

Argumentative essay about audio lingual method

Science



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1 GGGV 2044 METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Semester 2 2009/2010 AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD: A DISCUSSION (INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT) LECTURER: DR. HAMIDAH BT. YAMAT @ AHMAD LISA KWAN SU

LI A123040 TESL/2 2 1. 1 INTRODUCTION The Audio-lingual Method (ALM), by its very name – “ audio” and “ lingual” – refers to a language teaching approach that focuses on two aspects of language, namely listening and speaking.

Unlike its predecessor, the Grammar Translation Method, which focuses on reading and writing skills, this approach chooses to emphasize on the first two stages in the natural order of language learning (listening, speaking, reading followed by writing) with the belief that learners who are better speakers and listeners consequently make better readers and writers. The ALM has a firm foundation in the theories of both structural linguistics and behavioural psychology, and thus incorporates techniques and strategies that advocate the concepts and assumptions of language learning from both schools of thought.

The structural linguistics view of language learning says that language is learned through awareness and specific attention to the patterns and structure of the language. One of the ALM’s main characteristics is its use of repetition and drills that draw learners’ attention to the patterns of the target language which are subsequently memorized and repeated to automaticity. Language learning from the view of behavioural psychology on the other hand, occurs by conditioning and habit formation of accurate responses to stimuli. The right response for a stimulus is modelled by the teacher beforehand and then drilled into the learners repeatedly until

such responses become a “habit” that enables learners to successfully produce accurate responses without clues or prompting by the teacher. This discussion aims to further understand the Audio-lingual Method and explore the advantages and disadvantages of employing it in the second language classroom. The author also puts out her recommendations for the use of the ALM in the second language classroom.

2. 1 HISTORY

By the first half of the twentieth century, the Direct Method had lost its popularity in the U. S.

However, it is believed that the decline of the Direct Method brought about the emergence of the ALM. As Brown (2001) puts it: “... by the middle of the twentieth century, the Direct Method was revived and redirected into what was probably the most visible of all language teaching “revolutions” in the modern era, the Audio-lingual Method.” The U. S. educational institutions at the time still believed that a reading approach like the Grammar Translation Method was more practical than an oral one. Therefore the 1930s and 1940s saw the Grammar Translation Method going strong in all schools across the U.

S. However, after World War II, the U. S. saw an urgent need for her to be orally proficient in the language of her allies as well as foes. This led to a drastic change in the current view of language teaching from a mere reading approach to one with a heavier emphasis on aural and oral skills. Special intensive language programs were developed by the U. S. army which came to be known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), or more simply, the Army Method. In the 1950s, the Army Method was renamed the Audiolingual Method.

3. 1 PRINCIPLES OF ALM

Some of the main principles of language learning in the ALM are stated by Alkhuli 2005 (as cited by Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim in the International Forum of Teaching and Studies). One of these principles is that the second language learning process should be similar to that of first language acquisition. This complies with the natural order of language learning which is listening, speaking, reading and finally, writing. It is believed that the learner first learns to speak what he has listened to, then read what he has spoken, and write what he has read.

Therefore, the ALM emphasizes on listening and speaking skills in order to facilitate the progress of reading and writing skills besides increasing communicative competency. Another principle is that the second language is best acquired by habit formation. A habit is created when an action is repeated and is subsequently produced in response to certain stimuli almost without conscious activity. This is achieved via the repetitive pattern practices that are part and parcel of the ALM. Translation of the target language into the native language is considered harmful and will hinder acquisition of the second language.

Such translations are believed to impede the mastery or control of the second language. When the target language is used in all circumstances in the classroom, learners learn to make direct connections between the vocabulary and its semantics in the target language itself, which is ideal for effective second language learning. However, these principles are merely assumptions. Counter-arguments include: second language learning is completely different from native language acquisition in many different aspects.

In addition, the natural order of language learning that the ALM stresses on is irrelevant because the four language skills can be developed simultaneously rather than sequentially. The learning of a second language is not necessarily a process of habit formation where responses are elicited by stimuli, but also involves the cognitive. Finally, translation into the native language has proven a useful technique indeed in learning a second language, demonstrated in methods such as the Grammar Translation Method. 4. 1 MAIN FEATURES As aforementioned, the ALM follows the natural order of language learning.

