

## EXPLORING TEACHER'S IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIO LINGUAL METHOD, CHALLENGES, AND TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT'S VOCABULARY MASTERY

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the EFL teacher's implementation of the Audio-lingual Method, investigate his challenges and explain his technique to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The case study was carried out in SMA Pasundan Cikalongkulon Cianjur. The respondents were 32 students and an English teacher chosen purposively to be involved in this study. The instruments of data collection were observation and interview. The result showed that the EFL teacher implemented Audio-lingual Method well. It was proved that he applied its principles namely imitation, using the target language communicatively, separating the native and the target language linguistic system, modeling, repetition, reinforcement, verbal and nonverbal stimuli, and English culture. Moreover, the student's average score improved, There were some challenges namely limited time, student motivation, different capabilities, and the classroom condition. Moreover, there were some techniques such as dialog memorization, repetition drill, transformation drill, and question and answer drill, and the most applied techniques were repetition drill, transformation drill, and question and answer drill. It is recommended that English teachers implement Audio-lingual Method for teaching vocabulary. Further study could be conducted to investigate how the students feel when learning vocabulary using the Audio-lingual Method.

**Keywords:** Audio-lingual Method, challenges, techniques, and students' vocabulary mastery

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, the audio-lingual method was popular in the 1950s and 1960s. It arose at the turn of the twentieth century when American linguists like Bloomfield and Fries set out to collect all indigenous languages spoken in the United States. The method gained popularity later, when behaviorist psychologists such as Skinner believed that behaviors, including language, could be learned through repetition and reinforcement. The audio-lingual method was used at the Second World War to teach soldiers sufficient fluency to infiltrate enemy territory, it became known as the 'army method' (Sharpe, 2018). It has militaristic features in which both its strongest and weakest elements reside. Since the 1940s, the definitive solution to successful ESL instruction has been discovered many

times. That is why the audio-lingual method is also known as "the Army method."

The audio-lingual teaching method is defined as a method that emphasizes repetition of the words to help the students be able to use the target language communicatively. The purpose of the repetitions and drills is to break down the troublesome sentences into smaller parts. Drilling is a key feature of audio-lingual approaches to language teaching that place emphasis on repeating structural patterns through oral practice (Brown).

Thus, based on the statement above, the audio-lingual method drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. In the audio-lingual method, the teacher wants their students to be able to use the target language communicatively. The audio-lingual method uses repetition, replacement, and question-answering to drill speaking skills, especially a student's

vocabulary. The teacher has more influence over the students' behavior and vocabulary. After that, the teacher can know the students' memorization of their vocabulary. As mentioned, the lesson in the classroom focuses on the students' correct imitation of the teacher. Not only are the students expected to produce the correct output, but attention is also paid to correct pronunciation.

In the area of teaching vocabulary, there have been a number of writers who have conducted some studies. According to Siregar (2016), audio-lingual instruction increases students' vocabulary. Moreover, the teacher's proper manner motivated the children to study. Having a high level of motivation helps students improve their performance. Larsen (2010) found that the audio-lingual approach is a strategy that relies on repeating particular words in order to learn them. The audio-lingual technique is a method of teaching language that employs drills and pattern rehearsal. Moreover, Larsen (2010) found that the audio-lingual method is a method that focuses on repetition of certain words to memorize. Students will gain experience in increasing their vocabulary after listening to the routine and repeating words heard by the teacher. It means that using the audio-lingual method to teach vocabulary has a significant impact on students' achievement and has a positive impact on students' ability to expand their vocabulary.

Prasetya (2015) found that the audio-lingual approach gave successful language input, especially in mastering vocabulary for the kindergarten students. It could be argued that the audio-lingual method class is more successful in providing proper English language input. In other words, the students in the audio-lingual class succeeded in understanding and remembering the phrase given to them. The teacher in the audio-lingual class said that it was a good method but difficult to use. Moreover, Prasetya (2015) used this method to teach the Arabic version of

saying thanks and responding. According to that research, the audio-lingual approach achieved its objectives by providing teachers with an alternative method of teaching languages. Furthermore, in behavioral system theory, the basic ideas of audio-lingual learning (mimic and memorize) match children's conditions to learn language.

