practice the lines of this dialogue, the teacher has all the boys in the class take Bill's part and all the girls take Sally's.

She then initiates a chain drill with four of the lines from the dialogue. A chain drill gives students an opportunity to say the lines individually. The teacher listens and can tell which students are struggling and will need more practice. A chain drill also lets students use the expressions in communication with someone else, even though the communication is very limited. The teacher addresses the student nearest her with, 'Good morning, Adama.' He, in turn, responds, 'Good morning, teacher.' She says, 'How are you?' Adama answers, 'Fine, thanks. And you?' The teacher replies, 'Fine.' He understands through the teacher's gestures that he is to turn to the student sitting beside him and greet her. That student, in turn, says her lines in reply to him. When she has finished, she greets the student on the other side of her. This chain continues until all of the students have a chance to ask and answer the questions. The last student directs the greeting to the teacher.

Finally, the teacher selects two students to perform the entire dialogue for the rest of the class. When they are finished, two others do the same. Not everyone has a chance to say the dialogue in a pair today, but perhaps they will sometime later in the week.

The teacher moves next to the second major phase of the lesson. She continues to drill the students with language from the dialogue, but these drills require more than simple repetition. The first drill the teacher leads is a single-slot substitution drill in which the students will repeat a sentence from the dialogue and replace a word or phrase in the sentence with the word or phrase the teacher gives them. This word or phrase is called the cue.

The teacher begins by reciting a line from the dialogue, 'I am going to the post office.' Following this she shows the students a picture of a bank and says the phrase, 'the bank.' She pauses, then says, 'I am going to the bank.'

From her example the students realize that they are supposed to take the cue phrase ('the bank'), which the teacher supplies, and put it into its proper place in the sentence.

Now she gives them their first cue phrase, 'the drugstore.' Together the students respond, 'I am going to the drugstore.' The teacher smiles. 'Very good!' she exclaims. The teacher cues, 'the park.' The students chorus, 'I am going to the park.'

Other cues she offers in turn are ‘the café,’ ‘the supermarket,’ ‘the bus station,’ ‘the football field,’ and ‘the library.’ Each cue is accompanied by a picture as before. After the students have gone through the drill sequence three times, the teacher no longer provides a spoken cue phrase. Instead, she simply shows the pictures one at a time, and the students repeat the entire sentence, putting the name of the place in the picture in the appropriate slot in the sentence.

