

Accelerating EFL Learners' Speaking and Listening Skills through the Audio-Lingual Teaching Method

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a foreign language is a great challenge for EFL teachers in Indonesia because they are expected to be more creative and innovative in arousing students' attention during the learning-teaching process. The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) is one of the teaching methods in foreign language learning that may be utilized in teaching speaking and listening skills. This conceptual article attempts to explore how ALM can accelerate EFL learners' speaking and listening skills. Therefore, it discusses the concept of ALM, the strategy of ALM in learning speaking and listening skills, as well as the benefits of using ALM in learning language skills. A descriptive qualitative research approach with library research design was utilized to review and explore the concept, strategy, and benefits of using the ALM in accelerating EFL students' speaking and listening skills. This method enables researchers to delve into relevant information and experts' perspectives on the ALM. In addition, it gains more insight into learning and teaching speaking and listening skills, and reviews the learning of speaking and listening skills using the ALM. The data were obtained from previous research findings, related articles, and documentation on the ALM. The data were qualitatively analyzed and comprehensively described the issues and provided valuable insights for all stakeholders in the field of education, including EFL teachers, students, school curriculum developers, and researchers.

Keywords: Audio Lingual Method; EFL Learners, Listening and Speaking Skills.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Speaking and listening skills are the two language skills that are necessary to be mastered, besides writing, and reading skills in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). According to Ma'rifah (2023), speaking and listening have a strong correlation in learning a foreign language.

Meanwhile, Mardhiyah *et al* (2023), confirm that speaking and listening are necessary to master, despite the importance of all other language skills. When students have good listening skills it can make them more productive (Sihombing *et al.*, 2022). The reason for teaching listening and speaking is to enhance students' listening abilities and communicative competence.

In the Indonesian context, students mostly listen to their teachers' oral production and/or dialogue, and teachers are dominant in the session. Meanwhile, students' talking time is less, and that is why students are silent and less participate during the learning-teaching process. This is a problem that is often experienced by EFL students in listening subject and speaking classes. Therefore, teachers need to choose an appropriate method for students to accelerate their English learning, especially in listening and speaking class activities. Kakunta and Kamanga (2020), argue that EFL teachers must use suitable teaching methods to enhance learners' speaking skills which in turn to achieve the learning goals,. Meanwhile, Kord and Davari (2021), state that when teaching English language skills, it is necessary to apply the suitable teaching method because it is one of the ways to enhance learners' speaking skills. However, Putra *et al* (2022), argue that it is hard to choose one single best method for all due to the learners' age, language level, and the materials being taught. Thus, teachers should be flexible in selecting and adapting their instructional design, when needed.

According to Atiyah and Izzah (2019), having a good ability to listen subject makes it possible for learners to possess the ability to transfer information in oral communication. Meanwhile, the most important aspect of oral communication is speaking (Arroyyani, 2023) since it facilitates learners' great performance in English, and to be able to establish learners' communication they need to be exposed more to speaking skills (Isnadila *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, the first impression of learners' English competence is often related to their fluency in oral production and listening skills.

The review of literature shows that the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) is one of the interesting teaching methods in teaching speaking and listening subjects. It emphasizes the habit-formation model of learning, which is well-suited to the use of drills (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, this method suggests to use of drilling techniques and a variety of dialogues which provide learners with chances to use various communication patterns in appropriate situations in the target language. Since learning involves activities of repeating and memorizing the dialogues, teachers need to present a correct sentence pattern for the learners, and students need to focus on the correct pronunciation, intonation, and stress pattern (Qizi & Valiyevna, 2021). Through the audio-based learning media, language learners will learning the language easily (Karim, *et al.*, 2023).

Concerning the ALM, Brown (2001), states that it is about language learning that originates from behavioral psychology and the disciplines of descriptive linguistics combined with some new ideas. The ALM emphasizes the repetition of words so that students can communicatively use the target language. The purpose of repetition or practice is to break a troublesome sentence into smaller parts. Drilling is a language teaching technique that emphasizes the repetition of structural patterns through oral practice which is the main feature of the ALM. The use of ALM in this study brings a number of benefits for EFL learners to enhance their English speaking and listening skills due to the learning characteristics, features, and varieties of activities carried in the ALM. Besides, this particular teaching method has been widely used to train learners to communicate in a target language (Freeman, 2000). Therefore, the ALM is still relevant to the current practice of English language teaching and learning.

