



University Ziane Achour, Djelfa

Master Two

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Language Approaches and Teaching Methods

Department of Foreign Languages

First Term

English Division

Didactics Students

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3. The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method, which belongs to the cognitive approach of language teaching, was developed in the United States during WW II. There was a great demand for people speaking foreign languages for military purposes. They had to be prepared for their tasks in shortcut intensive courses. Some of the principles used in this method are similar to those of the direct method but many are different, based upon the conceptions of the Grammar Translation Method.

The goal of Audio-Lingual Method is to enable students to use the target language communicatively. In order to do this, students need to over-learn the target language, to learn to use it automatically without stopping to think. This aim can be achieved by students' forming new habits in the target language and overcoming the old habits of their native language.

The principles of the method are:

- the teacher is like an orchestra leader, directing and controlling the language behaviour of her/his students; she provides her students with a good model for imitation;
- the target language is used in the classroom not the students' native language;
- a contrastive analyses between the students' native language and the target language will reveal where a teacher should expect the most interference;

- there is student-student interaction in chain drills or when students take different roles in dialogues, but this interaction is teacher-directed because most of the interaction is between teacher-student and is initiated by the teacher;
- new vocabulary and structures are presented through dialogues, the dialogues are learnt through imitation and repetition, 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;
- the oral/aural skills receive most of the attention, pronunciation is taught from the beginning, often by students working in language laboratories;
- students are evaluated on the bases of distinguishing between words in a minimal pair or by supplying an appropriate word form in a sentence;
- student errors are to be avoided through the teacher's awareness of where the students will have difficulty;
- the syllabus is structure-based.

Activities characteristic of the method:

- dialogue memorization
- expansion-drill (This drill is used when a long dialogue is giving students trouble. The teacher breaks down the line into several parts. 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 directs more student attention to the end of the sentence, where new information typically occurs.)
- repetition drill
- chain drill (The teacher begins the chain of conversation by greeting a student or asking him a question. That student responds, then turns to the student sitting next to him and the chain will be continued. The chain drill allows some controlled communication, even though it is limited.)
- single-slot substitution drill (The teacher says a line, usually from the dialogue. Next, the teacher says a word or a phrase- called a 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 (The teacher gives cue phrases, one at a time that fit into different slots in the dialogue line. The students have to recognise what part of speech each cue is where it fits into the sentence and make other changes

such as subject-verb agreement.)

- transformation drill (Students are asked for example to transform an affirmative sentence into a negative one.)

- question and answer drill

- use of minimal pairs (The teacher works with pairs of words which differ in only one sound eg. ship – sheep.)

- gap-filling

- grammar game. (Larsen-Freeman 1986: 31-50)