

**THE AUDIOVISUAL METHOD
OF READING
(2/2)**

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THE AUDIOVISUAL METHOD IN ACTION

Pre-learning period.

The teacher should not consider as time-wasting the days and even weeks that s/he spends with the children to introduce them to the Audiovisual Method. The teacher will explain to the children in terms that they can understand, the parts of the body (organs dealing with sound) that have to do with speech. The instructor will thoroughly examine the various parts of the mouth with them: the tongue, the teeth, the palate, the lips...

The teacher will show the children how we speak with the body: posture, gestures, laughter, crying...eyes...The Audiovisual Method places a great deal of importance on gestures and on the location of the organs dealing with sound... Therefore, the teacher must prepare the children so that, at the proper time, they will know how to do the exercises well.

The teacher who becomes proficient in the Audiovisual Method will easily be able to transform the exercise and practice of position, descriptive and rhythmic gestures into a game for the children. These gestures will be dealt with later on and they will become dictations and mime shows. The imitation of sounds from elements in nature and from the animal kingdom prepares the children for the onomatopoeic phonemes.

Sounds

The Audiovisual Method uses the same scheme for the learning of all sounds. The difficulty that these propose is diverse.

1. To awaken the interest of the children.

We listen to and we retain that which interests us. The Guide presents a brief description for each sound that is appropriate for the interests and the capacity of the children. Normally, this is based on the child's culture and traditions. The particular sound which is the object of our study appears frequently throughout the text. After reading it two or three times, the teacher sets up a dialog with the students and practices these sounds in the dialog; the teacher makes

certain that the students understand the reading and motivates them toward mastery of the phoneme.

The student's reader has a full color page for each phoneme. The teacher must know how to use this richness from the lexicon, dialog, the entire set, etc...that the dialog includes... Furthermore, this is intimately related with the sound, onomatopoeia, etc...

Beginning with the reading and the drawing, the teacher should practice miming and dramatization with the children...in other words, to teach enjoyment!

2. Drawing the letter.

The teacher presents the letter that is being studied in a very large scale on the blackboard by means of the sheet that had previously been prepared. It is **extremely important** that only the names of the **vowels** are given to the students and **never** the names of the **consonants**. The consonants will be associated with onomatopoeic sounds.

3. Onomatopoeic association.

The Audiovisual Method associates sounds onomatopoeically that the students imitate and come to know; for example, the **a** will be the letter for the hen (*gallina, cacaracá*); the letter **u** for the owl (*buho, uuuu!*); the letter **n** for nose, etc.

4. Gestures.

The Audiovisual method uses the entire body and not just the parts that have to do with hearing. The Guinean child is especially noted for rhythm and movement. There are many gestures used by the Method in order to facilitate and fix the learning of phonemes:

- in the beginning the organs used involve those that deal with hearing;
- positions and manners indicate and point out the place and the method of articulation;
- by means of mime and rhythm, the phoneme makes its entrance in an animated scene...

During this activity the teacher must actually become a child along with the children, feel as they feel, live in their world of creative imagination...

5. The reproduction of the sound with the students.

This is the **fundamental** moment in the Audiovisual Method. The effectiveness of the method depends on its correct use.

Articulated human sounds distinguish themselves from one another in two ways: the point and the mode of articulation. It is extremely important that the children, from the very beginning, are able to distinguish precisely how and where the organs are located for the pronunciation of each phoneme. I agree with the pedagogue Tobias Corredera when he writes: "When a child is learning a language, he will not speak correctly if s/he does not know where (the point of articulation) or how (the mode of articulation) to locate the

articulatory organs; s/he does not know the effort that should be made nor is the child capable of measuring the force of air."

– In the Guide some phases are pointed out:

a/ The teacher puts his/her own sound organs in the correct position for the sound that is being studied and should not be afraid to exaggerate in order to make a point in front of the students...because we often articulate poorly.

b/ The teacher invites the students to follow suit and to imitate the teacher by putting her/his sound organs in the correct position. The teacher observes each student one by one and corrects those who follow. The teacher should **NOT** be in a hurry with this exercise because it is extremely important. The students must realize the exact point where they should put their sound organs. The Guide has a sketch for each phoneme.

c/ To initiate the students in the mode of articulation, the teacher invites the students to pronounce along with him/her one word that begins with the sound under study but without putting any vowel after the sound. This exercise is difficult for some phonemes.

d/ The teacher warns the students to observe where and how air comes out from that sound and how the sound organs vibrate.

(The limitation of this paper does not permit us to expand on this point, which would be necessary).

6. Singing.

The Guinean child has an enormous capacity for singing. All the phonemes are accompanied by a song that has the following characteristics: a short African rhythm composed by a native; the text is alliterated with the sound being studied. In a word, the songs are easy to understand and they give themselves to miming and the sound is therefore reproduced.

7. Staging.

The teacher's creativity really shines forth here. The Teacher's Guide suggests various activities: the living letter, the living word, song representation... onomatopoeic representation...and many other interesting ones that can be made up by the teacher.

8. Dramatization.

The cycle of activities for phoneme learning ends with this phase of instructional activity. Possible themes for this dramatization are varied: the Teacher's Guide narration, the element or animal that gave rise to the onomatopoeic activities, song lyrics, the combination of all these, etc... The important thing is that the students become involved in whatever activity is selected.

9. Review.

Repetition cements the knowledge and gives confidence; the Audiovisual Method offers to the teachers frequent reviews with varied and pleasant activities. The teacher

should not be in a hurry: we already noted above that with the learning of the five vowels and the first consonant the child can already read with meaning. It is up to the teacher to augment the texts in a progressive way.

Characteristics of the Audiovisual Method.

1. With the knowledge of the five vowels and **n** as the first consonant suggested by the Audiovisual Method, the children already can read sentences with meaning. The progressive knowledge of the consonants will complete and bring about the reading of more complicated sentences and readings.

2. Beginning with the sixth phoneme, the children can do exercises in a book other than their reader, using a method similar to the Audiovisual Method. When they do this the children become very optimistic and they feel important.

3. The Audiovisual Method fosters a spirit of teamwork in the children, since the learning activities, as well as the review and more stable activities, presuppose the participation and the collaboration of all the students.

4. The Audiovisual Method permits the teachers, as well as the students, to exercise creativity and originality. The Teacher's Guide suggests some activities, but it leaves the door open for many others.

5. The Audiovisual Method is progressive and it always moves from what is known to what is unknown. Nothing is ever presumed before it is studied.

6. The Audiovisual Method is extremely active and participatory: not even one student should remain outside of the game activities.

7. The Audiovisual Method requires little support material, which is an important element for a country in which economic resources are scarce.

8. The authority of the famous phonetician D. Antonio Quilis, well known in the Spanish-speaking world, endorses the Audiovisual Method with these words: "The Audiovisual Method, a mixture of a semiotic triangle and a phono stylistic function, is very interesting: the combination of a motivating image for a phoneme by means of the word, music as a vehicle of expression, and of a systematic, almost geometric, entry into reading as a graphical representation, makes this book an instrument that will permit the rapid and easy assimilation of codifying and uncoding procedures that grow out of the learning system of writing and reading." (From the Prologue of the Audiovisual Method).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL (not for sale):

1. The reader ANA AND THE BOY READ , 87 pages.
2. The METHOD GUIDE, 127 pages.
3. First reader, THE ETUGU FAMILY, 62 pages.
4. SONG cassette, edited by UNED, Madrid.
5. Radio cassettes, edited by Radio Africa 2000, Malabo.
6. A video, recorded by Guinean Television, Malabo.

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