Wahyuni, Mulyadi, & Ifadah (2018) found that the test results for students' vocabulary revealed a considerable improvement. Furthermore, when participating in learning material, the learner became more engaged and creative. They could also mimic the models from the material displayed in front of the class. They appreciated this practice since it allowed them to expand their vocabulary as well as their English skills. Hartati (2012) discovered that students respond favorably to the use of the audio-lingual method, which may be classified as a 'positive response.' The average vocabulary achievement of pupils after being taught utilizing the audio-lingual method is excellent, and they receive a high score. It demonstrates a significant influence between the students' responses to the use of the audio-lingual approach and their vocabulary achievement.

Haerul (2012) found that the students' vocabulary achievement had improved, and they had progressed from a very low to a very high level. The t-test analysis revealed a difference in vocabulary achievement between students taught using the audio-lingual approach and those taught before the audio-lingual approach (verbal explanation). They preferred being taught using the audio-lingual method over other methods. Furthermore, the audio-lingual method had an effective impact on students' language learning, especially their vocabulary mastery (Putu and Putri).

The audio-lingual method can improve student vocabulary mastery. However, little is known about the application of the audio-lingual method

from the point of view of the English teacher as a course designer, language role model, feedback provider, and language assessor in the classroom, particularly in the post-method era in which technology has become ubiquitous. Since teaching preparation, in-class teaching, and evaluation after class, there hasn't been much research into the process of implementing the audio-lingual method. Thus, this research, as part of teacher reflective practice, aims to explore the implementation of the audio-lingual method, particularly in improving vocabulary mastery in an EFL teaching context. Considering the background of research, the writer focuses on the questions of teachers' implementation of the audio-lingual method, his challenges, and techniques for improving students' vocabulary mastery.

## METHOD

In this study, the writer employed a qualitative research method using a case study. Qualitative research yielded descriptive data in the form of written or spoken accounts of a subject's observable behavior (Sugiyono, 2006). As a result, the study's goal was to explore how EFL teachers' implement the audio-lingual method and to investigate the teachers' challenges in implementing the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery. Moreover, it was to explain teachers' techniques for implementing the audio-lingual method and improving students' vocabulary mastery.

This research was conducted at SMA Pasundan Cikalongkulon Cianjur. Aria Wiratanudatar Street, Cikalongkulon Cianjur was the address. The school had 25 classes, and all classes were divided into two majors, namely, social and natural sciences. The tenth grade included two classes of social science and two classes of natural science. The eleventh grade included 3 classes of social science and 3 classes of natural science, and the twelfth

grade included 4 classes of social science and 5 classes of natural science. Each class consists of 30 students.

The class that was to participate in this research was the X (tenth grade 1) natural science class, which had 32 students, as shown in the table below.

**Table 1. The number of participants**

Class	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
X MIPA 1	12	20	32

The process of choosing the participants used a purposive sampling technique, which meant that all participants were chosen based on the purpose of the research, namely the class using the audio-lingual method and the teacher using it (Wibawa, Mahdiyah, & Afgani, 2016).

To collect primary data, observation and interviews were used. The observation was held to obtain information on the implementation of the teaching learning process using the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery based on the principles of the audio-lingual method as described by Larsen (1986), namely: imitation, the use of the target language communicatively, separating the native and the target linguistic systems, modeling, repetition, reinforcement, verbal and nonverbal stimuli, and English culture. On the other hand, the interview was conducted to obtain information about teachers' challenges and techniques during the implementation of the teaching-learning process using the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery. Secondary data from this study was used to support the primary data in the form of articles, and journals to engage the information in detail. In other words, secondary data was existing data collected by the previous researchers or organizations and published through websites, books, journal articles, or internal records that could support this study.

The data from the observation and interview were analyzed in accordance with

Davies and Mueller's (2020) description of three main steps: data reduction, data display, and data report analysis.

