

I. AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD: Introduction by Diane Larsen-Freeman

1. Language learning is a process of habit formation.
 2. It is important for teachers to prevent student error since errors can lead to the formation of bad habits.
 3. Students should overlearn the sentence patterns of the target language.
 4. Positive reinforcement helps students to develop correct habits.
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Video Presentation: The first method we will observe is the Audio-Lingual Method or ALM. It is a method with which many of you may already be familiar. My colleague, Michael Jerald, will now demonstrate the ALM. Watch carefully what the teacher is doing and what he is asking the students to do.

[Video Demonstration of Audio-Lingual Method by Michael Jerald: See Audio-Lingual Method Materials following Commentary.]

Video Commentary: As the lesson began, we saw the teacher presenting a dialogue to the class. The students just listened to the teacher at first. One of the ALM teacher's major roles is that of a model of the target language. It is the students' job to repeat as accurately as they can the teacher's model. Language learning is seen to be a process of habit formation. The more often the students repeat something, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning.

We saw how the students stumbled over one of the lines of the dialogue they were repeating. When this happened, the teacher used a backward build-up drill with the troublesome line. He started at the end of the sentence, and had the students repeat the final phrase. To this he added each phrase in turn until the students were able to say the whole sentence smoothly.

The teacher corrected the students' errors in other ways as well, for example, by quickly saying the phrase for the students to hear and repeat. It is important to prevent learners from making errors since errors lead to the formation of bad habits.

Later in the lesson, the teacher uses grammar drills: a single-slot substitution drill and a question-and-answer drill. These drills help students to learn, or even better to "overlearn" the sentence patterns of the target language. The overlearning leads to automaticity.

You may have noticed that the teacher often said "Good" or "Very good." In this way, he positively reinforced his students' work. Such reinforcement helps the students to develop correct habits. It wasn't until the end of the lesson that the students got to see the written version of the dialogue which they were learning. This is consistent with the ALM principle that speech is more basic to language than the written form.

[End of Commentary]

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION LESSON PLAN

Teaching Points

1. **Vocabulary:** clean
amazing
vacuum cleaner
pretty
lawn
2. **Grammar:** Using the modal combination would like
Using the superlative degree
3. **Expressions:** Yes, of course...
Oh, no I don't!
Why not?
Oh. (to express disappointment)
4. **Cultural point:** It isn't unusual for men to do housework in the United States.

Objectives

1. The students will be able to recite the dialogue from memory with few or no mistakes.
2. The students will learn all of the new vocabulary items and be able to use them when reciting the dialogue and doing the grammar drills.
3. The students will be able to do the grammar drills smoothly, quickly, and without mistakes.
4. The students will realize that sometimes men do the housework in the United States.

Video Lesson Steps in Sequence

[Dialogue Practice]

1. The teacher sets the scene for the dialogue and tells what he is going to do and what the students should do.
2. The teacher acts out the dialogue using pictures, gestures, and props.
3. The teacher acts out the dialogue again, in the same manner as above.
4. The teacher leads the students in repetition drills, one line of the dialogue at a time. When the teacher thinks the students have practiced a particular line enough, he goes on the next line but first

he goes back to the beginning and has the students recite all of the dialogue they have practiced to that point.

5. The teacher and students practice the dialogue by roleplaying it. First the teacher plays the role of The Salesman; the students are The Woman. Then they change roles and the teacher is the Woman and the students are The Salesman.
6. The teacher asks two students to come to the front of the class and act out the dialogue, using props. Then, two more students do the same thing, and so on, depending on the time allowed.

[Grammar Practice]

7. For the Single-Slot Substitution Drill, the teacher says the whole sentence with each substitution. Then the teacher gives the substitution phrase only; the students say the whole sentence:

Would you like to have the cleanest house in town?

the prettiest house

the greenest lawn

8. For the Question-Answer Drill, the teacher asks the questions, the students answer. Then the students ask the questions; the teacher answers.
9. The teacher gives the students a written copy of the dialogue. Then the teacher says each line; the students repeat while reading.
10. The teacher gives the students a homework assignment for the next class:
 - Memorize the dialogue so they can say it perfectly.
 - Sell a vacuum cleaner. (This, of course, was a joke.)

