AN ANALYSIS OF THE AUDIO-LINGUAL APPROACH

AS APPLIED TO METHODS OF TEACHING RUSSIAN

by

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ABSTRACT

Problem:

The term *audio-lingual approach* is used to denote a specific peda-
gogical orientation which grew out of language-teaching programmes for
United States military personnel during the Second World War. Its basic
distinction from the traditional approaches is that language is to be
taught as speech rather than as writing and grammar, as a living vehicle
of communication rather than as a fossilized set of printed rules and
paradigms. Language-learning, as defined audio-lingually, involves the
acquisition of skills in speaking and understanding speech, while read-
ing and writing are secondary skills based on the spoken language.

Despite the acknowledged superiority over traditional methods, how-
ever, the new approach has not met with widespread acceptance. Its rad-
ical requirements have brought opposition from grammar-oriented language-
-teachers. Linguists themselves have challenged its effectiveness in
actual classroom experience. Not all textbooks or teaching-methods pur-
ported to be based on the audio-lingual approach apply its principles to
the same degree.

Analysis:

In considering the success of the audio-lingual approach itself we
first examine its basic tenet regarding the primacy of speech and its

claimed significance in the teaching of foreign languages. The specific challenges to this claim (especially those based on the principles of gradation and rate of learning) are then discussed as to their validity and conclusions drawn accordingly. In the next chapter the parallel development of both hearing and speaking skills is considered, together with the problem of interference from the learner's native tongue; contextual factors such as dialect, style, tempo, and vehicle of presentation are also taken into account here. Finally we turn our attention to the actual assimilation of language-material by the learner in the classroom situation. The aim in each case is to determine what factors are essential to or desirable in a successful audio-lingual teaching-method.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of four audio-lingual textbooks for beginning Russian students (Cornyn's *Beginning Russian*, *Modern Russian* by Dawson, Bidwell, and Humesky, *Basic Conversational Russian* by Fairbanks and Leed, and the A-LM *Russian: Level One*) on the basis of the criteria already established in the first part. The analysis covers not only the presentation and assimilation of audio-lingual skills in general, but also some of the individual difficulties involved in the mastery of those skills as far as teaching Russian to English-speaking students is concerned.

Conclusions:

A comprehensive summary in diagram form compares the treatment of different items in the audio-lingual approach by the four teaching-methods discussed. General conclusions are then divided into two parts: a) the recommendation that in audio-lingual methods sufficient attention

be given to the learner's age and degree of literacy, his ability to understand as well as produce fluent speech, and his awareness of the finer points of contrast between the new language and his own; b) conclusions as to how well each of these considerations is treated in the different textbooks. A further final comment is made as to the success with which each of the teaching-methods, from an over-all viewpoint, applies the principles of the audio-lingual approach.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVES. The thesis is divided into two parts:

a) an extensive examination of the audio-lingual[1] approach to the teaching of the active and passive audial skills[2] of a second language with regard to establishing objective criteria for the evaluation of audio-lingual methods;[3]

b) an example of such evaluation embodied in a critical analysis of the presentation and assimilation of audial skills—including individual difficulties involved in the mastery of these skills—as treated in four methods of teaching Russian which are acknowledged to be based on the audio-lingual approach.

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[1] The terms *audio-lingual* and *aural-oral* refer to any approach based primarily on the *audial* aspects of language (i.e. as it is heard and spoken), with only secondary emphasis on the *graphic* aspects, or written representation of language. An essential component of the audio-lingual approach is the imitation of the spontaneous, everyday speech of native speakers, rather than memorization of written rules and paradigms characteristic of the traditional approach, which concentrates on the graphic aspects alone.

[2] The audial and graphic aspects of a language each involve an "active" and a "passive" skill. Graphic skills are writing and reading respectively. Speaking is the active audial skill; for its passive counterpart I shall use the recent term *auding* (cf. Mueller 185), to indicate not just listening, but auditory discrimination and comprehension.

[3] The term *method* is used in this thesis to denote the organization of teaching materials into a unified programme of presentation, i.e., an audio-lingual method consists of the embodiment of the principles of the audio-lingual *approach* into teaching *materials* (textbook, tape-recordings, teaching manual, etc.).

1.2 HYPOTHESES.

1.21 *First hypothesis*. The audial skills of a language are most effectively and efficiently taught by audio-lingual methods which give sufficient consideration to the following important points:

1.211 The age and literacy of the learner and the visual orientation of his educational experience as an asset or a hindrance to audio-lingual learning;

1.212 Parallel development of both active and passive skills with emphasis on the comprehension and production of fluent utterances in normal conversational context;

1.213 The learner's ability to discriminate between closely related sounds of the new language, as well as the interference from similar sounds in his native language.

1.22 *Second hypothesis*. With regard to their procedures for presentation and assimilation of audial skills, including individual difficulties involved in the mastery of these skills, not all audio-lingual methods publicized as such are equally successful in satisfying the criteria outlined in the first hypothesis.

1.3 TEACHING METHODS. Four audio-lingual methods for teaching Russian

are analysed in the second part of this thesis. They are set forth in

the following textbooks and manuals:

> Cornyn, William S., *Beginning Russian* (1961).
>
> Dawson, Clayton L./Bidwell, Charles E./Humesky, Assya,
> *Modern Russian* (2 volumes 1964/65); also *Instructor's
> Manual* (1964).
>
> Fairbanks, Gordon H./Leed, Richard L., *Basic Conversational
> Russian* (1964); also *Teacher's Manual* (1966).
>
> Modern Language Materials Development Center Staff, *A-LM
> Russian: Level One* (1961); also *Teacher's Manual* (1961).

1.4 HISTORICAL ORIENTATION. Although it is mainly during the past

two decades that audio-lingual methods, so-called, have become popu-

lar in North American schools, the roots of an aural-oral basis for

language-instruction reach far back into European history. As early

as 1632 the Czech educator Jan Komenský (Comenius) published his *Di-

dactica magna*, a work which attacked the traditional reading-trans-

lation methods based on grammatical studies of classical Latin and

Greek (cf. Mackey 142, Brooks 138). "Instead of rules, Comenius used

imitation, repetition and plenty of practice in both reading and

speaking" (Mackey 142).

Somewhat more recently (1899), the British linguist Henry Sweet

decreed that "all study of language, whether theoretical or practical,

ought to be based on the spoken language" (Sweet 49). Twenty years

later his colleague Harold Palmer adopted as the first of his nine

language-teaching principles: "The initial preparation of the stu-

dent by the training of his spontaneous capacities for assimilating

the spoken language" (Palmer 1922,131).

The first language-teachers in the United States to adopt an aural-
-oral approach were Gottlieb Heness, a German emigrant, and Dr. Lambert
Sauveur, a colleague from France. The use of the spoken language was
popularized after 1911 when Dr. Max Walter introduced the methods of
the German philologist Viëtor (cf. Méras 35—44). The Coleman report[4]
of 1929 marked a gradual shift of emphasis back to the reading approach,
which was checked to some degree during the Second World War when
trained *speakers* of foreign languages were in great demand. From this
situation grew the audio-lingual approach as it is known today in one
form or another in the United States and other countries: an approach
that includes the teaching of reading and writing, but gives primary
emphasis to the language as it is heard and spoken. It is this ap-
proach, as distinct from the traditional emphasis on the graphic skills
alone, that is subject to our examination in this thesis.

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[4]Prof. Algernon Coleman, *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in
the United States*—see Méras 46—47.

2. AUDIAL AND GRAPHIC SKILLS

2.1 AUDIO-LINGUAL ASSUMPTIONS.

2.11 *Primacy of the spoken language.* Dr. Herman Rapper of the University of Halle once summarized Viëtor's principles in part as follows: "Language consists not of letters but of sounds.... Not through the eye but through the ear the foreign language must come" (Méras 43).

As stated in 1.1, the audio-lingual approach to language-teaching concentrates primarily on the audial skills: it works from the fundamental principle that "a language is first of all a system of sounds for social communication; writing is a secondary derivative system for the recording of spoken language" (Carroll 1063).[1]

One of the facts commonly cited in support of this principle is the manner in which children learn their mother tongue—by hearing and speaking it: it is not until they have achieved a considerable audial command that reading and writing are learned. Several others are mentioned by Nelson Brooks in his *Language and Language Learning* (24—25) —the comparatively short history of the written word and its limited scope until the invention of the printing-press, the large number of unwritten languages even today, and the social and psychological predominance of speech.[2]

In addition to these, Robert A. Hall Jr. (28) points out a physiological factor which is frequently overlooked, namely, silent articula-

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[1]Cf. also Huebener 1965, 27—28.

[2]Cf. also Hall 26.

tion or *sub-vocalization* in reading and writing:

> It is commonly thought that we can read and write in complete
> silence, without any speech taking place. ...but nevertheless,
> inside the brain, the impulses for speech are still being sent
> forth through the nerves, and only the actualization of these
> impulses is being inhibited on the muscular level, as has been
> shown by numerous experiments.[3]

2.12 *The place of the written language.* In spite of its insistence

on the primacy of the spoken language, the audio-lingual approach does

not exclude graphic skills from the teaching programme, nor does it

fail to recognize the important role of reading and writing in the use

of language; it merely assigns them to a secondary position for teach-

ing purposes. This is probably best summarized by Brooks, who distin-

guishes three "bands" of language—gestural-visual, audio-lingual, and

graphic-material:

> The development of this third [graphic-material] band has, as
> everyone knows, completely transformed the life of civilized
> man, but its complete dependence upon the central audio-lingual
> band must never be disregarded.[4]

The proponents of the audio-lingual approach maintain that such a rela-

tionship extends even to the literary and cultural levels of language,

for "it is the spoken which is the real source of the literary language.

.... Every literary language must indeed in its first beginnings be

purely colloquial" (Sweet 49—50).

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[3]Cf. also Palmer 1921,21—22.

[4]Brooks 18. A Russian teacher in one of the ethnic republics of the So-
viet Union offers proof of this dependence (*zavisimost'*) as follows:
"Если сравнить ошибки, которые учащиеся допускают в письме, то эта
зависимость [письменной речи от устной] станет очевидной" (Nikolaeva
25). Cf. also Fisher 42.

2.13 *Significance for teaching.* The primacy of the spoken word has

long been recognized as significant in the teaching of foreign langua-

ges. In 1942 Leonard Bloomfield wrote:

> ...the acquisition of a 'reading knowledge' is greatly delayed
> and...the reader's understanding remains very imperfect unless
> he has some command of actual speech.
> In contrast with this, it is always possible to speak a lan-
> guage without reading conventional printed matter.[5]

This last statement is borne out by the large number of languages that

have no "conventional printed matter", as mentioned in 2.11. But why

should speech facilitate the learning of reading more than the opposite

case?

There are at least two reasons for this relationship. The first is

the physiological influence of speech in the form of sub-vocalization

while reading or writing (see Hall's quotation in 2.11). The second is

to be found in the psychological influence of the writing-system itself:

> Le prestige qu'a acquis la page écrite et le fait que notre en-
> seignement s'appuie sur des textes, nous masque la réalité.
> .... La langue, surtout celle que nous voulons enseigner aux
> débutants, se présente d'abord comme un moyen de communication
> orale. Or, on ne peut pas décrire ce système oral en se référ-
> ant à des normes qui ne concernent que l'écrit.[6]

Brooks points out still another danger in writing-systems:

> This sound-to-writing direction should be implicit throughout
> the initial stages of learning to read and write. .... If
> this procedure is not followed, and the learner is suddenly pre-
> sented with a text he has not already learned, he will obviously
> tend to pronounce the written symbols as he would pronounce them
> in his mother tongue.[7]

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[5]Bloomfield 8. Cf. also Eggert's quotation in Palmer 1921,16.

[6]Capelle 58.

[7]Brooks 165. This would pose a rather interesting problem in the case of

In view of these factors, then—a) that audial skills are not dependent on graphic skills, but vice-versa, and b) that writing-systems, both within themselves and in contrast with each other, may give the learner a distorted picture of language as heard and spoken—it has been adopted as an axiom by the strictest adherents of the audio-lingual approach that *"written work should if possible be excluded from the earlier stages of language-study"* (Palmer 1921,30).

2.14 *Summary.* The basic tenets of the audio-lingual approach treated thus far are as follows:

2.141 Language consists primarily of communication by *sound*; words are but a graphic representation of sound. This conclusion is based on the following factors: a) children learn their mother tongue by hearing and speaking; b) writing is a comparatively recent phenomenon with very limited scope until the invention of the printing-press; c) there are many languages today without a written form; d) speech remains the dominant factor in the individual independent of his graphic abilities; e) no reading or writing occurs without sub-vocalization.

2.142 Although it plays an important role in society, the written language, even that of literature, is entirely dependent on the spoken language.

2.143 Writing systems do not satisfactorily represent speech.

Russian, as some letters of the Cyrillic alphabet shared by the Latin represent totally different sounds from those represented by the same graphs in English. For example, Cyrillic горе /góre/—"sorrow"—might be read as English *rope*, while the classic written example is the Russian verb *поехать* /pajéxat̪/—"to drive".

2.144 It follows from the above premises that only the audial skills of a language should be taught at first.

2.2 CHALLENGES TO AUDIO-LINGUAL ASSUMPTIONS.

2.21 *What is being challenged?* In a recent article on the audio-lingual approach entitled "The Danger of Assumption without Proof" Beverly Bazan (337) warns us that "many of the current assertions cannot claim any status other than that of assumptions". (We have so been calling them in this thesis.) Theodore Huebener (1963,376) reports that "a more sober examination of its [the audio-lingual approach's] basic tenets and day-to-day application of its procedures have revealed that certain basic assumptions were not correct". Most of the maxims discussed thus far in this thesis[8] however—the primacy of speech over writing, the distortions of writing systems—, seem to be supported by provable facts. What assumptions, then, are not correct? What, in fact, is being challenged?

It may be well to point out here that the audio-lingual approach developed, to a large extent, under the watchful guidance of linguistic scientists. Applied linguistics includes the application to language--teaching methods of the discoveries and axioms of the descriptive linguists, who, although they have generally little interest for language--teaching, were in fact among the earliest to make full application of the principle of audial supremacy. And Robert L. Politzer (66) reminds us:

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[8]Summarized in 2.14.

...there is, of course, nothing in linguistic science as such
that tells us that the oral appraoch is the only valid one
[for language-teaching]. It just happens that most linguis-
tic scientists are primarily concerned with language in its
spoken form, or define language as a spoken rather than a
written means of communication. ...the language teacher who
is being advised by the linguistic scientist is merely stating
preferences dictated by his professional background.

In other words, the descriptive branch of linguistics must not be
confused with the application of linguistic theory to language-teaching
methods. The former supplies information in the nature of provable
facts about language itself; the latter infers from these facts certain
assumptions about teaching students how to use a language. Many teach-
ers, however, especially those accustomed to the traditional reading ap-
proach to language-teaching, fail to recognise this distinction and mis-
takenly try to dispute proven facts of language (such as the primacy of
speech over writing, or the inadequacy of writing to give a true pic-
ture of speech). This error is one of the chief causes of misunder-
standing between the applied linguist and the language-teacher.

The real issue under dispute by Bazan, Huebener, and others, is
whether the principle of audial primacy should be followed in *teaching*
a language, i.e., that audial skills should be taught before graphic
ones—*not* whether speech is primary to language itself. It is with
this in mind, then, that we shall examine the individual points of dis-
agreement in the first part of the thesis.

2.22 *Challenge to the primacy of speech in teaching.* As mentioned in
2.11, a fact often referred to as evidence of the primacy of speech is
that children learn their mother tongue essentially through the audial
skills. This is undoubtedly true in the child's early years, but the

high-school or university student who begins to learn a second language

is in quite a different position.

First of all, he is no longer a child, and he has already mastered

his mother tongue. But more important, as a result of visually orien-

ted educational processes he has come to regard reading and writing as

his primary means of learning anything he does not know (cf. Bazan 342).

