



## Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Audiolingual Method in Producing Asking, Giving, and Refusing Expressions at Junior High School

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This study aimed to determine whether the implementation of the Audiolingual Method could improve the speaking skill of first-year students at Public Middle School 26 Makassar, particularly in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions in English conversations.

**Methodology:** This study used Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on Kemmis and McTaggart's model with two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects were 23 students of Public Middle School 26 Makassar. Instruments included speaking tests, observation checklists, lesson plans, students' worksheets, and scoring rubrics adapted from Heaton (1988) covering accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility.

**Main Findings:** The findings showed significant improvement in students' speaking skills after applying the Audiolingual Method. The mean score increased from 2.2 in the pre-test to 3.8 in Cycle I and 4.4 in Cycle II. Students also showed better classroom participation, confidence, cooperation, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehensibility during speaking activities.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study highlights the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method through systematic drilling and repetition activities to improve junior high school students' speaking performance. Unlike previous studies focusing on pictures or questioning techniques, this research emphasizes oral habit formation, pronunciation practice, and communicative confidence using structured dialogue repetition in classroom action research.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential language skills in English learning because it reflects students' ability to communicate ideas, feelings, opinions, and information effectively in real-life situations [1]-[3]. In junior high school, speaking becomes an important component of language mastery since students are expected to perform transactional and interpersonal communication using appropriate vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehensibility [4], [5]. However, many students still experience serious difficulties in expressing ideas orally because they have limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, low confidence, and lack of practice opportunities in

the classroom. These problems often make students passive during the learning process and reduce their motivation to participate actively in speaking activities.

In English language teaching, especially at the junior high school level, students are required not only to understand grammar and vocabulary but also to use language communicatively in everyday interaction. Based on the curriculum, students are expected to be able to produce expressions such as asking, giving, and refusing things appropriately in spoken communication [6]-[8]. Unfortunately, conventional teaching methods often emphasize reading and writing more than speaking practice. Teachers frequently focus on textbook exercises and grammar explanation rather than interactive speaking drills [9], [10]. As a result, students become familiar with written forms but remain weak in oral production. This condition indicates that speaking instruction requires more practical and student-centered strategies that encourage repetition, pronunciation practice, and direct communication.

One of the teaching methods that can be applied to improve speaking ability is the Audiolingual Method. This method emphasizes repetition, drilling, dialogue memorization, pronunciation practice, and habit formation through oral exercises [11]-[13]. The Audiolingual Method is based on behaviorist theory which assumes that language learning occurs through stimulus, response, and reinforcement. Students learn language patterns by listening, repeating, and practicing continuously until correct habits are formed. Through this method, students are trained to produce correct pronunciation and sentence patterns naturally [14]. In speaking instruction, especially for beginners, this method is considered effective because it provides structured oral practice and reduces students' hesitation in speaking English.

The application of the audiolingual method is highly relevant for students who face difficulties in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions. These expressions require students to respond quickly and accurately in transactional communication [15], [16]. By using drilling activities, students repeatedly practice model conversations and sentence patterns so that they become more confident and fluent in oral interaction. In addition, repeated pronunciation exercises help students reduce mother-tongue interference and improve comprehensibility. The collaborative classroom atmosphere created through pair work and dialogue practice also increases students' motivation, participation, and confidence during the learning process [17], [18].

Based on preliminary observation at Public Middle School 26 Makassar, the first-grade students showed low speaking achievement, particularly in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions. Many students were unable to translate simple expressions into correct English sentences and often remained silent because they were afraid of making mistakes. Their lack of vocabulary and low confidence became the main barriers in speaking performance [19]-[21]. The pre-test results also showed that students' average speaking score was still categorized as poor, indicating that improvement was urgently needed. Therefore, an appropriate teaching method was required to solve these classroom problems and enhance students' speaking competence effectively.

Classroom action research was chosen as the research design because it allows the teacher and researcher to identify classroom problems directly and implement practical solutions through continuous reflection and improvement. Through two research cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection, the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method could be measured systematically [22]. This approach not only focuses on students' learning outcomes but also improves the teaching process itself. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the Audiolingual Method can significantly improve students' speaking ability, especially in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions among first-grade students of Junior high school 26 Makassar.

