

English Teaching in Chinese Context: Theory and Practice

中国语境下的英语教学：
理论与实践

主编 李正栓 郝惠珍

本书对中国语境下的英语教学进行研究，着重探讨理论与实践。首先对相关理论和新课程标准进行解读，并对1949年以来的英语教学进行概览性回顾，介绍了英语教学的方法与途径，提出在中国语境下英语教学应当走综合之路。本书对语言教学技能、语言知识教学、语言学习策略教学、语言教学中的德育教育、多媒体辅助语言教学、课堂管理、教案设计、学习风格与教学风格、反思教学、行动研究和学生成绩评估等问题进行细致讲解。本书读者对象为师范院校英语专业本科生、省市县区各级教研员、中学教师和准备考应用语言学 and 教学论方向研究生的读者。

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Preface

With the establishment and implementation of the National English Curriculum, the teaching of English has been in a constant state of flux, with new theories, approaches, practices, and materials appearing in China. We are constantly challenged by new research, provoked by the questioning of long-held beliefs, and amazed by the sheer brilliance and creativity of the researchers and professionals in the field of English teaching, especially by the new teaching concepts, teaching goals, and teaching methods proposed by the National English Curriculum.

In order to meet the needs of the new teaching situation, *English Teaching in Chinese Context: Theory and Practice* has taken its shape based on the information obtained from questionnaires and classroom observation, together with the English teachers' and students' practical advice and the latest research. It is a book designed for undergraduates in normal colleges and universities. It is also helpful and beneficial for middle school English teachers and those who study in- or out-of-service training program and postgraduate courses. It is also of much help to those who hope for professional development, yet have no chance or time to attend in-service or out-of-service training. Without discounting the importance of basic teaching methods and techniques in English language teaching, this book attempts to introduce the beliefs, knowledge, theory and thinking that underlie their successful use. What makes it different is that the aspects of quality-oriented education, moral education, strategies fostering and the development of learners' cultural awareness, etc. in the language teaching process are paid great attention to in order to meet the requirements proposed by the National English Curriculum. The argument pursued throughout the book therefore is that language teaching needs to engage teachers not merely in the mastery of rules of practice but in an exploration of the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and thinking that it is equally necessary to perform such practice in their own English class. *English Teaching in Chinese*

Context: Theory and Practice contains 18 chapters, covering English teaching situation in China, teaching and learning theories, essence of the National English Curriculum, history and development of English teaching in China, teaching of language knowledge and skills, affect and strategies, cultivation of students' cultural awareness and moral character, and variety of assessment, etc.

Chapter 1 discusses the present situation of English teaching in China, including teachers' concept, belief and methods in classroom teaching. The problems existing in English teaching at present are analyzed and the causes for the problems are explored. The major trends of English teaching in the 21st century in China are given further attention and the features in English teaching in China in the near future are predicted.

Chapter 2 offers a general introduction to the popular theories underlying English language teaching guided by the National English Curriculum, including the structural view, functional view, interactional view and transformational view, as well as the learning theories, such as discourse theory, monitor theory, cognitive psychology, the constructivism, etc.

Chapters 3 introduces the National English Curriculum, covering such aspects as essence of the National English Curriculum, teaching concept and approaches as well as the reform focus advocated by the National English Curriculum, and the theories underlying the curriculum. The teaching goals proposed by the National English Curriculum are presented in great detail.

Chapter 4 mainly summarizes the development of English language teaching in China since liberation according to the historical events that have happened in China. It also discusses the different phases of English teaching reform in China since liberation, and the features of language teaching in each of the different phases according to the development of language teaching theories and approaches.

Chapter 5 is an overview of the different schools of English teaching in the history of English language teaching: Grammar-Translation Method, