4 The Audiolingual Method (from Richards & Rodgers, 1986)

- The Coleman Report in 1929 recommended a reading-based approach to foreign language teaching for use in American schools and colleges.
- This emphasized teaching the comprehension of texts. Teachers taught from books containing short reading passages in the foreign language, preceded by lists of vocabulary.
- Rapid silent reading was the goal, but in practice teachers often resorted to discussing the content of the passage in English.
- Those involved in the teaching of English as a second language in the United States between the two world wars used either a modified Direct Method approach, a reading-based approach, or a reading-oral approach (Darian 1972).
- Unlike the approach that was being developed by British applied linguists during the same period, there was little attempt to treat language content systematically.
- Sentence patterns and grammar were introduced at the whim of the textbook writer.
- There was no standardization of the vocabulary or grammar that was included. Neither was there a consensus on what grammar, sentence patterns, and vocabulary were most important for beginning, intermediate, or advanced learners.
- But the entry of the United States into World War II had a significant effect on language teaching in America. To supply the U.S. government with personnel who were fluent in German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Malay, and other languages, and who could work as interpreters, code-room assistants, and translators, it was necessary to set up a special language training program.
- The government commissioned American universities to develop foreign language programs for military personnel. Thus the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was established in 1942. Fifty-five American universities were involved in the program by the beginning of 1943.
- The objective of the army programs was for students to attain conversational proficiency in a variety of foreign languages. Since this was not the goal of conventional foreign language courses in the United States, new approaches were necessary.
- Linguists, such as Leonard Bloomfield at Yale, had already developed training programs as part of their linguistic research that were designed to give linguists and anthropologists mastery of American Indian languages and other languages they were studying. Textbooks did not exist for such languages.
- The technique Bloomfield and his colleagues used was sometimes known as the "informant method," since it used a native speaker of the language - the informant - who served as a source of phrases and vocabulary and who provided sentences for imitation, and a linguist, who supervised the learning experience.
- Students in such courses studied ten hours a day, six days a week. There were generally fifteen hours of drill with native speakers and twenty to thirty hours of private study spread over two to three six-week sessions. This was the system adopted by the army, and in small classes of mature and highly motivated students, excellent results were often achieved.
- The Army Specialized Training Program lasted only about two years but attracted considerable attention in the popular press and in the academic community. For the next ten years the "Army Method" and its suitability for use in regular language programs was discussed.

- The "methodology" of the Army Method, like the Direct Method, derived from the intensity of contact with the target language rather than from any well-developed methodological basis. It was a program innovative mainly in terms of the procedures used and the intensity of teaching rather than in terms of its underlying theory. However, it did convince a number of prominent linguists of the value of an intensive, oral-based approach to the learning of a foreign language.
- There was a growing demand for foreign expertise in the teaching of English. Thousands of foreign students entered the United States to study in universities, and many of these students required training in English before they could begin their studies. These factors led to the emergence of the American approach to ESL, which by the mid-fifties had become Audiolingualism.
- In 1939 the University of Michigan developed the first English Language Institute in the United States; it specialized in the training of teachers of English as a foreign language and in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Charles Fries, director of the institute, was trained in structural linguistics, and he applied the principles of structural linguistics to language teaching.
- Fries and his colleagues rejected approaches like those of the Direct Method, in which learners are exposed to the language, use it, and gradually absorb its grammatical patterns. For Fries, grammar, or "structure," was the starting point:
    - The structure of the language was identified with its basic sentence patterns and grammatical structures.
    - The language was taught by systematic attention to pronunciation and by intensive oral drilling of its basic sentence patterns.
    - Pattern practice was a basic classroom technique. "It is these basic patterns that constitute the learner's task. They require drill, drill, and more drill, and only enough vocabulary to make such drills possible" (Hockett 1959).
- Like Michigan, a number of other similar programs were established, some of the earliest being at Georgetown University and American University, Washington, D.C., and at the University of Texas, Austin. U.S. linguists were becoming increasingly active, both within the United States and abroad, in supervising programs for the teaching of English (Moulton 1961). In 1950 the American Council of Learned Societies, under contract to the U.S. State Department, was commissioned to develop textbooks for teaching English to speakers of a wide number of foreign languages.
- The format the linguists involved in this project followed was known as the "general form": A lesson began with work on pronunciation, morphology, and grammar, followed by drills and exercises. The guidelines were published as *Structural Notes and Corpus: A Basis for the Preparation of Materials to Teach • English as a Foreign Language* (American Council of Learned Societies 1952). This became an influential document and together with the "general form" was used as a guide to developing English courses for speakers of ten different languages (the famous *Spoken Language* series), published between 1953 and 1956 (Moulton 1961).
- In many ways the methodology used by U.S. linguists and language teaching experts at this period sounded similar to the British Oral Approach, although the two traditions developed independently.
- The American approach differed, however, in its strong alliance with American structural linguistics and its applied linguistic applications, particularly contrastive analysis.
- Fries set forth his principles in *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945),

