

## اهمية استخدام المعمل في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية

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### ملخص البحث :

تهدف الورقة البحثية إلي توضيح الدور المهم الذي يلعبه المعمل في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية حيث يعتبر المعمل من الوسائل التعليمية التي تلعب دورا مهما في توصيل المعلومة للمتعلم ، وتناقش أهمية استخدام المعمل والعوامل التي تسهم في استخدامه ، وكيفية استخدامه ، والمناشط التي يمكن تطبيقها ، واللوازم والمعدات ، وكذلك القيود التي تحد من استخدام المعمل . وفي الختام اوصت الورقة بالتأكيد عبي ضرورة استخدام اساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بالمدارس الاعدادية والثانوية ، والجامعات الليبية للمعامل ، ومعالجة نواحي القصور في استخدامها..

## Using language laboratory in ELT

### Introduction

In this paper the writer tried to highlight the importance of using audio-aids in English language teaching. It discusses the effective use of Language Laboratory in enhancing EFL learners speaking and listening skills.

All the audio-aids share the same principles; though every teaching-aid has its own problems. The effectiveness of these aids depends on the purpose we use them for.

Audio aids do not teach anything themselves. Teaching is done by the teacher in the classroom before and after the use of audio aids. They must be fully integrated with classroom teaching.

The role of the teacher is crucial –tape recorders, language laboratories are merely aids to the learner and the teacher. But effective use of these tools depends on certain fundamental prerequisites. If teachers are left alone to struggle against all sorts of difficulties, success is unlikely and their failure and frustration will have unfavorable repercussions on their attitude towards new tools such as (Language Laboratory, Tape-recorder, Overhead Projector, DVD, etc.).

Suitable recorded materials are a fundamental prerequisite for successful work with these aids. Many teachers owe their failure to the lack of suitable materials. For this reason, the researcher has included in this paper a section about the materials.( Turiner, 1965).

### **1.1. Value of Language Laboratory.**

A first priority to language teaching is a separate language room.

In this room, we may have some permanent installation of listening facilities. This is really the first step towards the establishment of a language laboratory. If funds are available, it is possible to equip this room with individual listening or recording playback facilities.

The principles which apply to the use of a language laboratory apply also to the use of a simple tape- recorder; though each situation has its own problems. What will therefore be said about the language laboratory is of interest to the teacher who uses a single tape- recorder to supplement language teaching.

The first language laboratories were established in Britain in the 1960s. Since then, they have become a normal part of the teaching equipment of schools in many countries for teaching foreign languages.

However, according to the researcher humble experience in teaching English in some Libyan schools and universities, it has been observed that Language Laboratories haven't been effectively used.

The language laboratory has advantages as well as limitations. Since it is an expensive tool we must consider these issues before installing one; so that we may justify the expense.

Teaching with a language laboratory offers clear advantages over the normal classroom situation.

The taped lesson provides an authentic, unchanging and untiring source of linguistic models given orally by a range of various voices, male and female for the student to imitate. The student can practice listening as frequently as he likes. Repetitive practice which is so valuable to the student is very boring to the teacher who is now relieved and free for the vital task of teaching.

The student works at his own speed on material suited to his own ability. He may repeat an exercise as many times as he wishes before he moves on to the next.

The student is working for the whole of his time in the booth; listening and responding. Each student has only few minutes during the lesson to be heard and corrected individually by the teacher.

The student is working in a psychological isolation in order to be free from inhibitions which he may have when uttering foreign language sounds in the hearing of a whole class.

In the audio-active comparative laboratory, the student may objectively compare his own speech with that of the native model.

Testing oral production can be more objectively made in the language laboratory and in less time. Tapes of test utterances may be compared with each other. Individual testing is made at the console while other students continue with their normal practice, (Stack, 1971).

## **1.2. Factors of Effective Use of Language Laboratory**

- 1)-Adequate maintenance and servicing arrangements.
- 2)-Teachers' awareness of the advantages and limitations of the laboratory.
- 3)-The availability of suitable recorded materials , or the need for staff with the time, facilities and ability to produce them.

Once the language laboratory has been successfully incorporated into the teaching. Its use can be extended, (Hayes, 1981).

