

**Enhancing Student's Communicative Skills by Implementing  
Strategies Based on the Audio-Lingual Method on Seventh Graders in La Cuesta  
High School.**

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**Approval Sheet****Jury**

This Project was approved by the jury of Language Teaching, from Universidad Latina de Costa Rica, Ciudad Neily; as a requirement to get the tittle of Baccalaureate on English Teaching.

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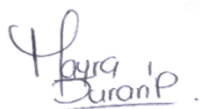


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### **Abstract**

The ability to communicate in a second language can be easier for some people because they may have acquired it in childhood or it can be a struggling journey to others. This is the case of most of secondary students of public and private high schools for whom the English subject is tough and complicated. They spend most of time speaking and listening their native language and in high schools the techniques and strategies might be mistakenly applied or they could not be the adequate, therefore the listening and the speaking ability are the weakest skills that learners develop and as result they are unable to communicate effectively in the target language as it was demonstrated in the first test for English domain in 2019.

This research is carried out in La Cuesta High School and the participants are twenty-nine seventh graders, male and female from thirteen to fifteen years old, whom come from different neighborhoods nearby and distant places as well, therefore there can be students from urban and rural places and different countries as Panamanian and Nicaraguan as indigenous ethnics as well.

Through the analysis of the data collected over the investigation it was found important information that supports that the Audio-Lingual method should be considered and implemented in second language teaching because the central focus of this method lies on helping second language learners to develop their communicative skills in a short period of time. On the other hand, the methodology correctly applied and accompanied with the necessary equipment and supplies could improve student's encouragement to learning English.

### **Resumen Ejecutivo**

La capacidad de comunicarse en un segundo idioma puede ser más fácil para algunas personas que para otros porque pueden haberla adquirido en la infancia o puede ser un trayecto difícil para otros. Este es el caso de la mayoría de los estudiantes de secundaria de colegios públicos y privados para quienes la asignatura de inglés puede ser difícil y complicada. Pasan la mayor parte del tiempo hablando y escuchando su lengua materna y en las escuelas secundarias las técnicas y estrategias podrían estar siendo mal aplicadas o no ser las adecuadas, por lo que la habilidad de escuchar y hablar son las más débiles que desarrollan los estudiantes y como resultado son incapaces de comunicarse de manera efectiva en el lenguaje objeto como se demostró en la primera prueba de dominio de inglés en el 2019.

Esta investigación se lleva a cabo en el Liceo La Cuesta y los participantes son veintinueve estudiantes de séptimo grado, varones y mujeres de trece a quince años, quienes provienen de diferentes barrios cercanos y también de lugares lejanos, por lo tanto, pueden ser estudiantes de zonas urbanas, lugares rurales y de diferentes países como Panameños y Nicaragüenses, así como etnias indígenas.

A través del análisis de los datos recopilados durante la investigación, se encontró información importante que respalda que el método Audio-Lingual debería ser considerado e implementado en la enseñanza de un segundo idioma porque el enfoque central de este método radica en ayudar a los estudiantes de un segundo idioma a desarrollar sus habilidades comunicativas en un corto periodo de tiempo. Por otro lado, la metodología correctamente aplicada y acompañada del equipo y suministros necesarios podría mejorar el estímulo de los estudiantes para aprender el idioma Inglés.



## Acknowledgement

First of all, I want to recall God for the opportunity of being here and for giving me wisdom, intelligence, and strengths during this process of preparation for my baccalaureate, because without him none of my achievements would be possible.

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On the other hand, I want to give special thanks to my parents Alberto Durán Robles and Isabel Palacio Beita for being a support in my life and studies and also I would like to thanks to my husband Mauricio Briceño Artavia for his support and for being part of this process too.

Thanks to those important people, they all have a piece of my heart and all my gratitude is for you, for your time, love, dedication, for fostering in me a better person with desires to improve every day more and to believe in myself.

Finally, I want to mention and thank a person who is very effort, intelligent, kind and a real friend Yulisa Yuliana Cedeño Gómez, during this time she has helped me many times and she has become my best friend and my coworker in all the projects.

Mayra Durán Palacio.

## **Acknowledgement**

This is a special time to recall that if I have got so far is because God has been with me and has been the most important through the most difficult times and he is to whom I would like to honor with this achievement and victory, furthermore; I would like to thank those special people that made this journey easier giving me strength and support and they are my loving husband and family.

Another special thanks is to my professors of the Universidad Latina because they have become role models and I admire them so much because they leave a footprint in my professional career.

Finally, I am pleased to thank my classmates and above all to my best friend Mayra Duran with whom I started this career helping each other on each project and sharing valuable moments.

Yulisa Yuliana Cedeño Gómez

## Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for every blessing in my life. Despite all the difficulties I have had, He has always been there, to protect me, to give strength and to guide me along the years. It is Him who deserves the glory for every achievement that has come to my life.

Secondly, I want to thank my parents Isabel Palacios Beita and Alberto Durán Robles for all their constant support. I really appreciate what you have done for me, your sacrifice and compromise, pursuing the aim of seeing me become someone, thanks for every effort you have done for I can study and become professional, thanks for your prayers, for your advices and the most meaningful for me, for being my aspiration, for you it has been worth every effort on my part to finish my career. You are a blessing in my life, definitely God chose the best parents for me. I love so much and I hope again to feast my baccalaureate with you and that you will be proud of me; your happiness is mine and I want to do all possible to continue fill your heart with joy and achievements.

Finally, I would like to thank to my husband Mauricio Briceño Artavia for giving me support when I have needed, for his effort to help me in everything despite the many sacrifices he does for I will be good, for supporting every time I was angry because I felt stressed and desperate when I did not know how to resolve something. Thanks for being a good man, I can say God placed on my path the man every woman needs. I love you with my soul and I hope to share this and more achievements at your side and to continue building up our future together.