John Carroll states the problem as follows:

> Fear has been expressed that the presentation of foreign lan-
> guage materials in auditory form may create difficulties for
> "eye-minded" students—"eye-mindedness" being conceived of as
> either a relatively permanent constitutional trait or a result
> of a predominantly visual emphasis in the individual's school
> experiences.[9]

In other words, we find that in the audio-lingual approach the prin-

ciple of audial primacy in language is brought into sharp conflict with

the graphic or visual predominance of our educational system. We have

already considered the basis for the former. Let us now briefly examine

what is involved in the latter.

Two considerations are evident: ease and speed. It takes much

less time to read a text than to listen to the same text in spoken form.

And in the learning situation, it is more practical to give reading as-

signments rather than listening ones. Especially in the post-elementary

stage lack of time and mechanical equipment has forced education to rely

heavily on graphic skills for teaching the student new material of any

kind, and even the classroom lecture is rather overshadowed by black-

boards, wall-charts, and the textbook.

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[9]Carroll 1078. Cf. also Bazan 344-345.

These are two of the reasons behind Rebecca Domar's powerful attack
on audio-lingual methods and her stubborn defence of the traditional
reading approach to teaching Russian. Her basic argument in regard to
ease is as follows:

> Reading is easier than understanding the spoken word of equal
> difficulty, because in reading one can proceed at the speed
> which suits him best, one can re-read that which he did not
> understand at first reading, one can look up unfamiliar words.
> All this is impossible when listening to someone talk. For
> similar reasons writing is easier than speaking.[10]

2.23 *Challenge in gradation of skills*. One of the factors that must be
taken into account in the teaching of any subject or skill is that of
gradation,[11] which Palmer defines as *"passing from the known to the un-
known by easy stages, each of which serves as a preparation for the next"*
(Palmer 1922,67).[12] In support of her contention for a reading basis,
Domar cites as a basic pedagogical principle that "in studying anything
one should begin with the easiest aspect of the subject and gradually
proceed to the more difficult ones" (Domar 11). Palmer as a linguist,
however, evidently had quite a different idea of "easy stages" in mind,

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[10]Domar 11. (Cf. also Sweet 51-52). An article similar in tone to Do-
mar's is Nathan Rosen's "All's Well That Ends Badly" which appeared
in a 1966 issue of the *Slavic and East European Journal*. John Kem-
pers' "response" in a later issue of the same periodical is still
within the confines of the "reading-approach" point of view.

[11]I prefer the term *gradation* to *grading* (which is sometimes used in this
sense) because "it avoids confusion with the grading of language tests
...and with *grading* as a grammatical term" (Mackey 204).

[12]Cf. also Hockett (1950,266), who describes progressive practice as be-
ginning with those items "which are either most *universally* necessary,
or are *easiest*, and going on to more difficult matters".

for a few pages later (1922,70) he writes: "To learn how to read and to
write a language may possibly be easier than to learn how to speak it and
to understand it when spoken, but this has no bearing on the subject of
gradation".

Even in the audio-lingual approach itself there is no evidence to
indicate how long the teaching of reading should be delayed (see Carroll
1078). Most agree there should be *some* audial-only period—for fear that
"the written word, due to the literate condition of the learner, might
lead irrevocably to the incorrect phonological interpretation" (Bazan 343).
However, William Francis Mackey points out:

> In the secondary school...the learner is so letter-bound that a
> long delay between speech and reading may result in the learner's
> forming his own idea of how the language must look in writing and
> in devising his own system of spelling....[13]

Some even advocate the teaching of all four skills simultaneously from the
beginning.[14] Vincenzo Cioffari (313) speaks of the written symbol as
"first of all a dependable reminder of sound" which "serves to recreate
the conditions which produced the correct sound in the first place". "The
written symbol is permanent, and the spoken sound is transitory", he adds.

Sweet (10) recommended phonetic transcription as the most suitable
"reminder", by which one could avoid the dangers of traditional orthogra-
phies (cf. 2.13) and gain the additional advantage of correcting auditory
impressions (cf. 4.23 on phonetic transcription). Bazan (342) goes so far

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[13]Mackey 234. Cf. also Huebener 1963,377.

[14]E.g. Polovnikova (132): "Обучение только устной речи, без одновременной
работы над письмом и над текстом, может привести к тому, что приобре-
тенные учащимся навыки не будут достаточно прочны, так как у них не
будет зрительной опоры".

as to point out evidence why the visual should *precede* the audial:

> In regard to interfering sense stimuli, empirical evidence
> does suggest that...retroactive secondary cues (e.g., hear-
> ing word, then seeing it written) seem to have a greater re-
> tardation effect than proactive cues (e.g. seeing it written,
> then hearing it spoken...).

We find, then, that in spite of the logical reasons for excluding

the graphic aspects in the initial stages of language-teaching, there

seem to be definite arguments for some sort of visual instruction as

well. This becomes even more noticeable when we take account of the

time allotted for a language to be taught, and the resultant speed or

rate at which it is expected to be learned.

2.24 *Challenge in rate of learning*. Once again a conflict arises be-

tween the traditions of education and the principles of applied linguis-

tics. School and university curricula are usually divided into a number

of "subjects", each subject being allotted one or more hours at intervals

during the week. The class-time per subject being very short, reading

and writing assignments are used to give the student the needed extra

contact with each subject.

The audio-lingual approach aims to teach language first of all as a

skill rather than as a subject; it teaches one how to *use* an instrument,

not just facts about it.[15] Facts may be gleaned through reading alone,

but skill in using any instrument is gained mainly through long and con-

stant practice. Not only does this mean an even greater number of con-

tact-hours than in other studies, but, because of the nature of the study,

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[15]Cf. Strevens 1963,12 and Palmer 1922,140. The analogy of a musical in-
    strument is well developed in Hockett 1950,266–267.

nearly all the contact must be with the teacher himself.[16]

But most schools and universities, even those equipped with language-
-laboratories, are reluctant to make the radical time-table changes neces-
sary to provide the numbers of teachers and hours which would be required
to achieve any audial mastery of a second language by the learner.[17]

Compensation is recommended in the grade-schools by extending the
number of years of language-study. Huebener recommends at least a six-
-year sequence in junior- and senior-high-school. There is even a move-
ment well underway in the United States (known as *FLES*) to promote the
teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school (see Brooks 114–119).

It was reported that the long period of study, however, caused a
marked *decline in interest* among the students of one school-system and
so led the administrators to cancel the FLES programme altogether (see
Page, 139–141). This might possibly have been due to other factors, how-
ever, although the situation was investigated with some thoroughness. In
another FLES experiment there was evidence that "the introduction of read-
ing in the upper grades [third to sixth], after a foundation of oral-aural
work, increases the efficiency of learning" (McRill 367–368).

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[16]Cf. Hockett (1950,267): "The beginner at a new language does *not* know
in advance what the language sounds like, and so the bulk of his prac-
tice, for a very long time, must be carried on in the presence of a
native speaker who can check on his production". O'Connor and Twadell
(5) make the observation that "a model utterance can be imitated and
repeated orally far oftener than in writing".

[17]Cf. Gilbert (65): "We are all agreed in theory that the aims of lan-
guage teaching in this country [U.K.] are to train the child to hear,
speak, read and write the language. In practice, however, the first
two of these aims are often abandoned after the first year, or even
earlier".

In a university situation, where the whole educational programme is limited to three or four years, naturally it is impossible to compensate for time-table difficulties by extending the period of study. Here too —at least in the humanities, under which language-instruction is usually classified—the emphasis is even more predominantly on the acquisition of scholarly knowledge rather than practical skills, and many students spend only enough time studying a language in order to meet administrative requirements. Domar (12) states the case bluntly from the pedagogical point of view:

> ...the great majority of students are unable and/or unwilling to devote more than two years to the study of Russian, and two years of college [university] Russian are not enough to learn to speak the language. During these two years, Russian is one of four, five, or even six courses which the student is carrying, often along with a part-time job, and therefore he cannot devote much time and effort to it.

From this and other reasons she concludes (13) that "reading should be the main objective of the first two years of the study of Russian" and thus a reading approach should be adopted.

A reading-course in a language indeed fits more easily into the literary atmosphere of a humanities-faculty than instruction in the "mere" skills of hearing and speaking (which has no doubt contributed to the former's popularity through the years). With this firm visual base, a little audial activity is easily added without being conspicuous. Domar also insists (13) that students "should be taught correct pronunciation from the very first meeting of the class, and there should be some conversation in Russian to enliven the class procedure". Such an achievement applied linguists regard as generally impossible without strong em-

phasis on the development of audial skills to the virtual exclusion of reading, especially if "correct pronunciation" is to include the more complex features of stress- and intonation-patterns such as one would use in normal conversation (cf. 3.13, 3.14). It is a well-known fact that real "conversation" cannot be produced merely on the basis of reading, or learning how to pronounce words, and "correct pronunciation" is far from attainable without much repeated practice in both auding and speaking, usually at the temporary expense of graphic facility. In informal conversation groups conducted for students studying Russian by a "reading" approach, the author noticed that significant sound features not found in English, especially palatalization of consonants (cf. 4.12, 6.22), were rarely distinguished with accuracy, as there had been little attention given to audial exercise in the classroom.

2.25 *Answer to challenges.* The best answer to reading enthusiasts like Domar and Rosen is probably given in Charles F. Hockett's article "Learning Pronunciation" (1950). The reason we read our own language with ease, it is brought out, is that reading simply involves associating the written symbols with familiar speech sounds, which in turn give us the meaning intended. Naturally this cannot apply if we do not know what sounds the symbols represent:

> Now if we approach a foreign language in its written form,
> with no advance knowledge and control of its spoken form,
> and try to train ourselves to interpret the strings of
> graphic shapes directly into meanings, we are trying some-
> thing which is completely alien to the structure and ca-
> pacities of the human nervous system. .... The only ef-
> ficient way, in the long run, to put oneself in the position
> to read with maximum understanding...material written in

some foreign language, is to get at least an elementary con-
trol of the spoken form of that language first.[18]

The only exception, according to Hockett, is material of a scientific

or technical nature, which lends itself to ready translation into one's

native tongue. Literature is not so easily translatable, however, and

"literary material must be received by the student in the acoustic shape

in which it was originally cast, or some literary values will be lost"

(Hockett 1950,264).[19] This corresponds with the following observation by

Peter Strevens:

> A reading knowledge *can* be taught in this way [without audial
> skills] but there is no evidence that teaching it thus is more
> rapid or effective, and a strong body of opinion exists which
> says that even if the spoken language is quickly abandoned, it is
> highly desirable to have passed through an 'oral-only' stage, and
> then subsequently made the conversion from spoken to written.[20]

2.26 *Summary.* Challenges to the audio-lingual assumptions hitherto dis-

cussed may be summarized as follows:

2.261 The conflict lies, not in the information supplied by the descrip-

tive linguist as to the primacy of speech over writing, etc., but in the

application of this information to language-teaching methods.

2.262 The audial emphasis of the audio-lingual approach conflicts with

the graphic or visual orientation of the school-system.

2.263 Although the applied linguist advocates temporary exclusion of

graphic skills, the pedagogical rule of gradation recommends their use

at least as a support.

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[18]Hockett 1950,263.

[19]Cf. also Sweet's quotation in 2.12.

[20]Strevens 1964b,30.

2.264 Grade-school language-programmes can supply the extra time needed for audio-lingual teaching by increasing the number of years of language--study, but this has not proved satisfactory in every case. Reading methods advocated for universities where a long period of study is impossible cannot effectively teach audial skills from a visual basis, nor can they succeed in teaching reading itself with the fullest possible benefit to the learner.

3. ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SKILLS

3.1 AUDING AND SPEAKING.

3.11 *Differences between native and target language.*[1] "Every year millions of people start learning a second language", writes Mackey (107), "but very few succeed in mastering it". "Why is this so?" he asks.

In 2.22 it was shown that the position of the second-language learner cannot be equated with that of the child learning his mother tongue. The high-school or university student has already learned his first language, we observed, and through his educational experience has been rather strongly influenced by its visual representation; hence he finds difficulty in learning aurally.

Familiarity with the graphic representation of one's native tongue is not the only obstacle to one's mastery of a second, however. As Hockett (1950,265) explains, "the first source of difficulty is the habits we already have for pronouncing our own language".[2]

From the discoveries of linguistic scientists we have learned that underlying each spoken language is a unique set of patterns or *habits* (see Brooks 49). In fact, the discovery of this vital problem, and proposed solutions to it, probably constitutes the greatest contribution of the applied linguists to the improvement of language-teaching methods.[3]

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[1]*Target language* is a term frequently used by applied linguists to indicate the language being learned, as opposed to the learner's native tongue.

[2]Cf. also Mackey 107—108.

[3]Contrastive analysis (see 4.22) is heralded by Guy Capelle (59) as "une des idées les plus productives de la linguistique moderne".

Since no two languages have identical sets of habits, it is evident that
the learner's "thoroughly ingrained habits for his own language...may
partly help, but will also partly interfere with, the habits to be ac-
quired for the new language" (Hockett 1950,266).[4]

"The sounds, constructions, and meanings of different languages are
not the same: to get an easy command of a foreign language one must
learn to ignore the features of any and all other languages, especially
of one's own", we read on the first page of Bloomfield's *Outline Guide
for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages* (cf. also Palmer 1922,43).
In practice, however, it has been found more difficult to eliminate bad
habits than to learn good ones (cf. Benson 78), as the Soviet educator
A.A. Reformatskij explains:

> Да, отучиться от своего [языка] труднее, чем выучиться чужому.
> И это — следствие несовпадения фонетических систем разных язы-
> ков, а не <сходства> или <различия> отдельных изолированных
> звуков.[5]

The problem of native-language interference is first encountered in
the training of the learner's "auding" habits. As Palmer (1922,130) no-
ted, "if his ear-training is neglected during the elementary stage, he
will replace foreign sounds by native ones and insert intrusive sounds
into the words of the language he is learning". Carroll (1069–1070) lists
as the first of four phonological problems that of *discrimination*—"i.e.,
hearing the difference between phonemes which are not distinguished or

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[4]Cf. also Mackey 109.

[5]Reformatskij 6. Cf. also Brooks (56–57): "What [the learner] does not
know is that the sound-system and the structural system of the new lan-
guage are different in nearly every detail from those in his mother
tongue".

used in one's native language". The real importance of auditory discrimination will be discussed in 3.12.

The eventual consequence of neglect of handling native-language interference——assuming that the learner continues with the language for a number of years——will be what is known as *compound bilingualism*, in which "certain features of a second language...are added to a learner's mother tongue but are not separated from it" (Brooks 267) and "the mother tongue ...continues to accompany——and of course to dominate——the whole complex fabric of language behavior" (Brooks 49; cf. also Fishman 128 and Carroll 1085–1086). This is distinct from *co-ordinate* bilingualism, where the speaker can make both languages function independently of each other. The latter is the only real basis for *speaking* the language and is the goal of the audio-lingual approach. Compound bilingualism, in which "two languages constitute simply two different ways of encoding the same set of referential meanings" (Carroll 1085), involves constant translation from and into the learner's native tongue and is generally adopted as the aim of the reading approach.

3.12 *The importance of auditory comprehension.* The greatest problem for a traveller in a foreign country, according to Wilga M. Rivers, is not his difficulty in speaking the language, but rather "that he cannot understand what is being said to him and around him". "As a result", she adds, "there is no communication and the traveller's speaking skills cannot be exercised to great advantage" (Rivers 196).