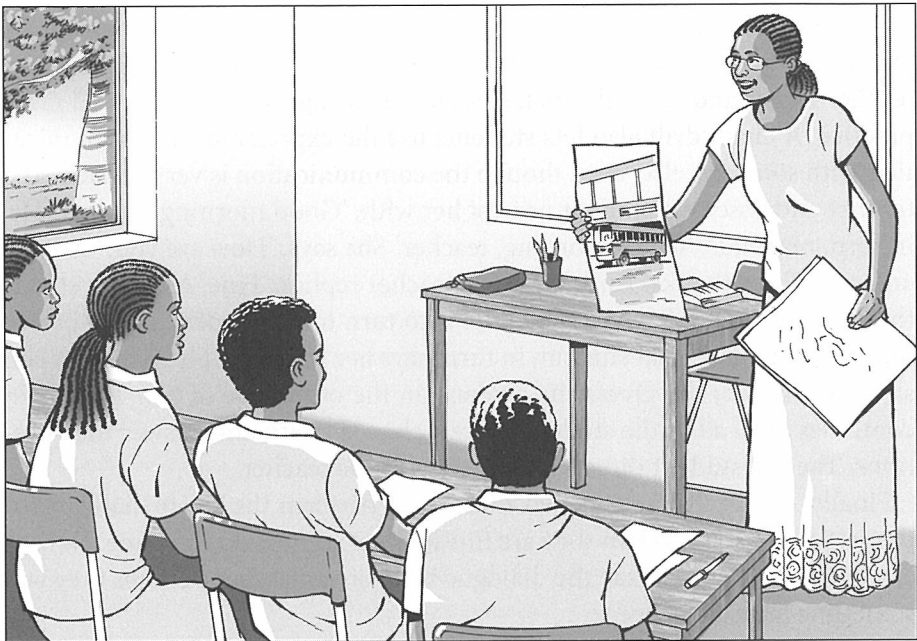


Figure 4.1 Using pictures to conduct a sentence drill

A similar procedure is followed for another sentence in the dialogue, ‘How are you?’ The subject pronouns ‘he,’ ‘she,’ ‘they,’ and ‘you’ are used as cue words. This substitution drill is slightly more difficult for the students since they have to change the form of the verb ‘be’ to ‘is’ or ‘are,’ depending on which subject pronoun the teacher gives them. The students are apparently familiar with the subject pronouns since the teacher is not using any pictures. Instead, after going through the drill a few times supplying oral cues, the teacher points to a boy in the class and the students understand they are to use the pronoun ‘he’ in the sentence. They chorus, ‘How is he?’ ‘Good!’ says the teacher. She points to a girl and waits for the class’s response, then points to other students to elicit the use of ‘they.’

Finally, the teacher increases the complexity of the task by leading the students in a multiple-slot substitution drill. This is essentially the same type of drill as the single-slot the teacher has just used. However with this drill,

students must recognize what part of speech the cue word is and where it fits into the sentence. The students still listen to only one cue from the teacher. Then they must make a decision concerning where the cue word or phrase belongs in a sentence also supplied by the teacher. The teacher in this class starts off by having the students repeat the original sentence from the dialogue, 'I am going to the post office.' Then she gives them the cue 'she.' The students understand and produce, 'She is going to the post office.' The next cue the teacher offers is 'to the park.' The students hesitate at first; then they respond by correctly producing, 'She is going to the park.' She continues in this manner, sometimes providing a subject pronoun, other times naming a location.

The substitution drills are followed by a transformation drill. This type of drill asks students to change one type of sentence into another—an affirmative sentence into a negative or an active sentence into a passive, for example. In this class, the teacher uses a substitution drill that requires the students to change a statement into a *yes/no* question. The teacher offers an example, 'I say, "She is going to the post office." You make a question by saying, "Is she going to the post office?"'

The teacher models two more examples of this transformation, then asks, 'Does everyone understand? OK, let's begin: "They are going to the bank."' The class replies in turn, 'Are they going to the bank?' They transform approximately fifteen of these patterns, and then the teacher decides they are ready to move on to a question-and-answer drill.

The teacher holds up one of the pictures she used earlier, the picture of a football field, and asks the class, 'Are you going to the football field?' She answers her own question, 'Yes, I'm going to the football field.' She poses the next question while holding up a picture of a park, 'Are you going to the park?' And again answers herself, 'Yes, I'm going to the park.' She holds up a third picture, the one of a library. She poses a question to the class, 'Are you going to the library?' They respond together, 'Yes, I am going to the library.'

'Very good,' the teacher says. Through her actions and examples, the students have learned that they are to answer the questions following the pattern she has modeled. The teacher drills them with this pattern for the next few minutes. Since the students can handle it, she poses the question to selected individuals rapidly, one after another. The students are expected to respond very quickly, without pausing.

The students are able to keep up the pace, so the teacher moves on to the next step. She again shows the class one of the pictures, a supermarket this time. She asks, 'Are you going to the bus station?' She answers her own question, 'No, I am going to the supermarket.'

The students understand that they are required to look at the picture and listen to the question and answer negatively if the place in the question is not the same as what they see in the picture. 'Are you going to the bus station?' The teacher asks while holding up a picture of a café. 'No, I am going to the café,' the class answers.

'Very good!' exclaims the teacher. After posing a few more questions that require negative answers, the teacher produces the pictures of the post office and asks, 'Are you going to the post office?' The students hesitate a moment and then chorus, 'Yes, I am going to the post office.'

'Good,' comments the teacher. She works a little longer on this question-and-answer drill, sometimes providing her students with situations that require a negative answer and sometimes giving encouragement to each student. She holds up pictures and poses questions one right after another, but the students seem to have no trouble keeping up with her. The only time she changes the rhythm is when a student seriously mispronounces a word. When this occurs she restates the word and works briefly with the student until his pronunciation is closer to her own.