in which the problems of learning a foreign language were attributed to the conflict of different structural systems (i.e., differences between the grammatical and phonological patterns of the native tongue and the target language).

- Contrastive analysis of the two languages would allow potential problems of interference to be predicted and addressed through carefully prepared teaching materials. Thus was born a major industry in American applied linguistics - systematic comparisons of English with other languages, with a view toward solving the fundamental problems of foreign language learning.

- The approach developed by linguists at Michigan and other universities became known variously as the Oral Approach, the Aural-Oral Approach, and the Structural Approach, it advocated aural training first, then pronunciation training, followed by speaking, reading, and writing.

- Language was identified with speech, and speech was approached through structure. This approach influenced the way languages were taught in the United States throughout the fifties.

- As an approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language the new orthodoxy was promoted through the University of Michigan's journal *Language Learning.*

- This was a period when expertise in linguistics was regarded as a necessary and sufficient foundation for expertise in language teaching. Not surprisingly, the classroom materials produced by Fries and linguists at Yale, Cornell, and elsewhere evidenced considerable linguistic analysis but very little pedagogy.

- They were widely used, however, and the applied linguistic principles on which they were based were thought to incorporate the most advanced scientific approach to language teaching. If there was any learning theory underlying the Aural-Oral materials, it was a commonsense application of the idea that practice makes perfect. There is no explicit reference to then-current learning theory in Fries's work.

- It was the incorporation of the linguistic principles of the Aural-Oral approach with state-of-the-art psychological learning theory in the mid-fifties that led to the method that came to be known as Audiolingualism.

- The emergence of the Audiolingual Method resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States toward the end of the 1950s. The need for a radical change and rethinking of foreign language teaching methodology (most of which was still linked to the Reading Method) was prompted by the launching of the first Russian satellite in 1957.

- The U.S. Government acknowledged the need for a more intensive effort to teach foreign languages in order to prevent Americans from becoming isolated from scientific advances made in other countries.

- The National Defense Education Act (1958), among other measures, provided funds for the study and analysis of modern languages, for the development of teaching materials, and for the training of teachers.

- Teachers were encouraged to attend summer institutes to improve their knowledge of foreign languages and to learn the principles of linguistics and the new linguistically based teaching methods.

- Language teaching specialists set about developing a method that was applicable to conditions in U.S. colleges and university classrooms. They drew on the earlier experience of the army programs and the Aural-Oral or Structural Approach developed by Fries and his colleagues, adding insights taken from behaviorist psychology. This combination of

structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures, and behaviorist psychology led to the Audiolingual Method.

- Audiolingualism (the term was coined by Professor Nelson Brooks in 1964) claimed to have transformed language teaching from an art to a science, which would enable learners to achieve mastery of a foreign language effectively and efficiently.

- The method was widely adopted for teaching foreign languages in North American colleges and universities.

- It provided the methodological foundation for materials for the teaching of foreign languages at college and university level in the United States and Canada, and its principles formed the basis of such widely used series as the *Lado English Series* (Lado 1977) and *English 900* (English Language Services 1964). Although the method began to fall from favor in the late sixties, Audiolingualism and materials based on audiolingual principles continue to be widely used today.