Mayra Duran Palacio

## **Dedication**

This is dedicated to my loving spouse Leslie Vanegas Lopez because he has been with me since the beginning, motivating me and being my special support thus I would like to honor him with this achievement.

Yulisa Yuliana Cedeño Gómez

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The present research refers to the use of strategies based on the Audio-Lingual Method. This method has become more popular through the years and it is well known as one of the most successful approaches for learning a second language a difference to other methods and strategies like the old styles that were used before the ALM such as the Grammar Translation Method. It is due to its characteristics that it is believed that such a method works best in the teaching of a second language. The Audio-Lingual Method presents one of the most important strategies that can be applied in the classrooms such as the absolute use of the target language during the class and the Audio-Lingual input that is valuable for learners.

Through this research is wanted to base the huge importance in the use of its approaches to improve the student's communicative skills of a second language because nowadays it is more necessary than ever before, to have a satisfactory command of the language and not a superficial knowledge. By the way, it is the job of every second language teacher of the Costa Rican educational system to take into account the methods that work best in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and look for strategies to apply them to obtain successful results with their students because the current curriculum has been modifying according to the student's needs, therefore some of the methods, approaches and strategies used in the past are no longer adapted to the new syllabus.

The main problem that can be pointed out and is a reality at national level of public education is the low performance of the oral communication of the target language because most students are not accustomed to listening and speaking English so they are not familiar with vocabulary, words and sounds that are typical of the English language. Being not acquainted with the target language becomes in a barrier difficult to overcome when learning a second language, for students can develop shyness and other reactions that could inhibit them when they are asked to speak an oral performance, as a result learners may finish the secondary education without the expected level of English domain, likewise the problem is triggered by facts that are going to be considered along this research that refer to the methods and strategies used in the classroom.

The aim for this research is mainly to explain the use of the Audio-Lingual Method for the development of the speaking skills of seventh graders and its strategies in the process of English teaching as a second language, since the ALM is more adapted to the new curriculum than others

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that are still used. To reach the main objective therefore, is going to be necessary, first to describe the background of the Audio-Lingual Method and its importance in second language teaching, second analyzing the advantages and also some shortcomings of the use of the Audio-Lingual strategies in ESL learners and finally, to compare the effectiveness of the strategies based on the Audio-Lingual Method to other methods currently used. By implementing the Audio-Lingual strategies, students will enhance their communicative skills.

This research is featured by a brief literature review of the topic presented and also the scopes of the topic itself, thus as to evaluate the situation raised and propose possible solutions. Then, it implies the importance of the research and the problem statement is shown. Finally, this research provides the objectives that are intended to reach and six chapters with all the necessary information for supporting this project.

It is through the methodology of the investigation of reliable sources on the internet, websites, books references, surveys and statistics that this investigation is going to be carried out. Moreover, it is through those research tools that it is possible to explain how the ALM techniques contribute to second language teaching to improve student's communicative skills. Being aware that the weaker skills in learners are listening and speaking, it is essential to demonstrate through the present research how ALM strategies can help students to develop those abilities of comprehension and production of spoken language. According to the process of the acquisition of a second language, those are the first abilities to be developed during the early learning stage, however this method is being implemented in adults by different educational programs of second language learning and has worked efficiently.

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

According to the first national diagnosis test of the English language domain applied in November 2019 provided by the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) with the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) the test revealed that a 70% of students of public and private high schools in the last year of education have basic domain of the English Language (A2) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Burgos, 2019).

Despite the abilities evaluated on the test were reading and listening, it is a fact that if the listening ability is not well developed the speaking ability either. Thus, it is this precise issue that not only concerns one or two schools but the public and private high schools at the national level

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so that means that the problem could be solved employing new strategies based more on treating that weakness of the English learning that takes part of the 70% of students. That percentage proves that students are not familiar with words, sounds and basic grammar and syntax which are essential to produce communication and at the same time to comprehend the spoken language.

The new English curriculum MEP (2016) establishes that secondary learners should reach a minimum level of English proficiency of B1 or B2 when completing the secondary education (p.4) so it can be seen clearly that it is still missing a little bit more effort by the whole educational system. Teachers play an important role in this process because they are the ones who carry out the teaching process and are the ones who can implement the new strategies based on the need of each student paying more attention in the shortage that has been evidenced in order to reach the goal proposed in the new curriculum.

That is why the research is aimed to explain the importance of the Audio-Lingual Method to improve the student's communicative skills. Besides, presenting the advantages and disadvantages that the ALM provides and establishing the background sustained by studies that are the basis for such a method as a teaching tool. Ultimately, comparing the Audio-Lingual Method effectiveness to other methods and strategies currently used.

### **1.3 Justification**

This research will be focused on proposing and analyzing possible strategies for enhancing student's communicative skills using the Audio-Lingual Method. The central focus are seventh graders of La Cuesta high school which could not have a sufficient basis for communicating effectively in the English language, as result of it, the research is directed to this population looking strategies that already exist but they might be not well performed through the use of the method proposed.

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

By implementing the Audio-Lingual strategies, students will enhance their communicative skills.

## **1.5 Objectives**

### ***1.5.1 General Objective***

To explain the use of the Audio-Lingual Method for the development of the speaking skill of seventh graders.

### ***1.5.2 Specific Objectives***

To describe the background of the Audio-Lingual Method and its importance in second language teaching.

To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Audio-Lingual strategies in ESL learners.

To compare the effectiveness of the Audio-Lingual Method to other methods currently used.

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations**

The recent thesis was mainly focused on students of seventh grader of La Cuesta high school and the central point that has been shown is the limited domain of the speaking skill of the English language. By proposing the Audio-Lingual Method, it is intended that learners can improve that weakness and get a better range at the end of the scholarship.