## RESULT

### 1. The description of research findings

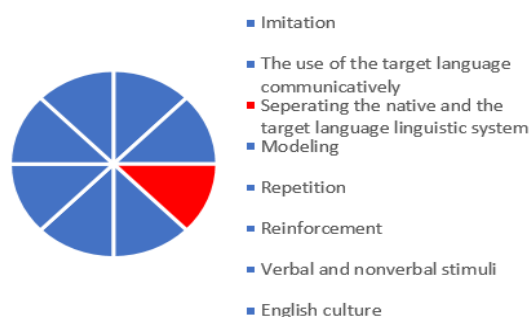
#### a. First stage

The first stage contained two meetings. Each meeting focused on observing the principles of the audio-lingual method.

##### 1) First meeting

The researcher observed the teaching-learning process in the classroom and put a checklist in the observation form based on Larsen, 1986. That can be seen in the following table.

Based on the observations made during the first meeting, the principles of the "audio-lingual method" were not successfully implemented. It was about 88%. It was shown by the result of observation, as described in the following figure:



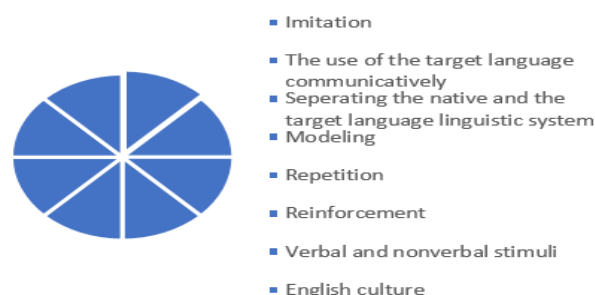
**Figure 1. The result of the first observation**

The figure above showed that all the principles of the audio-lingual method were not successfully implemented in the first teaching-learning process in the class, namely the principle of separating the native and target languages' linguistic systems. Although all the principles of the audio-lingual method were not implemented completely, the students' results in terms of vocabulary mastery improved, but they made some mistakes, such as changing positive to negative form

and mispronouncing some words or expressions.

#### 2) Second Meeting

Based on the observations made during the second meeting, the principles of the "audio-lingual method" were successfully implemented. It was about 100%. It was shown by the result of observation, as described in the following figure:



**Figure 2. The result of the second observation**

The figure above showed that all the principles of the audio-lingual method were successfully implemented in the second teaching and learning process in the class. As a result, the students' vocabulary mastery results improved significantly.

#### b. Second Stage

The result of the interview showed that "the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching vocabulary using the audio-lingual method in the implementation of the 13 curriculums are the limited time, students' motivation, different capabilities, as well as the classroom's condition or its atmosphere."

#### c. Third stage

Based on the interview, he said that "so far as I'm concerned, there are a few techniques that could be applied in teaching with the audio-lingual method, especially focusing on students' vocabulary mastery, but I always practice some techniques such as dialogue memorization, repetition

drills, transformation drills, question and answer drills, etc. Repetition drill, transformation drill, and questions and answers drill were the most commonly used techniques.

## DISCUSSION

### *1. The implementation of the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery*

The result of the observation showed that the teacher almost completely implemented the principles of the audio-lingual method in the first meeting (about 88%). The principle of separating the native and target linguistic systems was not successfully implemented in the first meeting, and they obtained an average score of 81 in the vocabulary mastery test. The average score was up to the KKM (minimal score limit of 75). Thus, using the principles of the audio-lingual method improved students' vocabulary mastery, although their implementation was not complete.

On the other hand, the teacher implemented all the principles of the audio-lingual method in the second meeting, namely, 100%. Consequently, in the second meeting, the average score of the students' vocabulary mastery improved and reached 94. The condition occurred based on the list of observations describing the principles of the audio-lingual method in the first and second meetings. The process of separating language systems was applied in the second meeting, namely changing positive sentences to negative sentences or vice versa; this process was not conducted in the first meeting. Therefore, in the second meeting, the students could do the changing process well; consequently, most of them gave the right answer in the second meeting.