This is probably all too true. The author recalls similar complaints from travellers who had been given ample instruction in "correct pronunci-

ation", but with little or no training in comprehension of fluent utter-
ances; he himself at one time found greater difficulty in understanding
native speakers than in being understood by them.[6]

Basic to auditory comprehension is the capacity for auditory *dis-
crimination*, which, as we noticed in 3.11, plays an important linguistic
role in language-learning. It is an accepted fact of language-use that
speaking is dependent on hearing, just as graphic skills depend on audial
ones. This is supported by Hockett's observation (1958,118) on "auditory
feedback", or the hearing of one's own speech, namely that any impairment
of it has an adverse effect on one's ability to articulate sounds correct-
ly. "Do not attempt to obtain a perfect pronunciation at the first les-
son", was François Gouin's advice in teaching the primary skills of a lan-
guage. "Address the ear then, first of all, and principally. .... The
ear is the prime minister of the intelligence".[7] Brooks (110) states:

> Although language sounds originate in the voice-box of the
> throat and are modulated into recognizable speech by move-
> ments in the mouth, it is the ear that dominates the lear-
> ning and use of speech sounds.[8]

Like many prime ministers, however, the organ of the ear has the

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[6]Cf. also Lemieux, who states that "the primary object of teaching pronun-
   ciation is the development of comprehension of the normal speech of the
   foreign native. In communicating with foreign peoples our own pronun-
   ciation is a secondary matter" (Lemieux 135).

[7]Quoted in Méras 42. Brooks (144) justifies this assignment of rank as
   follows: "Emphasis upon hearing should come first [of the audial
   skills], since the ear is the key organ in all speech; it not only
   permits the individual to hear what is said but also controls what he
   says when he acts as speaker".

[8]Cf. also Mueller 185.

least proclivity toward accurate discernment of detail and is probably
the most susceptible to false impression.[9] Palmer brought out what many
psychologists are recognizing today, that we hear what we expect to hear
rather than what is actually said. "There is a great difference", he
says, "between really hearing and merely imagining that one has heard a
sound or a succession of sounds" (Palmer 1922,71).

Yet even methods based on an audial approach to language-study, as
Pierre Léon points out, frequently present the student with a mass of ar-
ticulatory detail for "correct pronunciation" without first training his
ear in accurate distinction of significant sounds, which, we have seen,
directly controls the act of speech production (see Léon 57–62). In such
cases, according to Huebener (1965,37), mastery of auditory comprehension
is considerably retarded. Hence Brooks specifies that the audio-lingual
learner "is to hear much more than he speaks, [and] is to speak only on
the basis of what he has heard".[10]

Rivers (204) reminds us of the need for continued emphasis on auding
throughout the learning programme:

> ...listening comprehension is not a skill which can be mastered
> once and for all and then ignored while other skills are devel-
> oped. There must be regular practice with increasing difficult
> material.

3.13 *Method and order of presentation.* It was brought out in 3.12 that a

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[9]Cf. Léon (76): "When presenting new material, one must remember that...
the most difficult skill to acquire is probably a nativelike audio-
comprehension".

[10]Brooks 52. Cf. also Mackey (263): "As Epictetus put it long ago, na-
ture has given man one tongue and two ears that he may hear twice as
much as he speaks".

number of teaching methods, even those audially oriented, overemphasize
the mechanics of speech-production at the expense of needed ear-training.
The concern for "correct pronunciation" has long been proclaimed by lit-
erary enthusiasts as a feature of the reading approach (e.g. Domar 13),
although probably more often than not the new sounds were merely approx-
imated in terms of those of the mother tongue (cf. note on translitera-
tion in 4.23). More recent methods have exhibited a greater degree of
accuracy in pronunciation-teaching, thanks to phonological descriptions
provided by linguistic scientists, but few have taken the extra steps
necessary to deal satisfactorily with the problem of auditory discrim-
ination and comprehension.

A number of linguists, including Léon (76), Green (86), and Belasco
(18), recommend that, for the sake of adequate training in discrimina-
tion, the teaching-programme should concentrate first of all on phonemes,
"proceeding to the phonetic level only when all obstacles to audio-lingual
comprehension have been overcome" (Léon 76).[11]

Others, however, point out that the study of phonemes—or even of
words—alone is not enough to achieve a satisfactory auding ability.
Palmer (1921,18) refers to *the fatal attraction of the false facility
offered by the written word*" and shows how unreliable the word is as a
speech signal.[12] Mackey (235) further explains:

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[11]Cf. also Belasco 18.

[12]Cf. also Rivers (196): "Even if the native speaker enunciates his words
slowly and distinctly, elements of stress, intonation and word-group-
ing, often exaggerated in an earnest attempt at clarity, add to the
confusion of the inexperienced foreigner".

...the learner must go beyond the phoneme in order to be able
to understand a language. So long as he hears only the indiv-
idual sounds, or even individual words and phrases, he will
not understand the larger structures. For the relations among
the components of a pattern must be known before its individual
members can be understood. .... Does the method therefore
present sounds, words, or sentences first?[13]

It would appear then that, if the advantages of the audio-lingual

approach are to be fully exploited, adequate training in the "passive"

skill of auding[14] must be given precedence over speaking ability. Time

and effort are required for training the ear not only to assimilate the

supraphonemic patterns of fluent speech such as stress, intonation, etc.,

but also to perceive significant sound-features which in turn will influ-

ence the individual's own production of speech sounds. This cannot be

accomplished simply by teaching how individual phonemes or words are

pronounced, but by repeated presentation of whole sentences and phrases

for listening and understanding.

The influence apparently works in both directions, however, accor-

ding to Hockett, who states as an "undeniable fact" that "one cannot even

hear a new language correctly until one has learned to pronounce it reas-

onably well oneself"; hence, he proposes, "the natural and most efficient

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[13]Léon evidently realized the importance of supraphonemic considerations,
for later on the same page (76) he recommends: "Audiocomprehension
should be taught by first training students to understand complete
sentences, or at least groups of words, and then by using minimal
pairs in order to train their ears to perceive important acoustical
cues".

[14]Strictly speaking, as Mackey brings out, "perception of speech is not
passive. The skill of listening to a foreign language and understan-
ding what is said involves (1) the immediate and unconscious recogni-
tion of its significant elements, and (2) the comprehension of the
meaning which the combination of these elements conveys" (Mackey 261).

way is to develop at one and the same time ability to pronounce correctly and to hear correctly" (Hockett 1950,264/265). This principle, if adopted, would preclude the use of an "auding-only" period similar to the initial use of audial skills before the introduction of graphic ones.[15]

3.14 *Treatment of speech production.* The second stage of language-learning is referred to in one article (Banathy et al., 37) as "learning the production of the sound sequences of the target language so that its native speakers can comprehend them immediately and identify them as acceptable".[16] In order to do this, however, one has to do more than merely recognize significant sound distinctions, as Mackey (236) explains:

> In distinguishing the sounds of the spoken language, it is sufficient to be able to tell one phoneme from another; in speaking the language, however, this is not enough. For we cannot speak in phonemes; we have to utter the particular combinations of allophones which comprise them. Some methods completely ignore this; others give so much attention to the details of pronunciation that no time is left for the other elements of speech.

These "other elements", according to a number of audio-lingual specialists, are just as significant to speech production, if not more so, than the articulation of the sounds themselves. Most allophones are almost never pronounced in isolation, but by their very nature as allophones depend on contiguous sounds (i.e. their *distribution*) for their existence.

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[15]Cf. Huebener 1965,37. Separation of active and passive skills is one of the characteristics of what is known as *programmed* language-instruction (cf. F. Rand Morton's ALLP Spanish experiment as described in Valdman 146) and is recommended even in the audio-lingual approach (cf. Brooks 144).

[16]Cf. also Hockett (1950,262), who specifies a "good pronunciation" as "one which will *not* draw the attention of a native speaker of that language away from *what* we are saying to the *way* in which we are saying it".

This means that allophones should be learned in their respective environ-ments, as part of sound *sequences* (for example, consonants should be learned not only individually but in clusters as well).

But training in speech production cannot stop with sound-sequences. Suprasegmental features such as stress, juncture, and intonation, must also be taken into consideration. Stress is an important phonemic fea-ture in Russian. Robert Lado (48) gives a pointed illustration of the significance of juncture: "wedonotrealizethatinspeakingwemaynothaveas clearlydefinedwordjuncturesasthespacesbetweenwordsinwritingwouldhaveus believe". And E.P. Sedun (13) points out the significance of intonation in the learning programme:

> Известно, что русская речь студентов-иностранцев, даже при более или менее правильном произнесении отдельных звуков и звукосоче-таний в пределах слова, все-таки оставляет впечатление неправиль-ности.... Это происходит оттого, что учащиеся недостаточно вла-деют интонационными нормами русского языка....

These other elements, then—sound-sequences, stress, juncture, and intonation—are important in the learner's own production of speech as well as his comprehension of utterances, and cannot afford to be neglec-ted in a successful audio-lingual approach.[17]

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[17]The numerous factors involved in both auding and speaking are briefly hinted at in the following statement of Brooks' (57): "It must be explained to [the learner] that in his new circumstance grammar means the stream of speech issuing from a speaker's lips, the rec-ognition of the similarities and differences in these sounds, their complicated forms and arrangements, their intricate relations to each other and to the things they represent, and his eventual pro-duction of these sounds in a controlled and meaningful way". Cf. also Mackey 236.

3.2 CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS.

3.21 *Dialect, style, and tempo: significance for auding.* "From the be-
ginning, sounds can be learned through hearing natural utterances given
at the speed of normal native speech" (Méras 146). We concluded in 3.13
that one of the requirements of the audio-lingual approach was training
in the comprehension of the fluent speech of native speakers. What exact-
ly constitutes "normal native speech", however, needs to be more specif-
ically defined for teaching purposes.

Variations in speech involve three major factors: dialect, style,
and tempo. Style may be influenced by dialect and tempo by both; all
three, however, are subject to external influences, such as the speaker's
social background, occupation, and disposition respectively. Note the
relative degrees of permanence of each characteristic.

Huebener (1965,4) defines as the first "linguistic" (non-cultural)
objective of language-teaching "the ability to comprehend the foreign
language when spoken at normal speed and when concerned with ordinary,
nontechnical subject matter". And Rivers (202) advises that "even in
the very early stages familiar material can be understood when spoken
at normal speed". She explains this last phrase as follows:

> Normal speed does not mean rapid native speech, but a speed of
> delivery which would not appear to a native speaker to be un-
> duly labored—a speed which retains normal word groupings, eli-
> sions, liasons, consonant assimilations, natural rhythm and in-
> tonation. Utterances which are delivered at an unnaturally slow
> pace are inevitably distorted and the acoustic images stored by
> the student will not be immediately useful when he hears a natu-
> ral form of speech.[18]

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[18]Rivers 201—202.

The Russian educator V.I. Polovnikova, however, whose main concern is preparing foreign students to understand lectures in Russian, believes that the tempo should be graded, "сначала до 35, затем до 50—60 слов в минуту" (Polovnikova 135).[19]

Not unrelated to tempo is what one might call the *information-density* of an utterance and its corresponding *redundancy*, which, according to Rivers (197), is what "helps us to piece together the information we hear". This is a rather important point, since it has been an acknowledged practice of traditional language-textbooks to "overload" their example- and drill-sentences with an abundance of semantic or grammatical information, and it is possible that this flair has been carried on in the dialogues provided in the more recent texts. Naturalness of speech, however, is an accepted audio-lingual proposition.

It is still the natural speech of educated speakers that is desired, and generally of a standard dialect in fairly common use.[20] It is the style of speech they would use in dealing with "ordinary, nontechnical subject matter", as Huebener put it (see above quotation). Extremes of literary and colloquial style are not considered suitable for teaching purposes, as Capelle illustrates with French:

> Présenter à des élèves britanniques qui ne possèdent pas du
> français...une description de Balzac ou un dialogue pris sur

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[19]Polovnikova adds (135): "В конце концов студенты уже могут воспринимать на слух русскую речь того темпа, в котором читаются лекции в институте—около 70 слов в минуту".

[20]There may, of course, be special reasons for choosing a particular dialect or style of speech, depending upon the known needs of the learner (see Mackey 163—164).

le vif dans les couloirs du métro parisien, ne peut que semer
la confusion dans leur esprit ou plutôt, ce qui est encore
plus grave, les pousser à admettre tous ces modèles comme va-
lables en même temps et à se constituer une "variété nouvelle"
et inacceptable de français.[21]

Brooks stresses the importance of maintaining "clarity of...speech
signals" (52) and avoiding slurring and colloquial distortions. "The
learner, and especially the classroom learner, is entitled to hear lan-
guage clearly in focus as he learns" (Brooks 53).

3.22 *Dialect, style, and tempo: significance for speaking.* The selec-
tion of a speech-variety for the learner's own use appears to be quite
another question, however. Is the learner to make faithful imitation of
all that he hears in the way of fluent native speech at normal speed,
which might possibly include occasional departures from the established
norm of pronunciation for the dialect, especially when a number of pos-
sible variations exist for the same sound?

A number of those concerned favour some standardization. "Facility
in the use of the spoken language with acceptable standards of pronunci-
ation and grammatical correctness" is formulated as Huebener's second lin-
guistic objective.[22] Faced with the choice between "the uninhibited pro-
nunciation of the man in the street" and that of the "overcareful diction
teacher", Léon (61) sees the final objective as "the former for audiocom-
prehension and the latter for sound production".

Although few applied linguists would agree with the specification of

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[21]Capelle 58. Cf. also Sweet (40): "Vulgarisms should be avoided...sim-
ply because they belong to a different dialect".

[22]Huebener 1965,4. Cf. also Weinstein 29, Ušakov 379, Bogorodickij 332.

an "overcareful diction teacher" as a norm for everyday conversational style, there does seem to be a general concern that the learner avoid variations in his own pronunciation, at least until he knows enough of the language to use them instinctively. As Sweet put it (42), "his text-books should, as far as possible, give a uniform pronunciation, no matter how arbitrary the selection may be".

In fact, Sweet's description (40) of the "medium colloquial style of pronunciation" at which the learner should aim is probably the best adapted to the objectives of the audio-lingual approach:

> It is painful and incongruous to hear the rapid pronunciation of clipped speech reproduced in a slow, solemn, oratorical tempo. On the other hand, it is much more irrational to teach a foreigner pronunciations which never occur in the colloquial speech of natives. The best general advice is therefore: never be oratorical; be colloquial, but not too colloquial.

We may conclude, then, that in the audio-lingual approach material for auding should be presented at a moderate, conversational tempo, undistorted either by excessive speed or artificial slowness, and possibly graded in the initial stages. There should be a natural amount of redundancy to facilitate comprehension. Style should be that normally used in conversation between educated speakers of a standard dialect, avoiding unnecessary distortions and extremes of either literary or vulgar speech.

Material presented for speaking should not depart from conversational style or tempo, but need not include the variations in pronunciation that the learner might notice in auding.

3.23 *Choice of vehicle.* In 3.1 we saw the desirability of teaching audial skills primarily through the use of phrases and sentences rather than isolated sounds or words. We have also concluded that material should be pre-

sented in the normal conversational style and tempo of educated speakers of a standard dialect without distortions or extremes.

Even within these limits, however, there is still a variety of *vehicles* in which material may be presented to the learner. By *vehicles* we mean forms such as "the give-and-take of simple conversational situations, short sketches or short stories containing a considerable amount of conversation, and brief reports from fellow-students" (which Rivers [203] lists as suitable for training in auditory comprehension, although most of them involve active learner-participation as well).

The keynote here is *conversation*, generally presented in the audio--lingual approach by what is known as *dialogue*. "С помощью диалогов", writes Polovnikova (134), "удается с первых дней заставить студента говорить по-русски, притом говорить правильно". Two of Brooks' "many reasons" for the success of the dialogue are its "natural and exclusive use of the audio-lingual skills" and the fact that "all the elements of the sound-system appear repeatedly, including the suprasegmental phonemes, which are often the most difficult for the learner".[23]

Yet there are a number of those concerned who question the value of the dialogue in training the learner's audial habits. In fact, it is precisely because dialogues do "suppose the use of nearly all the complex abilities of speech", as Mackey (267) observes, that "some methods do not use them until these have been mastered". (This would contradict the conclusions reached in 3.1 as to the order of presentation of units.) On the

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[23]Brooks 145. Cf. also Huebener 1965,13.

other hand, there are those who think that dialogues are not realistically

complex enough:

> In the elaboration of audio-lingual methods we have come to re-
> member belatedly that parroting dialogues and performing mechan-
> ical pattern drills do not constitute use of language and that
> only if a student can comprehend and produce sentences he has
> never heard before and transfer his skills and knowledge to a
> normal communication situation can language learning be said to
> have taken place.[24]

This statement nevertheless does not dispute the use of dialogues in the

initial stages, but it does draw our attention to the need for some tran-

sitional link between classroom dialogues and real-life situations. Brooks

proposes to meet this need by introducing an "important intermediate step

...called dialogue adaptation, in which the expressions learned in the dia-

logue are, with the aid of the teacher, at once made personal by the stu-

dent" (Brooks 145).[25]

The alternative of course is to exclude dialogues altogether and rely

on "the give-and-take of simple conversational situations" between the

teacher and students, or among the students themselves. This is the solu-

tion recommended by Palmer, who sets forth in the second half of *The Oral

Method of Teaching Languages* (1921,39—134) a systematized programme of

"forms of work". The main part of the programme, following drills in aud-

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[24]Valdman 156—157. Cf. also Anisfeld 113.