One of the biggest limitations that can be mentioned is the present pandemic around the world which has affected the educational system in general and here in Costa Rica is not the exception. The prime limitation that caused that the thesis was not conducted as the planned was the Coronavirus which impeded that some instruments could be applied but was looked for other option to obtain the information necessary for continuing with the purpose of it what has been to explain the Audio-Lingual Method as the most suitable method for improving students speaking ability.

**CHAPTER II**

**THEORETICAL**

**FRAMEWORK**

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### **2.1 Historical Background of the Audio-Lingual Method.**

The Audio-Lingual Method is a linguistic approach that arose in the United States in the mid of the 1950's when the U.S army was involved in the World War II. This method came up because of the urgency for communication among the countries that took part in the conflict, so it was really indispensable to look for new strategies to enable communication quickly and accurately. Thus, the ALM was also known as the army method. Since then, linguists have explained it as one of the most important approaches for developing speech faster than other ones that already existed before the ALM, such as the Direct Method and the Grammar Translation Method which were the most famous in that time. However, that is not the only reason why the ALM is popular but for it is the first linguist method that had a scientific basis as Valdman (1970, p.309) said "The Audio-Lingual Approach has its origins in American structural linguistics, and together with careful analytical procedures, it inherited from it a reputation of scientific rigor". The ALM employs the structuralism that describes language like a structure that is necessary to be understood and described and not as a set of rules as explained by Chamorro (2020) in her YouTube channel regarding the ALM.

### **2.2 Audio-Lingual Method**

The main goal of the Audio-Lingual approach is communication in the target language and in the education process of the second language, the oral communication is one of the skills evaluated to obtain the expected level, despite that there exist other ways of communication. The ALM came to become one of the most "dynamic" methods according to the writer Valdman (1970) in that time, and it is so today. Many researches has been carried out in order to sustain the use of this approach in second language teaching as a successful method to effectively develop a learner's English-speaking skill. On the other hand, the ALM grammatical structure is no longer taught the same way as the Grammar Translation Method, which focuses more on teaching grammatical rules so students develop first the writing ability before the oral communication and the opposite happens with the ALM where translation is completely avoided because it is believed that every language is different so translation might lead to errors.

Another important goal of the Audio-Lingual Method is "to form native language habits in learners" (Dendrinis, 1992, as cited by Mart, 2013) stated in an article of the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences. This goal is achieved through the

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behavioral psychology of Skinner who considered learning as a process of conditioning through a stimulus and in this case applied to formal education. Thus, teachers are in charge of creating the environment for stimulus and response and those new habits consist of employing techniques such as repetition, dialogues and drills, this way students will assimilate new habits along the time. As stated previously, the ALM emphasizes the formation of native language habits in learners, so it is important that besides being stimulated by new habits, it is also relevant to take into account that when teaching a second language it is not only the language that is being taught but also like a new world in which learners are introduced. There is a principle of language pedagogy that says:

Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values and ways of thinking, feeling and acting. As learners redefine their identities as they learn a L2, they can be aided by a direct approach to acknowledging cultural differences, an open affirmation of learners' struggles of their value of their "home" culture and of their self-worth in potential feelings of powerlessness. (Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 82).

### 2.3 Characteristics

As emphasized before, the ALM gathers a lot of interesting traits that make of this method one of the most suitable to implement teaching of a second language. The Audio-Lingual Method does not show one single way to teach and learn a second language due to its characteristics, learners can acquire all its benefits when using it in the classroom. Further, an important feature of the ALM is that sequencing of skills are given high priority, listening, speaking, reading and writing and following together will improve student's learning of the language. This sequence of skills suggests that a learner must first listen to a language before any other skills are developed. What is said with the theory is that students can be a proficient speaker after listening because they have the chance to focus their attention on actually hearing what is said. After internalizing what they have heard, learners can manage pronunciation and intonation making them more effective speakers. (Postovsky, 1975, as cited by Cheung, 2010, p. 4) said "Listening ranges in meaning from sound discrimination to aural comprehension (i.e., actual understanding of the spoken language)".

Once the speakers have arrived at a closer mastery of the first two skills, the next logical evolution in this sequence is reading. At that point, reading becomes easier and more natural for



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learners because they have gotten the grammatical structure complete but in an indirect way not basically following a strict list of rules but paying attention when listening. On the other hand, sound-symbol is addressed with special attentiveness during the apprenticeship stage because it is part of the steps to follow when learning a second language. In the Audio-Lingual Method writing is considered a subordinate or supportive activity to oral learning because the central focus is oral production, writing is seen as a complement of all the skills.

Patterns are taught one at the time by means of repetitive drills, as has been said before; ALM is characterized by repetition of words, sentences and more that is what makes of this teaching method one of the best for learning a second language, the more the learner repeats a word the more he is going to keep it in mind for a long time. Next, other major feature of the ALM is that reinforcement is presented in all the learning process and facilitator pays close attention to pronunciation when students are asked to repeat a sentence, then the teacher uses that reinforcement as utterance form “good or that’s right” letting know to student that what he is saying is being correctly pronounced.

Finally, and not less important, is that in Audio-Lingual Method materials can be introduced to students in dialogue form which helps the learners to become more relaxed in conversational settings and feel comfortable when speaking.

### *2.3.1 Advantages*

Nowadays, the ALM is still at the top of the successful L2 teaching strategies because it gives primacy to speech. The oral production has been the target of every existing method, although the other methods possess other procedures that make a great difference in the expected results. In fact, it is at this point where the ALM results advantageous in the process of second language learning due to the methodologies and techniques that are employed from the beginning and in the course of the learning to develop the target language.