The use of repetitive drills is justified in shaping a new “habit” for learning the second language. Stimuli-responses are expected and correct ones are immediately reinforced as conditioning, concurrent with the views of behavioural psychology. The native language also plays a minimal role in the ALM. Only the target language is used within the classroom by both teacher and learners. New material in the target language is also introduced in dialogue form, closest to a natural situational context for learners to gain communicative competence and skills.

Modeling is done by the teacher whereby a particular structure of sentence is spoken and learners repeat the sentence, mimicking its sound patterns and intonation, and aiming for identicalness. Slips in learners’ pronunciation of words in the sentence are immediately corrected by the teacher to avoid formation of “bad habits”. Grammar rules are not taught explicitly but are expected to be induced by the learners through the various examples and patterns that are exposed to them during the lesson.

Contrastive analyses are also done between the native language and the target language in order to draw learner's attention to differences in pattern, structure and sound system of both languages.

5. 1 TECHNIQUES There are many techniques employed in the classroom that advocate the underlying principles (or assumptions) of the ALM, and are also based on the aforementioned two main schools of thought for the said method.

7 One of the main techniques used is of introducing new learning material in the form of a dialogue. A model conversation is analyzed, broken down and memorized through mimicry. Dialogues are seen as a natural conversational context that will aid learners in applying learned structures and vocabulary. Many drills are used in the ALM. The backward build-up drill (expansion drill) breaks down a difficult sentence into smaller parts. Usually the last phrase of the sentence is repeated by the learners and then parts are added on, or expanded, until learners are able to repeat the complete sentence without further trouble. Single-slot substitution drills require the learners to substitute in cues given by the teacher into a particular slot in the sentence. Multiple-slot substitution drills on the other hand, require a higher level of competence from the learners.

Learners must recognize particular slots within the sentence to substitute the cues given by the teacher, occasionally having to alter subject-verb agreements as well. Other drills include the repetition drill, chain drill, transformation drill and question-and-answer drill. (Refer to Appendix A)

6. 1 ADVANTAGES As compared to an extreme method like the Grammar Translation Method, where reading and writing are so stressed on that speaking and listening skills are neglected, ALM does develop the aural/oral

skills of learners. Learners through the ALM are able to participate in situational contexts competently. 8

In addition, learners are more aware of the phonetic aspects of the language. Through modeling and mimicry, learners pay more attention to proper pronunciation and intonation. Errors in pronunciation are immediately dealt with, while correct responses are positively reinforced. Learners are sensitive to the intonation and are aware of their different functions of questioning, requesting, pleading etc. Through substitution drills, learners also learn to recognize the borders between the phrases that make up the sentence. They are also exposed to a variety of different sentences that have similar structures through repetition drills as well.

Transformational drills help learners familiarize with question tags and their corresponding answers, affirmative and negative sentences and even active and passive ones. Such a wide variety of sentence and question structures serve to enhance learners' communicative ability. 7. 1 DISADVANTAGES Although the drills that are the ALM's distinguishing feature may be considered one of its strengths, they are also its weakness. Such drills leave no room for creativity, causing learners to lose interest or feel bored in the classroom. When learners lose their motivation, it negatively affects their progress in second language learning.

New vocabulary learned is also limited in context. Instead, the sound system and grammatical patterns are emphasized on more. Learners are taught set phrases in gruel repetition in response to certain questions, where the form and structure are 9 highlighted. Consequently, learners are only drilled to respond correctly with answers that are expected of them without caring

much for its meaning. For example, the set phrase, “ Fine, thank you,” is taught as a response to the question “ How are you? ” which learners use even when they feel otherwise.

This phenomenon is comparable to robots that have no cognition and only give particular responses to particular stimuli! There is rarely any variation in learners’ responses other than the ones that have been taught. Therefore, interaction and dialogue is very schematic and unnatural. In short, communicative competence is still called to question. Learners of the ALM may be able to participate in conversations, but they are rarely spontaneous and it is observed to be rather a case of regurgitating the “ right” responses in a certain situational context from memory.