Several previous studies have investigated strategies for improving students' speaking ability. Syed Jahara [23] found that Total Physical Response improved students' speaking ability in producing imperative sentences through physical response activities. Putri [24] reported that describing picture techniques increased students' speaking achievement by encouraging visual interpretation and oral explanation. Gumartifa [25] also revealed that drawing and describing pictures helped students improve vocabulary mastery and speaking confidence. Although these studies proved that interactive methods can improve speaking skills, they mainly focused on visual media and physical activities rather than structured oral drilling. Research specifically examining the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method in improving asking, giving, and refusing expressions at the junior high school level remains limited. This gap shows the need for further investigation using Audiolingual Method as the primary intervention.

The novelty of this study lies in the use of the Audiolingual Method as a systematic oral drilling strategy to improve students' speaking ability in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions. Unlike previous studies that focused on picture description and physical movement techniques, this research emphasizes repetition, dialogue memorization, pronunciation correction, and sentence pattern mastery through structured speaking practice [26]. This study also combines oral drilling with collaborative classroom action research cycles to monitor both students' speaking progress and classroom participation. This approach provides a more focused contribution to improving transactional speaking competence among junior high school students [27], [28].

The implication of this study is expected to provide practical benefits for English teachers, students, and future researchers. For teachers, the findings can serve as an alternative strategy for teaching speaking more effectively through drilling and repetition activities [29], [30]. For students, the Audiolingual Method can increase

confidence, improve pronunciation, and strengthen speaking fluency in daily communication. For future researchers, this study can become a reference for developing further investigations related to speaking instruction, classroom action research, and communicative teaching methods in different educational contexts. Thus, this research contributes both theoretically and practically to English language teaching.

The urgency of this study is strongly related to the persistent problem of low speaking competence among junior high school students in Indonesia. Speaking remains one of the most challenging English skills due to limited classroom practice, fear of making mistakes, and ineffective teaching strategies [31]. If this problem is not addressed, students may continue to experience difficulties in communicative competence, which affects their academic achievement and future social interaction. Considering that English communication skills are increasingly important in education and professional life, finding an effective teaching method becomes a priority. Therefore, investigating the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method is urgent to support better speaking instruction and improve students' communicative readiness in the modern educational environment [32].

Based on the background, research gap, and urgency presented above, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How can the Audiolingual Method improve students' speaking ability in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions at Public Middle School 26 Makassar? (2) How is the implementation process of the Audiolingual Method conducted during speaking learning activities through Classroom Action Research cycles? and (3) How do students respond to the use of the Audiolingual Method in improving their speaking confidence, pronunciation, and fluency? These research questions are formulated to investigate the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method and to obtain a comprehensive understanding of its implementation in improving junior high school students' speaking competence.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study employed classroom action research (CAR) using a collaborative approach between the researcher and the English teacher [33]. Classroom action research was selected because it is designed to solve practical problems found in the classroom and improve students' learning outcomes through continuous cycles of action and reflection. This research adopted the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart which consists of four main stages in each cycle: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study was conducted in two cycles, and each cycle consisted of three meetings. The first cycle focused on identifying students' initial problems and applying the Audiolingual Method through basic drilling activities, while the second cycle emphasized improvement and stabilization of students' speaking performance based on the weaknesses found in the first cycle. This design allowed the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching method systematically and continuously until the expected learning outcomes were achieved.

### **2.2. Subject/Sample**

The subjects of this study were the first-grade students of Junior high school 26 Makassar in the academic year 2013/2014. The total number of participants was 23 students consisting of 12 male students and 11 female students. These students were selected because they showed difficulties in speaking English, particularly in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions in transactional communication. Based on the preliminary observation and pre-test results, most students had low vocabulary mastery, weak pronunciation, lack of confidence, and low participation during speaking activities. Therefore, this class was considered appropriate as the research subject because it represented the real classroom problem that required immediate pedagogical intervention through the Audiolingual Method.

### **2.3. Source of Data and Data Collection Technique**

The data sources in this study were divided into quantitative and qualitative data [34]. Quantitative data were obtained from students' speaking test results, including pre-test and post-test scores in each cycle. These tests were used to measure students' improvement in speaking ability after the implementation of the Audiolingual Method. The aspects assessed included accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Meanwhile, qualitative data were collected through classroom observation during the teaching and learning process. Observation was conducted to record students' participation, creativity, confidence, happiness, and interaction during speaking activities. The researcher and collaborator used observation checklists to monitor students' responses and classroom atmosphere during the implementation of each cycle. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data provided comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of the treatment.