Approach

Theory of language

- The theory of language underlying Audiolingualism was derived from a view proposed by American linguists in the 1950s - *structural linguistics.* Structural linguistics had developed in part as a reaction to traditional grammar.

- The reaction against traditional grammar was prompted by the movement toward positivism and empiricism, which Darwin's *Origin of the Species* had helped promote, and by an increased interest in non-European languages on the part of scholars. A more practical interest in language study emerged. As linguists discovered new sound types and new patterns of linguistic invention and organization, a new interest in phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax developed.

- By the 1930s, the scientific approach to the study of language was thought to consist of collecting examples of what speakers said and analyzing them according to different levels of structural organization rather than according to categories of Latin grammar. A sophisticated methodology for collecting and analyzing data developed, which involved transcribing spoken utterances in a language phonetically and later working out the phonemic, morphological (stems, prefixes, suffixes, etc.), and syntactic (phrases, clauses, sentence types) systems underlying the grammar of the language. Language was viewed as a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types.

The term *structural* referred to these characteristics:

    (a) Elements in a language were thought of as being linearly produced in a rule-governed (structured) way.

    (b) Language samples could be exhaustively described at any structural level of description (phonetic, phonemic, morphological, etc.).

    (c) Linguistic levels were thought of as systems within systems - that is, as being pyramidally structured; phonemic systems led to morphemic systems, and these in turn led to the higher-level systems of phrases, clauses, and sentences.

- Learning a language, it was assumed, entails mastering the elements or building blocks of the language and learning the rules by which these elements are combined, from phoneme to morpheme to word to phrase to sentence.

- The phonological system defines those sound elements that contrast meaningfully with

one another in the language (phonemes), their phonetic realizations in specific environments (allophones), and their permissible sequences (phonotactics). The phonological and grammatical systems of the language constitute the organization of language and by implication the units of production and comprehension.

- The grammatical system consists of a listing of grammatical elements and rules for their linear combination into words, phrases, and sentences. Rule-ordered processes involve addition, deletion, and transposition of elements.

- An important tenet of structural linguistics was that the primary medium of language is oral: Speech is language. Since many languages do not have a written form and we learn to speak before we learn to read or write, it was argued that language is "primarily what is spoken and only secondarily what is written" (Brooks 1964).

- Therefore, it was assumed that speech had a priority in language teaching. This was contrary to popular views of the relationship of the spoken and written forms of language, since it had been widely assumed that language existed principally as symbols written on paper, and that spoken language was an imperfect realization of the pure written version.

- This scientific approach to language analysis appeared to offer the foundations for a scientific approach to language teaching.

- In 1961 the American linguist William Moulton, in a report prepared for the 9th International Congress of Linguists, proclaimed the linguistic principles on which language teaching methodology should be based:
  - "Language is speech, not writing **…**
  - A language is a set of habits …
  - Teach the language, not about the language …
  - A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say....
  - Languages are different" (quoted in Rivers 1964: 5).

But a method cannot be based simply on a theory of language. It also needs to refer to the psychology of learning and to learning theory.
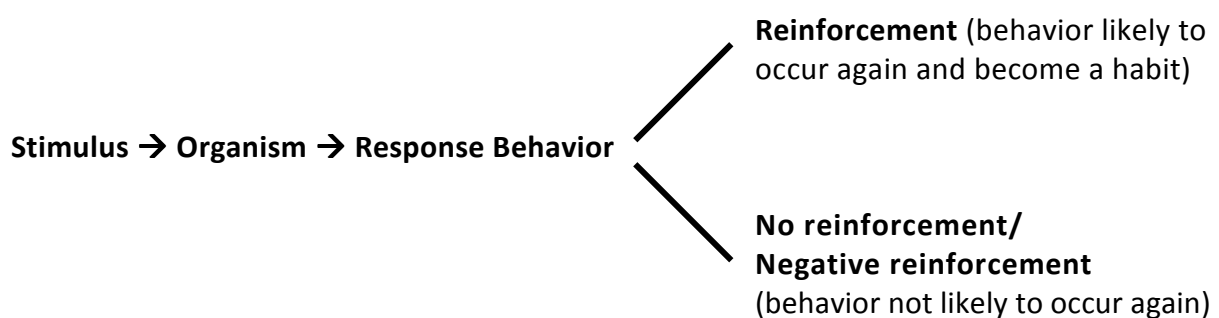
Stimulus → Organism → Response Behavior

