

STUDIES OF
ENGLISH TEACHING AND
LEARNING IN CHINA

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中国英语教学 理论研究

王茂金 著

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謝謝·宋吉

本书在对中國英語教學重大課題的研究中所表達的觀點,我非常樂意給予支持。在目前這個國際大環境中,作為外語的英語教學越來越重要,但其個性特點的顯著性也可能会變得日益模糊起來。與漢語和西班牙語一樣,英語是若干國際語言中的一種。這些國際語言在其國際化的進程中獲得了新身份,但也遇到了新問題,即在得到了國際用途的同時,可能会脫離其曾賴以形成的特定歷史條件和社會環境。我們一定要努力防止英語或漢語出現這樣的情況,這是本書的一項重要主張。

很多作為外語的英語教學方法論著作,都認識到了語言在保持個人身份和社會身份方面所起到的重要作用。在預示“地球村”將要到來的二十一世紀起始的今天,這樣的論著就顯得格外重要。

就方法論而言,本書詳細討論了交際法作為語言教學手段的廣泛魅力,並通過作者近期在國外完成的研究項目的主要部分使這種魅力得以具體化。作者研究的內容廣泛,包括宏觀語言技能、學習策略、社會文化意識培養、語言需求和語言成績評估。此外,作者還對學生主流學習課程中的英語語感培養問題做出了構想。尤為可貴的是,作者指出了學生的主要語言和文化體驗作為一種應採用的培養手段,在培養另一種語言(英語)交際能力方面所具有的重要性。這種語言和文化體驗的方法會有助於英語教學達到

同时为国际目的和国内需要服务的双重目标。

对于所有的语言教师来说,如果他(她)们相信语言能力和文化能力密不可分,相信学习一门语言会有助于增强一般理解能力,也会有助于加深学习者对本族语言重要地位的认识,那么,他(她)们对本书就一定会特别感兴趣。

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吉尔·博顿

Forward

I'm pleased to support the development of the ideas represented in this book on issues involved in the teaching of English in China. In the current international context, the teaching of English as a foreign language has both increased importance and, potentially, reduced prominence. English is one of several international languages—like, for example, Chinese, and Spanish—which, in becoming international, both gain identity and are threatened. In gaining an international context, these languages also potentially lose the specific historical and social context that nourished their development. This book will make sure this happens neither to English nor Chinese.

Books on the methodology of teaching English as a foreign language that recognize the role language plays in maintaining personal and social identities are particularly important at the beginning of the 21st century, which heralds the 'global village' era.

Methodologically, this book canvasses the broad appeal of the Communicative Approach as a means of language teaching, substantiated with reference to a major investigation conducted as part of the author's recent research program overseas. The author achieves comprehensive coverage through integrating lan-

guage macroskills, learning strategies, the development of socio-cultural awareness, and the assessment of language need and achievement. Further, the author envisages language awareness in students' mainstream learning programs. Particularly valuable is the author's recognition of the importance of students' primary language and cultural experience as a means of developing communicative competence in another language—English—that can serve both international goals and local needs.

The book will be of special interest to all language teachers who believe that language and cultural competence go hand in hand and that learning one language can enhance general understanding and the status of one's native language.

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Chapter One

AN EVALUATION OF 'COLLEGE ENGLISH INTENSIVE READING BOOK ONE'

ABSTRACT

This chapter reports an evaluation of '*Colloge English Intensive Reading Book One*' (*CEIR I*) and its use at Shaanxi Teachers University (STU) in the People's Republic of China. *CEIR I* was designed in 1991 and is the latest textbook based on the 1985 English syllabus (Zhai *et al.* 1991). At present it is used in non-major English courses in most of China's teachers' universities.

In undertaking the evaluation I sought to address certain purposes and audiences. The first one was to explore English teaching and learning in China through examination of the perceptions held by the teachers and students. The second one was to examine the teaching materials used and some beliefs held by teachers and students. The third one was to gain insights into Chinese teaching methods and materials. The last reason was to seek solutions to the problems thus identified on the basis of the Communicative Approach.

The primary audiences are colleagues teaching English non-majors and potential designers of a better textbook series. Other audiences are the administrators at departmental and senior levels of the above university.

The information that forms the core of this investigation was

obtained by means of two survey instruments: a teachers' questionnaire and a students' questionnaire. Each consists of 20 items arranged in a Likert scale format, with spaces for specific and general comments. Both survey instruments were presented in English with an adjacent Mandarin Chinese translation to a sample of 10 teachers had 49 students. The participants had recently used CEIR I at STU.

The central quantitative findings from the survey are the perceptions of the teachers and students, summarised in two tables. A number of generalisations are made based on these and several issues distinguished. Subsequently, trends in findings are discussed, item by item, in the light of comments made by the participants and theoretical perspectives from a literature review. The chapter concludes with number of recommendations for the teaching of English in the People's Republic of China generally and teachers universities specifically.

Section 1

Introduction to the Evaluation

This section presents initial information about *CEIR I* and the evaluation of its use at *STU*. It includes sections which establish its rationale and which describe the method of investigation and the textbook which was evaluated.

1.1 Rationale

1.1.1. The central role of textbooks in the People's Republic of China

In a country like China where English is a foreign language, one might expect that student textbooks play a decisive role. This can

be seen in what Burnaby and Sun (1989:219) say about the difficulty in implementing Western language-teaching methods:

The teachers ... cited various constraints on implementing Western teaching methods, class-size and schedule, resources and equipment, and the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytic skills. An examination of their views in light of the context and theory of Western language teaching demonstrates that the Chinese teachers' concerns have considerable justification.

The constraints on the teaching methods have directly resulted in the important role textbooks play in China's English teaching and learning. Because of the large size of classes, intensive class schedules, lack of resources and equipment, and many teachers' ignorance about how to teach English as a foreign language in an effective way (Tang 1983:67), more often than not, textbooks produce clearly-defined pathways and authoritative models for teachers and students alike to turn to, thus determining both what and how to teach and what and how to learn.

From a different perspective, Moag (1982) in his matrix, *Features of English-Using Societies*, has clarified the features of English as a foreign language used in all countries including China. These features may be used to explain and illuminate how and why EFL textbooks are used in China. For example, the EFL situation neither includes opportunities for natural language learning in early childhood nor provides situations where English is used for real communication in everyday life.

Tang (1983:68), in his research on the EFL situation in China, observes: