**Lecture 5**

**The Audio-Lingual Method: An Easy way of Achieving Speech**

1. Features of Audio-lingual method

2. The Audio-Lingual Method and Speech Development

The Audio-Lingual method aims to develop communicative competence of students through dialogues. Dialogues and pattern drills that students need to repeat are used to form habits in learners that will allow them to develop quick and automatic responses. Drills are useful in foreign language teaching in that they give students the opportunity to perform what they have learnt. The objective of this study is to demonstrate how the use of Audio-Lingual method facilitates learning a foreign language.

With the outbreak of World War II armies needed to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies as quickly as possible. This teaching technique was initially called the Army Method, and was the first to be based on linguistic theory and behavioral psychology.

Charles Fries of the Uni. of Michigan led the way in applying principles from structural linguistics in developing the method (Language is consisted with phonetics, lexicon, patterns, syntax).

Later on, behavioral psychology (Skinner 1904-1990) were incorporated. (stimuli – response-shaping- reinforcement-habit forming). Based on Skinner’s Behaviorism theory, it assumed that a human being can be trained using a **system of reinforcement**. Correct behaviour receives positive feedback, while errors receive negative feedback.

The Audio-Lingual method, which was proposed by American linguists in 1950s, was developed from the principle that “a language is first of all a system of sounds for social communication; writing is a secondary derivative system for the recording of spoken language” (Carroll, p.1963). Thus, the purpose of the Audio-Lingual method is to use the target language communicatively. According to this method, speech is given priority in foreign language teaching. The Audio-Lingual method teaches language through dialogues that focus on habit formation of students. Larsen-Freeman states that students will achieve communicative competence by forming new habits in the target language and overcoming the old habits of their native language (2000, p.45).

Dialogues and pattern drills that students need to repeat, are often used to form habits. Hence, as Larsen-Freeman (2000) says the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning. The Audio-Lingual method mainly consists of the following features:

- The teacher reads a dialogue by modeling it. It has been always motivating to put the subject matter in context, and students stand a better chance of retaining what they have learnt. Students learn the target language within a concrete context that will enable them to relate what they learn to real-life learning environments. Teachers as a role model will encourage and inspire the students to strive for learning the target language.

- Students repeat the dialogue. Through repetition students can use the target language automatically, and fluently as well. In this method it is desirable that students form a habit formation to use the target language with ease, therefore, the more they repeat, the easier they will speak the target language without thinking.

- Some words or phrases are changed in the dialogue. Drills used in this method will allow the students to have practice. Through drills such as single-slot substitution, multiple slot substation, and transformation students are given the opportunity to produce speech in the target language, furthermore, these patterns will let them see how language functions. Students learn how to respond correctly when they practice the drills.

Learners could overcome the habits of native language and form the new habits of target language.

**2. The Audio-Lingual Method and Speech Development**

The Audio-Lingual method focuses on oral skills. It aims to improve students’ speaking achievement. Language items are presented to students in spoken form without reference to the mother tongue so that they can learn language skills effectively. The goal of the Audio-Lingual method is, via teaching vocabulary and grammatical patterns through dialogues, to enable students to respond quickly and accurately in spoken language. The dialogues are learnt through repetition and such drills as repetition, backward build-up, chain, substitution, transformation, and question-and-answer are conducted based upon the patterns in the dialogue (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.45). Tim Bowen explains the contributions of this method to language learning as: “Most teachers will at some point require learners to repeat examples of grammatical structures in context with number of aims in mind: stress, rhythm, intonation, ‘consolidating the structure’, enabling learners to use the structure accurately through repetition, etc. Question and answer in open class or closed pairs to practise a particular form can also be argued to have its basis in the audio-lingual approach, as can, without doubt, any kind of drill.” This approach to learning is similar to the Direct Method, in that the lesson takes place entirely in the target language.

**Teaching**

* An oral-based approach.
* Attentively listening.
* Memorize the dialogue (conversation).
* Instructions are in target language.
* Using tape/CD/DVD player and language labs.

**Teaching Procedure 1 (example)**

* Listen (more than once) to a conversation.
* Have class repeat each line. (several times)
* Use backward build-up drill.
* Ss adopt the role of the conversation and dialogue with the teacher.
* Repetition drill- mimic the teacher’s model.
* Chain drill - 1/ Ss have opportunities to say his/her lines. 2/ let Ss use expression to communicate.

**Teaching Procedure 2 (example)**

* Substitute drill- Use the cue.
* Transformation drill - e.g. change affirmative sentences to negative sentences; active- passive
* Through actions and examples, Ss have learned to answer Qs following for the pattern T modeled.

**Backward build-up drill**

T: Repeat after me: post office.

C: Post office.

T: To the post office.

C: To the post office.

T: Going to the post office.

C: Going to the post office.

T: I’m going to the post office.

C: I’m going to the post office.

**Substitute drill- Use the cue.**

Reciting the line from the dialogue,

‘I’m going to the post office.’

1. single-slot substitution drill:

T shows the picture of the bank and says, ‘the bank’ (cue), pause, then says, ‘I’m going to the bank.’

2. multiple-slot substitution drill:

T: ‘she’

S: ‘She is going to the post office.’

T: ‘ to the park’

S: ‘She is going to the park.’

**Transformation drill:**

T: ‘They are going to the bank.’

C: ‘Are they going to the bank?’

T: ‘Are you going to the library?’ (show the picture)

C: ‘Yes, I’m going to the library.’

The Audio-lingual Method was widely used in the 1950s and 1960s, and the emphasis was not on the understanding of words, but rather on the acquisition of structures and patterns in common everyday dialogue.

These patterns are elicited, repeated and tested until the responses given by the student in the foreign language are **automatic**.

**Some characteristics of this method are:**

1. Drills are used to teach structural patterns
2. Set phrases are memorised with a focus on intonation
3. Grammatical explanations are kept to a minimum
4. Vocabulary is taught in context
5. Audio-visual aids are used
6. Focus is on pronunciation
7. Correct responses are positively reinforced immediately

**References**

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