

# The Application of Audiolingual Method in Junior High School English Speaking and Listening Class

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## Abstract

Arguments on Audiolingual Method never stops since scholars have pointed its unsound theoretical basis in terms of both language theory and language learning theory. However, even today we could see the application of this method in English teaching class more or less, which reflects it is conducive to language teaching to some degree. Therefore, this passage tries to show how Audiolingual Method can be applied to junior high school English speaking and listening teaching to promote English leaning.

## Keywords

**Audiolingual Method; English Teaching; Speaking and Listening Lesson.**

## 1. Introduction

The emergence of the Audiolingual Method resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States toward the end of the 1950s [1]. It was the launching of the first Russian satellite that made American government to consider the need for a radical change and rethinking of foreign language teaching methodology in order to prevent Americans from becoming isolated from scientific advances made in other countries.

The theory of language underlying audiolingualism was derived from the structural view, language is viewed as a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence type. The language goal of audio-lingual method is to get learners to grasp the structure of the language and several elements under the structure. The language learning theory behind the audio-lingual method is behaviorism. To the behaviorist, the human being is an organism capable of a wide repertoire of behaviors. The occurrence of these behaviors is dependent on three crucial elements in learning: a stimulus, which serves to elicit behavior; a response triggered by stimulus; and reinforcement, which serves to mark the response as being appropriate. With structuralism and behaviorism, learners will be stimulated by the teacher or teaching material to repeat various language elements under the structure over and over again in which process they will get wanted reinforcement and finally learn the target language mostly in listening and speaking.

## 2. Literature Review

A great number of articles discussing about the audio-lingual method have been published on various journals, scholars have expressed different opinions on this method and did a lot of researches on the application of the audio-lingual method. Some scholars have proved that the audio-lingual method have prompted the development of foreign language teaching in both theoretical and practical aspects [2]. However, we can't ignore the shortcomings of this method, just like what Hou mentioned, traditional audiolingualism has been abandoned, we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater, but modify it with increasing further understanding of this method to better meet the need of learners. What's more, Guo pointed that even though the audiolingualism are strongly rejected by some new methods in foreign language teaching, the order that listening and speaking go before reading and writing is still emphasized, which also

tried to demonstrate what the method need is implementation and improvement [3,4]. Therefore, researches on integration of The Audiolingual Method and other teaching methods started to be the focus of researchers. Duan tried to integrate the advantages of the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching, aiming at strengthening students' oral and listening learning, improving students' oral expression skills, and improving students' English communication level. While Dai discussed how to combine the audio-lingual method with situational teaching to help teachers better arrive at teaching objectives. Qian Wang attempts to discuss similarities and differences between the Audiolingual Method and Total Physical Response (TPR) from the aspects that are the theories of both language and learning, and the roles of learners and the teacher. At the same time, it tries to show the strengths and limitations of these two methods, and further explores fitted teaching contexts of the audio-lingual method and TPR [7]. Apart from efforts on combination of different teaching methods, some scholars also explored the application of The Audiolingual Method in English teaching classroom. Yuan analyzed the importance of applying the audio-lingual into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching classroom.

After reviewing relevant literatures, we are expected to be able to notice the advantages of the audio-lingual method, try to make good use of these advantages and combine the audio-lingual method with other teaching methods, integrating the advantages of different teaching methods to improve language teaching. It's true that this kind of method has it's own drawbacks, such as it has overemphasized oral and listening competence while ignored written and reading competence, which runs counter to the requirements put forward by New English Curriculum Standard. Actually, we are now already in a post-method era, where scholars no longer strive to find out what is the best teaching method for all because we have understood there does not exist a best teaching method for all but only most appropriate teaching method for a certain teaching situation, and in most cases we apply a mixture of different kinds of methods.

### 3. Scope of Application

Looking back to today's topic, the audio-lingual method, it is also appropriate in some teaching situations. It is clear that the focus of the audio-lingual method is listening and speaking, thus it could be applied to the teaching of listening and speaking. What needed to be taken into consideration is the stages in which the application of the audio-lingual method is more appropriate. The elementary and junior high school stage are considered more appropriate for the application of the audio-lingual method than senior high school. On the one hand, younger learners are hard to concentrate for a long time on written words and their language level also does not support them to read or write something difficult with the target language. On the other hand, senior high school students are busy with so heavy learning tasks that they can not spare much to practice listening and speaking, what they need more is to practice their reading and listening ability which are the key testing points for the college entrance examination. Therefore, a conclusion could be drawn that the audio-lingual method is appropriate to be applied in elementary and junior high school stages.

