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## **Audiolingual method for training listening skills in the English language with A1-level students**

*Método audio lingüístico para el entrenamiento en el idioma inglés, en las habilidades de audio con estudiantes de nivel A1*

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### **ABSTRACT**

At the ESFORSE Soldiers School in Ambato, addressing the issue of English language learning is quite difficult due to the different levels of language proficiency among cadets and the special requirements of the military context. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the audiolingual method for the development of listening skills in A1-level students. This methodological framework was subjected to a quasi-experimental design using pre- and post-tests. It involved 30 students chosen through non-probabilistic convenience sampling methods; therefore, both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for evaluation. The results indicated a statistically significant improvement in listening proficiency with a post-intervention assessment mean of 26,37 compared to 17,53 in the pretest and a Cohen effect size of 9,80 signifying a high pedagogical impact. Despite validating the effectiveness of the method in a military context, the study revealed methodological limitations that must be overcome to improve the validity of the conclusions. The findings suggest the integration of the audiolingual

method into military curricula while refinements to the methodological design are needed for future research.

*Keywords:* audio-lingual method, listening skills, listening competence, military education, pedagogical intervention

## RESUMEN

En la Escuela de formación de Soldados del Ejército ESFORSE en Ambato, se aborda el tema del aprendizaje del idioma inglés en el cual es muy complicado debido a los diferentes niveles de dominio del idioma entre los aspirantes y los requerimientos y exigencias especiales en el contexto militar. Por ello, se realizó un estudio para examinar la efectividad del método audio lingual, para el desarrollo de la capacidad auditiva en estudiantes de nivel A1. Este marco metodológico fue sometido a un diseño cuasiexperimental mediante pruebas previas y posteriores, en el cual se involucró a 30 estudiantes elegidos mediante métodos de muestreo no probabilístico; por lo tanto, para la evaluación se utilizaron técnicas tanto cualitativas como cuantitativas. Los resultados indicaron una mejora estadísticamente significativa en la competencia auditiva con una media de evaluación posterior a la intervención de 28,13 en comparación con 18,67 en la prueba previa y un tamaño del efecto Cohen de 0,80, lo que significa un alto impacto pedagógico. A pesar de validar la efectividad del método en un contexto militar, el estudio reveló limitaciones metodológicas que deben superarse para mejorar la validez de las conclusiones. Los hallazgos sugieren la integración del método audio lingual en los planes de estudio militares, mientras que se necesitan mejoras en el diseño metodológico para futuras investigaciones.

*Palabras clave:* método audio lingual, habilidades auditivas, competencia auditiva, educación militar, intervención pedagógica

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching English at the ESFORSE School of Soldiers located in Ambato is exposed to several obstacles due to the diversity of linguistic competences among the cadets, as well as the demands of the military environment. This inequality highlights the need to learn specialized pedagogical methods that adapt to the training and professional demands of students. Thus, in this context, the audiolingual method emerges as a potentially effective methodological intervention to optimize listening competence in A1 cadets, which is aligned with the communicative expectations of the military environment. This approach, which is based on the systematic repetition and memorization of linguistic patterns, needs to be subjected to a rigorous evaluation in order to establish whether it is relevant and effective in terms of improving military listening comprehension in situations.

In a significant study conducted at the School of Tourism of the National University of Tumbes, the effect of the audiovisual approach in teaching English was evaluated. The research applied a quasi-experimental design to a sample of 54 out of a total of 210 students and a questionnaire developed and validated by experts was used to assess the impact of the method. The results indicated a T-Student test with a confidence level of 95%, revealing a statistical significance of less than 0.05, meaning that the audiovisual method has a positive and relevant effect on the teaching of the English in question. Therefore, this method greatly improves language skills among students according to its effectiveness in particular educational contexts (Quevedo et al., 2021).

In another study, Baute et al. (2022) investigated the usefulness of Google Sites and Sequence-Based Learning in improving English speaking and listening skills among primary school students at Sor Matilde Justo Institution. Using a descriptive and quantitative method, it has been observed that there are certain weaknesses in students' listening and speaking skills with respect to their level of education. This shows that the use of modern technological tools such as Google Sites solves this problem as it provides an interactive and stimulating learning environment that has not only enhanced the teaching of English but also improved students' technological competencies under proper pedagogical guidance.

This study aims to verify the effectiveness of the audio-linguistic method for developing the listening skills of ESFORSE students, as there is little research on the subject in the military context. The theoretical approach of the method is based on behaviourist and structuralist principles, which promote the automation of auditory responses through controlled repetition of verbal stimuli. Historically, its use has been restricted to intensive language learning for specific purposes such as in the case of the Second World War, but this work aims to fill this gap and provide empirical evidence on its validity as an effective teaching resource in the training of soldiers with specific linguistic needs.

The audiolingual method is considered a pedagogical approach to foreign language teaching that is characterized by intensive repetition and automation of linguistic patterns through repetitive listening and oral production exercises (Mesa, 2023). Based on the principles of behaviorism and habit learning theory, it aims to improve listening skills by exposing students to model structures and promoting accuracy and fluency in listening comprehension. B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory supports this approach by suggesting that language acquisition occurs through repetition and reinforcement, while structuralism supports the sequential acquisition of linguistic structures (Ríos et al., 2024).

