

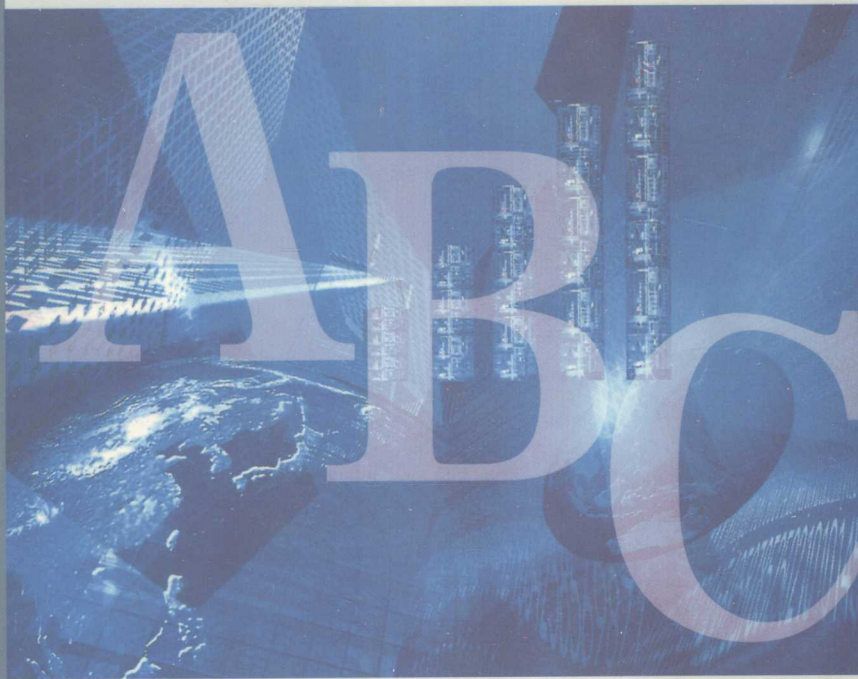
KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW OF
BASIC ENGLISH EDUCATION

基础英语教学

理论与实践

◆ 王之江 编著

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浙江大學出版社

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前 言

新世纪的外语教育形势对我们英语教师提出了新的严峻的挑战。

首先,要求教师转变教学观念,在以人为本的教育理念指导下,从语言知识教学转变为语言能力教学。英语教学的目的主要是培养学生的语言技能和使用英语的交际能力。

第二,要求教师改变教学方法——从“教师—学生”单向讲授法转变成以交际教学为基础、适合不同学生特点的方法。

第三,要求教师提高自身实际使用英语的能力——使教师从单纯的语言知识传授者转变成既是语言知识的传授者又是英语听说读写及交际能力的示范者。

由于各种历史和现实的原因,中学英语教师要接受这些挑战并非易事。早在21世纪来临之前,教育部就明确指出要对从事基础教育的教师进行继续教育。笔者认为,要帮助高校英语师范生和中学英语教师在专业和教学领域里从根本上得到提高,就需要帮助他们进行理论与实践方面的研究和学习。首先必须弄清诸如“语言是什么”、“语言教学的本质特性是什么”等涉及本体论层次的问题,然后再联系中学教学实际,讨论大纲制定、教材分析、教法研究、课堂教学等实践论、方法论层次方面的问题。这样,他们就可以在有关理论的指导下,充分联系中学英语课堂教学的实际,在专业和教学两个方面得到进一步提高。

本书就是根据上述指导思想写成的。全书共分十章。第一章

为我国基础英语教育的发展,介绍 20 世纪 80 年代中期以来中学英语教学的发展情况,以及英语作为外语在我国中学英语教学中的理论基础。第二章至第九章分别讨论英语语言系统中的音、词、句、篇及英语语言技能中的听、说、读、写八个部分。每一章都包括所涉及内容的理论部分——本质和特点,以及实践部分——如何掌握与如何教学。这八个章节既独立成章又相辅相成。只有把英语当作一个以文化内容为基础的音词句篇和听说读写的整合体(Whole Language)来进行教学,才会取得事半功倍的效果。第十章讨论中学英语教学的基本要素。本书每章后均附有一个“Workshop”活动,以帮助读者学完一章以后联系实际加以复习巩固。

笔者在本书编写过程中曾得到美国籍英语教授 George Jiang 博士和加拿大籍英语教师 Edith Warner 女士的帮助,在此一并表示感谢。

本书既可为中学英语教师在接受继续教育时使用,也可作为师范院校英语教学理论与实践课程的教材。本书对师范院校从事英语教学研究的教师也有参考价值。

由于本人水平有限,加上时间紧迫,疏漏和不妥之处在所难免,请同行和读者指正,以便改进。

作者
2000 年 12 月

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TEFL in China's Basic Education