Some scholars have studied the application of the audio-lingual method into above discussed stages. Qian talked about the application of the audio-lingual method in junior high school English teaching and provided some useful suggestions [4]. Thorough analyzing the textbook of six-grade primary school English textbooks with the application of this method, Fang considered the audio-lingual method is suitable for English teaching of primary school students since oral practice is their main teaching aim. In addition to the researches into elementary school and junior high school, there is also article talking about the application of this method into college English teaching to improve the oral competence of undergraduates . It is obvious Chinese scholars have made a lot of efforts to apply the audio-lingual method into English

teaching class in order to improve English teaching, and next we are going to check the exact way of the application of this method.

#### **4. The Application of the Audio-lingual Method in Junior High School English Speaking and Listening Class**

With the audio-lingual method, English listening and speaking teaching is always finished through the following steps, namely, cognitive imitation, repetition, transformation and choice. In the first step, it is the teacher who are responsible to speak the teaching material, a dialogue in most cases, with the object, pictures, gestures, situations and other signals to explain the meaning expressed. The second step is to make sure that the students understand what the teacher says, and then imitate the students, and the teacher should correct the students' mistakes in time. The third step, let the student repeat the content which learns unceasingly, remembers until. The fourth step is to choose some words, idioms and sentence patterns to describe a particular situation, situation or an event, so as to develop students' ability to use the content to communicate and practice. The following are some more specific analysis of the teaching procedures.

##### **4.1. Give Priority to Listening and Speaking, with Listening and Writing as a Supplement**

The process of listening is divided into three stages: the first stage is called the sensory stage. At this stage, the students get only a superficial impression, can identify briefly, according to all their first language learning experience of the material to listen to the initial segmentation, this is basically a passive and receiving phase. The second stage is called the recognition stage, and it is a stage that is recognized by dividing and organizing the segments. Students identify the received signals one by one, linking what has been identified to what is being identified. This identification process is active and detailed. The third stage is the stage of comprehension and establishment. The student repeats the material through the cognitive system, and from time to time compares and corrects what has been understood with what has been heard. Students through the re-understanding of the listening material into a more easily retained form is stored in memory. In this way, the comprehended material is changed and what is preserved is the semantic information.

##### **4.2. Practice Over and Over Again and Form a Habit**

In teaching, teachers should let students spend most of their time in imitation, memory, repetition, conversation and other practical exercises, on the basis of a lot of practice to develop a new set of language habits. First of all, teachers should create a conducive environment for students to acquire language, so that students are allowed to contact with and use the language as much as possible. The teaching content should be concrete, not too abstract, and it is best to use the content of small stories and dialogues related to daily life, so that students have a feeling of being in the scene, at the same time, learners can be familiar with the daily life of foreigners and the way of response. These may include eating, living, holidays, dances, parties, guests, letters, movies, television, medical, school, shopping, travel, etc. The students can listen to, imitate and practice repeatedly. In addition, students should also learn and master some of the most basic English sentence patterns, and idioms to be able to get skilled to blurt out. The teaching method can be adopted, such as listening to audio materials, retelling short articles, outlining general ideas, describing pictures, answering questions, discussing opinions, role-playing, and making dialogues. The content can also be expanded to include discussion and debate of social hot spots and various issues. Activities like debate, speech, group discussion, concluding remarks are often adopted. In this way, in a large number of comprehensive listening and speaking, practice, students can gradually achieve a more relaxed understanding

of English and use English to express their thoughts, feelings, will and views clearly and freely, that is, have a relatively strong English listening and speaking ability.