## METHODOLOGY

In the present study, a mixed methodological approach has been used, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of the audiolingual method in achieving the auditory competence of level A1 students at the ESFORSE Military School located in the city of Ambato. This methodological approach aims to provide a global evaluation of the impact of this audiolingual method through a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design that allows measuring changes in auditory competence before and after implementing the pedagogical intervention. This design allows direct comparison between the initial test results and those obtained after the application of the method, thus facilitating rigorous analytical reviews on the effects of the treatment on the auditory development of participants, adapting according to specific contextual conditions.

Students who were in the A1 level of English at ESFORSE constituted the sample of this research and it corresponded to 60 students. Non-probabilistic convenience sampling was adopted to select 30 individuals, who were considered as representatives and provided high-quality data. Several selections were made to include in the group such as constant attendance in classes and active participation during all phases of the study, thus ensuring homogeneity within the experimental group and validity of the results. The strategy consists of whose representation of the data correctly reflects the effects of the audiolingual method on the listening competence of the target group.

The research began with an exhaustive documentary review that allowed us to establish the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of the audio-lingual method. In addition, this verification was complemented by an interview with an expert in language teaching to adapt the activities of the method to the particularities of the military context in which it is implemented. The interview with the expert provided a critical perspective that allowed us to personalize the educational strategies and guarantee the adequacy of the proposed activities to the specific communicative needs of the military environment.

The intervention phase included several audiolingual method practices, such as systematic repetition of linguistic patterns, structured practice of oral patterns, and controlled

response exercises. These techniques were adapted to meet the specific communication needs in the military context. For quantitative data collection, standardized listening comprehension tests were administered at two-time points: before the intervention (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest). These tests allowed the measurement of students' progress in understanding spoken English. In addition, qualitative surveys were conducted to capture participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of this method in improving students' listening skills.

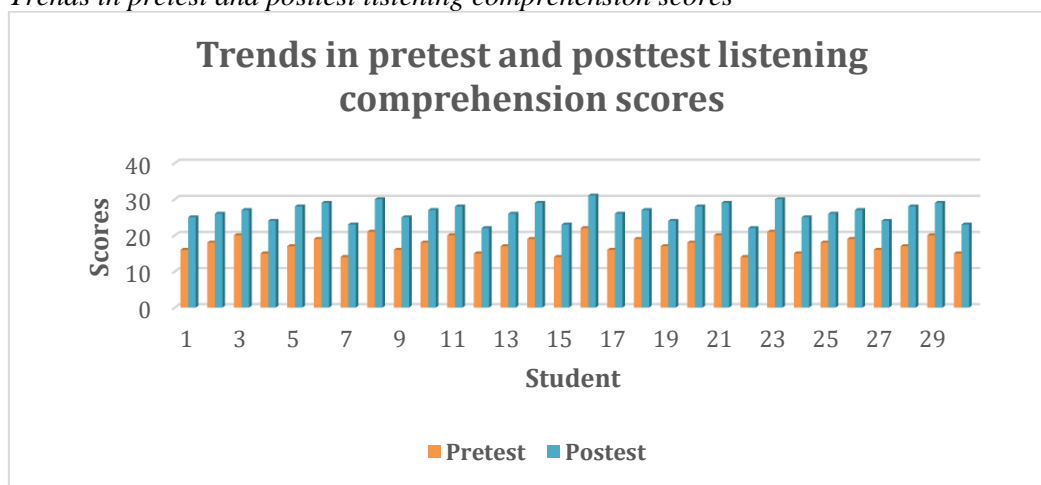
Methodological triangulation is used to provide a thorough and robust analysis of the data collected. This approach allowed for the validation of the results obtained through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, offering a deep and nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of the audiolingual method. The combination of standardized testing with perception surveys contributed to a comprehensive assessment of the impact this method has on the development of auditory competence, leading to a more complete and accurate interpretation of the effects this pedagogical approach has had in the ESFORSE military context.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the intervention implemented with the audiolingual method were subjected to an exhaustive statistical analysis that showed a notable improvement in the listening skills of the A1 level students at the ESFORSE School of Soldiers. Listening comprehension tests were administered before and after the intervention to assess its impact. The results of these tests were analyzed using paired sample statistical tests. In this way, it was possible to assess whether the differences between the pre- and post-assessments were statistically significant and, therefore, provide an objective measure of the effectiveness of the audiolingual method. In addition, the effect size was calculated to estimate the magnitude of the educational impact on improving the students' listening proficiency level.

**Figure 1**

*Trends in pretest and posttest listening comprehension scores*



Note. Own elaboration

Figure 1 contains the individual ratings and shows that listening skills became better overall after being subjected to the audiolingual intervention. Looking at this figure, overall,

students were better at listening when this approach was used. However, the data also reveal a very significant variability in individual results. This indicates that while some students made great progress in their listening skills, others made slight or constant gains. Therefore, although the intervention is generally effective, it could still help to personalize its use for each student to achieve greater results.