Should they not be able to recall the set phrases that have been learned, they are at a loss as to how to respond to the questions and conversational prompts of the other speaker. 8. 1 RECOMMENDATIONS From the discussion above, it is evident that although communicative competence is insufficient, the ALM drills provide learners with a multitude of structures and grammatical patterns that form the basic foundation for communication. The challenge is to help learners apply the knowledge they have gained to communicating effectively and in a natural manner. 10

However, this cannot be done if drills are continuously insisted upon in the classroom. A degree of flexibility is needed on the part of the teacher to allow spontaneous and natural conversation to take place after drilling them as well. Unguided dialogue practice forces the learners to apply what they have been drilled with into a communicative setting, taking into consideration the meaning of the phrases learnt with relevance to the given

situation. Model conversations can still be provided, but spontaneous ones allow for creativity and variety in responding according to the individual learner. Communication becomes more natural.

With regards to learner motivation, the responsibility is shouldered by both the teacher and the learners themselves. The teacher needs to, again, be flexible and allow for elements not necessarily ALM-like to be incorporated into the lesson, if only for the sake of breaking the monotone. Drills can still be employed of course, but in more interesting ways like role play and physical activities. In essence, the teacher should be creative in her strategies with the aim of increasing the communicative competency of the learners rather than teach by the book. Learners as well, play a major role in their own learning progress.

They should maintain a high level of self-motivation by actively participating in tasks and activities and being attentive at all times.

9. 1 CONCLUSION

The ALM definitely has its pros and cons in a second language classroom. However, the disadvantages and negative implications can be overcome if a slightly more eclectic approach to second language teaching is taken. Some teachers may stubbornly hold fast to the rules of the ALM and refuse to stray from it. In such a case, the 11 objective of second language teaching should be questioned. Is one's loyalty to the method or to the goal of aiding learners in achieving communicative competence?

If it is the latter, it does not matter what method is used in the classroom as long as ultimately, learners gain valuable communicative skills. As Celce-Murcia illustrates (as cited by Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim in the International Forum of Teaching and Studies): " Today, language students are considered

<https://assignbuster.com/argumentative-essay-about-audio-lingual-method/>

successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language, whereas two decades ago the accuracy of the language produced would most likely be the major criterion contributing to the judgment of a student's success or lack of success. " (1991, p. 125)

One single method should never be used exclusively in the classroom because it shall always remain flawed. It is the teacher's responsibility to determine her teaching goals and appropriate methods to be used; where an eclectic one might better achieve those goals. Therefore, the teacher of a second language must be prepared to modify and adjust her methods to suit the different learning needs of the learners. 12 APPENDIX A Here are examples of the different drills used in the Audio-lingual Method: Repetition drill Repetition drill is the normal drill, usually used to teach the lines of the dialogue.

Students are required to repeat after the teacher's model until they are almost identical. Chain drill The Chain drill uses maybe the first few lines of a simple dialogue. The teacher begins by addressing a student, or asking him a question. The student responds, then turns to the student beside him and asks him a similar question. The second student responds and the chain goes on until each student has participated. This allows for the teacher to check learner's speech. Transformation drill The teacher may give learners a question, and the learners are then required to formulate an answer from the form of the question given, and vice versa.

Or, an affirmative sentence is given and learners need to transform it into the negative. This can be used for teaching active and passive sentences, as well as direct and reported speech. Question-and-answer drill This drill allows

for learners to practice answering questions accurately and rapidly. It can also be done the other way round, where the learners form the questions on cue. 13 REFERENCES Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim. 2009. Re-evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

International Forum of Teaching and Studies 5(2): 1-9. Britto, Rory. 2009. The Dissipation of Methods in ESL: Expanding to Fill the Void. The Journal of Educationp. 75-84. Brown, H. Douglas. 2001. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, p. 13-37. Second edition. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. Larsen-Freeman, Diane. 2000. Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press. Savignon, Sandra J. 2001. Communicative Language Teaching. Theory Into Practice 26(4): 235.