[25]Motivation of the learner is another significant factor here. "What
class members seem to resent is that the classroom procedure has be-
come essentially impersonal", writes Horace Dewey (12) in an article
advocating "personalized exercises" in addition to dialogues. Cf.
also Rivers (200), who recommends that dialogues be exploited more
fully by "recombinations of the material in the current and earlier
dialogues, particularly in the context of actual situations".

ing and imitating, involves the use of questions and answers (or commands and answers) on the part of both teacher and learner. Probably the main disadvantage in this vehicle is the extra demands it makes upon the ingenuity of the teacher, and the greater danger of lapsing into artificial speech patterns in attempts to create various communication situations.

Singing is another vehicle that has been sometimes suggested for use in the audio-lingual programme, particularly in teaching pronunciation. It is unsuitable in the case of Russian, however, not only because of its lack of intonation patterns, but because of the variations in the phonological system which it involves.

The dialogue, then, is apparently the most useful vehicle for presentation of audial material in the audio-lingual approach, provided that it is not allowed to remain at the level of a fixed passage for memorization, but is fully exploited in terms of recombination and adaptation to the personal experience of the learner.

3.24 *Summary*. The audio-lingual approach to auding and speaking and the factors involved therein may be summarized as follows:

3.241 Differences between the sets of habits of the native and target languages constitute a major hindrance to the learning of a second language, and are first encountered in the problem of auditory discrimination.

3.242 Since auding has a direct influence on the other primary skills, it should be taught first, using larger units of speech such as sentences and phrases.

3.243 Speech production likewise should not be taught exclusively by isolated sounds, but in sequences and sentences, including suprasegmental

features of stress, juncture, and intonation.

3.244 Material for auding and speaking should be presented in the normal conversational style and tempo of educated speakers of a standard dialect without distortions or extremes; pronunciation in speaking should be standardized. The dialogue, if properly used, is probably the most useful vehicle for presentation of audial material, but should be supplemented by personal adaptation to the learner's experience.

4. ASSIMILATION PROCEDURES

4.1 SUB-CONSCIOUS ASSIMILATION.

4.11 *Practice in imitation.* "In the teaching situation", writes Simon Belasco (18), "drills must be drawn up to provide the student with enough practice so that he can acquire the correct habits necessary for speaking and understanding the target language". This audio-lingual goal is further clarified by Carroll (1070) as *automaticity*—"i.e., making correct production so habitual that it does not need to be attended to in the process of speaking".[1]

In 2.24 it was established that in the audio-lingual approach language is taught as a skill, and as such requires a considerable period of time devoted to practice in using it. This attitude was further endorsed in 3.11, where we saw that language, from the audio-lingual viewpoint, consists pre-eminently of a set of *habits* different from the learner's native set. Thus Brooks defines language-learning (46) as "*a change in performance that occurs under the conditions of practice*" (cf. also Banathy et al. 37).

Hence *imitation,* or *mimicry*,[2] has become a key word in audio-lingual teaching procedures, at least as far as the spoken language is concerned, and its praises have long been sung by enthusiasts of the oral-aural approach. "L'imitation, c'est là, en effet, le secret ouvert de la bonne

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[1]Cf. also Brooks' definition of *pattern practice* (146).

[2]Cf. Palmer (1922,47): "The term *imitation* is not adequate to express the process by which [the learner] should work; what we require is absolute *mimicry*".

acquisition d'une langue", wrote Paul Passy half-a-century ago in his
Méthode Directe (quoted in Palmer 1921,3). More recently a Russian spe-
cialist has concluded:

> Experience has demonstrated the value of thorough drilling in
> pronunciation at the very start of a language course. Since it
> is more difficult to eliminate bad habits than to learn good
> ones, it appears worthwhile to begin a course by spending some
> time on concentrated pronunciation practice.[3]

One or two of those concerned have expressed the importance of con-
stantly reviewing material that has already been practised. "It is not
only the number of times an item is repeated that counts", writes Mackey
(311), "it is also how these repetitions are distributed throughout the
course". And he adds: "An item repeated many times in the first lesson
may be entirely forgotten if it is never repeated again" (311–312).[4]

4.12 *Practice in discrimination.* We saw in 3.12, however, that speak-
ing is directly dependent on one's auding capacity, and that the learner
must hear the sounds correctly first in order to be able to reproduce them
with accuracy. Thus, even if pronunciation exercises are introduced "at
the very start of a language course" and given continued emphasis through-
out, they will not fulfil their purpose unless they are accompanied or
preceded by corresponding drills in auding.

A favourite exercise for both auding and speaking is the *contrastive
drill*, in which closely related—but nevertheless distinct—phonemes and
phoneme-sequences of the target language are juxtaposed so that the con-

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[3]Benson 78. Cf. also Bloomfield 12.

[4]Cf. also Mackey 259 (0.2.4, 1st paragraph).

trast between them becomes more perceptible to the learner. Thus Polov-
nikova (139) recommends "упражнения на различение слов, которые студенты
могут путать при восприятии со слуха (в силу особенностей фонетической
системы родного языка или по похожему звучанию)".[5]

In the opening paragraph of his article, "An Introduction to Russian
Pronunciation", Morton Benson acknowledges his emphasis on "the systematic
utilization of the basic linguistic notion of contrast" (Benson 78), and
proposes a series of contrast-drills to help the learner master what is
probably the most difficult sound-distinction for non-Slavonic speakers in
learning Russian, that of palatalization.[6] After drilling syllables con-
trasting palatalized and non-palatalized consonants in various positions,
he then turns to the use of "minimal pairs", i.e., actual words of the lan-
guage which are identical except for one phoneme.[7]

Reformatskij (9) goes so far as to say that a palatalized consonant
should never be presented without the contrast of its non-palatalized coun-
terpart, since "оппозиции твердых и мягких согласных свойственны очень не-
многим языкам; для русской же фонетики—это обязательный...момент звукового
строя".

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[5]Cf. also Léon's "second type of contrast" (Léon 70).

[6]Palatalization, described by Reformatskij (9) as "самый существенный мо-
мент звукового строя, ...основа русской фонологической системы", con-
sists of arching the front of the tongue against the hard palate while
uttering a consonant. It is to be distinguished from the term *palatal*,
which is used in reference to the point of articulation of certain con-
sonants (e.g. /š/ž/č/), involving the tip of the tongue rather than the
front.

[7]*Minimal pairs* are a recognized linguistic means of contrasting phonemes
of a language (cf. Mackey 265). Mueller (185) proposes to use them in
testing the learner's mastery of the sound-system in respect to dis-
criminatory ability.

Dictation has also been suggested as a useful exercise for auditory discrimination. Huebener (1965,77) gives "listening purposefully" and "distinguishing sounds, words, and thought groups" as its first two assets. And Polovnikova (142) acknowledges that "диктанты полезны...для развития умения воспринимать речь со слуха".

Although no general concensus is evident as to the gradation of imitation- and discrimination-exercises, some infer from the significant role of auditory comprehension (see 3.12) that drills in sound-recognition and ear-training would come first; others propose the opposite order. While Brooks (53) puts "mimicry" before recognition and discrimination, Palmer (1922,45) has the latter two preceded only by a form of sub-conscious vocalization in the ear-training process:

> ...the teacher articulates various sounds, either singly or
> in combination with others; we listen to these sounds and
> make unconscious efforts to reproduce them by saying them to
> ourselves. This is the most passive and most natural form
> of ear-training....
> We must then seek to recognize or identify certain sounds
> and to distinguish them from others.

This stage is then followed by articulation and mimicry.

Hockett (1950,265) maintains that "the natural and most efficient way is to develop at one and the same time ability to pronounce correctly and to hear correctly" (see also 3.13), but this is a general rule and in terms of its actual application one skill would probably be taught as dependent upon the other.

4.2 CONSCIOUS ASSIMILATION.

4.21 *Explanation versus imitation.* "That pronunciation can be learnt by mere imitation" Sweet regards as a popular fallacy, inasmuch as "the move-

ments of the tongue in speaking are even quicker and more complicated than those of the foil in fencing, and are, besides, mostly concealed from sight" (Sweet 5; cf. also Jespersen 7–8). Léon (75) agrees, and also notes that "most adult students want to understand what they are asked to imitate", recommending "several types of explanation".

Not all audio-lingual specialists approve of other than sub-conscious means of assimilation, as might be gathered from 4.11. Mackey states the problem as follows:

> Theories of learning may be divided into two main categories: cognitive theories and associative theories. .... A cognitive theory sees learning within a central mental organization; an associative theory considers it as a chain of responses.[8]

Bazan (338) maintains that "this stimulus-response view of language stems from a formerly traditional view" and that "it is a fallacious interpretation of language learning today".

Palmer has suggested that during the pre-reading stage of an audially based programme the pupils' homework might consist of "exercises designed to give the pupils 'right notions about the nature of language'" (Palmer 1921,32). Elsewhere (1922,78) he states that phonetics (or phonemics) "teaches us the difference between two or more sounds which resemble each other, and between a given foreign sound and its nearest native equivalent".

In 4.12 we saw the need for exercises in perception of phonemic contrast between closely related sounds in the target language. But surely

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[8]Mackey 125. Cf. also Carroll (1070): "Speculation among linguists seems to run to an almost schizoid indecision as to which of two diametrically opposed theories to accept...."

this cannot be done without involving some understanding of the phonological system of that language. Merle L. Perkins (115) makes the following important observation:

> Early in most [language] courses the student is expected to learn the sounds of the new language, but if he has no information about how they are identified in the first place, he is to a great extent carrying out the assignment blindly.

Benson's contrast-drills on Russian phonemes are to be preceded by "a brief, clear survey of the main peculiarities of Russian sounds" (Benson 78). Wayne Fisher (43) recommends using the first class session as an orientation period where "the instructor can point out the areas in which English phonation is likely to interfere with Russian phonation".[9] This, according to Claude P. Lemieux (135), will help the learner retain the auding and speaking abilities which he has learned.[10]

On the other hand, one who apparently supports the "associative" theory of language-learning expresses the opinion that "the place of linguistics is *behind* the classroom teacher. .... The classroom teacher should know of the existence of scientific linguistics but without necessarily having to understand it", although the same writer believes that "those who train teachers...must know their stuff in linguistics and

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[9]Cf. also Perkins (114), who recommends "a discussion of speech events at the very beginning" and "information about phonetics and phonemics before the first lesson about the sounds of the particular language".

[10]Cf. also Comenius' maxim: "All languages are easier to learn by practice than from rules. But rules assist and strengthen the knowledge derived from practice" (J. Comenius, *The Great Didactic* [*Didactica Magna*], tr. M.W. Keatinge, cited in Brooks 138).

above all in phonetics" (Strevens 1962a,73).[11] There does seem to be a

greater volume of writing in support of not only the teacher's linguistic

awareness, but that of the *learners* as well, at least as far as sound-dis-

tinctions and the phonological system of a language are concerned.

4.22 *The use of contrastive analysis.* In 3.11 it was brought out that

native-language interference in auditory discrimination of target-language

phonemes constitutes a major difficulty for the second-language learner.

Moshe Anisfeld (118) comments on the problem as follows:

> Often a beginning student does not hear a particular phoneme in
> the new language as different from a close phoneme in his native
> tongue; i.e. he classifies the stimulus input into the wrong cat-
> egory. .... It is therefore important for the foreign language
> learner to build up phonemic categories appropriate to the new
> language.

In other words, the learner needs to be aware that the phonemic system of

the target language is different from that of his own. The logical way to

achieve such awareness, according to the applied linguists, is by means of

a *contrastive analysis* of the two systems involved (cf. Banathy et al. 55).

This process, also known as "bilingual comparison" (cf. Strevens 1962b,48)

is extensively treated in Lado's *Linguistics Across Cultures,* where he

speaks of such comparison as "a means of predicting and describing the pro-

nunciation problems of the speakers of a given language learning another"

(Lado 11).[12]

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[11]V.A. Bogorodickij (331) notes that "знакомство с физиологией произношения
не должно считаться лишним и для начального учителя" without reference
to any impartation of such knowledge to the learner; Polovnikova (137),
however, speaks about "ценность специальных уроков по фонетике [для
учащихся]".

[12]Cf. also Reformatskij 6, Polovnikova 133, Politzer 66-67.

Capelle (59) notes that "la plupart des théories linguistiques sou-
lignent l'individualité et les caractères propres de chaque langue". Un-
derlying the principle of contrastive analysis is the recognition that
the comparison of any two languages will reveal a set of differences un-
like that between any two other languages, and therefore that "the typi-
cal and persistent difficulties of one group [of learners] may well be
entirely different from those of another group, depending on the mother
tongue of the pupils" (Strevens 1962b,48).[13]

This constitutes something of a problem in the teaching of Russian
in North American universities, where a great number of students who
take up the language come from Slavonic, but not necessarily Russian,
families. Differences between closely related languages are no less
difficult than those between totally unrelated ones, sometimes even more
so, since it is the very similarities in sound that often cause the most
confusion (cf. Anisfeld's quotation at the beginning of 4.22).[14] For
this reason the use of cognates in teaching sounds is generally frowned
upon (e.g. Lemieux 135), although at least one person (Benson 80) sees
cognates as a useful means of contrasting sound-systems.

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[13]N.K. Krupskaja (410–411) describes a French-language-programme in Geneva,
Switzerland, which she attended in 1908: "Особенностью курсов был диф-
ференцированный подход к каждой национальности.... Кроме того, каждой
национальной группе указывалось, в чем именно недостатки произношения
у данной национальности. .... Для каждой национальности были свои
учебники, выясняющие, в чем разница в структуре слов, их сочетании".

[14]Even students from Russian-speaking families are usually familiar with
only a regional dialect (other than the Moscow norm); this greater sim-
ilarity can add further to the interference in mastering correct speech
patterns. Cf. also Reformatskij (12): "Элементы сходства—мнимые тож-
дества—содержат такие элементы нетождества, которые зачастую труднее
преодолеть, чем явные нетождества взаимно чуждых языков".

In fact, some linguists recommend considerable audial practice in contrasting similar phonemes in the native and target languages, much like the contrastive drills for related phonemes whithin the target language itself (see 4.12). Sigmund S. Birkenmayer, in an article on Russian pattern drills, defines "contrastive drill" as "perceiving and imitating the difference between the elements of a foreign language and those of our own language" (Birkenmayer 43). This type of drill, at least as far as using words to illustrate the contrast rather than simply juxtaposing the phonemes in question, is described by Léon (71) as "an excellent teaching device but...a poor testing technique" since "the student not only has one vowel to compare with another but also many other acoustic cues which will enable him quickly to recognize the English word, even if he is unable to analyze the differences between the two vowels". If this be the case, however, such bilingual contrast-drills would be more useful in the learner's assimilation of phonemic sequences and suprasegmental features (cf. 3.13, 3.14) rather than in his learning of individual phonemes.

We may conclude, then, that contrastive analysis is a valuable element in the *cognitive* aspect of the audio-lingual approach, i.e., in making the learner aware of the differences between the phonological system of the target language and that of his own, and helping to prevent his native habits from interfering with the assimilation of those of the new language.