**Table 1**

*Results of the statistical measures of the pretest and posttest applied to the A1 level students of the ESFORSE*

Extent	Pretest	Posttest	Difference	df	p-value	d
Minimum	14,00	22,00	6,00			
Maximum	22,00	31,00	8,00			
Average (M)	17,53	26,37	9,46	29,00	< 0,001	9,8
Standard deviation (SD)	2,25	2,47	3,97			

Note. Degrees of freedom (df), Cohen effect size (d). Own elaboration.

The statistical analysis of the data reflected a significant increase in the means of the evaluations carried out after the intervention. The post-intervention evaluations had a mean of  $M = 26,37$  ( $SD = 2,47$ ), while the pre-intervention evaluations had a mean of  $M = 17,53$  ( $SD = 2,25$ ). When analyzing paired samples, through a value of degrees of freedom equal to 29,00, a value of  $p < 0.001$  was obtained, confirming the statistical significance of the differences observed. Therefore, this indicates that there was a statistically significant improvement in the students' listening skills after the intervention.

The effect size calculated with the value  $d = 9,80$  therefore shows a high degree of improvement in the participants' listening skills. This  $d$  value suggests that the audiolingual method intervention has a considerable effect on the students' listening ability, reflecting a substantial improvement in the pre-assessment. Consequently, these results provide evidence of the effectiveness of the audiolingual approach and highlight its importance as a pedagogical tool in teaching the English language, especially in contexts where there is an intensive need to develop listening skills.

According to the results, the use of the audiolingual method can contribute to improving listening for students at level A1 in the ESFORSE. However, there is significant variability in individual results, which highlights the need to adapt the intervention to individual differences in progress to be more effective. Furthermore, these results represent concrete evidence of the effectiveness of this method and demonstrate that it is important to adapt pedagogical strategies to the specificities of learners in a military environment.

## DISCUSSION

Importantly, the audiolingual method has demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in improving cadets' listening skills, which is a strong indicator of its efficacy in military education.

The results obtained in the post-intervention assessments reflect a significant improvement in the participants' listening competence, demonstrating that the method has achieved its goal of automating auditory responses through systematic repetition and intensive practice of language patterns. This finding validates the effectiveness of the method in achieving its pedagogical goals and is consistent with the theoretical foundations of the approach, which are based on behaviourist and structuralist perspectives. These theories claim that language acquisition can be facilitated through controlled repetition and exposure to specific linguistic structures, thus providing a solid empirical basis for the incorporation of the audiolingual method in military-oriented English language programs.

The study also helps to confirm the applicability and validity of the audiolingual method in a military context, an area that has received little attention in the existing academic literature. The size of the impact obtained may suggest that the method is not only highly effective, but also has great significance for the training of military personnel. The method results in the development of listening skills necessary for operational performance, which is useful for the training of soldiers who require language skills that are accurate and effective during stressful situations.

Despite the positive results, it is essential to accept some methodological limitations that may be relevant to the interpretation of the research results. One of the main limitations is that a control group was not included in the study design, which prevents direct comparison with a group that did not receive the intervention. This shortcoming suggests that future studies should be conducted with control groups to improve internal validity and provide more rigorous evaluations in terms of the effectiveness of the method used. More robust experimental designs could address these shortcomings and lead to clearer conclusions about the effectiveness of the audiolingual approach.

The results of the research confirmed that the audiolingual approach is an effective pedagogical intervention in increasing listening proficiency in ESFORSE. This study expands knowledge on teaching methods in specialized contexts, creating a basis for future research and possible reforms of pedagogical practices. The inclusion of the audiolingual method in the military English curriculum could optimize the development of basic listening skills, which would significantly contribute to the training of military personnel and their operational capacity in real-life situations.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a solid validation of the audiolingual method to improve the listening skills of A1 level cadets of the ESFORSE School of Soldiers. The applied method resulted in a statistically significant increase in listening skills, which can be observed in the posttest means, which were 26,37 while the pretest was 17,53, or a difference of 9.46 points, which demonstrates

not only a considerable advance in the listening skills of these students, but also in this sense it can be understood that the audiolingual method is effective to optimize this skill within the specialized military educational context.

The audiolingual method has a positive impact, showing its potential to meet particular communication demands in military contexts, which is important at the pedagogical level in the training of cadets. The great improvement observed in the post-test results underlines the relevant contribution that this method makes to listening competence, its applicability in the field of English from a military perspective. These results support its effectiveness in terms of specific pedagogical objectives and its ability to adjust to certain communicative characteristics of the medium.

However, the study has some methodological limitations, such as the absence of a control group, which raises the need for further research incorporating this variable to strengthen the experimental design. Despite these limitations, the positive findings remain valid and notable, thus demonstrating the success of this method in improving listening comprehension. The inclusion of control groups in future studies will allow for a more rigorous evaluation of the impact of the method, thus increasing the validity of the test and strengthening the basis for more effective teaching techniques in military contexts.



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