Reinforcement (behavior likely to occur again and become a habit)

No reinforcement/ Negative reinforcement (behavior not likely to occur again)

Figure 4.1

Theory of learning

- The language teaching theoreticians and methodologists who developed Audiolingualism not only had a convincing and powerful theory of language to draw upon but they were also working in a period when a prominent school of American psychology - known as behavioral psychology - claimed to have tapped the secrets of all human learning, including language learning.

- Behaviorism, like structural linguistics, is another antimentalist, empirically based approach to the study of human behavior.
- To the behaviorist, the human being is an organism capable of a wide repertoire of behaviors. The occurrence of these behaviors is dependent upon three crucial elements in learning: a *stimulus,* which serves to elicit behavior; a *response* triggered by a stimulus; and *reinforcement,* which serves to mark the response as being appropriate (or inappropriate) and encourages the repetition (or suppression) of the response in the future (see Skinner 1957; Brown 1980). A representation of this can be seen in Figure 4.1. Reinforcement is a vital element in the learning process, because it increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again and eventually become a habit.
- To apply this theory to language learning is to identify the organism as the foreign language learner,
    - the behavior as verbal behavior,
    - the stimulus as what is taught or presented of the foreign language, the response as the learner's reaction to the stimulus, and
    - the reinforcement as the extrinsic approval and praise of the teacher or fellow students or the intrinsic self-satisfaction of target language use.
    - Language mastery is represented as acquiring a set of appropriate language stimulus-response chains.

The descriptive practices of structural linguists suggested a number of hypotheses about language learning, and hence about language teaching as well.

- For example, since linguists normally described languages beginning with the phonological level and finishing with the sentence level, it was assumed that this was also the appropriate sequence for learning and teaching.
- Since speech was now held to be primary and writing secondary, it was assumed that language teaching should focus on mastery of speech and that writing or even written prompts should be withheld until reasonably late in the language learning process.
- Since the structure is what is important and unique about a language, early practice should focus on mastery of phonological and grammatical structures rather than on mastery of vocabulary.

Out of these various influences emerged a number of learning principles, which became the psychological foundations of Audiolingualism and came to shape its methodological practices. Among the more central are the following:

1. Foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes. By memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills the chances of producing mistakes are minimized. Language is verbal behavior - that is, the automatic production and comprehension of utterances - and can be learned by inducing the students to do likewise.
2. Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned in the target language are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form. Aural-oral training is needed to provide the foundation for the development of other language skills.
3. Analogy provides a better foundation for language learning than analysis. Analogy involves the processes of generalization and discrimination. Explanations of rules are therefore not given until students have practiced a pattern in a variety of contexts and are thought to have acquired a perception of the analogies involved. Drills can enable

learners to form correct analogies. Hence the approach to the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive rather than deductive.

4. The meanings that the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Teaching a language thus involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak the language (Rivers 1964: 19-22).

In advocating these principles, proponents of Audiolingualism were drawing on the theory of a well-developed school of American psychology - behaviorism. The prominent Harvard behaviorist B. F. Skinner had elaborated a theory of learning applicable to language learning in his influential book *Verbal Behavior* (1957), in which he stated, "We have no reason to assume … that verbal behavior differs in any fundamental respect from non-verbal behavior, or that any new principles must be invoked to account for it" (1957: 10).

Design

Audiolingualists demanded a complete reorientation of the foreign language curriculum. Like the nineteenth-century reformers, they advocated a return to speech-based instruction with the primary objective of oral proficiency, and dismissed the study of grammar or literature as the goal of foreign language teaching. "A radical transformation is called for, a new orientation of procedures is demanded, and a thorough house cleaning of methods, materials, texts and tests is unavoidable" (Brooks '.1964: 50).