The learning target using the ALM is that students can pronounce English like native speakers. Richards and Rodgers (2001), state that language abilities are learned in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Forms of teaching and educational activity in the ALM are conversations, drills, and pattern practice. Furthermore, repetition and memorization are activities that are often carried out in this method. According to Nation and Newton (2009), people communicate with each other in real life using spoken and written communication, therefore, listening and speaking ability are crucial to early language development. Meanwhile, Sukarman and Algiovan (2022), state that when learning the English language, speaking plays an important role and it is considered as the most important aspect.

Several previous studies were conducted on similar issues, for instance, Sukarman and Algiovan (2022), conducted a quantitative study to figure out the effect of ALM in improving students' speaking accuracy. 18 students from the XI grades of the accounting class of the vocational high school of Kartikatama Metro-Indonesia were involved as the participants of the study. The data were collected through a speaking test by asking them to deliver a monologue about their identity, impression during online learning, and hope. The findings showed that the mean score of students' speaking accuracy in the post-test (57.2) was higher than the mean score of speaking accuracy in the pre-test (36,1). In addition, the Grammar aspect was higher in mean difference compared to the Pronunciation aspect. In short, the students' speaking accuracy improves after being taught by using the ALM.

Anindya *et al* (2023), carried out a classroom action research (CAR) study to investigate the implementation of the ALM to enhance listening skills among JHS students in Grade VII of SMP Dharma Patra Pangkalan Susu. The findings revealed that the ALM significantly improved

students' listening comprehension skills through dialogues, audio recordings, authentic materials, and interactive activities. In conclusion, the ALM positively influences students' listening skills by combining listening practice with authentic materials and interactive activities.

Another relevant study was carried out by Sidabutar (2021), who would like to examine the impact of the audio-linguistic method on the speaking ability of students in second grade at the English Department of HKBP Nommensen University Medan in the academic year 2018/2019. The study concentrated on vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and comprehension in dialog speaking. The results of the research revealed that there was a tendency for students to learn, speak English, and explore information through the ALM. Sihombing *et al* (2022), carried out a study to explore the use of ALM to overcome students' listening problems in Senior High School students in Junior High School Kartika Pematangsiantar. The results showed that the ALM could assist them in creating fun classes, and students could easily use the target language because they were trained in the ALM teaching principles.

Several relevant studies have been conducted on the issue of the ALM in teaching language skills. Most of the studies were conducted to figure out the effect of the ALM on speaking skills or listening skills separately in the secondary high school context. However, a few studies are specifically focused on the review and scrutinize on how ALM accelerate EFL students' listening and speaking skills integrated into the same topic in tertiary-level education to the best of the researchers' knowledge.

To this end, the present study attempts to explore and discuss the concept, and strategies of the ALM, and how it accelerates and benefits students' language skills development, especially listening and speaking skills. The results of the study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge in English Language Teaching (ELT), especially in learning English language skills; speaking and listening skills.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

In this present study, researchers utilized a descriptive qualitative research approach with library research design to review and scrutinize the concept, strategies, and benefits of using the ALM in accelerating EFL students' speaking and listening skills. This method enables researchers to delve into relevant information and experts' perspectives on the ALM.

2.2. Instruments

The data were obtained from previous research findings, related articles, and documentation on the ALM as one of the methods in foreign language teaching. The use of this method is to gain more insight into learning speaking and listening skills and review the learning of listening and speaking skills using the ALM.

2.3. Data analysis

The data were qualitatively analyzed through a comprehensive review of relevant journal articles, and research reports, as well as scrutinize the concept, strategies, and benefits of using the ALM in accelerating EFL students' speaking and listening skills. By analyzing the data gathered, researchers were able to comprehensively describe the issues and provide valuable insights for all stakeholders in the field of education, including EFL teachers, students, school curriculum developers, and researchers on how speaking and listening skills are taught.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

The ALM emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing. It drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns (Freeman, 2000). In addition, it uses dialogues as the main form of language presentation and drills as the main training technique. The establishment of the ALM based on the aural-oral is a form of dissatisfaction with the traditional methods and their validity, especially with their treatment of spoken language.

Apart from focusing on speaking and listening competence, the ALM suggests the importance of drilling because it may lead to good habit formation for learning a second or a foreign language. The purpose of language learning is to learn how to use the language to communicate. Language learning is a process of habit formation, and the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning. However, the major challenge of foreign language teaching is getting students to overcome the habits of their native language (Freeman, 2000).

According to Haycraft (1978), the audio-lingual concept comes from psychology and linguistics. It is the result of a combination of behaviourist psychology, structural linguistic theory, aural-oral approaches, and contrastive analysis. Language appears to have its unique device on this idea. This gadget originates at numerous one-of-a-kind levels: syntactic, phonological, and morphological. Each level has its distinctive pattern and acquires a set of practical communication

skills as a view of language learning. This requires learning the rules and language in which these combine elements from phrases to sentences or phonemes to morphemes to words.