4.23 *The use of phonetic transcription.* In 2.23 we considered a number of arguments—stemming chiefly from the predominantly visual empha-

sis of the learner's educational experience—in favour of some sort of

graphic aid to "ease the strain" of audial assimilation.   Let us see

the problem restated in the following quotation from Hockett:

> In our society the written word is emphasized at every turn.
> Students consequently are apt to work more efficiently—even
> at learning pronunciation—if they have something to *look at*
> as they work, instead of working entirely through imitation.
> Unfortunately, most traditional writing systems are not suf-
> ficiently regular to be used for this purpose without confus-
> ing the issue....[15]

Hockett then suggests (*loc. cit.*) that "materials for the students to

follow as they practice pronunciation therefore need a *transcription*—

an invented writing system which represents with absolute regularity

the speech sounds they are to learn to make and recognize".[16]

It may be well to remind ourselves here of the sharp difference be-

tween *transcription* and *transliteration*. The former is based on the

sound-system of the language, and involves the use of a symbol for each

phoneme or allophone of the spoken language. Transliteration, on the

other hand, is based on the *graphic* system of the language, and gener-

ally consists of using the native-language writing-system to give ap-

proximate sound-values to the *letters* of the target-language alphabet.[17]

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[15]Hockett 1950,268.

[16]Sweet and Jespersen were both ardent advocates of transcription (cf.
Sweet's quotation in 2.23). Cf. also Mackey (265): "If...[the lear-
ner] has had so much experience with the written language as to have
to see a word in writing before being able to pronounce it, phonetic
notation may become a necessity".

[17]This is a most familiar sight in traditional Russian textbooks, includ-
ing some of the more recent ones. Cf. for example Fayer 2–14, Gronicka
& Bates-Yakobson 2–6, Doherty & Markus 6–7 (all of which were published
between 1958 and 1960). Lunt (4) uses transcription as well as trans-
literation.

Thus Otto Jespersen advised the use of transcription alone without concomitant reference to traditional orthography,[18] so that the learner might not confuse the sound-system representation with the irregular orthographic system (see Jespersen 168—173).

It is generally recommended today that transcriptions be used on the phonemic rather than on the purely phonetic level (e.g. see Méras 54, Brooks 276); Sweet proposed that only "significant" sound-distinctions be recorded.[19] Possibly related to this is the feeling (e.g. Huebener 1965,30) that the learner need have only a passive acquaintance with transcription-symbols. Edmond Méras would impose even further limits: "Except in advanced work in phonetics, the students should not be expected to write phonetic symbols or to read aloud a text written in them" (Méras 140).

About the only real challenge found to the use of transcription itself came from Benson (78), who notes that "many teachers feel that beginning with the Russian alphabet offers fewer difficulties in the long run". It is true that the Cyrillic alphabet, while not regular, at least manifests some degree of consistency in its irregularity in representing

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[18]As to the length of time transcription should be continued, however, very little indication could be found. Jespersen himself admitted this to be "one of the most difficult questions" and could recommend only *as long as possible* (Jespersen 172/173).

[19]Sweet 18. This corresponds to Jespersen's use of transcription, "not ...to replace, but...to support, the teacher's oral instruction in pronunciation. Even if it misses some of the very finest shades, it may still be of benefit, just as a table of logarithms can be very useful even if the numbers are not carried out farther than to the fourth decimal place" (Jespersen 166).

the Russian sound-system. The danger is, of course, that the students—
and teachers too—will fail to perceive the nature of the irregularity
and try to deal with non-existent items such as "hard and soft vowels"
(or worse still, with "palatalized vowels").[20] The phonological facts
of the language must be made extremely clear to both teacher and learner
right at the beginning of the course and constantly recalled throughout
the teaching-programme if phonemic transcription is to be excluded in
favour of Cyrillic orthography alone.

The transcription itself, however, must not be too heavily empha-
sized. Hockett (1950,269) compares it to a scaffolding, erected to help
the learner gain audial control of the language; as such "it must be re-
spected; but as only a scaffolding, it will eventually be torn down (or
be allowed to 'wither away')".

4.24 *Summary.* Audio-lingual recommendations regarding both conscious
and unconscious assimilation procedures may be summarized as follows:
4.241 Since language is a set of habits, the use of these habits should
be made as automatic as possible through imitative drills, with constant
review throughout the programme.
4.242 Auditory discrimination is best taught by drills contrasting relat-
ed but distinct phonemes within the target language; another useful means
may be that of dictation.

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[20]Under the heading "Hard and Soft Vowels", Fayer (15) gives the follow-
   ing (mis)information: "If the tongue is raised against the *palate*
   when a, э, o, or y is pronounced, the sound becomes softened or *pal-*
   atalized. я is thus a palatalized a; e, a paltalized э; ё, a pala-
   talized o; and ю, a palatalized y".

4.243 Training in pronunciation and discrimination may be facilitated by an explanation of the new phonological system in contrast to that of the native language.

4.244 The learner must be made aware—by means of contrastive analysis—of the phonological differences between the target language and his native tongue, so that he may prevent his native habits from interfering with his assimilation of the habits of the new language.

4.245 The need for graphic support (see 2.23) is probably best met by a phonemic transcription without reference to traditional orthography (at least initially), although, as a temporary aid, the transcription must not be overemphasized. In the case of Russian, extreme care must be taken if the Cyrillic orthography is used alone.

5. TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS: PRESENTATION

5.1 PRESENTATION OF AUDIAL AND GRAPHIC SKILLS.

5.11 *Pedagogical orientation*. The age-group at which instructional material is directed and the length of time expected to be devoted to it vary somewhat from method to method. Since these are factors which have some influence on the preparation of the textbooks and other materials, it might be well to compare them before evaluating the methods themselves.

William Cornyn's *Beginning Russian* (COR)[1] containing thirty-five "lessons", was specifically written for an intensive first-year Russian programme at Yale University (see COR Introduction ix–x, also Benson 78). *Modern Russian*, by Clayton Dawson, Charles Bidwell, and Assya Humesky (DBH)[2] is a two-volume course of thirty-six units intended for a university programme lasting two years (see DBH/T 1). *Basic Conversational Russian* by Gordon Fairbanks and Richard Leed (FBL) is divided into twelve "grammar-" and twenty-four "conversation-units". It is aimed at students in either high-school or university, and "may be covered in anywhere from one semester of a fairly intensive college course to two years of a less intensive high school course" (FBL vii), depending upon the number of hours available per week.

The Audio-Lingual Materials (ALM) course with fourteen units, prepared

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[1]Three-letter abbreviations are used in reference to the methods under discussion. The letter "T" following an abbreviation (except COR) refers to the teaching-manual provided with the respective textbook.

[2]Bidwell is given as an author for the first volume, and as a consultant for the second volume.

by the staff of the Modern Language Materials Development Center, "may be used by any beginning class in the junior or senior high school", although "it must be pointed out that the first-level course has been prepared for classes beginning foreign language study in grades seven, eight, or nine" (ALM/T 5). It is to be completed in either one or two years, according to the number of class sessions per week.

ALM, DBH, and FBL are provided with supplementary manuals for the teacher or instructor;[3] COR is not. Publishers supply tapes and/or discs for laboratory use with all books except COR.

5.12 *Linguistic orientation.* The primary aim of the methods presented in all four textbooks, as stated or implied in their respective introductions, is a degree of mastery of Russian as a spoken language. Hence all four recognize either openly or implicitly the primacy of the spoken language over the written. For example, the second paragraph of COR's introduction begins as follows:

> The method of teaching implied in the material of this book rests on the proposition that the quickest and most accurate means of attaining fluency in a language is to begin by speaking it.[4]

And in the first paragraph of the ALM introduction we find:

> The program is based on the conviction that language is first of all speech, and that the ability to communicate by means of spoken words is of primary importance.[5]

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[3]The FBL *Teacher's Manual* was not published until 1966, two years after the textbook was issued. Hence it should be borne in mind that enlightening information in this manual as to the application of audio-lingual concepts to the course was not available at first to the language-teacher. The tapes were issued in the same year as the textbook, however.

[4]COR ix.

[5]ALM vii.

FBL is the only method which makes a special appeal in its introduction to those students whose interest lies more in reading Russian: they are advised to "treat this course exactly as do those who wish to develop active control of the spoken language" for the following reasons:

> ...first, the most efficient method of developing thorough and fluent reading ability is to begin the study of a language by learning to speak it; second, the literature in a particular language cannot be appreciated unless one has the built-in capacity of contrasting literary style with the style of everyday run of the mill speech....[6]

This corresponds with the arguments put forward by Hockett and Strevens in 2.25 for learning literature through language (cf. also Sweet's quotation in 2.12).

5.13 *Order of presentation*. The following statement by Nelson Brooks appears in the introduction to the ALM manual:

> In the audio-lingual phase language functions purely on its own. The visual-graphic phase is ancillary to language and important to it, but it can easily be foregone, as it is constantly in the daily life of everyone. All four skills should be taught in a carefully prescribed sequence and proportion of allotted time.[7]

Although the introductions to FBL and COR do imply an "audio-lingual phase" before any graphic activity—either reading or writing—is undertaken by the learner, ALM and DBH make specific recommendation of it, the former more strongly than the latter. As DBH (vii) explains:

> Language learning...properly begins with listening and repeating and only later proceeds to reading and writing. These first two

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[6]FBL v. Cf. also FBL/T (1), where the purpose of the textbook is acknowledged as being "to lay a foundation upon which may be developed real fluency in all of the language skills: aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing".

[7]ALM/T 3.

> stages are of primary importance if the student is to gain even
> a minimum control of spoken Russian; for this reason we recommend
> strongly that most material be presented and practiced with books
> closed, both in class and in the laboratory.

ALM, on the other hand, goes so far as to propose that textbook distribution be postponed for a period of three months so that "the first three or four units can be mastered audiolingually" (ALM vii). Three reasons for temporary exclusion of all graphic work are cited: a) audial skills involve habits, and all available time should be devoted to practising these habits; b) written symbols interfere with the learning of audial skills; c) audial foundation simplifies the learning of graphic skills.

Assimilation of habits will be discussed in Chapter 6. Let us see how interference from writing is treated in the other textbooks under consideration.

5.14 *The use of transcription in presentation.* In 2.23 we saw the desirability, from the pedagogical point of view, of having some sort of visual support for the letter-bound second-language learner in high-school or university. In 4.23 we concluded that this is best provided by a phonemic transcription, as the distortions of traditional orthographies interfere with learning correct audial habits. As noted in 5.11, learners are expected to begin the ALM book *before* reaching high-school, when they are not yet so "letter-bound" as to require extra visual support. Hence ALM can more successfully promote an "audio-lingual phase" with the complete exclusion of graphic activity at the beginning of the course; this naturally obviates the need for transcription, as once the learner has a relative mastery of the Russian sound-system, he is not so easily distracted by orthographic irregularities.[8]

The other three methods, designed for use at the high-school and/or
university levels, do employ transcription in varying degrees. Presum-
ably DBH's ruling of "most material...practiced with books closed" would
still permit the student limited use of his eyes in the initial stages.

COR and FBL both use a phonemic transcription (although the two are
not identical);[9] that found in DBH is partially allophonic as far as the
vowels are concerned, giving [ə] as the non-pre-tonic variant of the pho-
neme /a/.

All three methods introduce the Cyrillic orthography along with the
transcription from the very start. Although this violates Jespersen's
principle of a transcription-only period (Jespersen 168–173; cf. 4.23),
there is less danger of confusion in the case of Russian because of the
considerable difference between Latin and Cyrillic symbols, and also be-

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[8]Nevertheless, ALM warns against interference during the "intermediate per-
iod" when graphic symbols are introduced: "In different ways, both the
unfamiliar Cyrillic letter shapes and those that resemble the familiar
Roman ones will cause interference. Tell the students it will take
time to learn to react properly to unfamiliar letters. Explain that
they are likely to respond in a typically English fashion to those let-
ters which look familiar, and caution them to be on guard against this.
Insist that the present main objective is still to understand and speak,
and that they must continue to trust their ears rather than their eyes"
(ALM vii).

[9]The main difference between the two transcriptions is the manner in which
paired palatalized consonants are represented. FBL (like DBH) uses a
hook below the letter to indicate palatalization (e.g. /d̨/l̨/m̨/); COR
prefers a following *j* instead (e.g. /dj/lj/mj/). The latter, although
lending itself nicely to a morphological analysis of Russian verbal con-
jugations (see COR 83), is a source of confusion to the learner (and,
sometimes, the teacher) because it might mislead one to suppose that
it represents two sounds (consonant plus *jod*, for example) rather than
a single palatalized consonant. Cf. the contrast of /şel/ "[he] sat
down" and /sjel/ "[he] ate". Hence FBL's and DBH's use of the hook is
preferable.

cause, as mentioned in 4.23, the Cyrillic alphabet is at least somewhat

consistent in its irregularities, which the learner would presumably be

able to detect by comparison with the transcription. It should not be

forgotten, however, that the use of Russian orthography from the beginning

of the course is merely a concession to the gradual development of graphic

skills; audial skills themselves would probably be more effectively taught

without the simultaneous burden of an irregular writing-system, however

consistent it may be.

The three methods differ as to the length of time and the purpose

for which the transcription is used. DBH introduces all new material in

transcription for the first ten units, and retains it throughout for pro-

nunciation-drills. FBL, on the other hand, provides only the first four

conversation units in transcription, and the pronunciation-drills in the

appendix for which it is also used are expected to be covered by the end

of the sixth conversation-unit. COR employs transcription for new senten-

ces up to the tenth lesson (at which time pronunciation exercises are dis-

continued), and continues to use it for word-lists right to the end of the

book.

None of the three methods requires the learner to write the transcrip-

tion-symbols, or to use them for more than a sentence at a time in reading;

this would follow Méras' advice in 4.23. In each case the transcription

is used merely as a supporting device to facilitate mastery of the sound-

-system. It does not replace Cyrillic orthography for the development of

graphic skills (cf. DBH/T 16).

5.2 PRESENTATION OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SKILLS.

5.21 *Context of presentation: choice of vehicle.* Two alternative ve-

hicles of presentation were discussed in 3.23: a) unconnected sentences,

and b) the dialogue. The former is featured in COR; the latter is adop-

ted in the others.[10] None of the methods advocates song as a vehicle.

ALM and FBL provide one dialogue per unit, containing about fifteen

to twenty utterances each; after Lesson 4, DBH has two dialogues per unit,

with about ten utterances per dialogue.[11] In each method the dialogues

serve to illustrate specific grammatical points to be practised through

following drills, and are thus advised to be taken before other items in

the unit.[12] DBH precedes all dialogues with a "Preparation for Conversa-

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[10]Cf. DBH/T (5) which offers the following in support of the use of dia-
logue: "(1) it offers the best possibilities for introducing and
teaching spoken language patterns in all persons; (2) it is the eas-
iest type of material to memorize and provides the greatest opportu-
nities for immediate application in real life situations; (3) it is
a dramatic way of bringing out cultural similarities and differences
between Soviet society and our own; and (4) it provides for the intro-
duction of various styles of speech that could not be so easily re-
flected in prose passages or basic sentences" (cf. 3.23).

[11]It is noted, however, that in the ALM method "each dialog is divided in-
to two related sections of half dialogs" (ALM/T 11). This is a move
toward the more stringent conditions imposed by Brooks (244), who spe-
cified that "if a dialogue goes on for more than half a dozen utteran-
ces it is broken up into parts, each unified and containing not more
than four or five utterances; these parts are learned separately".
While this may be unnecessarily restrictive, the author, along with
others who have worked with the FBL materials, has concluded that un-
interrupted strings of fifteen or more sentences are too long for
practical use, either in the classroom or in the language-laboratory.

