College of Education for Women

English Department

 Subject: Methods of Language Teaching

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The audio-lingual method

Learning by using this method became very popular and it was adopted in every school that teaches English, because they wanted to increase the English level of their students, even, this method is one of the most used in basic level, because it shows the correct pronunciation of the words and corrects the mistakes done at the moment. In this lecture we are going to study the following questions:

1-What is the History of the Audio-lingual Method?

2-What is the Audio-lingual Method and its principal principles?

3-What are the goals of the Audio-lingual Method?

4-What techniques are involved in this Method?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Audio-lingual Method? Through the reading of this topic, we will realize about the uses of this method and how to use it, because it has its techniques and the teacher has to have a very good speaking skill in order to develop the students´ speaking skills. The answers of the questions above are interesting and show exactly what most of English teachers use to do in their classes.

nowadays, and if we realize, this is a traditional method, it is useful, but later on, we are going to see how to use it and who to use it with, because this method is not for all levels

What is the history of the Audio-lingual Method?

The United States involvement in World War II brought a significant change in the teaching of languages in U.S. schools. It quickly became apparent that the grammar-translation method had not produced people who were able to speak the foreign languages they had studied. The U.S. government asked the universities to develop foreign language programs that produced students who could communicate effectively in those languages. Changes in the beliefs about how people learn impacted the teaching methodologies being developed. Based on the behavioristic psychology, the audio-lingual method was developed.

In the audio-lingual method, the emphasis was on the memorization of a series of dialogues and the rote practice of language structures.

What is the Audio-lingual Method and its Principal Principles?

The Audio-lingual Method also called The Oral Method, acts as a supporting for improving the speaking skills, because it helps to pronounce a word in a correct form by using some drills like repetition, transformation, chain and some others. The students repeat a word, phrase or sentence after the teacher, but, why after the teacher? It is because we need to know how a word is pronounced in order to reproduce it in a correct way, otherwise, we would be guessing a pronunciation ,and we could make a mistake. That is the importance of having a model in this method.

This method has a "Skinnerian" characteristic which is the use of the response-reinforcement. When the teacher gives an example stimulus and explains to the students how to pronounce a word or a phrase and motivates them to repeat it, it is considered as a stimulus ,the response is the reproduction of what the teacher wants to the students repeat, but if the teacher listens to a student who makes a mispronunciation mistake, the teacher can explain and repeat again in order to give a reinforcement about the correct pronunciation.

What are the goals of the Audio-lingual Method?

The goal of the Audio-lingual Method was to create communicative competence in learners. However, it was thought that the most effective way to do this was for students to "overlearn" the language being studied through extensive repetition and a variety of elaborate drills. The idea was to project the linguistic patterns of the language into the minds of the learners in a way that made responses automatic and "habitual". To this end it was held that the language "habits" of the first language would constantly interfere, and the only way to overcome this problem was to facilitate the learning of a new set of "habits" appropriate linguistically to the language being studied.

What techniques are involved in this Method?

Dialogue Memorization: In this drill, the students have to memorize a dialogue between two people ("A" and "B"), the short conversation or students perform role "A" and the teacher performs role "B", and then perform both of them. Also, the teacher they change roles in order to can divide the class into two groups and give to one group role "A" and finishing the conversation, the other group would be role "B", and after both groups can change roles and perform the two roles of the .conversation

Backward build-up (expansion): This drill is used when a long line of dialogue is giving students troubles. The teacher breaks down the line into several parts. The students repeat a part of the sentence, and if the students have done it good, the teacher will add another word or two words of the line for being repeated, but if they made a mispronunciation mistake the teacher will repeat the word or words in order to give the model to follow. And that process is repeated until the long line of dialogue is pronounced in a correct way.

 Here are some common applications of the audio-lingual method:.

Drilling: This method involves extensive repetition of language   .1 patterns and structures through various types of drills, such as substitution drills (where students replace one element of a sentence with another) and transformation drills (where students change the form of a sentence).

Dialogues: Dialogues are a central component of the audio-lingual   .2 method. Students listen to and repeat scripted dialogues to practice pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structure. These dialogues often contain everyday language and are used to model real-life communication situations.

Pattern Practice: Students engage in structured activities where   .3 they manipulate language patterns and structures in controlled contexts. This helps reinforce grammatical structures and vocabulary in a systematic way.

Minimal Pair Exercises: Minimal pair exercises involve contrasting 4. words or phrases that differ by only one sound (e.g., "ship" and "sheep" or "bet" and "bat"). Students practice distinguishing between these similar sounds to improve their phonetic accuracy.

Language Labs: Audio-lingual methods often make use of 5. language laboratories, where students listen to recordings and practice speaking exercises individually or in small groups. These labs provide opportunities for focused repetition and self-paced learning.

Error Correction: Instructors using the audio-lingual method often 6. provide immediate correction of errors during speaking activities, reinforcing correct usage through repetition and positive reinforcement.

Role-playing: Role-playing activities simulate real-life situations 7. and allow students to practice using language in context. Students may engage in role-plays where they act out scenarios such as ordering food in a restaurant or making a phone call.

Structural Drills: These drills focus on specific grammatical 8. structures or language patterns, helping students internalize the underlying rules of the language through repetitive practice.

Overall, the audio-lingual method aims to develop students' speaking and listening skills through intensive practice and reinforcement of language patterns and structures. It is often associated with behaviorist theories of learning, where habit formation through repetition is seen as essential for language acquisition.