Teacher's major roles is to be a model of the target language and therefore, teachers should provide students with a good model. Students should learn to respond to both verbal and nonverbal stimuli. When students do correct things in the class, teachers should give positive reinforcement to help the students to develop their correct habits. Anindya *et al* (2023), urge the importance of teachers' roles in assisting their students in learning English because students often struggle to communicate effectively in English,

As suggested by the ALM, the teaching and learning stages include repetition, drills, memorization, and imitation which intend to help students increase their listening and speaking skills, including how to pronounce words correctly, and gain more vocabularies in English. Furthermore, in its application to the listening activities, this method made it possible for students to listen to both the teacher and the audio given. Then the next steps, students will clarify what they have heard by repeating it many times. In short, English learners will have more exposure to their empirical experience and a pleasant learning atmosphere in listening and speaking activities through the utilization of ALM.

Concerning the use of the ALM, Bushra (2001), states some principles, namely: first, in the goal language instructions are given; the form of language is displayed in context; as little as possible the students' mother tongue interferes with efforts to gather the target language; second, providing college students with native speakers together with models as teaching instructions; third, responding to verbal and non-verbal stimuli is a form of encouragement for language learners within the target language, and the instructor is like an orchestra chief who leads and controls learners' behavior.

Some principles of the ALM which may be applied by EFL teachers to teach language skills, especially speaking and listening skills are as follows: first, instructions are given in the target language, and language forms occur within a context; second, errors should be avoided at all cost because errors lead to the formation of bad habits; third, provide positive reinforcement because it helps the student to develop correct habits; and fourth, vocabulary, and structures are learned through repetition and imitation.

The Strategy of Using the ALM in Learning Speaking and Listening Skills

The ALM is one of the teaching methods that can be used to improve students' abilities and skills in speaking and listening. The teachers can use the ALM because it has a scientific basis that

truly links theory and practice. In the ALM, teachers play an active role in the learning process. Moreover, learning using the ALM is the application of an appropriate method where teachers can use digital parts such as power points in presentations, videos, animations, websites, and computer applications connected to the internet as a medium for learning speaking and listening. Malgoubri *et al* (2021), confirm that combining new technology-based learning platforms with effective pedagogy has become a daunting task for both teachers and teacher-training colleges.

Freeman (2000), presents a multiplied description of a few regular strategies which can be intently associated with the ALM, namely; first, memorizing talk; students memorize beginning dialogues the use of mimicry and implemented position play; second, backward build-up (expansion drill); second trainer breaks one line into numerous parts; students repeat every segment beginning on the cease of the sentence and expand backwards via the sentence, including every segment in sequence; third is repetition; students repeat teachers' version as quick and appropriately as possible; fourth, chain drill; students ask every different and solution separately in a round chain across the class; fifth, single-slot substitution drill; teachers state a line from the talk, after which makes use of the phrase or word as a cue while repeating the road, students need to replace it into the sentence in the suitable place; and sixth; multiple-slot substitution drill.

According to Kizi (2022), some strategies that can be applied in the ALM are repetition drill, question and answer drill, minimal pairs, grammar game, and complete dialogue. All strategies can be applied to meet students' learning goals. Meanwhile, Ummah (2016), suggests several techniques that may be used by teachers in teaching conversational English using the ALM method, namely first, EFL teachers may perform activities such as conversational memorization skills, backward building exercises (extension), and repetition exercises in the English conversation class. Second, teachers may conduct a chain practice technique in the question-and-answer practice session and complete the conversation.

In applying the ALM, a teacher speaks or performs an audio, then the students imitate it. In its application, some steps are usually carried out in the audiolingual method, namely, first, the presentation of dialogues or short readings, where the teacher reads it repeatedly, and students listen without looking at the text. Then proceed to imitate and memorize dialogues or short readings. Using the technique of imitating and memorizing, the teacher reads sentence by sentence, the so-called mimicry memory technique (mim-mem). Students demonstrate or perform the dialogue that has been memorized in front of the class in turn.

In the ALM, the teacher presents instructional design through listening exercises, then accompanied by practicing saying words and sentences being studied in the form of ear training

(hearing exercises) and speak training (speaking exercises). In the application of the ALM, several things must be considered including, students must listen, then speak, then read, and finally write. Meanwhile, grammar is provided in the form of sentence patterns or dialogues with topics of regular conditions. All language elements must be presented ranging from easy to difficult. Teachers must avoid the possibility of loading students' errors in responding.