Objectives

- Brooks distinguishes between short-range and long-range objectives of an audiolingual program.
- Short-range objectives include training in listening comprehension, accurate pronunciation, recognition of speech symbols as graphic signs on the printed page, and ability to reproduce these symbols in writing (Brooks 1964: 111). "These immediate objectives imply three others: first, control of the structures of sound, form, and order in the new language; second, acquaintance with vocabulary items that bring content into these structures; and third, meaning, in terms of the significance these verbal symbols have for those who speak the language natively" (Brooks 1964: 113).
- Long-range objectives "must be language as the native speaker uses it.… There must be some knowledge of a second language as it is possessed by a true bilingualist" (Brooks 1964: 107).
- In practice this means that the focus in the early stages is on oral skills, with gradual links to other skills as learning develops. Oral proficiency is equated with accurate pronunciation and grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately in speech situations. The teaching of listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are all related to development of oral fluency. Reading and writing skills may be taught, but they are dependent upon prior oral skills. Language is primarily speech in audiolingual theory, but speaking skills are themselves dependent upon the ability to accurately perceive and produce the major phonological features of the target language, fluency in the use of the key grammatical patterns in the language, and knowledge of sufficient vocabulary to use with these patterns.

The syllabus

- Audiolingualism is a linguistic, or structure-based, approach to language teaching.
- The starting point is a linguistic syllabus, which contains the key items of phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language arranged according to their order of presentation.
- These may have been derived in part from a *contrastive analysis* of the differences between the native tongue and the target language, since these differences are thought to be the cause of the major difficulties the learner will encounter.
- In addition, a lexical syllabus of basic vocabulary items is also usually specified in advance. In *Foundations for English Teaching* (Fries and Fries 1961), for example, a corpus of structural and lexical items graded into three levels is proposed, together with suggestions as to the situations that could be used to contextualize them.
- The language skills are taught in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is viewed largely as training in aural discrimination of basic sound patterns.

  > The learner's activities **must** at first be confined to the audiolingual and gestural-visual bands of language behavior....
  >
  > Recognition and discrimination are followed by imitation, repetition and memorization. Only when he is thoroughly familiar with sounds, arrangements, and forms does he center his attention on enlarging his vocabulary ... Throughout he concentrates upon gaining accuracy before striving for fluency. (Brooks 1964: 50)

- When reading and writing are introduced, students are taught to read and write what they have already learned to say orally. An attempt is made to minimize the possibilities for making mistakes both in speaking and writing by using a tightly structured approach to the presentation of new language items. At more advanced levels, more complex reading and writing tasks may be introduced.

Types of learning and teaching activities

- Dialogues and drills form the basis of audiolingual classroom practices. Dialogues provide the means of contextualizing key structures and illustrate situations in which structures might be used as well as some cultural aspects of the target language. Dialogues are used for repetition and memorization.
- Correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are emphasized. After a dialogue has been presented and memorized, specific grammatical patterns in the dialogue are selected and become the locus of various kinds of drill and pattern-practice exercises.
- The use of drills and pattern practice is a distinctive feature of the Audiolingual Method. Various kinds of drills are used. Brooks (1964: 156-161) includes the following:

1. **Repetition.** The student repeats an utterance aloud as soon as he has heard it. He does this without looking at a printed text. The utterance must be brief enough to be retained by the ear. Sound is as important as form and order.
   EXAMPLE.
   This is the seventh month. —This is the seventh month.
   After a student has repeated an utterance, he may repeat it again and add a few words, then repeat that whole utterance and add more words.
   EXAMPLES.
   1 used to know him. — I used to know him.
   I used to know him *years ago.* — I used to know him *years ago when we were in school....*

2. *Inflection.* One word in an utterance appears in another form when repeated.
EXAMPLES.
I bought the *ticket.* — I bought the *tickets.*
He bought the candy. — *She* bought the candy.
I called the young *man.* — I called the young *men …*

3. *Replacement.* One word in an utterance is replaced by another.
EXAMPLES.
He bought this *house* cheap. — He bought *it* cheap.
Helen left early — *She* left early.
They gave their *boss* a watch. — They gave *him* a watch

4. *Re-statement.* The student rephrases an utterance and addresses it to someone else, according to instructions.
EXAMPLES.
Tell him to wait for you. — Wait for me.
Ask her how old she is. — How old are you?
Ask John when he began. — John, when did you begin? ...