Since the ALM focuses on majorly the listening input to get the spoken production, the author Abu-Melhim, (2009, p.43) stated that “better listeners and speakers will make better readers and writers” saying this as an underlying theory. Likewise, due to the increasing demand of a globalized world wherein fluency in a second language is what is required mostly, the Audio-Lingual approach has had an important success in reaching that goal. In fact, a study applied to

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students of Asian countries, published in 2017 drew the following conclusion “The implementation of the ALM seems to more effectively develop student’s English speaking skill in a relatively short period of time in accordance with the existing time allocation as stipulated in the 2013 curriculum” (Ghofur et al, 2017, p.6).

Another advantage that proceeds from the listening input is the proper pronunciation, because the target language is mostly used because in English language it counts not only the written form of words but the pronunciation and intonation are essential to be understood. The old methods did not pay attention to the pronunciation of the English words and as a consequence errors that were not corrected became “persistent or fossilized”. In the Audio-Lingual Method, pronunciation is focused and it is a special fact that the method possesses and it stands out from the others, therefore learners would learn a word with a well command of pronunciation and intonation. The stress that the ALM puts on the previous aspect is related to the next advantage that has to do with the use of techniques such as drills, repetition, vocabulary taught in context, memorization of phrases among others which form habits in students that help them to interact verbally like native speakers.

As a last advantage, it is the focus placed on the culture of the target language. (Clear Words Translations, 2017) is a website and blog that supports and answers the question of how essential is understanding culture to learning a language? It explains several reasons for the importance of understanding culture background, such as culture increases engagement in learning a language, learning about a local culture means less misunderstandings, cultural background makes language easier and culture knowledge allows you to think in another language. It also stated that:

Understanding culture is like having a context that allows you to give the right meaning to each new word you learn. The more you know about the sociocultural background, the easier it is to get involved and learn new words, expressions and ways of speaking. (Clear Words Translations, 2017)

### ***2.3.2 Disadvantages.***

As any other teaching method, the ALM does not differ from rest in this aspect. As (Alkhuli, 2005, as cited by Abu-Melhim, 2009, p. 44) pointed out “No approach is completely

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right or completely wrong since each approach has arguments for it and arguments against it” and also “No approach suits all goals, all students, all teachers or all foreign language programs”. Hence, the first disadvantage may be the result of the use of techniques such as drills because students could find them repetitive and monotonous. It may not be so for children or young students but for adults resulting in lack of motivation. A second shortcoming of the Audio-Lingual Method is closely related to the previous one because it is said that this approach does not encourage learner’s creativity making learning as a mechanical procedure as Yang, (2018, p.51) said “The theoretical foundations of the Audio-Lingual Method ignored the mental properties of people”.

A third negative aspect of the Audio-Lingual approach is that it may be considered as “artificial learning” because it is said that limited vocabulary is learned in context due to it makes that learners response in a certain way in a certain moment automatically and not based on context or the student personal thought, becoming dialogue routine as unnatural and stereotyped Abu-Melhim (2009, p.44). Fourth, the ALM as a teacher-dominated method implies that the teacher plays the central role in the classroom giving the instructions, leading the practices and activities, making corrections and so on. This function on the ALM is criticized by its opponents because it does not give primacy to the role of the learner as the person in charge of its own learning process. Additionally, the function of the teacher in error correction is that immediately mistakes may cause harm to learner’s confidence to speak the foreign language. Mei, (2018, p.51) considers that “In order not to damage students’ confidence, immediate error-correction should be controlled”.

### **2.4 Audio-Lingual Techniques**

First of all, the word “techniques” in language learning teaching has its own concept and meaning that refers to the topic itself. There are different definitions of what a technique is, regarding the educational area, however the idea is the same or at least aim for the same. For instance, techniques are steps that are followed when teaching. (Buitrago, 2012) wrote that “It’s each specific strategy that we use in the classroom”. A teaching technique is also defined as “A well-defined procedure used to accomplish a specific activity or task” (Doliente, 2014). A technique carries out a method and in this case the Audio-Lingual method counts with several well-known techniques that have characterized it and makes it work in such a way that it still takes part in many second language teachers’ activities in many classrooms today.

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### **2.5 Activities for Implementing the Audio-Lingual Method in the Classroom.**

The American linguist (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.47-50 as cited by Alemi and Tavakoli, 2016) provides a list of techniques which are closely related to the Audio-Lingual Method.

#### ***1) Dialog memorization.***

Students memorize an opening dialog using mimicry and applied role playing.

T: Hello. How are you?

S: Fine, thanks. And you?

T: Fine. Where are you going?

S: I am going to school. Would you like to come?

T: Sure. Let's go together.

#### ***2) Backward Build-up (Expansion Drill).***

Teacher breaks a line into several parts; students repeat each part starting at the end of the sentence and expanding backwards through the sentence, adding each part in sequence.

#### ***3) Repetition Drill.***

Students repeat the teacher's model as quickly and accurately as possible.

#### ***4) Chain Drill.***

Students ask and answer each other one by one in a circular chain around the classroom.

#### ***5) Single-slot Substitution Drill.***

Teacher states a line from the dialogue, and then uses a word or phrase as a "cue" that students when repeating the line must substitute into the sentence in the correct place.

Teacher: That backpack is mine.

Students: That backpack is mine.

Teacher: YOURS.

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Students: That backpack is yours.

Teacher: OURS.

Students: That backpack is ours.

### **6) Multiple-slot Substitution Drill**

Same as the single slot drill, except that there are multiple cues to be substituted into the line.

### **7) Transformation Drill.**

Teacher provides a sentence that must be turned into something else, for example a question to be turned into a statement, an active sentence to be turned into a negative statement and so on. For instance, Teacher I clean the house. Students I don't clean the house.

### **8) Question and Answer Drill.**

Students should answer or ask questions very quickly.