The Benefits of Using the ALM in Accelerating EFL Students' Speaking and Listening Skills

The ALM is a method that emphasizes a lot of practice both through dialogue and listening to audio based on students' learning needs. There are many benefits of using the ALM in learning and teaching English, especially speaking and listening skills, they are as follows: first, The ALM may develop students' speaking and listening skills because the presence of learning platform and audio-visual aids brings a positive impact on students' language exposure both listening and speaking class activities. According to Arroyyani (2023), by having a large number of exposure, students will have chances to practice oral communication and enhance their English competence.

The literature review shows that applying the ALM with the help of audio media may help students improve their listening and speaking skills. EFL teachers may design the teaching session using the ALM and combine it with audio media to make it less complicated for students to recognize the instructional design, especially stories and events on the topic of language given. However, language institution that has plan to apply the ALM using technology-based learning platform needs to provide multimedia elements such as animation, and videos because the devices will potentially support the learning and teaching process (Hanum *et al.*, 2023). In its implementation, teachers may ask their students to imitate the sound of a word they need to remember which is then done repeatedly in practice before students are taught to read and write.

Listening is the ability to understand the information and messages conveyed and respond seriously. With good listening skills, we will be able to understand and capture information from the speaker. If we can understand it will create good communication. Being an excellent listener begins with a genuine effort to take note of the individual we are paying attention to. Meanwhile, speaking is one of the skills to establish a person's communication competence in English to express opinions, comment, and reject other people's opinions if they are not by our opinions. Thus, speaking may facilitate a person in communicating (Isnadila *et al.*, 2022), These functional spoken language skills are carried out in everyday human life. By communicating with each other we can obtain and convey information.

Literature review shows that the ALM may increase students' interest and motivation in learning English and improve their learning outcomes. Several other advantages of using the ALM in learning and teaching speaking and listening English namely, first students acquire the skills to create the sentence patterns they have learned and gain vocabulary in context, and have good pronunciation or accuracy; and, second, students tend to be more active in conversation but need to respond consistently to the stimuli given by teachers. Karim *et al* (2022), confirm that having a wide range of vocabulary will contribute to students' speaking ability. Thus, students can improve and develop their language skills gradually in and outside of the class.

Despite the advantages of the ALM, there are some shortcomings of the ALM found in this discussion, namely; first, students do not play an active role and only respond to the stimuli given by the teacher. Therefore, it is the teacher who determines all the exercises and teaching materials for the class (teacher-centered approach). In other words, mastery in the classroom is completely controlled by the teacher; second, this method believes that those who do not understand the meaning of the imitated sentences at the initial stage are acceptable. Furthermore, when a student listens to the teacher carefully, gets the correct answer, and completes all the assignments without errors, the student is considered to have learned the language well.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Regarding the issues and discussion of the concept, strategy, and benefits of using ALM in accelerating EFL learners' speaking and listening skills, we would like to highlight some necessary points, namely first, the ALM is one of the foreign language teaching methods which emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing. It suggests the importance of drilling. Furthermore, teachers play important roles in the teaching and learning process, and in guiding and controlling students' behavior in the target language. Since the language learning is a habit formation, teachers must prevent learners' errors because errors may lead to learners' bad habits.

Second, some strategies that may be applied in accelerating EFL learners' speaking and listening skills through the ALM are first, teachers introduce the dialogue by providing a good model for their learners in the target language; second, new vocabulary and structural patterns are presented through lines of dialogue, and the dialogues are learned through imitation and repetition, and some drills are performed to provide learners with more language exposures.

Third, several benefits of using the ALM include the presence of audio-visual aids learning platform brings a positive impact on students' language exposure both in the listening and speaking class activities. Through the ALM, students will have chances to practice oral communication enhance their English competence, and enhance vocabulary mastery. In addition, the interesting audio-video-based learning equipment may increase students' interest and motivation in learning English. Thus, students can improve and develop their language skills gradually in and outside of the class.

4.2. Suggestions

Bearing in mind the benefits and useful of applying the ALM in teaching speaking and listening skills, we would like to recommend several points, they are first, EFL teachers need to consider the appropriate teaching methods for their instructional design and skills taught because there is not single best method suits for all learners due to the learners' age, proficiency level, and learning styles; second, the ALM is one of the most recommended teaching methods for teaching speaking and listening skills because it may enhances learners' oral production, increase vocabulary mastery, and motivate them to get involve in their learning activities due to the present of interesting audio video-based learning, and various drilling activities conducted during learning and teaching process; third, the next researchers who have the similar research interest to look into the effectiveness of other teaching methods, e.g. Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and other language teaching methods towards reading and writings, as well as the language components both in quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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