Vol. 1, Issue 2

APPLYING THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD TO DEVELOP LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN B1 LEARNERS

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Abstract. Listening comprehension is a part of learning English as a Foreign Language. Many B1-level learners find listening comprehension hard because B1-level learners meet words B1-level learners do not know, hear speech that is linked together hear sounds that differ from what B1-level learners expect and hear conversation that moves fast. The Audiolingual Method gives tools such as repeating, memorising dialogues, copying speakers and practising patterns that could help listening comprehension growth. This article looks at how the Audiolingual Method might help B1-level learners build listening comprehension. The study uses a review of research by Brooks, Larsen-Freeman, Richards and Rodgers and Field. The focus is on how listening drills, awareness of pronunciation, dialogue practice and the ability to spot spoken language connect. It also looks at classroom tasks that work in life and at the limits of using repetition and memorisation. The literature tells us that Audiolingual tools can be useful if they paired with tasks that ask for meaning with materials and with feedback. Still listening comprehension is more, than spotting known patterns; listening comprehension requires B1-level learners to read meaning and react to speech in situations. Therefore, the Audiolingual Method must be used in a way that fits each B1-level learner’s level and needs. More studies are needed to show how well the Audiolingual Method works for B1-level learners.

Keywords: Audiolingual Method, listening comprehension, B1-level learners, English as a Foreign Language, repetition, dialogue practice, pronunciation, listening skills.

Introduction

Listening comprehension is one of the skills in learning English as a Foreign Language. It helps learners to understand what people say take part in talks follow what is being said and talk properly in school situations. While learning English listening gives learners a chance to get used to how words sound the words they use the way sentences are built the way sentences flow and how people speak naturally. It also helps with speaking because learners have to understand how words and phrases are used before they can use them right when they talk. Even though it is very important listening is often seen as one of the parts for people learning a new language. This is especially true when learners meet words they don’t know when people speak fast when words run together and when people talk in different ways.

At the B1 level learners are usually expected to understand the ideas of clear and standard speech about topics that are familiar. These topics include school, jobs, things to do for fun, traveling and daily life. However meeting these goals can be hard when learners cannot find words in a group of words or when they can’t tell what is important and what is not. A learner might know what a word means when reading it but not recognize the word when hearing it in a talk. This can happen because spoken language has shortenings, weak sounds joining of words changes in which part of the word is stressed and shortening of words. These things are not as clear in written words. Because of this learners might not follow a conversation even if they know many of the words being used. These problems show the need for listening lessons that help learners get used to spoken English and feel more confident, about understanding it.

I see that the Audiolingual Method, also called ALM is one teaching approach that may help with this process. The Audiolingual Method was created under the influence of linguistics and behaviorist theories of learning. The Audiolingual Method focuses on

language practice, imitation, repetition, memorising dialogues and forming language habits. In classes that use the Audiolingual Method students hear language models. Then students practice using forms through structured exercises. Listening is very important because students first hear the Audiolingual Method language before repeating sentences that work on pronunciation or answering questions. Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that the Audiolingual Method pays attention to language, grammar patterns and organize classroom activities. These features make the Audiolingual Method useful for building listening skills especially when students need practice recognising expressions and sentence patterns.

I have found that the Audiolingual Method also stresses how important it is to say words and to repeat language patterns. Larsen-Freeman (2000) explains the Audiolingual Method through activities such as memorizing dialogues doing repetition drills using substitution drills and working on question-and-answer exercises. These Audiolingual Method activities can be used in listening lessons to focus learners on sounds, stress patterns, common expressions and grammatical structures. For example learners can listen to a conversation about routines, spot expressions about time and frequency and repeat the chosen sentences after the recording. Next they can listen to sentences that carry information and notice the changes. Such Audiolingual Method activities may help learners become more familiar, with how the sounds they hear match the meanings they need to grasp.

Nevertheless, listening comprehension cannot be reduced simply to recognizing and repeating sentences. Successful listening requires learners to find the idea understand the supporting details interpret new expressions and see the purpose of the speaker’s message. In life speakers may change topics speak faster use informal phrases or hint at meanings indirectly. Because of this learners who practice dialogues may struggle to understand new conversations.