[12]Cf. for example DBH/T (25): "It is important for the teacher to realize
the necessity of presenting the...Conversations during the first two
sessions. With the exception of the Pronunciation practice, which is
not directly tied to the lesson vocabulary, all other material depends
on the introduction of the Conversations, since they contain the basic
lexical and structural items to be practiced in the lesson".

tion" to introduce new vocabulary and structures, and follows them with

"Basic Sentence Patterns" which "serve as a bridge between the Conversa-

tions and the structural drills" and "provide carefully organized sets

of sentences that illustrate the grammatical material of the lesson and

the lexical material of current and past lessons" (DBH/T 6). This in

effect helps to free the dialogue itself from having to incorporate all

the grammatical points to be drilled, and thus allows a greater natural-

ness of style.

In addition to the dialogues, ALM supplies several of its units with

"recombination narratives" (mainly for listening purposes—cf. 5.23),

in which material previously presented is recombined to form new utter-

ances. In Units 7 and 14 a narrative replaces the dialogue (cf. ALM/T

26). ALM is also the only method that devotes specific effort to the

subject of *dialogue adaptation*,[13] the objective of which is "to relate

the dialog sentences and situation to the personal experience of the

students and to aid memorization" (ALM/T 14). This consists (in the ALM

method) of questions aimed at the student, using the vocabulary and struc-

ture of the preceding dialogue. Model answers are given in the book, but

the learner is encouraged to formulate his own, within the limits of vo-

cabulary and structure already acquired.

In COR the dialogue is replaced by a series of twenty-five to thirty

sentences illustrating a specific grammatical point, and followed later in

the lesson by a review series of forty to fifty sentences. (These lists

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[13]Cf. Brooks' second quotation in 3.23.

of individual utterances with little or no semantic connection between them are very similar to those found in Lunt's *Fundamentals of Russian*.) As was brought out in 3.23, this calls for greater resourcefulness on the part of the teacher to put the utterances into the context of an actual communication situation, without which, according to Albert Valdman, language-learning cannot take place (see 3.23).

5.22 *Context of presentation: dialect, style, and tempo.* Considerations of dialect, style, and tempo (cf. 3.21, 3.22) are taken into account by all textbooks except COR. Typical is the statement concerning the FBL recordings, that "the language of the dialogues is typical of normal, connected speech, not of artificial grammar book examples" (FBL vi). "Natural speed" is a proclaimed feature of the DBH conversation--recordings for the listening and comprehension stages (DBH viii—cf. 5.23), and in the *Instructor's Manual* it is advised that "model utterances spoken by the instructor, like those on the tapes, should be delivered at a normal conversational speed.... No concessions should be made to 'spelling pronunciation'" (DBH/T 15).[14] Normal speed in both teacher's and learner's utterances is recommended in the ALM manual (ALM/T 9/11), as well as in laboratory work:

> ...the silent repeat spaces provided [on the tape] have been carefully calculated and measured. If the student is "on his

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[14]Cf. the following quotation from D.N. Ušakov (379): "<Правильным> является язык образованных москвичей, однако без искусственных, буквенных произношений, в роде ч т о вм. ш т о , к о н е ч н о вм. к о н е ш н о и т.п., которые возникают у грамотников под влиянием орфографии".

toes" and repeating the material at the proper speed, he can just make his utterance in the space provided. Thus he is obliged to approach a near-native pace from the beginning.[15]

It must be remembered, as Rivers (201) pointed out, that "normal speed does not mean rapid native speech".[16] The FBL tapes might have been improved by recording the conversations at a slightly slower "normal speed", and being more careful to avoid slurring and other distortions. Brooks (53) stressed that "the learner...is entitled to hear language clearly in focus as he learns" (see 3.21), and DBH points out the need for "slightly greater clarity in articulation than that of informal speech" (DBH/T 15).

As to style and dialect, all four methods have adopted the "colloquial" or everyday speech of educated speakers of a standard dialect, apparently Muscovite.[17] The ALM manual (11) comments on this as follows:

> The language of the dialogs is the standard, authentic, contemporary, informal language that would be used in equivalent circumstances by native speakers of the same age...as the American students in the class. The writers have tried to avoid obvious regional peculiarities....

In the case of ALM, however, the "same age" refers to the junior-high-

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[15]ALM/T 31. The same is true of the FBL dialogue-recordings.

[16]See full quotation in 3.21. Cf. also Polovnikova's suggestion of the grading of tempo in the initial stages (3.21).

[17]There is some question as to the period and type of Muscovite dialect chosen as the norm for these textbooks, especially in DBH, FBL, and COR, where stressed /i/ and /e/ are given as coalescing into [i] in unstressed position, when in fact the unstressed variant of /e/ (after palatalized consonants) is actually considered to be more of an [I] in present-day Moscow Russian, the [i] being regarded as an older form. ALM at least recognizes some distinction—"unstressed e and the unstressed и are pronounced *almost* alike" (ALM/T 38; italics J.W.) —without specifying the nature of the difference.

-school level (12—15 years old), and thus the style of the dialogues is
not really suitable for learners of high-school and university age.[18]

The styles of DBH and FBL are more suited to the university atmo-
sphere. Dialogues in the former centre mainly around university life in
Moscow; those of the latter around the travels of an American tourist in
the Soviet Union. DBH leans more towards the colloquial side with ex-
pressions such as "А вы домой?" (12) instead of "А вы идёте домой?",
"Во сколько?" (198) instead of "Который час?", while FBL generally pre-
fers the more polite forms, at least on first introduction.[19] COR, which
uses sentences instead of dialogues, is still more formal on occasion,[20]
although the style is basically that of conversational speech. The dif-
ferences in style for active and passive material will be noted in 5.23.

5.23 *Presentation of auding.* Although none of the methods discussed
recommends a specific "auding-only" period—in apparent agreement with
Hockett (1950,265) that "the natural and most efficient way is to de-
velop at one and the same time ability to pronounce correctly and to
hear correctly" (cf. 3.13, 4.12)—there does seem to be a general rec-
ognition of a distinction between auding and speaking skills. For
example, the following quotation is included in the ALM *Teacher's Manual*
in reference to the accompanying tape-recordings:

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[18]This is true of one or two dialogues in DBH as well, e.g. the Lesson 17
   dialogues about children hunting mushrooms (391—392, 394—395).

[19]E.g. Conversation-Unit 10, FBL 109: "Куда вы идёте? — Я иду на вокзал.
   — Вы тоже на вокзал? Куда же вы едете? — Никуда."

[20]E.g. Lesson 27, COR 186: "Консул вас сейчас примет, если консульство не
   закрыто".

> In the presentation of language for learning, a distinction
> is made between *language for listening* and *language for imi-
> tation* in order to accomplish different objectives. ....
> Excellent recorded materials are planned and executed with the
> primary aim of each passage, each drill, clearly in mind. The
> result is that language for listening and language for imita-
> tion are never confused, and one is never used in a place
> where the other is appropriate.[21]

It might be gathered from further information in the manual that the

"language for imitation" is contained in the dialogues while the "lan-

guage for listening" takes the form of narratives, which "it is not

necessary for the students to memorize", at least not in full (ALM/T 27).[22]

Another application of the distinction might be the introduction of the

dialogue on tape "first for listening only, with no student response",

followed by stages for imitation (ALM/T 31).

This feature is also found in the FBL dialogue-recordings under the

title of "full-speed version", followed by a "spaced version" for repeti-

tion by the learner. But specifically designed for auditory comprehen-

sion, according to the teaching manual (FBL/T 4), are the "listening-in"

exercises. These consist of recorded conversations—three per conversa-

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[21]ALM/T 30, cited from *Criteria for the Evaluation of Materials to be In-
cluded in a Selective List of Materials for Use by Teachers of Modern
Foreign Languages* (MLA FL Program Research Center) 1961, p. 42. The
two "languages" are explained in the same quotation as follows: "Re-
corded *language for listening* helps to develop a skill that has been
little understood and hence very much neglected in foreign language
teaching: the ability of a non-native to understand easily when spo-
ken to by a native speaker of the language. Recorded *language for
imitation*, on the other hand, while it may help to develop listening
skills, has a quite different main purpose: it serves as a model for
the student's own production of the spoken language".

[22]Narrative style is naturally different from that of conversation, and
the tempo somewhat slower. This is no doubt another reason why they
are not intended for memorization (cf. 5.22).

tion-unit—between Russian speakers at a rather rapid normal speed.[23]

Unless the accompanying *Laboratory Manual* (the function of which is mere-
ly "to provide information on the spelling of Russian"—FBL/T 19) is used,
the learner has no opportunity of seeing these dialogues in printed form.
His only contact with them being through his ear, he is given greater op-
portunity and incentive to develop his auding ability. (By contrast, all
ALM narratives—including those for "listening"—are printed in the stu-
dent's textbook.)

DBH has no recombination material—either narrative or dialogue—for
auding purposes, but the two conversations in each unit[24] are given spe-
cial listening and imitating stages on the tapes, as with the ALM recor-
dings. In addition to the first presentation for "listening", however,
there is also a fourth stage in which the dialogue is repeated at normal
speed for "[semantic] comprehension" (see DBH/T 6/13).

5.24 *Presentation of speaking.* The second stage in the recorded dialogues
on the ALM and DBH tapes consists of the breaking-down of sentences into
partial utterances ("partials"), starting from the *end* of the sentence so
as to "preserve natural intonation" (as repeatedly stated in the DBH manual
—see pp. 6, 13, 14, 15–16; cf. also ALM/T 9). In the third stage whole
utterances are given for repetition (cf. ALM/T 31, DBH/T 6/13/14). Only
the latter stage is provided for the learner's imitation on the FBL recor-
dings, although the FBL manual, published some two years later, recommends

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[23]There does not appear to be any significant difference in speed or style
from that of the unit-dialogues (cf. 5.22).

[24]Lessons 1–4 have only one conversation each, as noted in 5.21.

sentence build-up (starting from the end) as a classroom technique (see

FBL/T 11—12).[25]

The author has had experience using the FBL Russian tapes in labora-

tory-periods, and has also worked with DBH-type recordings (with the four-

-stage conversation) in another language;[26] thus his comparison may be

valid to some extent. He found that where students were to repeat com-

plete utterances (sometimes as many as sixteen words long[27]) only once,

they found great difficulty in retaining and imitating what they had

heard. The rapid tempo at which the dialogue was spoken (see 5.22) did

not help to ease this problem. Students using the four-stage recordings,

however, where utterances were first broken down into segments before

being given for repetition in their entirety, achieved a reasonable de-

gree of fluency by the end of the period.[28]

In 3.1 we took note of the importance of "going beyond the phoneme"

in the training of both auding and speaking abilities, and taking into

consideration such factors as sound-sequences, stress, and intonation.

These are most fully exploited in the FBL and DBH methods. The *Instruc-

tor's Manual* for the latter (15) comments as follows:

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[25]Another reason is offered here (FBL/T 11) for beginning from the end of
the sentence: "it is easier to repeat the first part of what someone
else has said than it is to repeat the last part (at least in the
case of foreign language material)".

[26]Recordings for *Modern French* by Desberg and Kenan.

[27]E.g. FBL 135, Sentence #4.

[28]Naturally there were a few exceptions among those with very great and
very little aptitude for language-learning, but the statements made
here reflect the overall pattern.

> At the very start of his language learning, the student must
> become accustomed to hearing Russian spoken naturally—not word
> by isolated word, but with the ordinary phrasing and intonation
> that characterize the native speaker of the language.

This advice is well supported throughout the textbook by a considerable

amount of explanation and drill devoted to the features of speech beyond

isolated sounds, especially clusters and intonation (these will be dis-

cussed in 6.24 and 6.25 respectively). FBL pays little attention to

clusters, but includes a number of good drills on intonation, as well

as on the effect of palatalization on stressed and unstressed vowels.[29]

ALM and COR, on the other hand, concentrate mainly on isolated

sounds. The latter gives an excellent analysis of the allophonic var-

iants of the unstressed vowels, and some consideration to voicing assim-

ilation (see 6.24), but little or no attention to anything else. Even

though ALM prints all its pronunciation-drills in the *Teacher's Manual*

so that the learner cannot see them, there is a rather poor selection by

comparison with DBH and FBL. It is claimed that these drills, "while not

focusing on the whole Russian sound system, have isolated the most diffi-

cult problems in pronunciation for an English-speaking person" (ALM/T 35).

The claimants fail to recognize, however, that a problem equally diffi-

cult, if not more so, is presented by the suprasegmental features of a

language (cf. 3.13), which can hardly be described as "isolated" in any

significant degree.[30]

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[29]The influence of palatalization on vowel quality is one feature rather
poorly treated in DBH (see 6.23).

[30]Even if "pronunciation" is interpreted here in its narrow sense of sound-
-articulation, the claim remains unfulfilled, since some of the more
difficult palatalizations (e.g. /ɳ/ķ/χ/š̆:/ & all voiced consonants)
have been omitted.

It would appear that the ALM authors assume that pupils of junior-high-school age would be sufficiently unlettered as to assimilate such features simply from the teacher's own use of the foreign language in the classroom, without specific explanation and drills on them. This could well be the case under favourable circumstances (i.e., a native speaker able to speak with clear, well-defined intonation-patterns and/or pupils with more than average ability in sound-pattern discrimination), but it should not be expected automatically even in a majority of classroom situations, for from about twelve years on children seem to find more difficulty in accurate reproduction of sounds they hear. Carroll (1091) comments as follows:

> The evidence seems clear that the earlier the child is introduced to a foreign language, the better his pronunciation will be, other things being equal; it is probable that facility in acquiring good pronunciation without special instruction is a decreasing function of age and levels off at about the age of puberty.

5.25 *Summary*. The analysis of the four methods (ALM, COR, DBH, FBL) in regard to their presentation of audial skills in accordance with the audio-lingual approach may be summarized as follows:

5.251 Orientation: COR and DBH are both intended exclusively for university courses, FBL for university or high-school, and ALM for junior-high--school. All four acknowledge the primacy of speech in language-teaching.

5.252 Audial-graphic relationship: DBH and ALM make specific recommendation of an audial-only period before graphic skills are pursued; FBL and COR imply this but do not state it. Except for ALM, all methods introduce Cyrillic from the very start along with a phonemic transcription for passive use only.

5.253 Context: All methods except COR take account of context, and use dialogues as their chief vehicle of presentation, although ALM is the only one giving specific attention to dialogue-adaptation. The styles of DBH and FBL are more suited to the university atmosphere (cf. 5.251). FBL recordings are slightly faster than desirable.

5.254 Auding and speaking: ALM and FBL recognize the distinction between active and passive audial skills, as does DBH to some extent. FBL has the excellent feature of recombined material exclusively for auditory comprehension, while ALM and DBH provide "staged" conversations. These feature sentence build-ups from the end of the sentence. FBL and DBH give considerable attention to suprasegmental features, while ALM and COR concentrate mainly on isolated sounds.

6. TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS: ASSIMILATION

6.1 METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION. All four methods admittedly subscribe to the audio-lingual concept of language as a system of habits to be acquired through practice. "The fundamental principle that has guided us", say the DBH authors, "is that a foreign language is learned not so much by intellectual effort and analysis as by intensive practice" (DBH/T 2). The FBL manual equates language-learning with "acquiring the set of pronunciation habits and grammatical habits so that the student can apply them automatically, just as a native speaker does" (FBL/T 3). Similar statements are found in the introductions to ALM (vii) and COR (ix).

The acknowledged emphasis on learning the language by acquiring habits through practice is well borne out by the rather large number of drills—both phonological and grammatical—included in the textbooks and manuals, and the recording of these on the tapes provided by the publisher. Yet only one of the methods (ALM) appears to embrace the "associative" theory[1] in its entirety. In the others steps are taken to make the learner *aware* of what he is learning, rather than let him respond sub-consciously to a series of stimuli.

DBH begins Lesson 1 with a fairly extensive presentation of the Russian sound-system (by way of transcription), and in the first two lessons explains its discrepancies with the writing-system (Cyrillic orthography). Such explanations go hand-in-hand with drills, as is also the case with the presentation of Russian consonants and clusters in Lessons 5—34. FBL

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[1]Cf. Mackey's quotation in 4.21.

deals with sound-spelling correlation in Grammar-Unit 1, while phonolog-
ical explanations, accompanied by appropriate drills, are given all to-
gether in a separate chapter at the end of the book. (The drills are
numbered, however, to permit easy reference in the text.) COR explains
the Russian sound-system in an introductory chapter entitled "Sounds of
Russian", and provides corresponding drills in the course of the first
ten lessons.

