

**THE NEW AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD
FOR TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
AND ITS UTILIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES**

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the growth of foreign language teaching in the elementary schools, with emphasis on the audio-lingual method.

The need for foreign language teaching has been apparent since World War II, both for personal and national goals. The army's crash program began the new approach when it became apparent that the older methods of study had not produced speaking ability. The study of linguistics gave impetus to this new approach. The audio-lingual method has achieved good results and each year brings refinement of materials and methods.

Present day methods in foreign language teaching have had much success by starting with the elementary school-age child, who still has a very flexible tongue. The audio-lingual approach is utilized and greatly increases the student's interest in learning.

Many of the theories and practices are based on proven linguistic methods. With uninterrupted instruction through high school, excellent results are often being obtained. Each year of study is bringing refinements in the adaptability and flexibility of the new methods and the ease with which changes are being made.

Many mechanical devices are used: films, film strips,

overhead projectors, records, tape recordings and language laboratories. These help to insure alert classes and quick responses when used properly. They also provide immediate feed-back and correction for the pupils. Emphasis is placed on speaking from the first day the instruction in the foreign language begins. Many so-called "games" are used which are actually drills and repetitions. These are invaluable in learning a foreign language, although the student may be unaware of the purposes for what is taking place.

This new method is not only producing the desired results in speaking ability, but may achieve this with greater ease and relaxation on the part of the student. Students seem to concentrate and work more earnestly and conscientiously toward the desired goal of speaking fluently.

Since Spanish has been taught in the elementary grades for a relatively short time, a final assessment cannot be made for several years. It has been shown, however, that the few pupils who have had this preparation, can often be placed in the third year of high school foreign language classes.

The new techniques for teaching a foreign language are demanding on teachers because a high degree of fluency and of special training are required. That means that there is a relative scarcity of qualified teachers. With the improved methods and the knowledge of linguistics plus competent teachers, the teaching of foreign languages has a bright future.