

The Audio-Lingual Method

(1940s, 1950s -1960s)

Key words: *world war II, structures and linguistic patterns, habits, repetition, dialogue, vocabulary in context, memorization.*

(Definition): The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) is an oral-based approach which drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. It has a strong theoretical base in linguistics and psychology.

Q/ How is the Audio-Lingual Method based on behaviorism or psychology?

The best way to acquire the sentence patterns of the target language is through **conditioning**— helping learners to respond correctly to stimuli through **shaping and reinforcement**. In other words, *learners overcome the habits of their native language and form the new habits required to be target language speakers.*

Q/ When did the ALM appear? Why?

A/ During the World War II because the American military suddenly needed a quick and effective way to teach foreign language skills.

Q/ How does the ALM see language?

A/ Language is a form of behaviour learned by correct habits.

The Principles of the Audio-Lingual Method

1. **Dialogue in context:** Language forms occur most naturally within a context.
2. *Only the target language is used in the classroom. Actions, pictures, or realia are used to give meaning.*
3. **The teacher as a model:** 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.

4. **Habit formation & repetition:** Language learning is a process of habit formation. The more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning.
5. **Preventing errors. Errors are corrected immediately:** It is important to prevent learners from making errors. Errors lead to the formation of bad habits. When errors do occur, they should be immediately corrected by the teacher.
6. **The purpose is communication:** The purpose of language learning is to learn how to use the language to communicate.
7. **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. **Very good: Positive reinforcement** helps the students to develop correct habits.
9. **Using spoken cues and picture cues:** Students should learn to respond to both verbal and nonverbal stimuli.
10. **Pattern practice:** Pattern practice helps students to form habits which enable the students to use the patterns.
11. **Overlearning:** Students should 'overlearn', learn to answer automatically without stopping to think.
12. **Teacher as an orchestra leader:** The teacher should be like an orchestra leader—conducting, guiding, and controlling the students' behavior in the target language.
13. **Structural patterns (phrases) are more emphasized than vocabulary:** The major objective of language teaching should be for students to acquire the structural patterns; students will learn vocabulary afterward.
14. **Learning naturally, inductive learning of rules:** The learning of a foreign language should be the same as the acquisition of the native language. The