ALM, intended for younger learners, prefers to forego the imparta-
tion of any phonological information to the learner, and relies solely
on his imitative capacity. It does provide explanations of sound-articu-
lation in the *Teacher's Manual*, however, but the only instruction for
teaching the sounds to the pupils is: "Model the following words, asking
first for choral and then for individual response" (ALM/T 37–48). It is
conceivable that in practice the teacher might find it necessary to use
the explanations in class as well, for, as we have seen,[2] it is at the
junior-high-school age (12–15 years old) that the child's ability to
mimick by ear alone seems to decline, and more "information about how
[sounds] are identified in the first place" is needed, or he will be "to
a great extent carrying out the assignment blindly".[3]

6.2 ASSIMILATION OF THE RUSSIAN SOUND-SYSTEM.

6.21 *Phonological difficulties for English-speakers.* In 6.2 we shall
examine the treatment by each method of four major problems confronting

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[2]Cf. Carroll's quotation in 5.24.

[3]Perkins 115; see full quotation in 4.21.

English-speaking students in their assimilation of the Russian sound-
-system. These difficulties may be described as follows:

6.211 Russian has a distinctive feature in its consonantal system which
English does not, namely, palatalization;[4] palatalized and non-palatal-
ized phonemes contrast in minimal pairs.

6.212 Russian vowels change in quality depending on a) the position of
the vowel in relation to word-stress, and b) whether a preceding or fol-
lowing consonant is palatalized or non-palatalized.

6.213 Russian has a number of consonant-clusters which are not found in
English at all or are not found in the same distribution in English.

6.214 Russian stress- and intonation-patterns are quite unfamiliar to
the English-speaking learner.

6.22 *Palatalization of consonants.* Palatalization is one of the most
difficult Russian phonemic features for English-speaking learners. The
problem is most fully exploited in DBH and FBL; it is treated to a lesser
extent in COR, and rather scantily (even in practice drills) in ALM.

The "Pronunciation practice" sections of Lessons 5—10 in DBH are de-
voted to teaching the pronunciation of "hard" (non-palatalized) and "soft"
(palatalized) consonants, divided into four groups (cf. DBH 3—5). The
first group of twelve pair (those that contrast before any vowel) is treat-
ed in Lessons 5—8, the second group of three consonants (the palatalization
of which depends upon the following vowel) in Lesson 9, and the third and
fourth groups (three palatalized and three non-palatalized consonants) in

[4]See 4.12, fn. 6, for definition.

Lesson 10. For each consonant or pair the usual Cyrillic spellings are given along with the phonemic representation, followed by two or three examples, a brief description of the articulation, and a contrastive sound--drill. Everything is clearly set forth in the student's textbook except the sound-drills, which appear in a special appendix in the *Instructor's Manual* (40–52); these generally consist of a series of a dozen or so minimal or near-minimal pairs contrasting the hard and soft phonemes in initial, medial, and final positions, or distributional examples of unpaired consonants (cf. 4.12). A commendable feature is the contrastive drill of [č] with [t̢], since, it is explained, many students tend to confuse them (DBH/T 51). A similar drill contrasting another close pair—[š] and "[šč]" (which in the author's opinion would be better represented by [š̢:])—might have profitably been added. (A reference to the textbook-page and tape--reel number is provided along with each drill in the manual.)

The articulatory explanations (see above) include some mention of contrast with similar phonemes in English,[5] but there might be a slight danger in comparing the effect of palatalization in Russian to that of a *y*-glide in English, even with such a carefully-worded statement as "soft Russian [t̢]...has the effect *on the ear* [of an English-speaker] of being followed by a *y-like* glide" (DBH 68, italics J.W.; cf. also 5.14, fn. 9). This is balanced, however, by the fairly precise description of its formation "by a closure of the front part of the blade of the tongue (not the tip) against the ridge of the gums" (DBH 68).

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[5]E.g. DBH (68): "Neither Russian hard [t] nor soft [t̢] (nor any other Russian consonant, for that matter) ever has the puff of breath that usually accompanies English *t*". A similar note is given for the description of all obstruents.

As mentioned in 6.1, FBL has assembled all its pronunciation-material into one chapter at the end of the book (FBL 299—321). Here the drills are set out in a slightly different manner from that of DBH: they are organized, according to the FBL manual, "by grouping in one exercise sounds that have some feature in common" (FBL/T 9). Thus Drill 1 is devoted to the voiceless obstruents /p/t/k/, Drill 2 to dentals /t/d/n/, and Drill 3 to voiced consonants /b/d/g/v/z/ž/. Drills 4—8 treat non-palatalized consonants /r/, /l/, /x/, /c/, and /š/ž/ respectively, and Drill 9 is for practice in lip-rounding for consonants before back vowels /o/u/. Palatalized consonants are taken up in Drills 10—15, grouped according to point of articulation (labials, velars, dentals), with /ʲ/, /č/, and "/šč/" treated in separate drills. Although hard and soft consonants are drilled separately from each other, references in the text itself encourage juxtaposition of drills so that the contrast may be made clearer.[6] Although examples are included for initial, medial, and final distribution, there is no attempt to organize the drills so as to result in minimal (or near-minimal) pairs when contrasted. The only use of minimal pairs comes, surprisingly enough, under the heading of "Reading Exercise" at the end of Grammar-Unit 1 (FBL 19—20). Further sound-drills are provided in the exercises for Conversation-Units 1 and 2 (6/11), but these do not include paired palatalized consonants, and are organized primarily as an introduction to the Cyrillic alphabet, rather than to give practice in specific Russian phonemes.

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[6]E.g. FBL 50, Ex. A; cf. also FBL/T 15.

In both the introductory "Sounds of Russian" chapter (COR 1–3) and in the pronunciation-section of Lesson 1 (8–9), COR has Russian consonants properly classified into the same four groups as has DBH (3–5). In Lesson 1 they are listed in logical order (e.g. /b/bj/p/pj/d/dj/t/tj/ etc.) with one example each and no explanation. The "explanation" given in "Sounds of Russian" has some articulatory description[7] but relies rather heavily on comparison (rather than contrast) to similar phonemes in English, sometimes with non-linguistic devices as well.[8] Here, too, the phonemes (in transcription) are simply listed in the order of the English alphabet, without any attempt to show the relationship of phonemes to each other (except in regard to palatalization). The "explanations" of consonants /l/lj/, /r/rj/, /t/tj/p/pj/, are repeated in Lessons 7–9 respectively with a few more examples for each, but even here there seems to be no attempt to set up any minimal contrasts.

As mentioned above, palatalization receives even scantier attention in ALM, despite the declaration of its significance beforehand: "In English this distinction does not exist, but in Russian it is essential: it may serve as the only distinction between two words with otherwise identical phonetic forms" (ALM/T 39; cf. also Reformatskij's quotation in 4.12). The first fifteen drills make a fair beginning: five each are devoted to the pairs /l/ḷ/, /r/ɍ/, and /t/ṭ/, where first the hard, then the soft

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[7]E.g. "*p*: like English *p* in *sport*, i.e., without the puff of breath that accompanies English *p* in *port*" (COR 2).

[8]E.g. "*r*: like English *r* in a telephone operator's pronunciation of *thr-r-ree*.... *tj*: like English *t* in *stew* in that pronunciation that has a *y*-glide after the *t*". (Note that COR uses *j* to indicate a palatalized consonant, not the phoneme /j/, which he transcribes as *y*.)

variant is drilled, followed by a contrast of the two; this is all done through examples, which in the contrast-drills are at least near-minimal pairs. The four remaining drills, however, cover only five additional consonants: /p/k/, /š/ž/, and /x/, with no further mention of soft varieties. And that is all that is stated or drilled as far as palatalization of Russian consonants is concerned.

6.23 *Changes in vowel quality.* Changes in the quality of Russian vowels, as noted in 6.21, depend on two main factors: a) the position of the vowel in relation to word-stress, and b) whether a preceding or following consonant is palatalized or non-palatalized. The contrast of stressed and unstressed vowels has been treated in traditional Russian textbooks for some time;[9] the latter has received comparatively little attention to date. In fact, the influence of palatalization on vowel quality is not mentioned at all in ALM, and DBH deals with it only indirectly; it is treated fairly extensively, however, in FBL and COR. The effect of stress on vowel quality receives considerable attention from all methods except ALM.

The problem of changes in vowel quality—especially in regard to unstressed vowels—is most fully exploited by COR, where the pronunciation sections of three lessons (4—6) are devoted to it. A good introduction to the subject is given in the "Sounds of Russian" chapter (COR 3—5). Stressed vowels are dealt with first, and after changes in length are noted (before final consonants or clusters as opposed to single medial

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[9]E.g. Gronicka & Bates-Yakobson 14, also Fayer 22.

consonants), the variants of the five vowel phonemes according to preced-

ing and following palatalization are presented.[10] A disadvantage in the

presentation is too heavy a reliance on comparison with English sounds

(cf. also 6.22 on COR's treatment of palatalized consonants).[11] This is

then followed by an analysis of the unstressed vowels, classified accord-

ing to four positions:

   1. initial, not preceded by a consonant;
   2. final, not followed by a consonant;
   3. immediately before the stress, but not initial;
   4. elsewhere, i.e., two or more syllables before the stress but
   not initial, or after the stress but not final.[12]

For the vowel phonemes /i/ and /a/ the difference in vowel quality is

shown after palatalized and non-palatalized consonants in each position

where applicable,[13] and one or two examples are given for each variety.

More examples are given when the subject is taken up in Lessons 4—6.[14]

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[10]Vowels tend to increase in height and/or frontness according to the
number of contiguous palatalized consonants—e.g. /a/ is realized as
[a] between two non-palatalized consonants, and as [æ] between two
palatalized consonants; between palatalized and non-palatalized con-
sonants (and vice-versa) the allophone is approximately midway be-
tween [a] and [æ]. Vowels also tend to be followed by a forward-up-
ward glide before palatalized consonants.

[11]E.g. "*u*: like the vowel of English *put*, *foot* but with the lips slightly
protruded, so that the sound, though short, resembles the vowel of
goose, *soup*" (COR 4). This comparison may only add to the problem of
native-language interference (see 3.11).

[12]COR 4.

[13]As COR points out (4—5), /o/ does not occur in unstressed syllables at
all; /e/ is found only in position 1; /u/ has approximately the same
quality in all unstressed positions [but does vary according to the
palatalization of contiguous consonants]; /a/ does not occur in po-
sition 3 (and only rarely in position 4) following palatalized and
palatal consonants.

[14]Positions 1 and 2 are drilled in Lesson 4, positions 3 and 4 in Lessons
5 and 6 respectively.

FBL's treatment of changes in vowel quality does not include the same refinement or distinction as that of COR; for example, it recognizes only the influence of preceding palatalization on the quality of stressed vowels /i/a/o/u/, and only that of following palatalization on stressed /e/. Drills 16—21 are devoted to stressed vowels in the environment of "plain" consonants and in final position, and Drills 22—26 to those in the company of palatalized consonants (FBL 308—311). Once again, however, text references allow for juxtaposition of drills for sharper contrast.[15] Drills 27 to 32 treat unstressed vowels in palatalized and non-palatalized environments, but no more than one position is recognized except for /a/ after a non-palatalized consonant, where COR's position 3 is distinguished from other possibilities.[16] Like COR, FBL also makes use of English comparisons, even though a short note appears beforehand (FBL 307) to the effect that "these...are only meant as approximations" and that the learner should not take them "too seriously", since "there is a great deal of dialect variation with respect to English vowels"; the student "should rather depend upon the instructor or the recordings".

As mentioned at the beginning of 6.23, DBH recognizes the influence of palatalization on vowel quality only indirectly. This is because its

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[15]E.g. FBL 25, Ex. A.

[16]As stated before Drill 28 (FBL 312), "this is the vowel for which it is necessary to introduce the extra variable of pretonic position. In pretonic position the vowel /a/ is similar to the *u* in English *but* and in other unstressed positions it is similar to the *a* in English *soda*". If this is the only distinction to be made, it might have been more accurate to include COR's position 1 together with position 3 (pretonic), as initial /a/ is closer to pre-tonic /a/ than to other unstressed variants. This is in fact done in DBH (see below).

explanations (and drills) are based on the "sound-values" of the Cyrillic

vowel-letters rather than on the Russian sound-system itself.[17] Thus in

the two pages devoted to the subject (23—25) DBH treats the variants ac-

cording to palatalization under the corresponding Cyrillic vowel-symbols

(o and ё etc.); it also deals with stressed and unstressed "sound-values"

together. Within these limitations, however, at least two unstressed

variants according to position are recognized for o, e, and я (for some

reason a is not even mentioned).

ALM, the method intended for learners of a younger age, devotes only

one drill to stressed vowels and one to unstressed vowels, both using the

Cyrillic alphabet only (ALM/T 37—38). No distinctions are recognized in

the former (except for the obvious difference of и and ы).[18] The only

word of explanation in regard to unstressed vowels is that "unstressed o

and the unstressed a are pronounced alike" and that "unstressed e and the

unstressed и are pronounced almost alike" (ALM/T 38);[19] twelve examples

are provided in all. No variants according to either position or palatal-

ization are recognized.

6.24 *Consonant clusters*. Like the vowel allophones, there is also a need

(as was brought out in 3.14) to give some attention to consonantal variants

in what are known as *clusters*. The student of Russian who masters the cor-

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[17]This is rather surprising for DBH, which otherwise uses the Russian sound-
-system (in transcription) as the basis of its explanations and drills.

[18]There is as yet no final consensus as to the phonemic or allophonic status
of these two sounds; for one discussion of them see Leed 39—41.

[19]Cf. also 5.22, fn. 17.

rect pronunciation of Russian consonants—both palatalized and non-palatalized—will have further difficulty when he comes to utter words and sentences simply because of the large number of unfamiliar clusters—those not characteristic of English at all and those appearing in different distributions. He has learned how to say the individual consonant sounds, but he has not yet learned how to use them in juxtaposition. Yet with the exception of the phonemic alternation of voiced and unvoiced consonants, the only real treatment of clusters is to be found in DBH.

After individual consonant sounds are drilled in Lessons 5—10 (cf. 6.22), the "Pronunciation practice" sections of the next *twenty-four* lessons[20] are devoted to the problems of consonant clusters in all distributional positions, particularly those clusters and distributions which are not characteristic of the English sound-system. Initial and final clusters containing /r/ or /ŗ/ are drilled separately in Lessons 13 and 14; those containing /l/ or /ļ/ appear in the following lesson. Lessons 18 and 19, for example, deal with clusters beginning with /s/ and /z/, and other two-consonant clusters are treated in Lessons 21—23. The pronunciation sections of Lessons 24—29 are devoted to clusters of three consonants, that of Lesson 30 to four-consonant clusters (with /st/ as the two middle consonants). Information on cluster-simplification (where more consonants are represented orthographically than are sounded) is given in Lesson 20, and a drill on double consonants is provided in Lesson 11. Under the heading of "special consonant clusters" in Lesson 12

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[20]Except for Lesson 17, which deals with voicing alternation in final position.

are given such items as /čš/čč/dž/tc/. The pronunciation sections of

Lessons 31—34 consist of a four-part presentation and drill of "initial

consonant clusters with no parallel in the English sound system", which

includes clusters like /ɬg/vm/gn/mr/. As mentioned in 6.22, all drills

(aside from a few examples) are printed in the teaching manual rather

than in the student's textbook.

The feature of alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants—not

only in clusters, but also at the end of words—is dealt with in Lessons

3, 16, and 17. It must be remembered, however, that this is a *phonemic*

variation, in which one phoneme is replaced by another, rather than the

mere alternation of allophones in distribution.[21] However, since it is

a feature involved (at least partially) with consonant clusters, and is

treated to some extent in all four methods, it deserves some discussion

here.