I think, Field (2008) stresses that listening should be seen as a process and that learners need help understanding the problems that arise when they process language. This view suggests that Audiolingual Method activities should be paire with tasks that ask learners to interpret meaning, spot information and apply their listening skills in situations.

Another important thing to think about is how listening times can make learners feel more confident. When students listen to a recording than one time they get more chances to hear words and phrases they may have missed the first time. The first time they listen can be used to get the idea or topic. The times they listen can focus on the small parts like how words are said or how people talk to each other. Hearing the audio many times can help students get used to common ways of speaking. This can make them feel less unsure when they listen to a language. It is important that each time they listen has a goal. If students keep listening without knowing what to focus on the task can feel boring. It might not help them with the problems they have when listening.

The teacher has a role when using methods that focus on listening and speaking. Teachers need to pick recordings that match the students level and decide what the students should learn. They also have to show how to say words and give feedback that helps students understand why they didn’t get something right. If a student doesn’t understand a part the teacher should think about what might be causing the problem. Was it a word the student didn’t know? Maybe the way the words sound when spoken fast? Could it be the grammar or how the sentence is made? Maybe the student didn’t understand what the speaker meant. Once the teacher finds the problem they can play the part of the recording again. If needed they can let the student see the words written down. After looking at the written words the student should listen again without the text. This way the learning moves, from the teacher helping to the student learning on their own. It helps the student start to understand by themselves.

The choice of teaching materials is just as important as the method used. For B1-level learners listening materials should be tough enough to help them grow. Not so hard that they can't understand. Short dialogues on topics are a good place to start. They give learners easy-to-handle bits of language and let teachers focus on specific phrases. As learners get better teachers can slowly add conversations, different voices, faster speech and more accents. Materials should also be about communication, not just random sentences. For example a conversation about making an appointment helps learners practice hearing dates, times, suggestions and polite words. All while following the goal of the talk. This mix of meaning and clear practice makes listening exercises more useful for what learners actually need in real life.

How well the Audiolingual Method works also depends on balancing repetition drills with communication. Controlled exercises let learners focus on one language point and practice it correctly. Communicative activities on the hand ask learners to use what they've learned to do something. Like share information or complete a task. These two kinds of activities work together. After practicing phrases for giving directions with repetition and substitution drills learners can listen to a dialogue. Figure out the route the speaker is describing. Then they can work in pairs to give or follow directions in a situation. This step-by-step approach helps learners go from practicing in a way, to understanding and speaking more on their own.

The basic ideas behind the Audiolingual Method give a starting point for looking at how it might help with learning to listen.. We should not think it works without proof. Brooks (1960) gives a look at how languages are learned and how speaking is practiced. Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain the ideas and ways to teach with the Audiolingual Method. Larsen-Freeman (2000) shows how the method can be used in the classroom. Field (2008) adds another view on how people understand language. All these writers give a base for thinking about how repeating sounds, practicing conversations working

on pronunciation and listening with a purpose can be used in teaching.. We need more study to see how well these methods help B1-level learners with listening.

This article looks at how the Audiolingual Method can be used to help B1-level EFL learners improve their listening. It looks at repetition, practicing conversations, pattern exercises focusing on pronunciation and what teachers say to students. It also talks about choosing the materials and helping students understand spoken language in real situations. The article uses a way of thinking based on books about teaching and listening. It does not share results from a classroom test. Instead it looks at ideas from writers and talks, about what they might mean for teaching.

The importance of this discussion is its use in English classrooms where students need organized help to understand spoken English. By looking at how Audiolingual techniques can be changed for B1-level learners the article tries to find ways to mix listening practice with real meaning activities. Its main point is that repetition and dialogue practice can help with listening growth when they planned carefully given feedback and tied to tasks that ask students to get meaning. At the time the article says no single teaching way can solve all listening problems. A flexible plan that looks at students' level, needs and communication goals needed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, looking at the Audiolingual Method for B1-level listening can help us see better how organized speaking practice can be used in language teaching. Repeated listening, dialogue work and focused sound practice give chances for students to get used to spoken English.. These methods should be backed by activities that push students to spot main ideas grasp details and read messages beyond memorized patterns. More study, with B1-level students needed to find out how well the Audiolingual Method boosts listening and which mixes of classroom techniques work.

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