1.0 Introduction

【内容提要】中国基础英语教育的发展 20世纪80年代以来,我国的基础英语教育有了飞速的发展。国家教委(教育部)自90年代初起先后制订和修订的初、高中英语教学大纲以及人民教育出版社与英国朗文出版集团有限公司合作编写的《初中英语》(JEFC)和《高中英语》(SEFC)教材对深化当前中学英语教学改革起到了积极的指导和推动作用。作为英语教师,必须了解英语教学改革的发展过程和趋势,以便抓住有利时机,不断提高自己的教学水平,紧紧跟上这一大好形势的发展。

本章介绍了英语作为外语进行教学所依据的不同理论信息,以及基础英语教育的教学原则。

Objectives:

- ◆ To familiarize teachers of English with the new development of English education in middle schools
- ◆ To introduce teachers of English to some essential information of Teaching English as Foreign Language(TEFL) in Chinese context
- ◆ To help teachers of English to be aware of principles of secondary English education

1.1 The New Development of Secondary English Education

In the middle of 1980s an official survey in 15 cities and provinces revealed that most middle school students found it hard to use the English they had learned for communication. One key reason was that the traditional approach to language teaching passed down from the 1930s still dominated middle school classrooms. English textbooks then in use were outdated and this hampered the students' learning of the language. Written and published by the People's Education Press (PEP) in the late 1970s, the textbooks emphasized grammar only. The dialogues and short stories did not reflect the language used in daily life. There were grammar and translation throughout English classes. Students studied a text and learned the grammar with analysis of parts of speech. Then they did some sentence translation from English to Chinese and vice versa. The classroom language was overwhelmingly the mother tongue – Chinese, not the language being learned by students.

Most middle school teachers of English, trained in the traditional way, resorted to rote learning and their students repeated endlessly without seeming to understand how to use the language in real life. Since teachers used little English in class, their students had little chance to hear English actually spoken. The teachers and textbooks became the resource of the knowledge of English instead of the resource of techniques and skills in learning and using the language.

“Traditions die hard.” But PEP, with cooperation from the Longman Group Ltd. of Britain, prepared a new set of textbooks for junior middle schools – JEF (Junior English for China) and another set for senior

ones – SEFC (Senior English for China) in line with the new national English language teaching syllabuses for junior and senior middle schools stipulated by the State Education Commission in the early 1990s. It was the first time in China's history that Chinese and foreign publishers joined their efforts to edit an “English textbook with Chinese characteristics”. In 1993, about 70 per cent of the middle schools in China adopted JEF C. In 1996, first-year students of senior middle schools who had used JEF C went on to learn SEFC as consistent teaching materials for their further studies of English.

The new textbook series are more beneficial to teachers as they provide teachers with more advice and aids on the effective methods of teaching. While using the new teaching materials, teachers learn to develop a communicative approach to English language teaching and build up their own confidence. They make use of the resources and get inspiration from the new textbooks to create more opportunities for students to interact both in and out of class. Students develop skills by learning and using English. Learning grammar only facilitates their learning the language. In this way, students learn English for functional communication. The purpose of JEF C /SEFC is to enable students to use the language in a meaningful way.

There are some problems in the implementation of JEF C/SEFC. The new textbooks seem to work well with key middle schools but are somewhat difficult for average schools, particularly for ordinary schools in the countryside to follow. Some teachers still keep to the old teaching methods. Some others complain that there is too much material in the new textbooks to be taught in the limited class hours available. However, English classes have started to emphasize the importance of “language use” rather than “knowledge of the language”. Grammar-translation as

the sole method of instruction has been on its way out. Oral fluency has become one of the goals in middle school teaching of English. Although it is still too early to say how much improvement the new teaching materials will bring about in TEFL advancement in China, it is generally acknowledged that a vigorous reform in secondary English education is now in full swing. New standards of English curriculum for basic education will be adopted, teaching materials are being streamlined and teachers of English are being retrained in a more effective way. The reform aims at further promotion of quality-oriented English education, without stressing students' high scores on examinations. To abandon exam-dominated education, teachers of English should teach their students how to think in English and use English in real life as much as they possibly can, not just memorize what they have learned from books or within class.