For the final few minutes of the class, the teacher returns to the dialogue with which she began the lesson. She repeats it once, then has the half of the class to her left do Bill's lines and the half of the class to her right do Sally's. This time there is no hesitation at all. The students move through the dialogue briskly. They trade roles and do the same. The teacher smiles, 'Very good. Class dismissed.'

The lesson ends for the day. Both the teacher and the students have worked hard. The students have listened to and spoken only English for the period. The teacher is tired from all her action, but she is pleased for she feels the lesson went well. The students have learned the lines of the dialogue and to respond without hesitation to her cues in the drill pattern.

In lessons later in the week, the teacher will do the following:

- 1 Review the dialogue.
- 2 Expand upon the dialogue by adding a few more lines, such as 'I am going to the post office. I need a few stamps.'
- 3 Drill the new lines and introduce some new vocabulary items through the new lines, for example:

I am going to the supermarket. I need a little butter.

... library. ... few books.

... drugstore. ... little medicine.

- 4 Work on the difference between mass and count nouns, contrasting 'a little/a few' with mass and count nouns respectively. No grammar rule will ever be given to the students. The students will be led to figure out the rules from their work with the examples the teacher provides.

- 5 A contrastive analysis (the comparison of two languages, in this case, the students' native language and the target language, English) has led the teacher to expect that the students will have special trouble with the pronunciation of words such as 'little,' which contain /ɪ/. The students do indeed say the word as if it contained /i:/. As a result, the teacher works on the contrast between /ɪ/ and /i:/ several times during the week. She uses **minimal pair** words, such as ship/sheep, live/leave, and his/he's to get her students to hear the difference in pronunciation between the words in each pair. Then, when she feels they are ready, she drills them in saying the two sounds—first, the sounds on their own, and later, the sounds in words, phrases, and sentences.
- 6 Sometime towards the end of the week, the teacher writes the dialogue on the blackboard. She asks the students to give her the lines and she writes them out as the students say them. They copy the dialogue into their notebooks. They also do some limited written work with the dialogue. In one exercise, the teacher has erased 15 selected words from the expanded dialogue. The students have to rewrite the dialogue in their notebooks, supplying the missing words without looking at the complete dialogue they copied earlier. In another exercise, the students are given sequences of words such as 'I,' 'go,' 'supermarket' and 'he,' 'need,' 'butter,' and they are asked to write complete sentences like the ones they have been drilling orally.
- 7 On Friday the teacher leads the class in the 'supermarket alphabet game.' The game starts with a student who needs a food item beginning with the letter 'A.' The student says, 'I am going to the supermarket. I need a few apples.' The next student says, 'I am going to the supermarket. He needs a few apples. I need a little bread' (or 'a few bananas,' or any other food item you could find in the supermarket beginning with the letter 'B'). The third student continues, 'I am going to the supermarket. He needs a few apples. She needs a little bread. I need a little cheese.' The game continues with each player adding an item that begins with the next letter in the alphabet. Before adding his or her own item, however, each player must mention the items of the previous students. If the student has difficulty thinking of an item, the other students or the teacher helps.
- 8 A presentation by the teacher on supermarkets in the United States follows the game. The teacher tries very hard to get meaning across in English. The teacher answers the students' questions about the differences between supermarkets in the United States and open-air markets in Mali. They also discuss briefly the differences between American and Mali football. The students seem very interested in the

discussion. The teacher promises to continue the discussion of popular American sports the following week.

Thinking about the Experience

Although it is true that this was a very brief experience with the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), let us see if we can make some observations about the behavior of the teacher and the techniques she used. From these we should be able to figure out the principles underlying the method. We will make our observations in order, following the lesson plan of the class we observed.