Table 1. Research Subject Distribution

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52.2
Gender	Female	47.8
Total Students	Participants	100

## 2.4. Research Instrument

The instruments used in this research were speaking tests and observation checklists [35]. The speaking test was used to assess students' speaking ability before and after the treatment. Students were asked to produce asking, giving, and refusing expressions both orally and in written form based on classroom tasks and post-tests. The scoring rubric was adapted from Heaton (1988), covering three major aspects: accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Each aspect was scored on a scale of 1 to 6, ranging from unacceptable to excellent. Observation checklists were used to record students' classroom behavior during the teaching process, including their learning activities, creativity, feeling of happiness, and interaction with peers and teachers. These instruments were selected to ensure both learning outcomes and learning processes were evaluated comprehensively.

Table 2. Speaking Assessment Criteria

Aspect	Indicator	Score Range
Accuracy	Pronunciation and grammar correctness	1–6
Fluency	Smoothness and continuity of speaking	1–6
Comprehensibility	Clarity and listener understanding	1–6

## 2.5. Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques [36]. Quantitative data from speaking tests were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis to determine students' mean scores, score improvement, and percentage of achievement in each cycle. The formula used included calculating the students' total score, percentage, and mean score to compare pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II results. The improvement was measured by comparing students' average scores across the research cycles. Qualitative data obtained from observation checklists were analyzed descriptively by identifying students' classroom participation, motivation, confidence, and interaction during the implementation of the Audiolingual Method. These observations helped explain the reasons behind score improvement and provided deeper understanding of classroom learning behavior. The mean score formula used in this study was:

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad \dots(1)$$

Where:

X = Mean score

$\sum X$  = Total score of all students

N = Number of students

## 2.6. Research Procedure

The research procedure followed the standard Classroom Action Research cycle consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, teaching materials, observation sheets, speaking tests, and classroom instruments needed for the implementation of the Audiolingual Method [37]. In the action stage, the researcher applied the Audiolingual Method by introducing model conversations, conducting repetition drills, asking students to memorize dialogues, and encouraging pair practice in front of the class. In the observation stage, the researcher and collaborator observed students' learning activities, confidence, participation, and speaking performance during the teaching process. In the reflection stage, the researcher analyzed students' weaknesses and classroom problems found in the cycle, then used the results to improve the teaching strategy for the next cycle. This procedure was repeated in two cycles until the target of students' speaking improvement was achieved.

Planning → Action → Observation → Reflection → Next Cycle

Cycle I focused on introducing the Audiolingual Method and improving students' basic speaking confidence through word drilling and simple conversation practice. Cycle II emphasized sentence drilling, pair dialogue performance, vocabulary reinforcement, and improving students' fluency and comprehensibility. The

research was stopped in the second cycle because the students' mean score had significantly improved and the target of the study had been successfully achieved.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Students' Speaking Achievement Improvement

The implementation of the Audiolingual Method showed significant improvement in students' speaking ability, particularly in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions in English transactional communication. Before the treatment was conducted, the students' speaking performance was still categorized as low. Most students experienced difficulties in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and confidence in speaking. They were often silent during classroom interaction because they were afraid of making mistakes and lacked confidence to express simple English expressions orally. Based on the pre-test results, the mean score of students' speaking ability was only 2.2, indicating that most students were still in the poor category and needed serious instructional improvement.

During the first cycle, the researcher applied the Audiolingual Method through word drilling, sentence repetition, dialogue memorization, and guided pair conversation practice. Students were introduced to expressions of asking, giving, and refusing things, then asked to repeat and practice them intensively. This process aimed to build language habits and reduce students' hesitation in speaking. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive because students were required to respond directly and practice with peers. As a result, the students' mean score increased from 2.2 in the pre-test to 3.8 in Cycle I. This improvement indicated that the Audiolingual Method successfully helped students improve their initial speaking competence, especially in pronunciation and sentence production.