DBH gives the following advice for dealing with voicing alternation:

> Since the writing system does not accurately reflect the spo-
> ken language, it is essential for the student to know which
> consonants are voiced, which are voiceless, and, especially,
> which are paired in terms of voice or absence of voice. This

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[21]The distinction between Russian voiced and voiceless consonants them-
selves presents a problem for the English-speaking learner. Although
there are voiced and unvoiced consonants in English, it is the tense/
lax opposition which is the significant feature, and voicing is merely
a concomitant phenomenon. In Russian, however, voicing is distinctive;
the tense/lax contrast is minimal. Thus the learner's ear, accustomed
to the latter as the distinctive signal, may not always perceive the
voicing opposition without it; similarly a tense/lax dominated con-
trast in his own speech will hinder its comprehension by native Rus-
sians: hence the need of special attention. This is given to some
extent in each method along with the introduction of palatalized and
non-palatalized consonants (cf. for example 6.22, fn.5).

is important because, in certain positions, only consonant sounds of one or the other series are spoken, regardless of the spelling.[22]

Accordingly, each method gives a table showing paired and unpaired consonants (DBH and COR use transcription and so list palatalized consonants separately). COR includes among paired consonants (labelled *mutes*—see COR 5) those unvoiced consonants (/c/č/x/x̣/) which do not have voiced counterparts operating independently, but only under the conditions of the voicing alternation in clusters. All four methods point out the special status of /v/ỵ/ in regard to voicing alternation; all include examples of replacement of voiced consonants by voiceless ones in clusters, and vice-versa, as well as replacement of voiced consonants in word-final position.

DBH, however, is the only method that includes any specific drills on the alternation feature: two pages of extensive practice drills are given in Lesson 3, and further drills appear in the *Instructor's Manual* to be used in Lessons 16 and 17, which are also devoted to voicing alternation. Two short drills appear in the ALM manual (48)—in one of them voiced phonemes are contrasted as to alternation before voiced and voiceless second-members in a cluster[23] but both drills include only ten examples altogether. No drills on voicing alternation are provided in either FBL or COR.

6.25 *Stress and intonation patterns.* We observed in 3.1 that stress and intonation are most significant factors in the comprehension and produc-

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[22]DBH 40.

[23]A similar drill is recommended by Birkenmayer (48).

tion of Russian speech (cf. especially Sedun's quotation in 3.14). The features of stress and intonation are given considerable attention in DBH and FBL, very little in ALM, and virtually none in COR.

The most important characteristic of Russian *stress* (in comparison to that of English) is the absence of secondary word-stress.[24] Perhaps as a result of this, stressed vowels are sounded with greater intensity than are English vowels with primary stress, and there is a very striking difference between stressed and unstressed vowels.[25] This much, at least, is brought out in all four methods (cf. DBH 7, FBL 314, ALM/T 36, COR 3). Phrase-stress, however, is treated only in DBH and FBL; in the former it is even indicated in the phonemic transcription by a double acute mark. No specific stress-drills are provided in DBH, but FBL includes two drills each for word- and phrase-stress.

Intonation is designated by the DBH manual as "one of the areas most neglected in Russian textbooks" (DBH/T 9). "Practice has shown", the text continues, "that the student usually focuses on the pronunciation of individual words and, unless properly directed, fails to perceive and imitate the intonation of the sentence as a whole", in much the same way that he concentrates too much on the individual phonemes when trying to master clusters. Hence DBH has seen fit to include special sections on "Intonation practice" in six of its early lessons (6—11) in addition to the regular "Pronunciation practice" feature. Lesson 6 introduces the

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[24]As explained in FBL (315), however, there are a few compound words in
    Russian with an optional secondary stress, e.g. железнодорóжный.

[25]Of the latter, those in COR's positions 1 and 3 (cf. 6.23) tend to be
    slightly stronger than the others.

learner first of all to falling contours in statements and questions (with "question-words"); questions with rising and rising-falling contours (without "question-words") are dealt with in Lessons 7 and 8 respectively, and emphatic statements with the latter-type curve in Lesson 9. Lessons 10 and 11 contain a review of all contour-types.

Seven drills are allotted to intonation practice in the FBL "Pronunciation of Russian" chapter (Drills 37—43, FBL 317—321). These cover three main types of utterances: statement, questions "with interrogative words", and questions "without interrogative words". A commendable feature of FBL's treatment of intonation is the constant contrast with English intonation-patterns for the same types of utterances. Both FBL and DBH make good use of diagrams illustrating intonation-patterns.

ALM, on the other hand, has one short drill (eight examples) contrasting intonation-patterns in questions and statements; however, there is little accompanying explanation (and no diagrams), even for the teacher, who himself might not be entirely familiar with Russian intonation-patterns. COR makes no mention of intonation whatsoever.

6.26 *Summary*. The analysis of the four methods (ALM, COR, DBH, FBL) in regard to assimilation of phonological difficulties may be summarized as follows:

6.261 Palatalization: DBH gives the most thorough treatment, especially with its use of contrastive drills and minimal pairs; FBL is the next recommended, as a number of drills are devoted to the subject; COR follows DBH's classification procedure, but is lacking in coherence and provision

of adequate drills; ALM provides good drills only for a few consonant pairs, but neglects all the others.

6.262 Vowel quality: COR presents the most extensive analysis of changes in vowel quality under the influence of palatalization and stress, but FBL provides more adequate drills and is probably better suited to teaching purposes—both, however, rely somewhat on English comparisons, thus adding to the interference problem; DBH does not treat the subject in sufficient detail, and ALM hardly touches it at all.

6.263 Clusters: DBH is the only method to give adequate treatment of Russian consonant clusters, and is the only one which includes a sufficient amount of drill on voicing alternation; ALM has two short drills, but does make use of the contrast principle; FBL and COR explain the phenomenon and provide examples but no drills.

6.264 Stress: Word- and phrase-stress is best treated in FBL, which is the only method providing specific stress-drills; DBH indicates phrase-stress in its transcription; ALM and COR deal with word-stress only.

6.265 Intonation: Both DBH and FBL give considerable attention to intonation-patterns—the former offers a more thorough explanation of the actual contours, while the latter features a contrast with English intonation-patterns; the subject receives minimal attention in ALM and none in COR.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF TEACHING-METHODS.

7.11 *Presentation.*

ITEM	ALM	COR	DBH	FBL
Number of units	14	35	36	24 Conv./12 Gram.
Expected level of learners	junior-high-school	1st year university	1st & 2nd years university	high-school & university
Primacy of speech	recognized	recognized	recognized	recognized
Provision for audial-only phase	textbook distribution delayed	—	books closed in sessions	—
Type of transcription used	—	phonemic; digraphs for palatalized consonants & /šč/	partly allophonic; no digraphs (except /šč/)	phonemic; no digraphs (except /šč/)
Length of transcription period	—	10 units for new material; thruout for word-lists	10 units for new material; thruout for pron.-drills	4 units for dialogues; all pron.-drills
Use of Cyrillic	after audial phase	from start	from start	from start
Main vehicle used	dialogue	sentences	dialogue	dialogue
No. of utterances	15—20	25—30	2 sets of 10	15—20

ITEM	ALM	COR	DBH	FBL
Other "vehicle" material	dialogue adaptation; recombination narratives	review sentences	"Preparation for Conversation"; basic sentence patterns	recombination dialogues (on tape only)
Contextual considerations	recognized	—	recognized	recognized
Tempo	fairly rapid	—	less rapid	fairly rapid
Dialect	Moscow[1]	Moscow[1]	Moscow[1]	Moscow[1]
Style	juvenile	more formal	more colloquial	less formal
Content of utterances	juvenile	miscellaneous	university life	travelogue
Provision for auding-only phase	—	—	—	—
Provision for auding	narratives; one dialogue stage	—	two dialogue stages	recombination dialogues (on tape only)
Provision for speaking	2 dialogue stages: sentence-breakdown + full-utterance repetition	—	2 dialogue stages: sentence-breakdown + full-utterance repetition	one dialogue stage: full utterance only
Emphasis in audial skills	isolated sounds	isolated sounds	whole utterances	whole utterances

[1]Cf. 5.22, fn. 17.

7.12 *Assimilation.*

ITEM	ALM	COR	DBH	FBL
Language as a set of habits	recognized	recognized	recognized	recognized
Need for explanation	——	recognized	recognized	recognized
Pronunciation drills	all in manual	first 10 units	mostly in manual; first 34 units	special chapter; first 6 conv. units
Palatalization: classification	——	4 groups as per following phoneme	4 groups as per following phoneme	——
Palatalization: amount of drill	15 drills on 3 pair only; most positions	examples only; all pairs in special chapter, 4 in Lessons 7–9; most positions	drills in Units 5–10; all pairs; all positions	5 drills; most consonants; all positions
Palatalization: organization of drills	near-minimal pairs	no minimal nor near-minimal pairs	minimal & near-minimal pairs	no minimal pairs; separate drills on palatalized & non-palatalized cons.
Changes in vowel quality: classification	little attention; in Cyrillic only	most extensive treatment; four unstressed variants	less extensive treatment; two unstressed variants	fairly extensive treatment; only one unstressed variant (except for /a/)
Changes in vowel quality: drills	2 drills	examples only	2 pages of drills	17 drills

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86

ITEM	ALM	COR	DBH	FBL
Clusters (except voicing alternation)	—	—	extensive treatment; Units 11–34	—
Voicing alternation: classification	paired + non-paired table	paired + non-paired table	paired + non-paired table	paired + non-paired table
Voicing alternation: drills	2 short drills	—	2 pages of drills	—
Stress: classification	word-stress only	word-stress only	word- & phrase-stress	word- & phrase-stress
Stress: drills	—	—		4 drills
Intonation: classification	2 types; no diagrams	—	3 types & review; diagrams	3 types; diagrams
Intonation: drills	1 short drill	—	Units 6–11	7 drills
Native-language contrast	balance of comparison and contrast	more comparison than contrast	more contrast than comparison	balance of comparison and contrast

7.2 FIRST HYPOTHESIS.

The audial skills of a language are most effectively and efficiently taught by audio-lingual methods which give sufficient consideration to....

7.21 *Age and literacy of learner*. Problem: It is acknowledged that audial skills cannot be taught without complete concentration on audial learning alone to the exclusion of graphic skills, yet audial assimilation is hindered by the predominantly visual orientation of the learner. Conclusions:

7.211 The development of audial skills being the primary goal, the spoken language must be maintained as the *basis* for all audio-lingual teaching, as well as the chief medium of presentation of the language.

7.212 A visual representation of the spoken language is a useful *support* (but only a support) for all except very young pupils in learning the audial skills of a language.

7.213 Any written representation so employed must be an *accurate* reflection of the sound-system of the language without the distortions common to many traditional orthographies. This purpose is best served by the use of a phonemic transcription.

7.22 *Development of active and passive skills*. Problem: Many foreign-language learners have found difficulty in understanding the normal conversational speech of native speakers, and in correctly producing more than isolated sounds or words. Conclusions:

7.221 Attention should be paid to training the learner's *ear* to recognize significant sound-distinctions, which will also facilitate accurate production.

7.222 In the development of both auding and speaking skills language should be presented first in *whole utterances* with particular emphasis on stress- and intonation-patterns.

7.223 Naturalness of context is best found, for teaching purposes, in the average conversational style and tempo of educated speakers of a standard dialect, and is best presented by means of a dialogue of informal conversation, followed by its adaptation to the learner's own experience.

7.23 *Interference with similar phonemes*. Problem: It is acknowledged that the teaching of language as skills requires a considerable amount of practice in the formation of automatic habits, yet older learners find difficulty in making unfamiliar sound-distinctions and tend to substitute native-language phonemes in their attempt at imitation. Conclusions:

7.231 Contrast-drills in which related phonemes are juxtaposed enable the learner to recognize and produce phonemic distinctions more accurately.

7.232 Perception and production of phonemic contrast can be strengthened by an awareness of the target-language sound-system.

7.233 Native-language interference should be prevented by making the learner aware—through contrastive analysis—of the differences in the two phonological systems.

7.3 SECOND HYPOTHESIS.

> ...not all audio-lingual methods publicized as such are equally successful in satisfying the criteria outlined in the first hypothesis.

Four acknowledged audio-lingual methods for the teaching of Russian have been examined in regard to their satisfaction of the above criteria.

Our conclusions may be set forth as follows:

7.31 *Provision of visual representation.*

7.311 All four methods discussed acknowledge the spoken language as the basis for all teaching-material.

7.312 Only three of the methods provide a visual representation in the form of transcription. The other (ALM) neglects to include any form of transcription, and it is questionable whether the age difference (and degree of literacy) between senior- and junior-high-school learners is sufficient to warrant its omission.

7.313 The transcriptions used by DBH and FBL are more suitable for pedagogical purposes than that found in COR because of their representation of palatalized consonants by a single symbol.

7.32 *Mastery of fluent conversational utterances.*

7.321 Not all methods recognize a distinction between auding and speaking material, or the need for training in auditory discrimination. COR makes no provision for this at all, and DBH only to a limited extent. ALM uses narratives for training in auditory comprehension, while FBL provides recombined material on the tapes after each dialogue for this purpose.

7.322 Only two methods (DBH, FBL) emphasize the suprasegmental features of stress- and intonation-patterns; the others concentrate mainly on isolated sounds.

7.323 A standard dialect of educated speakers is adopted by all methods, but there are varying shades of style—from more formal (COR) to less formal (FBL) to more colloquial (DBH) to juvenile (ALM). Some of the material (e.g. FBL dialogues) is recorded at slightly too fast a tempo for

teaching purposes. Only three methods use dialogue as the chief vehicle

of presentation—COR prefers sentences—and only one (ALM) makes any pro-

vision for dialogue-adaptation.

7.33 *Contrast and conscious assimilation.*

7.331 Only two methods (DBH and FBL) apply the principle of phonemic

contrast to any great extent (the former's use of minimal pairs is es-

pecially effective), although ALM provides contrast-drills for isolated

items like voicing alternation in clusters and a few palatalization-paired

consonants.

7.332 One method (ALM) includes no explanation whatsoever for the learner,

and very little even for the teacher. Another (COR) gives a fine analysis

of changes in vowel quality, but little explanatory reference to anything

else. The other two present a more satisfactory explanation of the Rus-

sian sound-system along with fairly extensive drills.

7.333 Very little is brought out in any of the four methods as to the

distinctions between Russian and English phonological systems (DBH prob-

ably does more so than the others). In fact, especially in COR, there

seems to be too great a stress on the *similarities* of the target- and

native-language sounds rather than on the differences between them.

7.4 FURTHER COMMENTS. We may further conclude that two of the methods

discussed are more successful on the whole than are the other two in meet-

ing the criteria established for the audio-lingual approach. While the

ALM method would perhaps be suitable for learners at the elementary-school

level (who are much more responsive to sound-discrimination and -imitation

than are even their junior-high-school counterparts), its practicability

in terms of high-school or university language-courses is severely limited
by its lack of explanatory material and lack of consideration for the vis-
ual needs of older learners. On the other hand, it is chiefly the absence
of sufficient drills that prevents COR from being an effective audio-lin-
gual method *per se*. Presumably, linguistically trained native or near-
-native speakers of Russian would be able to make compensation in the
classroom, but in the writer's opinion such material as is lacking in the
textbook would be extremely difficult for the average Russian teacher to
improvise.

The DBH and FBL methods, however, seem to be on the whole more suit-
able for high-school and university audio-lingual Russian programmes,
since, with the exceptions already brought out, they both succeed in
meeting the criteria of the audio-lingual approach. Of the two, FBL
probably gives a slightly better over-all treatment, covering more fea-
tures, while certain features (e.g., palatalization and especially clus-
ters) are presented in sharper focus by DBH. We may conclude, neverthe-
less, that these two methods—out of those discussed—are the best rep-
resentatives of the audio-lingual approach.

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