Observations	Principles
1 The teacher introduces a new dialogue.	Language forms do not occur by themselves; they occur most naturally within a context.
2 The language teacher uses only the target language in the classroom. Actions, pictures, or realia are used to give meaning otherwise.	The native language and the target language have separate linguistic systems. They should be kept apart so that the students' native language interferes as little as possible with the students' attempts to acquire the target language.
3 The language teacher introduces the dialogue by modeling it two times; she introduces the drills by modeling the correct answers; at other times, she corrects mispronunciation by modeling the proper sounds in the target language.	One of the language teacher's major roles is that of a model of the target language. Teachers should provide students with an accurate model. By listening to how it is supposed to sound, students should be able to mimic the model.
4 The students repeat each line of the new dialogue several times.	Language learning is a process of habit formation. The more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning.
5 The students stumble over one of the lines of the dialogue. The teacher uses a backward build-up drill with this line.	It is important to prevent learners from making errors. Errors lead to the formation of bad habits. When errors do occur, they should immediately be corrected by the teacher.

6	The teacher initiates a chain drill in which each student greets another.	The purpose of language learning is to learn how to use the language to communicate.
7	The teacher uses single-slot and multiple-slot substitution drills.	Particular parts of speech occupy particular 'slots' in sentences. In order to create new sentences, students must learn which part of speech occupies which slot.
8	The teacher says, 'Very good,' when the students answer correctly.	Positive reinforcement helps the students to develop correct habits.
9	The teacher uses spoken cues and picture cues.	Students should learn to respond to both verbal and nonverbal stimuli.
10	The teacher conducts transformation and question-and-answer drills.	Each language has a finite number of patterns. Pattern practice helps students to form habits which enable the students to use the patterns.
11	When the students can handle it, the teacher poses the questions to them rapidly.	Students should 'overlearn,' i.e. learn to answer automatically without stopping to think.
12	The teacher provides the students with cues; she calls on individuals; she smiles encouragement; she holds up pictures one after another.	The teacher should be like an orchestra leader—conducting, guiding, and controlling the students' behavior in the target language.
13	New vocabulary is introduced through lines of the dialogue; vocabulary is limited.	The major objective of language teaching should be for students to acquire the structural patterns; students will learn vocabulary afterward.
14	Students are given no grammar rules; grammatical points are taught through examples and drills.	The learning of another language should be the same as the acquisition of the native language. We do not need to memorize rules in order to use our native language. The rules necessary to use the target language will be figured out or induced from examples.

15 The teacher does a contrastive analysis of the target language and the students' native language in order to locate the places where she anticipates her students will have trouble.	The major challenge of language teaching is getting students to overcome the habits of their native language. A comparison between the native and target language will tell the teacher in which areas her students will probably experience difficulty.
16 The teacher writes the dialogue on the blackboard toward the end of the week. The students do some limited written work with the dialogue and the sentence drills.	Speech is more basic to language than the written form. The 'natural order' (the order children follow when learning their native language) of skill acquisition is: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
17 The supermarket alphabet game and a discussion of American supermarkets and football are included.	Language cannot be separated from culture. Culture is not only literature and the arts, but also the everyday behavior of the people who use the target language. One of the teacher's responsibilities is to present information about that culture.

Reviewing the Principles

At this point we should turn to the 10 questions we have answered for each method we have considered so far.

1 What are the goals of teachers who use the Audio-Lingual Method?

Teachers want their students to be able to use the target language communicatively. In order to do this, they believe students need to overlearn the target language, to learn to use it automatically without stopping to think. Their students achieve this by forming new habits in the target language and overcoming the old habits of their native language.

2 What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students?

The teacher is like an orchestra leader, directing and controlling the language behavior of her students. She is also responsible for providing her students with a good model for imitation.

Students are imitators of the teacher's model or the tapes she supplies of model speakers. They follow the teacher's directions and respond as accurately and as rapidly as possible.

3 What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

New vocabulary and structural patterns are presented through dialogues. The dialogues are learned through imitation and repetition. Drills (such as repetition, backward build-up, chain, substitution, transformation, and question-and-answer) are conducted based upon the patterns present in the dialogue. Students' successful responses are positively reinforced. Grammar is induced from the examples given; explicit grammar rules are not provided. Cultural information is contextualized in the dialogues or presented by the teacher. Students' reading and written work is based upon the oral work they did earlier.