5. *Completion.* The student hears an utterance that is complete except for one word, then repeats the utterance in completed form.
EXAMPLES.
I'll go my way and you go ... — I'll go my way and you go *yours.*
We all have ... own troubles. — We all have *our* own troubles ...

6. *Transposition.* A change in word order is necessary when a word is added.
EXAMPLES.
I'm hungry, (so). — So *am* I.
I'll never do it again, (neither). —Neither *will* I

7. *Expansion.* When a word is added it takes a certain place in the sequence.
EXAMPLES.
I know him. (hardly). — I *hardly* know him.
I know him. (well). — I know him *well--*

8. *Contraction.* A single word stands for a phrase or clause.
EXAMPLES.
Put your hand *on the table.* — Put your hand *there.*
They believe *that the earth is flat.* — They believe *it …*

9. *Transformation.* A sentence is transformed by being made negative or interrogative or through changes in tense, mood, voice, aspect, or modality.
EXAMPLES.
He knows my address. / He doesn't know my address. / Does he know my address?
He used to know my address. / If he had known my address.

10. *Integration.* Two separate utterances are integrated into one.
EXAMPLES.
They must be honest. This is important, — it is important that they be honest.
I know that man. He is looking for you. — I know the man who is looking for you …

11. *Rejoinder.* The student makes an appropriate rejoinder to a given utterance. He is told in advance to respond in one of the following ways:
Be polite. / Answer the question. / Agree. / Agree emphatically. / Express surprise. / Express regret.
Disagree. / Disagree emphatically. / Question what is said. / Fail to understand.
BE POLITE. EXAMPLES.
Thank you. — You're welcome.
May I take one? — Certainly.
ANSWER THE QUESTION.   EXAMPLES.
What is your name? — My name is Smith.
Where did it happen? — In the middle of the street.
AGREE.   EXAMPLES.
He's following us. — I think you're right.
This is good coffee. — It's very good.

12. ***Restoration.*** The student is given a sequence of words that have been culled from a sentence but still bear its basic meaning. He uses these words with a minimum of changes and additions to restore the sentence to its original form. He may he told whether the time is present, past, or future.
EXAMPLES.
students/waiting/bus — The students are waiting for the bus.
boys/build/house/tree — The boys built a house in a tree …

Learner roles

- Learners are viewed as organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses.
- In accordance with behaviorist learning theory, teaching focuses on the external manifestations of learning rather than on the internal processes.
- Learners play a reactive role by responding to stimuli, and thus have little control over the content, pace, or style of learning. They are not encouraged to initiate interaction, because this may lead to mistakes.
- The fact that in the early stages learners do not always understand the meaning of what they are repeating is not perceived as a drawback, for by listening to the teacher, imitating accurately, and responding to and performing controlled tasks they are learning a new form of verbal behavior.

Teacher roles

In Audiolingualism, as in Situational Language Teaching, the teacher's role is central and active; it is a teacher-dominated method. The teacher models the target language, controls the direction and pace of learning, and monitors and corrects the learners' performance. The teacher must keep the learners attentive by varying drills and tasks and choosing relevant situations to practice structures. Language learning is seen to result from active verbal interaction between the teacher and the learners. Failure to learn results only from the improper application of the method, for example, from the teacher not providing sufficient practice or from the learner not memorizing the essential patterns and structures; but the method itself is never to blame. Brooks argues that the teacher must be trained to do the following:

- Introduce, sustain, and harmonize the learning of the four skills in this order: hearing, speaking, reading and writing,
- Use and not use - English in the language classroom.
- Model the various types of language behavior that the student is to learn. Teach spoken language in dialogue form. Direct choral response by all or pnm of the class. Teach the use of structure through pattern practice. Guide the student m choosing and learning vocabulary. Show how words relate to meaning in the target language. Get the individual student to talk.
- Reward trials by the student in such a way that learning is reinforced. Teach a short story and other literary forms. Establish and maintain a cultural island.
- Formalize on the first day the rules according to which the language class is to be conducted, and enforce them.