### **9) Use Minimal Pairs Analysis.**

Teacher selects a pair of words that sound identical except for a single sound that typically possesses difficulty for the learners-students are to pronounce and differentiate the two words. For instance, But-bat/ wet-wait/ desk-disk

### **10) Complete the Dialogue.**

Selected words are erased from a line in the dialog-students must find and insert.

### **11) Grammar Games.**

Various games designed to practice a grammar point in context, using lots of repetition.

**CHAPTER III**

**METHODOLOGICAL**

**FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Research method**

The present work possesses characteristics that make it a qualitative research. The deductive method is more suitable for the main purpose of this project which is to encourage the speaking skill of seventh graders of La Cuesta High School implementing the ALM in the classroom. As (Widodo 2006, as cited by Hmedan & Nafi, 2016, p.42) say that “the deductive method is derived from the notion that deductive reasoning from general to specific”. That means rules, principles, concepts or theories are presented first and then their application is treated.

In research, theory is introduced first, then the hypothesis is presented, after that, it is important to observe or analyze facts to prove the effectiveness of the method and finally, a confirmation can be given to establish the Audio-Lingual Method as one the most convenient to use in the classroom.

### **3.2 Type of Investigation**

This research attempts to explain the use of the ALM for developing the speaking-skill of seventh graders. Walliman (2011) commented that a descriptive design has the idea of observing in order to collect the data needed to establish a norm or to predict what will happen under the same circumstances (p.10). A descriptive research describes a population, and in this case the population are students of a public high school. Acknowledging that the research problem that carries out this investigation is the shortage of the English speaking-skill of 70% of students from public and private high schools at national level.

Therefore, it can be said that this research follows the descriptive design, because with a descriptive research can be answered essential questions to obtain the necessary information and the results of the research will support the hypothesis. Those questions are the following:

What? The English speaking-skill

How? Most of the students of public High Schools have a Basic English domain.

When? The last semester of 2021

Where? La Cuesta High School

### **3.3 Research Approach**

As has been said before, the research approach of the current study is qualitative. Richards and Schmidt, (2010 p.475) provide a clear definition of this type of research “Narrowly, any research that uses procedures that make use of non- numerical data, such as interviews, case studies, or participant observation”. By using observations, interviews, focus groups and surveys will be possible to collect the information needed to support this research.

### **3.4 Sources and Subjects of Information**

#### ***3.4.1 Sources***

To develop and conduct different processes in this investigation, is going to be necessary using two types of sources. As Walliman (2011, p.70) cited “The primary data are the first and most immediate recording of a situation. Without this kind of data, it would be difficult to make sense of anything but the simplest phenomenon and be able to communicate the facts to others”. When using primary data collection, it is fundamental to select the most adequate instrument of measurement to obtain the expected result, for instance, questionnaires are suitable because they enable to organize the questions and receipt replies without actually having to talk to every respondent.

Other source required for the research is the secondary data, which according to Walliman (2011) “Secondary data are data that have been interpreted and recorded. A major aspect of using secondary data is making an assessment of the quality of the information or opinions provided”. This data is the result of reading and researching from books, websites, articles, magazines and many more. Another important source of the research is the teacher in charge of the seventh graders, who is going to help with the application of the instruments given.

#### ***3.4.2 Subjects***

The subjects of this investigation are students and an English teacher of La Cuesta High School.

### **3.5 Variables**

“A variable in research simply refers to a person, place, thing or phenomenon that you are trying to measure in some way” (University of Southern Carolina). The variables in this research are of two types:



### ***3.5.1 Conceptual Definition***

The present research is conducted by a methodology of observing and analyzing plenty of information that supports the research topic. Through that searching, it is possible to have a broader knowledge of the topic and analyze studies previously done in other countries or environments that let the researcher know how the information obtained relates to each other. It should be noted that the conceptual variables are abstract ideas and they form the basis for the hypothesis research. For that reason, the conceptual variable of this research has to do with the communicative skills, the spoken language production and student's fluency and that is what needs to be measured in a conceptual definition.

### ***3.5.2 Operational Definition***

This design describes the variables that will be applied as indicators for the research and the procedures that will be used to observe or measure the variables. Thus, it is important to restate the problem statement of the research that in a concise way states that 70% of students of secondary education from public and private high schools at national level have Basic English communicative-skills, which is under the range of the current curriculum standard.

However, the population sample to be studied will be seventh graders of La Cuesta High School and the various procedures, techniques to be used for collecting data is firstly, the search for reliable information in books, websites, articles and documents which form the theoretical framework of the research. Secondly, there are the instruments that will be applied for gathering data directly from the subjects, such as interviews and questionnaires. Finally, the data gotten from the subjects will be processed and analyzed, as Ary et al. (2010, p.480) stated "Data analysis is a process whereby researchers systematically search and arrange their data in order to increase their understanding of the data and to enable them to present what they learned to others".

## **3.6 Population and Sample**

### ***3.6.1 Population***

It is defined as "any set of items, individuals, etc. that shares some common and observable characteristics and from which a sample can be taken" (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p.443). The population that is meant to be represented in this investigation are students of secondary high schools of Costa Rican education.

### ***3.6.2 Sample***

According to the definition of Longman Dictionary the sample is “any group of individuals that is selected to represent a population” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.506). Thus, the specific group in which data is collected from in this investigation is the group 7-1 of La Cuesta High School, 15 men and 14 women and also the English teacher.

### **3.7 Instruments**

Instruments are tools used to collect, measure and analyze data related to a research purpose.

#### ***3.7.1 Questionnaire***

Griffiee (2012, p.67) defined questionnaire as “A data-collection instrument that asks respondents for demographic information, opinion or questions of fact”. It is by means of a questionnaire that the actual research would be conducted. To gather the information needed to state the objectives of this investigation, it is going to be necessary to apply one questionnaire to students of La Cuesta High School.