1.2 Information for TEFL in Chinese Context

China's TEFL program in secondary education is going through an extensive and profound reform in curriculum development, syllabus designing, teaching material writing, teaching methodology, research and evaluation. Bob Adamson, a PhD in English language curriculum in China, points out "A successful curriculum should never make a big leap forward. Keep teaching reforms near to where you are and it should be appropriate to local conditions." As English teachers and researchers, we have responsibilities beyond classroom. We should take a leading role in the discussion of foreign language teaching issues at all levels of syllabus implementation within the curriculum, at both school-scale and teacher-scale or through education commissions and professional associations, etc. We should have answers in relation to China to the question: "What should it mean to be

an English learner and user in our country? ”

1.2.1 Information for the Variety of English

English is the most widely used language in the world. A distinction is often made according to how the language is learned. One well-established categorization makes a three-way distinction between a native language, a second language, and a foreign language.

1. ENL: English as a Native Language

English is spoken as a native language by more than 375 million people, mainly living in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, and South Africa. There, the language is acquired when the speaker is a young child (generally in the home with his/her parents). ENL is also called mother tongue or first language.

2. ESL: English as a Second Language

English is also a second language in many countries and regions where only a small proportion of the people have English as their native language. In those places, mostly former British colonies, English has been legally designated as an official language. ESL is acquired by the speaker at some subsequent period, compared with his ENL acquisition. English as a second language might as well be learnt in the English-speaking countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

3. EFL: English as a Foreign Language

By EFL we mean people in countries require English for communication with people in other countries, either through the spoken or the written word, for such purposes as trade and cultural exchange. Foreign language learning takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom. Examples of EFL are English learnt in France and China.

What Chinese students are learning at school is of course EFL, “good Chinese English”, to be exact, nationally acceptable and internationally intelligible.

1.2.2 Information of Linguistics for English Education

English teaching is the most important and influential means of implementing policy decisions of foreign language education in middle schools in China. In the past, inappropriate decisions led to waste of time, effort and money. So it is essential that decisions in China’s basic education of English be made on the best possible linguistic evidence.

1. General Linguistic Information

Description of how each language is constructed; how it varies through space and changes through time; how it is related to other languages; how its spoken form differs from its written one; and how it is used by its speakers.

2. Sociolinguistic Information

This information relates to: who uses what, where, when, to whom, how frequently, and why, and provides a basis for answers to the questions: how many learners? to what level of proficiency? And at what stage in the education system (if any) should they begin their studies?

3. Psycholinguistic Information

Description of how language is processed in the mind and in particular what factors and what types of “input” facilitate language acquisition under different types of learning situation.

4. Applied Linguistic Information

Information of some special factors which affect language teaching in the classroom; teaching and learning style; learning strategy; information about what works and what does not and why.

We should also take into consideration the availability and qualifications of teachers /teacher-trainers, the existence of suitable teaching materials and resources for material development and the application of multimedia educational technology in the classroom.

1.2.3 Information for English Methodology

Methodology is defined in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics as the study of the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them. The English methodology is a very dynamic one with new theories constantly challenging old orthodoxies. In the beginning there was grammar-translation approach. In the 1950s and 1960s the audio-lingual approach was adopted, influenced by behavioral psychology. Since the mid-1970s the communicative approach, based on functionalism which stresses the teaching of language as it is used in real life, has become popular in English classrooms.

1. Grammar-translation Approach

Aims; cultural appreciation and translation of classical literary texts

Theory of Language: structural-prescriptive traditional grammar

Theory of Learning: teacher-centered; deductive way of learning (learn the rules and apply them)

Learning Conditions: medium of instruction – mother tongue;
teacher's role – linguistic and literary informant

Main Inadequacies: weakness of listening and speaking skills, lack of fluency

2. Audio-lingual Approach

Aims: Stress is placed on language practice rather than on translation;
a shift from teaching about language to teaching language skills;
professional and cultural oral/aural proficiency

Theory of Language: structural-descriptive

Theory of Learning: teacher-centered;

inductive way of learning, drills derived from behaviorist theory

Learning Conditions: medium of instruction – target language;

teacher's role – drill-controller and demonstrator

Main Inadequacies: Drill exercises are boring. Learners lack ability to use the language in actual communication

3. Communicative Approach

Aims: all-round communicative competence in accordance with learner's needs

Theory of Language: functional/notional concept of language description that categorizes not into a structural framework, but into how the language is used, based on sociolinguistic studies

Theory of Learning: learner-centered;

learning development derived from psycholinguistic studies of first and second language acquisition

Learning Conditions: medium of instruction – target language

teacher's role – facilitator, assessor, organizer, and sometimes participant

Main Inadequacies: difficulties in structuring and grading learning materials

There does not seem to be general agreement among English teachers and teacher educators about the best teaching and learning methods for Chinese students of English. The *grammar-translation* approach worked well in China before the mid-1960s and helped to train a great many highly qualified interpreters, translators and teachers of English. However, it