(Brooks 1964: 143)

The role of instructional materials

- Instructional materials in the Audiolingual Method assist the teacher to develop language mastery in the learner. They are primarily teacher oriented.
- A student textbook is often **not** used in the elementary phases of a course where students are primarily listening, repeating, and responding.
- At this stage in learning, exposure to the printed word may not be considered desirable,

because it distracts attention from the aural input. The teacher, however, will have access to a teacher's book that contains the structured sequence of lessons to be followed and the dialogues, drills, and other practice activities. When textbooks and printed materials are introduced to the student, they provide the texts of dialogues and cues needed for drills and exercises.

- Tape recorders and audiovisual equipment often have central roles in an audiolingual course. If the teacher is not a native speaker of the target language, the tape recorder provides accurate models for dialogues and drills.

- A language laboratory may also be considered essential. It provides the opportunity for further drill work and to receive controlled error-free practice of basic structures. It also adds variety by providing an alternative to classroom practice.

- A taped lesson may first present a dialogue for listening practice, allow for the student to repeat the sentences in the dialogue line by line, and provide follow-up fluency drills on grammar or pronunciation.

Procedure

- Since Audiolingualism is primarily an oral approach to language teaching, it is not surprising that the process of teaching involves extensive oral instruction. The focus of instruction is on immediate and accurate speech; there is little provision for grammatical explanation or talking about the language. As far as possible, the target language is used as the medium of instruction, and translation or use of the native tongue is discouraged.

- Classes of ten or less are considered optimal, although larger classes are often the norm.

- Brooks lists the following procedures the teacher should adopt in using the Audiolingual Method:
    - The modeling of all learnings by the teacher.
    - The subordination of the mother tongue to the second language by rendering English inactive while the new language is being learned.
    - The early and continued training of the ear and tongue without recourse to graphic symbols.
    - The learning of structure through the practice of patterns of sound, order, and form, rather than by explanation.
    - The gradual substitution of graphic symbols for sounds, after sounds are thoroughly known.
    - The summarizing of the main principles of structure for the student's use when the structures are already familiar, especially when they differ from those of the mother tongue....
    - The shortening of the time span between a performance and the pronouncement of its rightness or wrongness, without interrupting the response. This enhances the factor of. reinforcement in learning.
    - The minimizing of vocabulary until all common structures have been learned.
    - The study of vocabulary only in context.
    - Sustained practice in the use of the language only in the molecular form of speaker-hearer-situation.
    - Practice in translation only as a literary exercise at an advanced level.

(Brooks 1964: 142)

In a typical **audiolingual** lesson the following, procedures would be observed:
1. Students first hear a model dialogue (either read by the teacher or on tape) containing the key structures that are the focus of the lesson. They repeat each line of the dialogue, individually and in chorus. The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Correction of mistakes of pronunciation or grammar is direct and immediate. The dialogue is memorized gradually, line by line. A line may be broken down into several phrases if necessary. The dialogue is read aloud in chorus, one half saying one speaker's part and the other half responding. The students do not

consult their book throughout this phase.

2. The dialogue is adapted to the students' interest or situation, through changing certain key words or phrases. This is acted out by the students.
3. Certain key structures from the dialogue are selected and used as the basis for pattern drills of different kinds. These are first practiced in chorus and then individually. Some grammatical explanation may be offered at this point, but tins is kept to an absolute minimum,
4. The students may refer to their textbook, and follow-up reading, writing, or vocabulary activities based on the dialogue may be introduced. At the beginning level, writing is purely imitative and consists of little more than copying out sentences that have been practiced. As proficiency increases, students may write out variations of structural items they have practiced or write short compositions on given topics with the help of framing questions, which will guide their use of the language.
5. Follow-up activities may take place in the language laboratory, where further dialogue and drill work is carried out.