The questionnaire will contain 10 questions. It is going to be divided by multiple select questions and rank order questions, all this with the function of getting information to analyze and make a conclusion with the data collected. The questionnaire is sent to the teacher by e-mail and the same for returning but it is mainly applied to students.

#### ***3.7.2 Interview***

In qualitative research, the interview is one of the most utilized instruments of collecting data, because it provides information directly from the sources in a person-to-person structured conversation. The interview in this case, goes addressed to the teacher as a source of knowledge and information in order to know how much he knows about the Audio-Lingual techniques and how he applies them, and also ask him to give his opinion about it, among other questions.

The interview consists of a series of about ten questions. A few of them will be closed questions but the majority of them will be open questions, since with open questions it will be possible to obtain broader and deeper information from the teacher. On the other hand, the interview will be applied to the teacher by e-mail and the reply of the interview questions the same way.

Finally, the data collected from the interview will be processed and analyzed. According to Griffie (2012, p.164) “interview data are not just the words the respondent tells us”. So it requires a thorough process wherein the obtained information must be interpreted and examined to compare the answers to the information gathered in the research.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**RESULTS ANALYSIS**

## 4.1 Similarities and Contradictions

### 4.4.1 Similarities

The Audio-Lingual Method has been tested by different researchers who have approved the application of the method based on studies, investigations that support their position.

Some researches assure that the ALM helps to develop English student's speaking skill in a short period of time due the structure that it possesses and the way of teaching that is implemented. According to (Freeman and Freeman, 1992 as cited by Ogeyik & Dogruer, 2009, p.48) "teachers treat learners as passive learners, and learning is accomplished in a teacher-centered classroom where students are led through repetitious drills and exercises to form correct habits of pronunciation and sentence word order". It implies that the teacher plays the central role in the classroom giving to students the appropriate pace of learning and tools needed to acquire the language step by step.

Another researcher shares a similar point of view that supports one of the main purposes that the Audio-Lingual Method has, which is to form native habits in learners by means of the behaviorism. It claims that:

There exist meaning focused input containing target forms and vocabulary rather than formal grammar instruction in the classroom, thus, learners acquire the forms and vocabulary naturally, during the process of comprehending the input, which is a similar way a child learns the first language (Hinkel and Fotos, 2002 as cited by Ogeyik & Dogruer, 2009, p.49).

The ALM seeks that learners learn the grammatical structure complete but not based on grammatical rules, as (Lewis and Hill 1985 as cited by Tambunan & Gintings, N.D, p.45) says "in Audio-Lingual Method in learning the second language, teacher is expected to emphasize on accuracy of the language itself". That means, students are capable to form sentences based on the grammatical construction and they should be able to pronounce the language accurately as well as the native speaker.

Other agreement with the ALM is by (Clear Words Translations, 2017) which mentions that "The more you know about the sociocultural background, the easier it is to get involved and

learn new words, expressions and ways of speaking”. Knowing the culture of the language that is being learned is an important fact because it enriches the knowledge and vocabulary of learners.

An essay found arguments that the Audio-Lingual Method is the best for beginning level English classes in a foreign language setting. It is believed that if learners are exposed to constant English language, they could develop the listening ability rapidly and then the other skills in chronological order.

Once more, there is an article about an evaluation of the communicative approach and Audio-Lingual Method in teaching grammar in a private high school in Turkey which agrees that the ALM is the most effective teaching method for learning a second language even more since the first level of childhood. It says “Audio-Lingual Method had positive impacts on the elementary level students” (Ogeyik & Dogruer, 2009, p.54). It confirms that the more a student is in contact with the language the more he is going to learn it in a short period of time.

#### ***4.4.2 Contradictions***

Along this research, all about the ALM, there have been found not only opinions and studies in favor of this method but also different ways of thinking and researches carried out in different countries that disagree in some points, despite of its indubitable contributions to second language teaching. Some contradictions found in literature will be pointed out and described in detail as follows.

Some studies criticize the ALM because it is said that ALM does not give importance to the four skills equally, as an information found in an article Critique of Audio-Lingual Method (2016) that claims that “the prioritization of developing listening and speaking skills over reading and writing delays literacy development, this imbalanced approach might cause insecurity for some learners in terms of posing challenges for the success of learner’s higher education”. One of the principles of the ALM states that listening and speaking are the first skills to be developed and then reading and writing for reasons that have been already explained in the previous chapters.

Another contradiction found in literature is on the methodology of the ALM such as the use of repetition and drills. For example, some researchers are in favor of the techniques employed by the ALM, as one famous American linguist (Larsen Freeman 2000 as cited by Alias 2012, p.22) whom stated that “we have to use drills if we want students become able to speak English

communicatively” and in Alias’s opinion, drill is the best alternatives in teaching speaking (2012, p.27).

Other author’s opinions contrast to the stated by Larsen Freeman above, as for example, what was stated on the article Critique of Audio-Lingual Method (2016) “Learning through endless pattern drills and rote dialogue memorization could lead to the void of spontaneity and creativity, it discourages learner’s initiatives, and the learning process would be found unsatisfying”. Also, referring the ALM techniques Mei (2018, p. 52) commented that the ALM techniques and practices will make students feel frustrated and bored to learn. However, some researchers claim that drills and repetition become boring when they are applied in a wrong way as cited by Alias (2012, p. 28) “Some teachers mistakenly used them (drills) for written practice, thus giving students a boring, tedious chore” and also he claimed that “the aim of the drill is to “strengthen habits” to make the pattern “automatic”.

