

LNG 242 LANGUAGE LAB METHOD AND PRACTICES

Lecture 7: AUDIOLINGUAL EXERCISES

Linguistic stimulus-Response Mechanisms

Language is a system of communication by sound- a special kind of sound produced by the human vocal organs and falling on the human ear. (The graphic form of language must be considered secondary in that it is an attempt to represent the spoken word. The audiolingual theory of language learning is that the audiolingual forms of language must be controlled before the graphic skills are taught. The steps in teaching the language are (1) **Hearing**, (2) **Speaking**, (3) **Reading** and (4) **Writing**. The first two are *audiolingual* skills; the last two are *graphic* skills.

The language laboratory is a drill ground guided by authentic native voices. The exercises presented in the laboratory for practice are systematic, giving intensive active practice in application of structural and phonetic principles previously presented in the classroom. Active practice is supplemented by listening practice, or passive hearing of dialogues, narrations, speeches, poems, newscasters' discussions, dramatic presentations. The Language lab provides a means of using the students' time more economically and efficiently.

It is of utmost importance that the teachers provide ways for students to use the results of laboratory attendance in class. Classroom follow-up of laboratory work may consist of such things as the following;

- i. Verification of answer to quizzes which were made a part of the tape drills
Student note answer in his course of the lab session, and check them in class.
- ii. Dictation based on structures in the taped work.
- iii. Questions based on narration or dialogue.
- iv. Class performance of the actual drill practice of the laboratory. This is particularly effective, because students who have conscientiously practiced this identical material in the lab will be able to demonstrate the results in class.
- v. General utilization of material learned in the laboratory, emphasizing structural correctness as well as precision of pronunciation and intonation.

The aim of audiolingual practice is, in part, to enable the student to engage in correct, useful communication in the target language. Pattern drills and lab exercises of other kinds constitute the spadework of language learning.

Drills must be constructed with a *single* possible correct rejoinder or reply, because just one correct reply can be given on the tape for **reinforcement**.

Written Drills.

Textbook exercises originally intended for written practice are usually not suitable for audiolingual presentation. Types to be avoided include those having blanks to fill in, infinitives in parentheses to be adjusted to a particular subject, and English words inserted into the target language.

Also avoid examples that do not have systematic arrangement. Exercises that lack pattern and orally impossible forms are unusable as oral drills.

Basic Principles of Mechanical Drills

The laboratory pattern drill requires repetitive practice of structure. (i.e. A number of similar example must be collected fro drill on a particular grammatical structure.) In the audiolingual drill, one must supply enough examples to make a perceptible pattern in which the grammatical principle always operates in the same way in successive example. This is termed *pattern consistency*.

The basic principle of the mechanical audiolingual drill is that a large number of similar example are used, and that the *similarity must reside in the phonetic (or phonemic) and structural system*. Hence the audiolingual drill must be concerned with *oral grammar* (as opposed to written grammar).

What is Oral Grammar?

It is obvious from the plural rule of English, for example that simplified spelling rules do not necessarily lead to “correct” spoken form (i.e. Simple adding an “s” to a noun., will not give accurate depiction of the differences between cats, dogs, and horses.

In beginning audiolingual teaching, where control of sound is the primary goal, students must be weaned away from the dependence upon printed word to which all other schoolwork thus far has accustomed them.

Drills in **phonetic discrimination** (minimal pairs, **like the beet, the bite**) take on great importance. Not only do they make the student aware of the sound building-blocks of the target language, but they enable the student to benefit from the self correcting feature of the four phase drill.

Pattern Drills

A pattern drills consist of stimuli (problems) and responses (answers), in which there is a consistent relationship between stimulus and responses over a series of about eight items. The word pattern implies that there will be several items all of the same type. In the laboratory pattern drill, the student can solve each problem by analogy with the solution to the proceeding one within a pattern group (=segment)

Four-Phase Drill

The four phase drill is the mechanism best suited to laboratory pattern drills. In machine teaching terminology, each four-phase stimulus-response item constitutes a *frame*.

One Frame

Phase 1	Stimulus
Phase2	Attempted Response
Phase3	Corrected Response
Phase4	Repetitive

Phase 2 and 4 (pauses) are period of activity on the part of the student He must first pay attention to the problem, and during these phase articulate the response, using the correct pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and stress.

The four- phase drill has many advantages. It requires creative thinking on the part of the student rather than mimicry, because the stimulus (phase 1) cannot be repeated; it also requires action.

The drill is self correcting that is the student is able to compare his initial response (phase2) with the correct native response (phase3). Any error will result in a striking contrast. If the attempted answer is correct, valuable reinforcement takes place when the student heard that he was right.

It is axiomatic in machine teaching that the student must repeat any frame in which he errs before going on to the next frame.

- a. the answer is not responsive (inappropriate)
- b. intonation is deficient
- c. rhythm is incorrect
- d. accent (stress)is incorrect
- e. the response is not completed during the pause allowed
- f. no answer is given during the pause

Phonemic Discrimination

Self evaluation is an important part of the four-phase drill. The student must determine whether he has answered correctly by comparing his answer (phase2) with the answer on the tape (phase3). Adequate hearing aptitude is necessary, especially with regard to the phonemes peculiar to the target language

Student must be able to discern the degree of similarity between their own utterances and those on the tape in phase 3 (correct answer). Failure to notice and correct errors results in practice of *incorrect* speech habits.

Training in hearing acuity must be provided both in class and in the lab. It consists of special *phonemic discrimination* drills, particularly “same or different” (*minimal pair*) drills which can be used in either place

Consistency of Patterns

Patterns drills are defined as a series of stimulus- response pair in which the relationship between the stimulus and the response is consistent for a certain number of frames. This can be done without ever repeating the same problem. (The consistency is the operation. Once the operation is identified, the student can solve all the problems by applying the same principle, he/she has ever seen the problem or not.)

In language drills for the laboratory, the operation is explained and practiced in class. The student would then attend the laboratory knowing just what is meant by “next”; that is he would now that the relationship between the stimulus and the response was consistent, and he would know what the operation was.

Teaching & Testing Portions of a Drill

A taped drill usually consists of two or more segments of patterned pairs; these segments may be followed by a number of mixed, unpatterned pairs for purpose of testing.

A number of testing portions may be combined to provide a general review of several tapes.

Length of Drills

Pattern drills gain in effectiveness when they are repeated. Noticeable improvement in student performance is evident on the second play, and still more on the third play. A principle to be learned from this is that units should be short enough to allow at least two plays during one lap period.

Experience has shown that drills of approximately 10 minutes duration are about right. Some grammatical points may be covered in one 10-15 minutes tape; others must be subdivided into several short tapes.

Types of Drills

The following are the types of drills most frequently encountered in the language lab;

1. **Pattern Drills.** This is basic to laboratory at the beginning and intermediate levels. (Four Phase drills are most satisfactory.)
2. **Dialogue and Dialogue Exploitation.** Authentic dialogues are presented on tape, using native speakers' everyday situations, sound effects, and sometimes music.
3. **Narration.** The telling of stories, recounting of incidents, and the like provide listening practice.
4. **Dictation.** Any material may be used for dictation as a way to approach the written form of the utterances taught first in oral forms.
5. **Unpatterned Meaningful Drills.** Four-phase drills employing rejoinders may be used to exploit dialogues, narrations, or other materials presented in class.
6. **Phonological Drills.** The mere presence of correct responses on the tape does not ensure accurate learning of pronunciation. Special drills are needed on the very outset of instruction to improve the ability to hear and produce the sounds of the foreign language.