The decline of Audiolingualism

Audiolingualism reached its period of most widespread use in the 1960s and was applied both to the teaching of foreign languages in the United States and to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. It led to such widely used courses as *English* 900 and the *Lado English Series,* as well as to texts for teaching the major European languages. Audiolingualism was criticized on two fronts.

- On the one hand, the theoretical foundations of Audiolingualism were attacked as being unsound both in terms of language theory and learning theory.

- On the other, practitioners found that the practical results fell short of expectations. Students were often found to be unable to transfer skills acquired through Audiolingualism to real communication outside the classroom, and many found the experience of studying through audiolingual procedures to be boring and unsatisfying.

- The theoretical attack on audiolingual beliefs resulted from changes in American linguistic theory in the sixties. The MIT linguist Noam Chomsky rejected the structuralist approach to language description as well as the behaviorist theory of language learning. "Language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy" (Chomsky 1966: 153).

- Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar proposed that the fundamental properties of language derive from innate aspects of the mind and from how humans process experience through language. His theories were to revolutionize American linguistics and focus the attention of linguists and psychologists on the mental properties people bring to bear on language use and language learning. Chomsky also proposed an alternative theory of language learning to that of the behaviorists. Behaviorism regarded language learning as similar in principle to any other kind of learning. It was subject to the same laws of stimulus and response, reinforcement and association. Chomsky argued that such a learning theory could not possibly serve as a model of how humans learn language, since much of human language use is not imitated behavior but is created anew from underlying knowledge of abstract rules. Sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition but "generated" from the learner's underlying "competence."

Suddenly the whole audiolingual paradigm was called into question: pattern practice, drilling, memorization. These might lead to language-like behaviors, but they were not resulting in competence. This created a crisis in American language teaching circles from

which a full recovery has not yet been made. Temporary relief was offered in the form of a theory derived in part from Chomsky - cognitive code learning. In 1966 John B. Carroll, a psychologist who had taken a close interest in foreign language teaching, wrote:

> The audio-lingual habit theory which is so prevalent in American foreign language teaching was, perhaps fifteen years ago in step with the state of psychological thinking of that time, but it is no longer abreast of recent developments. It is ripe for major revision, particularly in the direction of joining it with some of the better elements of the cognitive-code learning theory. (Carroll 1966: 105)

- This referred to a view of learning that allowed for a conscious focus on grammar and that acknowledged the role of abstract mental processes in learning rather than defining learning simply in terms of habit formation.
- Practice activities should involve meaningful learning and language use. Learners should be encouraged to use their innate and creative abilities to derive and make explicit the underlying grammatical rules of the language. For a time in the early seventies there was a considerable interest in the implication of the cognitive-code theory for language teaching (e.g., see Jakobovits 1970; Lugton 1971). But no clear-cut methodological guidelines emerged, nor did any particular method incorporating this view of learning.
- The term *cognitive code* is still sometimes invoked to refer to any conscious attempt to organize materials around a grammatical syllabus while allowing for meaningful practice and use of language. The lack of an alternative to Audiolingualism in language teaching in the United States has led to a period of adaptation, innovation, experimentation, and some confusion.
- On the one hand are new methods that have been developed independently of current linguistic and second language acquisition theory (e.g., Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Counseling-Learning);
- on the other are competing approaches that are derived, it is claimed, from contemporary theories of language and second language acquisition (e.g., The Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching).

Conclusion
- Audiolingualism holds that language learning is like other forms of learning. Since language is a formal, rule-governed system, it can be formally organized to maximize teaching and learning efficiency.
- Audiolingualism thus stresses the mechanistic aspects of language learning and language use.
- There are many similarities between Situational Language Teaching and Audiolingualism. The order in which the language skills are introduced, and the focus on accuracy through drill and practice in the basic structures and sentence patterns of the target language, might suggest that these methods drew from each other.
- In fact, however, Situational Language Teaching was a development of the earlier Direct Method and does not have the strong ties to linguistics and behavioral psychology that characterize Audiolingualism. The similarities of the two methods reflect similar views about the nature of language and of language learning, though these views were in fact developed from quite-different traditions.