Another point that is contradictory to another researcher’s point of view was claimed by (Spolsky, 1989 as cited by Alias, 2012, p.24) “This method was blamed for not developing the ability to carry on spontaneous conversations, a goal it had not originally recognized”. There could be some reasons why this method is perceived in that way and those reasons could be firstly, because the ALM is a teacher centered method, it means that the teacher leads the class and the student is a reactive subject. Secondly, the role of the teacher in error-correction could be another factor for students not to feel comfortable in spontaneous conversations and thirdly, because of the methodology of repetition and drills explained previously therefore, some people believe that this can inhibit students to develop speaking skill in real life situations.

On the other hand, there are multiple sources and studies carried out that assure the success of the ALM to achieve quick communicative competence as Valdman (1970) argues “the Audio-Lingual approach aims, first and foremost, to impart to the learner the ability to understand and speak a foreign language” and as mentioned by Audio-Lingual method, (2016) “The Audio-Lingual method addresses a need for people to learn foreign languages rapidly”. Thus, it is not a secret that from the origins of the Audio-Lingual method, though this approach was not applied first in the educational area, the main goal was the oral communication as explained in the historical background of the ALM in the second chapter of this research.

## 4.2 Findings

There was an action research carried out in SMK YAPIP MAKASSAR and the sample were students of second year of class. Although, the research was focused more on the use of the ALM in teaching listening comprehension it has much to do to the present research that is centered on how the ALM enhance the oral communicative skill of students. As one of the principles of the ALM states that “One can learn to speak and understand a language only being exposed to the spoken language and by using the spoken language”. Principles of the Audio-Lingual method, (2012). The findings and results of the action research applied, showed improvements in the student’s score. The researcher declared that “It is concluded that using Audio-Lingual could help to improve student’s listening comprehension”. (Abdul, 2016.p.51)

Another research carried out in El Salvador concluded that “With the use of the Audio-Lingual method the researchers achieved the development of the listening comprehension and the speaking skill in ninth grade students at Justo Gonzales Carrasco private school” (Avelar Cardoza et al. 2010). The research aimed to discover how effective the Audio-Lingual was once immersed in Salvadorian private and public high schools.

The next action research was executed in an Indonesian school in a fifth grade group, in which the research was implemented by cycles and diverse techniques of the ALM. That group of students faced problems on speaking English, therefore on comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar as well. Thus, the main objective of the research was to “describe the process of teaching and learning by using audio-lingual method in order to improve the students’ skill on speaking” as stated by Eda Maaliah et al. (2017. p.53). In the reflecting step of the research “The students said the activities of Audio-Lingual method, structure in dialogs and question and answer drill, in the cycle III motivated them to learn English more especially on speaking”. (Eda Maaliah et al, 2017. p.56).

The following research was titled: The effect of the Audio Lingual Method on students’ speaking achievement. It was executed to a group of second grade of students on English Department of the HKBP Nommensen University Medan in academic year 2018/ 2019. Sidabutar affirmed the following results of the research:

Based on the result of the study, the researcher concludes that there was a significant effect of the Audio- Lingual Method on the students’ speaking ability” by using the Audio-



Lingual Method shows better results compared to those who did not teach by using the Audio- Lingual Method. (2021. p. 64).

An article confirms the told by the structuralists (Richards & Rodgers, 1987 as cited by Tassev, 2019.p. 427) whom argued that “people learnt to speak before they learnt to read or write and thus, speech had a priority in teaching a language”. That quote confirms that the ALM is the more suitable method for learning and teaching any language.

There is one more time another finding that continues assuring what is said about the Audio-Lingual Method has basis and studies that support the told in the thesis. (Richards & Rodgers, 1987 as cited by Tassev, 2019.p. 427) “Learning a foreign language is, thus, a process of “mechanical formation habit”.

A classroom action research made at fifth grade of Madigondo Elementary School in the year of 2015/ 2016 recommends the Audio-Lingual Method for improving the speaking skill of elementary students. Following with that action research there are many literary that approve the method, as (Nunan 2000, p.39 as cited by Eda Maaliah et al, 2017. P. 47) said “speaking is the second skills among the four skills that should be comprehended by the people chronologically in their life”. That again stablishes that the only way to achieve it, it is through the ALM and its implementation.

**CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSION**

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of the techniques of the Audio-Lingual Method correctly carried out in the classrooms of English second language teaching will have remarkable improvements in second language learner's ability to communicate proficiently in the target language. It was stated at the beginning of this research that the main problem that learners are facing is the low performance of the speaking ability, which prevents learners to accomplish the expected level of English domain. Thus, it is at this point where the ALM plays an important role as a proposal to be taken into account to help second language learners to improve their communicative competence.

This research is relevant because explains the use of the ALM as one of the most successful methods for the present educational requirements and learners needs, despites that it has been said that not a single method is perfect it can actually be beneficial in the weakest areas as the listening and speaking. Likewise, positive results have been published by many researchers that have investigated and tested the Audio- Lingual methodology on second language learners having improvements in the development of the listening and speaking skills. Besides, it is important to emphasize again that the ALM is closely related to the way that people learn their native language, which is learning by hearing, so analyzing this fact, it can be said that the Audio-Lingual method is better when learning a second language because that is an innate ability, learning by hearing.

Some researchers agree on not only using just one single method along the process of teaching a second language and some professors may agree on the use of the ALM for beginners, so this finding is important to start working in an efficient way since the very moment when students begin the secondary education for then implementing other techniques and so when finishing the secondary education learners can perform proficiently the English tests for language domain and beyond high school in their professional careers.