Based on that explanation, it is obvious that implementing the audio-lingual method could improve students' vocabulary mastery. This finding was supported by previous research findings, such as Rizky (2017), who found the

students' ability on a vocabulary mastery test in an experimental class was at a very good level after implementing the Audio-lingual Method. Besides that, it was found that the audio-lingual method was very effective for increasing vocabulary (Putu & Putri, 2021). Moreover, it helps students use their vocabularies grammatically because it focuses on grammatical drill (Axmedovna et al., 2021), pronunciation, and the memorizing of phrases (Putu & Putri, 2021).

Furthermore, the audio-lingual method was responded to positively by the respondents (Putu & Putri, 2021). It motivated them to study English, especially enhancing the vocabulary. Furthermore, the audio-lingual method quickly formed habitual and automatic responses. The principle of teaching drills of sentence patterns (Axmedovna et al., 2021) and their pronunciation (Putu & Putri, 2021) was the main thing to improve students' vocabulary mastery. As a result, it developed communication skills. It was related to the goal of language teaching and learning that communication should be practiced (Mukminatien, Suryani, 2016). Based on the explanation, the implementation of the audio-lingual method in teaching English was not only improving students' vocabulary mastery but also allowing them to practice the language communicatively. That conclusion could be drawn by practicing the dialog with a friend in the classroom. Moreover, they were instructed to drill and repeat the intention expression during the teaching and learning process.

### *2. The teachers' challenges in implementing of the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery*

The challenges identified during the interview were limited time, low student motivation, different abilities, and the class atmosphere.

**a. Limited time**

The limited time was the challenge of teaching using the audio-lingual method. The process of memorization and drilling, the core of the audio-lingual method (Arief & Rohani, 2022), needed much time. On the other hand, the duration of the English lesson was just 45 minutes for a one-hour lesson, and the total hours were 2 hours a week. This was a challenge for the teacher to manage their students in order for them to be capable of mastering vocabulary. Correct stress and intonation. The speaking test did, in fact, take a long time.

Furthermore, the total number of students in a class was a potential time waster. Every class had more than 33 students who needed to be guided by the teacher. The process of checking their memorization and drilling in order to practice the vocabulary, expressions, or sentences added a new challenge for the teacher.

Based on that, the teacher should provide extra time to teach the students, or they will have to practice English outside of the English lesson or out of class. That should be done to get a perfect result.

**b. Low motivation**

Low motivation was also another challenge in implementing the audio-lingual method. This could be seen by the lack of attention and participation of the students during English lessons, and also by the value of the students' participation in English lessons, which shows a lack of motivation to learn English. Similar to what is conveyed (Wullur, Liando, & Rorimpandey, 2020), the factors that make students unmotivated to learn English are because the teacher must have a good personality and good strategies to make students interested and motivated to learn.

**c. Different capability**

Most of the school didn't consider the students' capabilities in English in every class, and it occurred in SMA Pasundan Cikalongkulon Cianjur. Some of them had good capabilities, and the rest had enough or the worst capabilities in English. Moreover, the condition of students' different capabilities was the problem of every school, especially in remote schools. Thus, they had different capabilities in English. This was a serious problem to achieve the same learning objective because the objective should consider the students' needs (Fachrurazy & Tresnadevi, 2017).

**d. Classroom atmosphere**

The classroom atmosphere should support the teaching-learning process to achieve the learning objective. It would be a serious problem if the classroom atmosphere was not considered well. Willis (2015) said that there were many aspects influencing the classroom atmosphere, such as the curriculum, method, building, teaching materials, community, and pupils. It meant that the classroom atmosphere could help the students study in an enjoyable situation (Willis, 2015). It denoted that the classroom atmosphere would motivate the students to study.

There was some research that found that the majority of the students had poor English reading habits (Iftanti, 2015), and their English was considered relatively low in general (Rinantanti, Rahman, Atmowardoyo, & Bin-Taher, 2017). One of the causes was the classroom atmosphere, which did not support the teaching and learning process, especially in English lessons (Willis, 2015). Based on that, the classroom atmosphere had to be the priority to solve.