TEACHER-TRAINING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE VIDEO

1. How does the teacher teach the meaning of the dialogue?
2. Why does the teacher tell the students to listen and not to talk during Steps 2 and 3 of the lesson?
3. The teacher almost always says a word, phrase, or sentence immediately before the students say it. Why?
4. How does the teacher correct the students' mistakes? Why do you think it is done in this manner?
5. Where did the teacher first use the "backward build-up" technique? This is the technique in which the teacher has the class learn the longer sentence by repeating small parts of the sentence, starting from the end and working toward the beginning until the students were saying the whole sentence from the beginning. What is the purpose of this technique? How, exactly, is it done?

6. In Step 4 of the lesson, how well did the students have to be able to say each line before the teacher went on to the next line? What do you think the teacher was looking for in the students' performance?
7. Where in the lesson did you see the students do choral (the whole class in unison) repetitions? What other forms of repetition did you see? What pattern in the use of these forms did you see? What purpose do you think this pattern served?
8. What role does the teacher play while the students are acting out the dialogue in Step 6? What does the teacher do when a student has trouble remembering the words or makes a mistake?
9. When does the teacher introduce the gestures that go with the dialogue? When does the teacher first have the students practice them? What is the students' reaction? Does using the gestures help or hinder the students' learning? Why?
10. What do you think the students learned in this lesson? What does "to learn" mean in the context of this lesson (in keeping with audio-lingual principles)? How does this match your definition of learning?
11. To what extent do the students take the initiative to speak during the lesson? That is, do they decide when they will speak and what they will say, or does the teacher, or is it a combination of the two? Why is it that way?
12. Why does the teacher wait until the end of the class to show the students the dialogue in writing? Why does the teacher give the students the dialogue in writing at all?

TEACHER-TRAINING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE VIDEO

Watch the lesson on the tape again and list as many examples of when and how the teacher exercised control. (Under what circumstances? Using what techniques?) Keeping in mind that control of all aspects of the lesson by the teacher is very important to the success of this method, discuss your findings with a colleague.

Concentrate on mastering the techniques the teacher used in Steps 2, 4, and 7 of the lesson. Work with a small group of your colleagues, one step at a time, in the following manner, until you gain confidence in your ability to do it smoothly:

[Peer Teaching]

1. Watch the section of the tape containing the part of the lesson you have chosen to work on. Make a list of everything you see the teacher doing and saying. Repeat this until you have a reasonably complete description of what the teacher did and how he did it.
2. Practice teaching this part of the lesson to your colleagues. Imitate the teacher on the tape as closely as possible.
3. Ask your colleagues to tell you what you did right and what you need to change. Then do it again.

4. After each of you has had a chance to practice teaching this part of the lesson, watch the tape again and see what more you can learn this time.
5. Discuss other possible ways of doing the Question-Answer Drill (Step 7). For example, have individual students ask each other the questions.
6. Write your own mini-dialogue (3 to 5 lines) and practice teaching it to your colleagues. After you finish, ask your colleagues to help you evaluate what you did on the basis of clarity and on its consistency with audio-lingual principles.

EXTENSIONS OF THE DEMONSTRATION LESSON: INTERACTIVE/COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

Interactive and communicative activities, as we define them today, are not traditionally part of an Audio-Lingual lesson. The following suggestions for expanded activities, therefore, are not necessarily interactive or communicative.