However, the first cycle still revealed several weaknesses. Some students still had limited vocabulary and found difficulty translating expressions into correct English forms. Several students were still shy and reluctant to perform in front of the class. The observation results showed that only 26% of students asked questions when instructions were unclear, and only 21% voluntarily presented their discussion results. This showed that although improvement had occurred, students' confidence and classroom participation were still not optimal. Therefore, a second cycle was needed to stabilize the learning process and strengthen students' speaking performance through more intensive drilling and reinforcement.

In the second cycle, the researcher improved the teaching strategy by adding vocabulary glossaries, providing clearer sentence construction steps, motivating shy students more intensively, and strengthening pair dialogue practice. Students were asked to create short conversations, memorize them, and perform in front of the class. A fun game activity was also introduced to increase student motivation and reduce speaking anxiety. This modification produced better learning outcomes. The students became more active, confident, and willing to participate during classroom interaction. The mean score increased again from 3.8 in Cycle I to 4.4 in Cycle II, showing a substantial improvement in students' speaking ability.

Table 3. Comparison of Students' Mean Scores

Assessment	Mean Score	Category
Pre-Test	2.2	Poor
Cycle I	3.8	Good
Cycle II	4.4	Very Good

The table above clearly shows that students' speaking achievement improved progressively across the research cycles. The highest score also increased from 4.1 in the pre-test to 4.7 in Cycle I and 4.9 in Cycle II. Meanwhile, the lowest score improved from 1.0 in the pre-test to 1.6 in Cycle I and 3.1 in Cycle II. This result proves that the Audiolingual Method did not only improve high-achieving students but also helped lower-achieving students improve their speaking competence significantly. The consistent improvement indicates that repeated oral practice and drilling activities were effective in strengthening students' language habits [38].

#### 3.2. Improvement of Classroom Participation and Learning Behavior

In addition to academic achievement, the implementation of the Audiolingual Method also improved students' classroom participation and learning behavior. Observation was conducted based on four aspects: learning activities, creativity, feeling of happiness, and interaction. These aspects were important because speaking improvement is closely related to students' motivation, confidence, and active participation during the learning process. In the first cycle, several indicators still showed low percentages, such as students asking questions (26%), presenting results voluntarily (21%), and exploring ideas independently (34%). This indicated that many students were still passive and lacked confidence.

After reflection and improvement in the second cycle, these indicators increased significantly. Students who asked questions increased to 39%, students presenting voluntarily increased to 60%, and students discussing actively with peers reached 100%. Students who showed happiness during the learning process increased from 43% to 95%, while students who completed assignments properly increased from 47% to 95%. This improvement demonstrates that the Audiolingual Method created a more engaging and supportive learning environment where students felt comfortable practicing English without excessive fear of making mistakes.

Table 4. Improvement of Observation Indicators

Indicator	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
Asking questions	26	39
Presenting voluntarily	21	60
Working with peers	30	100
Feeling happy in learning	43	95
Completing assignments well	47	95

These findings confirm that speaking improvement is strongly influenced by classroom atmosphere and teaching strategy. When students are repeatedly exposed to oral practice in a supportive environment, they become more confident and active [39], [40]. The use of pair work and repetitive dialogue practice reduced anxiety and encouraged peer collaboration. This aligns with behaviorist learning theory, where repetition and reinforcement help students form automatic language habits and improve oral performance gradually.

The findings of this study indicate that the Audiolingual Method was effective in improving students' speaking ability because it focused on intensive oral drilling, pronunciation practice, repetition, and habit formation [41], [42]. According to behaviorist theory, language learning occurs through stimulus, response, and reinforcement. In this study, the teacher provided repeated speaking stimuli through model conversations and drilling exercises, while students responded by practicing the expressions repeatedly until correct speaking habits were formed. Reinforcement was given through correction, repetition, and encouragement [43]. This process helped students reduce pronunciation errors, improve fluency, and strengthen comprehensibility.

The improvement from pre-test to Cycle II proves that students learned more effectively when speaking instruction was practice-oriented rather than theory-oriented. Conventional methods that focus too much on grammar explanation often fail to provide enough speaking opportunities. In contrast, the Audiolingual Method allowed students to practice language directly and repeatedly in meaningful classroom interaction. This method was especially effective for beginner learners who needed structured guidance and confidence building before engaging in spontaneous communication [44]. The repetitive dialogue exercises helped students internalize sentence patterns and respond more naturally in speaking situations.