4 What is the nature of student–teacher interaction? What is the nature of student–student interaction?

There is student-to-student interaction in chain drills or when students take different roles in dialogues, but this interaction is teacher-directed. Most of the interaction is between teacher and students and is initiated by the teacher.

5 How are the feelings of the students dealt with?

There are no principles of the method that relate to this area.

6 How is the language viewed? How is culture viewed?

The view of language in the Audio-Lingual Method has been influenced by descriptive linguists. Every language is seen as having its own unique system. The system comprises several different levels: phonological, morphological, and syntactic. Each level has its own distinctive patterns. Everyday speech is emphasized in the Audio-Lingual Method. The level of complexity of the speech is graded, however, so that beginning students are presented with only simple patterns. Culture consists of the everyday behavior and lifestyle of the target language speakers.

7 What areas of language are emphasized? What language skills are emphasized?

Vocabulary is kept to a minimum while the students are mastering the sound system and grammatical patterns. A grammatical pattern is not the same as a sentence. For instance, underlying the following three sentences is the same grammatical pattern: 'Meg called,' 'The Blue Jays won,' 'The team practiced.'

The natural order of skills presentation is adhered to: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The oral/aural skills receive most of the attention. What students write they have first been introduced to orally. Pronunciation

is taught from the beginning, often by students working in language laboratories on discriminating between members of minimal pairs.

8 What is the role of the students' native language?

The habits of the students' native language are thought to interfere with the students' attempts to master the target language. Therefore, the target language is used in the classroom, not the students' native language. A contrastive analysis between the students' native language and the target language will reveal where a teacher should expect the most interference.

9 How is evaluation accomplished?

The answer to this question is not obvious because we didn't actually observe the students in this class taking a formal test. If we had, we would have seen that it was discrete-point in nature, that is, each question on the test would focus on only one point of the language at a time. Students might be asked to distinguish between words in a minimal pair, for example, or to supply an appropriate verb form in a sentence.

10 How does the teacher respond to student errors?

Student errors are to be avoided if at all possible, through the teacher's awareness of where the students will have difficulty, and restriction of what they are taught to say.

Reviewing the Techniques

If you agree with the above answers, you may wish to implement the following techniques. Of course, even if you do not agree, there may be techniques described below that you are already using or can adapt to your approach.

● Dialogue Memorization

Dialogues or short conversations between two people are often used to begin a new lesson. Students memorize the dialogue through mimicry; students usually take the role of one person in the dialogue, and the teacher the other. After the students have learned the first person's lines, they switch roles and memorize the other person's part. Another way of practicing the two roles is for half of the class to take one role and the other half to take the other. After the dialogue has been memorized, pairs of individual students might perform the dialogue for the rest of the class.

In the Audio-Lingual Method, certain sentence patterns and grammar points are included within the dialogue. These patterns and points are later practiced in drills based on the lines of the dialogue.

- **Backward Build-up (Expansion) Drill**

This drill is used when a long line of a dialogue is giving students trouble. The teacher breaks down the line into several parts. The students repeat a part of the sentence, usually the last phrase of the line. Then, following the teacher's cue, the students expand what they are repeating part by part until they are able to repeat the entire line. The teacher begins with the part at the end of the sentence (and works backward from there) to keep the intonation of the line as natural as possible. This also directs more student attention to the end of the sentence, where new information typically occurs.

- **Repetition Drill**

Students are asked to repeat the teacher's model as accurately and as quickly as possible. This drill is often used to teach the lines of the dialogue.

- **Chain Drill**

A chain drill gets its name from the chain of conversation that forms around the room as students, one by one, ask and answer questions of each other. The teacher begins the chain by greeting a particular student, or asking him a question. That student responds, then turns to the student sitting next to him. The first student greets or asks a question of the second student and the chain continues. A chain drill allows some controlled communication, even though it is limited. A chain drill also gives the teacher an opportunity to check each student's speech.

- **Single-slot Substitution Drill**

The teacher says a line, usually from the dialogue. Next, the teacher says a word or a phrase (called the cue). The students repeat the line the teacher has given them, substituting the cue into the line in its proper place. The major purpose of this drill is to give the students practice in finding and filling in the slots of a sentence.