[Reading Passages]

1. Select a short passage about a different topic but one that contains the same grammar points and/or vocabulary items. (You can write it yourself or find one in a book.)
2. Prepare the students by reviewing the grammar (through substitution and other drills) and teaching any new vocabulary items that might be in the story.
3. Read each sentence before the students do, to set a correct model for them to imitate.
4. Have the students read out loud to practice their pronunciation and intonation. Be sure to correct any mistakes as soon as they are made.
5. Follow the same pattern as used in teaching the dialogue, by starting with choral repetitions, then group repetitions, and then individual repetitions. Let individual students read out loud without your first modeling the sentences, but continue to correct their mistakes immediately.
6. Ask comprehensive questions of individual students.

[Controlled Writing]

The students can do a controlled writing exercise about housework.

1. Use the video lesson dialogue or write one based on the same format. While preparing, leave blank spaces for some of the words (as in a cloze test).

2. Give the students a copy, or write it on the board, or dictate it. Ask them to write the whole dialogue, filling in the blanks as they go along.

[Creative Story-Telling/ Writing]

With your guidance, the students can create their own stories. Start by setting the topic (in this case, housework).

1. Give one student a word that will begin the story. The first student says the first word of the story; the second student then repeats the first word and adds one of his/her own; the third student starts at the beginning, repeating the first and second words, and then adds another one, and so on. Taking turns in this manner, the students build the story as it progresses around the room.
2. Make sure that the story makes sense, and that the grammar and pronunciation are correct. Make corrections immediately. Help students who are stuck to come up with a word. Keep it light and fun.
3. After the story has gone around the room once, ask the students to dictate the story to you. After you write it on the board, they can write it in their notebooks. In large classes, you can work with groups of 12 to 15 at a time while the others observe and take notes.

[Minimal-Pairs Pronunciation Practice]

For special pronunciation practice with difficult sounds, you can do a minimal-pair drill with the students. Depending on the native language of your students, of course, a good pair to follow up this lesson would be the vowel sounds in **lawn** and **loan**.

For teachers new to the field, a basic minimal pair drill is the practice of pairs of words that have exactly the same sounds except for one sound which is different in the pair (for example, **lawn/loan**). Spanish speakers, for instance, often have trouble differentiating between the /i/ and /iy/ sounds in **ship** and **sheep**. An example of a minimal-pair drill for speakers of Spanish learning English then might contain the following:

ship/sheep; lip/leap; hip/heap; dip/deep

Learners from other language backgrounds have various problems differentiating between pairs like **thin/tin; lake/rake; pin/bin; wine/vine; sing/sink; pool/pull**, etc. You can easily prepare your own minimal-pair list in the following way:

1. Make up a short list of word pairs, selecting words which the students already know, if possible. Remember to choose word pairs that contain only one different sound. Ask yourself:
 - Does it change the meaning of the word if this sound is not pronounced correctly?
 - Are your students having trouble pronouncing this sound?
 - Do the word pairs match exactly except for this one special sound?

2. Now, model the words for your students, pronouncing them first individually and then in pairs. Ask the students to repeat after you. In this way, they can learn to hear them correctly and to say them correctly. (For beginning students it is helpful to have visual aids to illustrate the words.)

[Charades]

Practice getting the meaning of words and phrases across through demonstrating and acting, an important and useful technique for this method. You can practice by playing a variation of charades with your colleagues as follows:

1. Choose vocabulary items, phrases, or expressions that are in the classroom text or curriculum you use (instead of movie or book titles).
2. Play with two teams, A and B. Each team writes words, phrases, etc., on small pieces of paper (one item per piece of paper).
3. Players fold the pieces of paper so that they can't be read, and put them in two small containers — a hat or box, for example.
4. One person from Team A chooses a piece of paper from Team B's pieces of paper. He or she then has three minutes to act out the meaning of what is written on the paper for his or her own team mates. The object is for the team to guess the word that is written on the paper within the three-minute time limit. If he or she succeeds, then that player's team gets one point.
5. Then, it is Team B's turn to have a representative take a piece of paper from Team A's collection and act it out for his or her team. The meaning can be communicated in any way *except* by speaking, writing, or pointing to the object itself.

[End of Lesson Materials]