**CHAPTER VI**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **6.1 Recommendations**

### **6.1.2 Students**

In the process of learning and teaching, the student is the beneficiary person of the efforts of teachers, institutions and the educational system. The process of teaching a second language is not the exception, though the ALM is a teacher-centered method, students are the ones who are supposed to receive the knowledge imparted by teachers. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Students participate in all the activities that are developed in the class, for example the activities when the student have to participate actively in dialogues, drills, among others, including those which they might consider less important.
2. As part of the Audio-Lingual technique students are no allowed to speak in their mother tongue, so students should try to use the English language the most because this will help them to put into practice the spoken language and pronunciation leaving aside shyness and prejudices when speaking English.
3. Learners should also perceive English not just as any subject or study to get the score and pass the year, instead of they should see English Language as an important part of their lives that will be useful including when finishing high school because English is a universal language.

### **6.1.3 Institution**

The institutions, as the place where the process of teaching is carried out, it is also the place where students, teachers and the rest of the staff get together. Therefore:

1. The institution altogether should look after that the process of English teaching is being implemented according to the established curriculum given by the Ministry of Public Education.
2. The institution should also try to provide to the English classrooms with the necessary equipment such as computers, headphones, projector, internet, in other words, an English lab and the infrastructure as well because it is essential to have a proper environment and equipment for the students learning.

#### **6.1.4 Teacher**

It is the person in charge of creating a comfortable environment for teaching and also to transmit knowledge. Some recommendations for the teacher can be:

1. To continue using the ALM in the classroom
2. Encouraging students more for using the language thus inside and out the classroom.
3. To modify or look for other techniques to implement the method.
4. To make classes more interesting for students (activities that catch their attention) that way he can do classes proactively and the method can be carried out effectively.

#### **6.1.5 Educational System**

The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) is in charge of providing to teachers and students at national level the tools or equipment needed for the teaching process. Some recommendations are:

1. To provide the educational center the adequate conditions for teaching and learning.
2. To train teachers more for the implementation of such teaching methods.
3. To include those teaching methods into the syllabus, with that teachers and learners would use it daily and language can be seen as a showy subject that could open opportunities for them in a future and not just as another task to accomplish.

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# **ANNEXES**

## INTERVIEW

APPLICANTS: MAYRA DURAN PALACIO AND YULISA CEDEÑO GOMEZ

PERSON INTERVIEWED: PROFESSOR GEINER CALVO PIZARRO

YEAR 2022

1. Do you know what the Audio-Lingual Method is?

Yes, I do.

2. What do you think about the ALM?

It's the method that every teacher should use because it emphasizes listening and pronunciation.

3. Do you implement the Audio-Lingual techniques?

Yes, I do.

4. In your opinion. What are the ALM techniques that best work for improving the English speaking skill of students?

No native language in the classroom.

Students should follow the teacher's directions and respond accurately and as rapidly as possible.

5. What positive and negative aspects do you think the ALM has?

Positive aspects: the use of dialogs, learning through imitation, and repetition.

Negative aspects: Students fear about making mistakes, it's hard for students to practice English outside the classroom.

6. Do you think that the ALM works the same for all levels?

No, it doesn't.

7. Do you recommend the use of the ALM?

Yes, I do.

8. According to the first national diagnosis test of English domain applied to students in their last year of education, in 2019. The test revealed that 70% of students from public and private high schools have basic level. According to the new English curriculum 2016, students should reach a minimum level of English proficiency B1/B2 when completing high school. What are the reasons why you consider for that low performance of English domain

Most students aren't interested in learning English; they take that subject because it's mandatory. Besides, most schools don't have the necessary conditions for teachers to develop their classes efficiently (we don't have English labs).

9. Do you prefer to use one single method or use it together with methods?

I prefer to combine different methods.

10. If you could improve something of the current educational system regarding to the English teaching, what would it be?

Have smaller groups of students (15 students per group the most), and have English labs.

### **Result Analysis**

The person interviewed was the English teacher Geiner Calvo Pizarro who is professor of La Cuesta High School and who is in charge of teaching several groups of different levels including a group of seventh graders whom are the subjects of this research. The interview was basically 10 questions which majorly were open questions, those were about how much he knew about the Audio-Lingual Method, if he applies the Audio-Lingual techniques and he was asked to give some opinions and considerations about the implementation of the ALM in the English class.

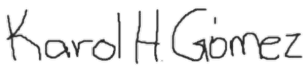
In the answers he gave to the interview, it can be seen clearly that the professor knows what the ALM is, advantages and shortcomings of the Audio-Lingual techniques. He currently implements the Audio-Lingual techniques and he thinks that the best of the ALM is the listening input that students receive and the focus on pronunciation furthermore, no native language in the classroom he considers highly important. His consideration about the main problem for the low English performance that secondary learners have lies on the lack of interest to learn English, he said that students take the subject because it is mandatory and he also mentioned that schools do not have the necessary conditions for teachers to develop their classes efficiently.

Although the professor considers that the ALM techniques are indubitable efficient, he thinks that its techniques do not work the same for all levels, therefore he combines it with other methods as he teaches different levels. The last question for the professor was to give some recommendations if he could improve something of the current educational system, regarding to the English teaching. To that, he answered that he would like that student's groups were smaller maximum fifteen students per group and have English labs.

To sum up, regarding to the teacher's answers, it can be seen that he completely agrees on the use of the Audio-Lingual method to enhance student's communicative skills and he recommends the use of its techniques since the most important for students when learning a second language is to develop those abilities of listening comprehension and spoken production to reach the expected level of the new English curriculum.

## **TRIBUNAL EXAMINADOR**

Este proyecto titulado: Enhancing Student's Communicative Skills by Implementing Strategies Based on the Audio-Lingual Method on Seventh Graders in La Cuesta High School., por el (la) estudiante: Mayra Isabel Durán Palacio y Yulisa Yuliana Cedeño Gómez, fue aprobado por el Tribunal Examinador de la carrera de Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Latina, Sede San Pedro, como requisito para optar por el grado de Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés.

  
Karol Hernández Gómez

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