These results support previous studies conducted by Ifa Latifah [45], who found that Total Physical Response improved students' speaking performance through active physical response activities. Similarly, Siribhon Samithong [46] showed that describing picture techniques improved students' speaking confidence and vocabulary mastery. Khusnul Yatima [47] also reported that visual description strategies positively influenced speaking fluency and classroom participation. However, unlike those studies which emphasized visual and physical media, the present study demonstrated that oral drilling and dialogue repetition through the Audiolingual Method could provide stronger reinforcement for pronunciation accuracy and transactional speaking fluency. This makes the Audiolingual Method particularly suitable for teaching formulaic expressions such as asking, giving, and refusing.

The success of this method also reflects the importance of classroom action research as a practical strategy for solving instructional problems. Through continuous reflection and improvement across cycles, the teacher was able to identify classroom weaknesses and modify teaching strategies effectively. This flexible and reflective process ensured that students received better instructional support in the second cycle. Therefore, Classroom Action Research not only improved student achievement but also improved teaching quality and teacher responsiveness to classroom challenges.

The gap analysis in this study is based on three previous studies that focused on Total Physical Response to improve imperative sentence production, Ifa Latifah emphasized picture description techniques for speaking development, and Siribhon Samithong used drawing and describing pictures to strengthen students' speaking ability. Although these studies successfully improved speaking performance, they mainly relied on physical movement and visual support rather than structured oral repetition. Very limited studies specifically examined how the Audiolingual Method improves transactional expressions such as asking, giving, and refusing things among junior high school students. This study fills that gap by focusing on oral drilling and pronunciation habit formation as the main strategy for speaking improvement.

The novelty of this study lies in the application of the Audiolingual Method specifically for improving transactional speaking competence through asking, giving, and refusing expressions [48]. Unlike previous studies that emphasized descriptive speaking tasks or physical response techniques, this research prioritizes repeated oral

drilling, dialogue memorization, pronunciation correction, and communicative confidence building. The integration of these activities within Classroom Action Research cycles also provides a systematic model for measuring both learning outcomes and classroom participation improvement [49]. This offers a more focused pedagogical contribution to English speaking instruction at the junior high school level.

The implication of this study is significant for English teachers, especially those teaching speaking at beginner and intermediate levels. Teachers can use the Audiolingual Method as an alternative strategy to create more interactive and practice-based speaking instruction. Repetition drills, dialogue practice, and pair conversation activities can be implemented to reduce students' fear of speaking and improve oral fluency [50]. For students, this method increases confidence, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, and communication readiness. For future researchers, this study provides a useful reference for developing further investigations on speaking pedagogy, classroom action research, and communicative teaching methods across different educational contexts.

This study also has several limitations. First, the research was conducted only in one class with a relatively small number of participants, so the findings may not fully represent broader student populations. Second, the duration of the research was limited to two cycles, which may not fully capture long-term speaking development. Third, the study focused only on asking, giving, and refusing expressions, so the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method for other speaking functions such as argumentation or presentation skills was not examined. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, longer treatment duration, and broader speaking contexts to strengthen the generalizability and practical application of the findings.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Audiolingual Method was effective in improving the speaking ability of first-grade students at SMP Negeri 26 Makassar, particularly in producing asking, giving, and refusing expressions in English transactional communication. The improvement was shown by the increase in students' mean score from 2.2 in the pre-test to 3.8 in Cycle I and 4.4 in Cycle II. In addition to academic achievement, students also demonstrated better classroom participation, confidence, interaction, and motivation during the learning process. Repetition drills, dialogue memorization, pronunciation practice, and pair conversation activities helped students develop speaking habits more naturally and reduced their fear of making mistakes. Therefore, the Audiolingual Method can be considered an effective alternative strategy for teaching speaking at the junior high school level, especially for beginner learners who require structured oral practice and communicative confidence building. Based on the limitations of this study, future researchers are recommended to conduct similar studies with larger participant groups and longer research duration to obtain more comprehensive findings regarding students' speaking development. Further studies are also suggested to examine the effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method in broader speaking contexts, such as presentation skills, debates, storytelling, or argumentative speaking, in order to strengthen the practical application of the method in English language learning.

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#### USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All stages of the research process, including data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation, were conducted entirely by the authors without the assistance of any AI-based tools.

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