## **1.3. Use of Language Laboratory**

The usefulness of language laboratory depends on the use we make of it. Many teachers use it in such a way that no clear advantages over a tape recorder in the classroom are produced.

Through its efficient use, the student can improve his audio-lingual performance, extend his vocabulary and reinforce structures taught in the classroom. He receives individual help and work at his own space.

But recorded materials must be well devised. Poor materials are the cause of failure of many teachers in their use of the language laboratory. Badly devised drills and excessive mechanical drilling lead to boredom. The student must see how these drills can be used in real life situations. He must be regularly checked, helped and corrected. And variety must always be an essential element in lab work to avoid boredom and to maintain interest.

In the laboratory, each student is actively participating with his full attention. This is very tiring. Ten or fifteen minutes of such concentrated attention without a break is enough for young children, not more than twenty minutes for older students. It is much preferable to have lab practice of shorter and more frequent periods rather than one long session once a week.

The programmed tape should allow at least one break within each twenty minutes. Two or three intermediate breaks or at least changes of activity will make the work more acceptable. The optimum duration of a particular exercise is difficult to predict, therefore; the teacher should be very observant of the learner's reactions.

Break and variety are two important principles in lab work. Those who design lesson tapes should have these principles in mind. A well- devised lesson tape will contain a variety of

well- balanced activities: practice in listening comprehension, learning of dialogues, pattern practice and some recreation such as singing.

When there is a full class in the laboratory, it is necessary for the teacher to have a system in his monitoring , especially with large classes. The teacher cannot be expected in this case to be able to give close attention and detailed help to every student. Probably the best thing for him to do is to concentrate on a group of students to whom he will give detailed help in that lesson. But it is important that each student in the laboratory feels that the teacher has his attention on him. For this reason, during the lesson the teacher should quickly listen to the work of other students, without waiting to give detailed help.

The proper functioning of the laboratory can be unfavourably affected by a number of difficulties which concern administration within schools. In Libya, we have the problem of large classes in secondary schools and the problem is connected with timetabling. The time- table in secondary schools is inflexible and splitting classes into smaller groups is in many cases difficult to achieve. In England, there is so much grouping in secondary schools especially in comprehensive schools and this is achieved through a flexible syllabus and time-table.

Another problem concerning the proper functioning of the language laboratory is the problem of breakdowns and servicing the equipment.

It is essential that any fault in the equipment be repaired in the shortest possible time. Frequent breakdowns create frustration and annoyance to the teachers and students alike.

For all the problems concerning the lab, it is necessary that one member of the staff undertake responsibility, and be authorized to do the organizational work needed, (Hayes,1981).

### 1.3.1 Activities of Language Laboratory

a)-With beginners, it can be used for pronunciation practice, structure pattern drills, sentence building, question- and answer work, listening comprehension, role-playing and games.

Question-and-answer work would be based on some visual clue, ( a slide or a textbook picture). Later more open-ended questions are introduced.

In listening comprehension, the teacher may give students some questions in advance; the answers to which can be found in the taped passage.

In dialogues, after playing the dialogue twice, play it through again with one role left out, asking the students to fill in the appropriate part.

Such games as the following are appropriate for the language laboratory or the classroom: give three clues about the identity of a person, a place or a thing, then; leave a pause for the student to respond before he hears the answer. Describe a picture and ask students to draw what you are describing.

Provide simple maps of a town and describe an imaginary journey checking at various stages that the students are at the right places. Sound effect quizzes are also appropriate.

b)-With intermediate and advanced students, the laboratory can be used for:

-Specific linguistic activities e.g. persuade a friend to visit your hometown,

-Direct to indirect speech:

Choose a text of two to four minutes which is in the form of a conversation and ask students to retell it in indirect speech.

-Oral summaries: play a passage through twice, allow adequate time for preparation and ask for a summary.

-Visual clues: show a series of pictures which tell a simple story and ask the students to tell the story.

-Transcription: choose a short piece (about one minute) taken from a film or tape and ask them to write it down exactly as spoken, using the stop button.

-Interpreting: begin with a consecutive translation of short phrase groups, then; proceed to simultaneous translation of more complex material. This type of work, especially simultaneous translation is too difficult to carry out successfully in the prevailing conditions in secondary schools.