### **3. *The techniques of the audio-lingual method for improving students' vocabulary mastery***

Based on the teacher's answer, he was concerned about a few techniques that could be applied in teaching vocabulary with the audio-lingual method, especially focusing on students' vocabulary mastery. The teacher used some techniques, such as dialogue memorization, repetition drills, transformation drills, and question and answer drills. The teacher's answer was in line with Larsen's (2000) statement that there were some techniques closely associated with the audio-lingual method, namely: (1) Dialogue and *memorization* It meant that students memorized the dialog and practiced it with their friends. (2) Expansion drill (backward build-up). The teacher divided the sentences into several parts, and the students had to drill them until they memorized them well. They then moved on to other parts of the sentence until the sentence was complete. (3) drills for repetition It meant that they had to repeat the teacher's model as quickly and accurately as possible. (4) Chain saw Students practiced the language by asking and answering questions about each other in a circular chain around the classroom. (5) Substitution drills in single slots They should drill an easy vocabulary or phrase next to the difficult one in the correct place. (6) *Multiple-slot Substitution drill*. They should drill the multiple cues or difficult vocabulary or phrases to be substituted into the line. 7) *Transformation drill* It meant that the students should change the sentences to other forms, such as negative to positive or vice versa. (8) Drill with Questions and Answers It meant that they should practice their language by asking and answering as quickly as possible. (9). *Use minimal pairs*. The students should analyze the different sounds, and then they could pronounce them well. It aided them in honing their pronunciation of the vocabulary. (10) *Complete the dialogue*. Students should fill in the blanks in the

sentences with appropriate vocabulary (11) Grammar games. It meant that they were provided with various games in order to practice grammar well, repeat, ask, and answer quickly without error, and they were happy to study, especially in vocabulary mastery.

Those techniques of dialog memorization-expansion drill, repetition drill, chain drill, transformation drill, question and answer drill, using minimal pairs, and completing the dialog-had been practiced by the teacher (*see the lesson plan appendix 6*). These techniques, which were combined with the principles of the audio-lingual method, were designed to improve students' vocabulary mastery in context. Thus, the teaching and learning process was well managed, as Sari & Sinurat (2021) found that the audio-lingual method was an approach that emphasized vocabulary and trained the grammatical sentence pattern based on the context without error. It was believed that much of the practice of the dialogues would develop oral language proficiency based on the ability or qualification of improving students' vocabulary mastery.

The dialog memorization technique guided students in memorizing the dialog, which they then practiced with a friend. The expansion, repetition, and chain drill techniques facilitated their ability to drill, repeat, and communicate the dialog with their friend well. The transformation drill technique facilitated their use of other language structures in the dialog, and question and answer drill and minimal pairs techniques guided them to practice with their friend and comprehend the dialog well. The last was completing the dialog that reinforced their ability to comprehend the text well. Thus, the audio-lingual method is an appropriate technique used to improve students' mastery of vocabulary. The result of this study is helpful information for English teachers in teaching vocabulary.

## CONCLUSION

Based on observations, it was determined that the EFL teacher used the audio-lingual method. It was proved that he applied its principles, namely imitation, by using the target language communicatively, modeling, repetition, reinforcement, verbal and nonverbal stimuli, and English culture. Moreover, the students' average score improved, and it reached 94.

There are some challenges to improving their vocabulary mastery, namely limited time, low student motivation, different capabilities, and the classroom environment. Because of the time constraints, the process of memorization and drilling, which is at the heart of the audio-lingual method, took a long time. Low student motivation meant a lack of attention and participation from the students during the English lesson. Different abilities meant that some students had excellent English skills while others had only adequate or poor English skills. The last was the classroom atmosphere; it meant that the school supported the teaching and learning process to achieve the learning objective by providing suitable class conditions and meeting all requirements.

Moreover, there were some techniques used by the teacher to improve students' vocabulary mastery, such as dialog memorization, repetition drills, transformation drills, and question and answer drills, and the most applied techniques were repetition drills, transformation drills, and question and answer drills. It is recommended that the audio-lingual method will be a suitable choice to improve students' vocabulary mastery and can be implemented by the teacher in teaching vocabulary.

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