#### **4.3. Sentence Pattern-centered**

Sentence pattern is the foundation of language teaching, and also the central part of the whole foreign language teaching and learning. Sentence pattern not only has structural meaning, but also has lexical meaning and social and cultural meaning. The training of language skills should focus on sentence pattern. Sentence pattern is the pattern of syntactic structure, which is a typical pattern selected from a large number of sentences according to their structural meaning and characteristics. Sentence patterns are highly representative and general. Each sentence pattern reflects a certain linguistic phenomenon. Therefore, teachers should start with basic mode of sentence pattern teaching, which is mainly present-practice-consolidation, pay attention to the unity of sound, form and meaning, and emphasize the use of background and context, thus makes the student clear concrete expression way, achieves the goal of natural and fluent use of the target sentence pattern. After vividly presenting the meaning of the sentence pattern, the teacher must find out whether the students really grasp its meaning. After students understand the meaning of the sentence, it is time for drilling practices. In drilling practices, the sound, shape, meaning should take into account. Students should not only understand the structural form and grammatical meaning of English sentence patterns, but also master their pronunciation and intonation, from correct reading to fluency, until they can blurt it out and use it flexibly.

#### **4.4. To exclude Or Restrict the Mother Tongue**

Listening and speaking is the primary aim of foreign language teaching and learning. This requires students to react quickly and think in a foreign language, and the use of mother tongue or translation as a teaching method will hinder students from establishing a direct link between the foreign language and thinking and slow down the process of learning a foreign language, it is not good for mastering spoken foreign language. Oral English teaching is devoted to the development of students' oral communication ability. Teachers should help students form good habits of oral communication and make the language clear, fluent and expressive. In English language teaching, it is an important means and way to cultivate students' ability to express their thoughts and thoughts in English.

#### **4.5. An Example of the Application of the Audio-lingual Method in Junior High School English Listening and Speaking Class**

We have discussed the detailed procedures of the teaching with the audio-lingual method in English teaching. In fact, today's application of the audiolingual method is no longer followed by the mechanical "listen and repeat" model, it is more dynamic, creative and take students need and interest into consideration. I am going to provide a practical teaching design to show how to apply the audio-lingual method to have an English listening and speaking lesson in today's English teaching.

##### **4.5.1. Analysis of Teaching Material**

The teaching material is 1a from 1c in Unit 6 "I'm watching TV" of the second volume of English book for Grade 7 adopted from the People's Education Press. The language goal of this unit is to get students to be able to talk about what people are doing, that is, the present time in English tense. 1a to 1c part is a typical listening and speaking lesson which will last for 40 minutes.

##### **4.5.2. Teaching Procedures**

I divide the lesson into five sections: recognition, listen and finish 1b, imitation, repetition and after-class activity.

Section one: Recognition

The content of 1a part is often good material for the leading in of unit topic. The teacher uses the pictures in 1a to make students understand what does “what are you doing” mean and how to answer the question. The teacher needs to ask question like “what is the boy doing?” and answer “He is taking the phone” for several times and students are expected to understand the meaning and structure of the dialogue after teachers repeatedly provides similar sentences. Therefore students will get a initial recognition of the sentence pattern.

Section two: listen and finish 1b

Students listen to the type and match the name with corresponding picture in 1a. This is for practicing students listening ability on the one hand, which is an important part of listening and speaking lesson. Listening is the basis for speaking, only when students have gotten enough exposure to language input they are capable of outputting.

Section three: Imitation

The practice of speaking often goes after listening practice. The first step of speaking practice is just imitation. They need to imitate the sentence pattern after the teacher or audio material to make sure they can pronounce each words accurately. The teacher can either use sentences he/she produced before or make some other sentences by describing what is happening in the classroom. It should be noticed that the teacher should just elicit some basic sentence structure because of students’ limited language level. At the same time, the teacher explains the difficult points and solve any problems students have. If time is enough, teachers should let every student to speak these sentences to check their correctness.

Section four: Repetition

When students are ready in oral practice, it is time for them to practice the sentence pattern with 1c. in 1c, students are required to answer the questions about what people are doing in 1a. This activity could be adapted into a conversation activity between two students, students work in pairs, one student ask questions and the other answers (their roles could be exchanged after several rounds). The teacher should provide different choices for students to choose according to their ability and interest.

Section five: After-class activity

The homework for students is to recite a complete dialogue provided by the teacher and practice the sentence pattern more after class which will the teacher will check next time by inviting several students to finish conversations like this.

## 5. Conclusion

The audio-lingual method is still a vital teaching methodology in English teaching of the junior high school. It conforms to these students’ age features and could meet the needs of oral teaching of English. The ultimate aim is to improve students’ English level by means of appropriate methodologies.

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