- **Multiple-slot Substitution Drill**

This drill is similar to the single-slot substitution drill. The difference is that the teacher gives cue phrases, one at a time, that fit into different slots in the dialogue line. The students must recognize what part of speech each cue is, or at least, where it fits into the sentence, and make any other changes, such as subject-verb agreement. They then say the line, fitting the cue phrase into the line where it belongs.

- **Transformation Drill**

The teacher gives students a certain kind of sentence pattern, an affirmative sentence for example. Students are asked to transform this sentence into

a negative sentence. Other examples of transformations to ask of students are: changing a statement into a question, an active sentence into a passive one, or direct speech into reported speech.

- **Question-and-answer Drill**

This drill gives students practice with answering questions. The students should answer the teacher's questions very quickly. Although we did not see it in our lesson here, it is also possible for the teacher to cue the students to ask questions as well. This gives students practice with the question pattern.

- **Use of Minimal Pairs**

The teacher works with pairs of words which differ in only one sound; for example, 'ship/sheep.' Students are first asked to perceive the difference between the two words and later to be able to say the two words. The teacher selects the sounds to work on after she has done a contrastive analysis, a comparison between the students' native language and the language they are studying.

- **Complete the Dialogue**

Selected words are erased from a dialogue students have learned. Students complete the dialogue by filling the blanks with the missing words.

- **Grammar Game**

Games like the Supermarket Alphabet Game described in this chapter are used in the Audio-Lingual Method. The games are designed to get students to practice a grammar point within a context. Students are able to express themselves, although in a limited way. Notice there is also a lot of repetition in this game.

Conclusion

We have looked at both the techniques and the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method. Try now to make the bridge between this method and your teaching situation.

Does it make sense to you that language acquisition results from habit formation? If so, will the habits of the native language interfere with target language learning? Should errors be prevented as much as possible? Should the major focus be on the structural patterns of the target language? Which of these or the other principles of the Audio-Lingual Method are acceptable to you?

Is a dialogue a useful way to introduce new material? Should it be memorized through mimicry of the teacher's model? Are structure drills valuable pedagogical activities? Is working on pronunciation through minimal-pair drills a worthwhile activity? Would you say these techniques (or any others of this method) are ones that you can use as described? Could you adapt any of them to your own teaching approach and situation?

Activities

A Check your understanding of the Audio-Lingual Method.

- 1 Which of the techniques below follows from the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method, and which ones do not? Explain the reasons for your answer.
 - a The teacher asks beginning-level students to write a composition about the system of transportation in their home countries. If they need a vocabulary word that they do not know, they are told to look in a bilingual dictionary for a translation.
 - b Toward the end of the third week of the course, the teacher gives students a reading passage. The teacher asks the students to read the passage and to answer certain questions based upon it. The passage contains words and structures introduced during the first three weeks of the course.
 - c The teacher tells the students that they must add an 's' to third person singular verbs in the present tense in English. She then gives the students a list of verbs and asks them to change the verbs into the third person singular present tense form.
- 2 Some people believe that knowledge of a first and second language can be helpful to learners who are trying to learn a third language. What would an Audio-Lingual teacher say about this? Why?

B Apply what you have understood about the Audio-Lingual Method.

- 1 Read the following dialogue. What subsentence pattern is it trying to teach?

SAM	Lou's going to go to college next fall.
BETTY	Where is he going to go?
SAM	He's going to go to Stanford.
BETTY	What is he going to study?
SAM	Biology. He's going to be a doctor.

Prepare a series of drills (backward build-up, repetition, chain, single-slot substitution, multiple-slot substitution, transformation, and question-and-answer) designed to give beginning-level English language learners some practice with this structure. If the target language that you teach is not English, you may wish to write your own dialogue first. It is not easy to prepare drills, so you might want to try giving them to some other teachers to check.

- 2 Prepare your own dialogue to introduce your students to a sentence or subsentence pattern in the target language you teach.

References/Additional Resources

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