-Listening comprehension: all kinds of materials may be used; news bulletins, scenes from plays, poems, short stories, biographies, the sound track of a film, ( El-Araby, 1974).

### 1.3.2.LAB MATERIALS

The criteria for the choice and production of taped materials as well as their use are the same for both language laboratory and a simple tape recorder in the classroom.

Teachers cannot expect to be able to purchase all the needs for the language laboratory and probably they will not find a full language laboratory course that exactly fits their requirements. A proportion of this material will have to be produced by them.

The production of materials for the language laboratory is a specialized task. The materials must be carefully prepared, clear, graded , purposeful and based on linguistic facts.

To build up a collection of suitable materials, it is necessary to set aside a very large amount of time for the working timetable of highly-skilled teachers. But the production of audio-lingual courses involves team work. Teachers, linguists, artists, technicians, publishers, and educational bodies need to co-operate in making such courses available to schools.

Lab materials are of two types: core material and reinforcement and extension materials. Core material includes students' books , teachers' books , tapes and often a visual element. Reinforcement and extension materials include, for example, tapes of recorded short stories , 'business' conversations , plays , actual recordings of aspects of life in the country concerned and taped pronunciation drills.

In devising lab materials the best contextualized and effective approach is the functional approach. With this, the student

sees the immediate practical application of what he is learning while covering the more important or relevant structures of the language in a graded sequence. The situational contents are selected because of their appropriateness to the particular function. They are not taken in order of their supposed linguistic difficulty. The student progresses through a variety of situations , learning the language appropriate to each and gradually developing the skill to express his own needs and reactions in new situations. This approach is nearer to the way in which a child learns his mother tongue.

Many courses and teachers try to contextualize structures , that is , they try to create life situations where they teach systematically structures graded according to their difficulty. Others try to select and organize (situations) according to structures involved , they try to cover the more important structures in graded sentence while progressing through a variety of social situations.

The writer suggests that teachers should give more emphasis in enabling their students to see the practical application of the structures and vocabulary they learn in a wider range of social situations , that their students become more efficient in expressing their personal tastes emotions , moods and opinions , giving information, making suggestions, giving advice , identifying people and places , using the language for greeting people , shopping , travel , exchange of news and so on , that is, that teachers should follow a more functional approach ( but not entirely), (Tomlinson ,1998).

## 1.4.Limitations of Language Lab

The meanings of the sentences of a drill must already be known to the students when they practice a drill. Teaching of these is done in the classroom by the teacher in a personal interchange with the students. Laboratory work must be integrated with classroom work. The work in any laboratory session must consist of practice of what has been taught in a previous lesson and the work done in the laboratory should be used as a basic for developing further skill during following classroom lessons.

A further limitation is that linguistic drilling in the laboratory is not real-life conversation. It is only a training in the skills of speech. These skills must be used later in real-life situations. The student must have experience of reality, then his training in the laboratory will be really effective.

The language laboratory has aroused much controversy for and against it from the earliest time of its use. After about fifteen years of experience with language laboratories a polarization of views about its usefulness has emerged, this is rather the results of the teachers' reaction to it after a period of working with it.

On the one hand, are successful teachers who are enthusiastic about it and ascribe to it at least part of their success. On the other hand, are those teachers who consider their experience with it as disastrous and the installment of a language laboratory as a harmful waste of money.

The reason for this polarity of experience and conflicting views may be due to a variety of factors. Nevertheless, a single fact has been quite clear as the principal reason for this language laboratories depend heavily for their successful use upon certain basic prerequisites, (Turiner 1965).

## Conclusion

Language Laboratory is one of the most important teaching-aids that bridge the gap between the class and the outside world. Language teachers can usefully use the lab for carrying out different communication activities especially for developing EFL learners' listening and speaking skills. Providing Libyan schools and universities with a room of appropriate size equipped with all necessary technological facilities such as ,tape-recorder ,TV sets ,data show, pictures and self-study books can help the English language teachers shifting their approaches from teacher-centred to more learner-centred through promoting student's autonomy. However, training teachers and students for using the lab effectively should be seen as a prior step to introducing it into schools and universities.

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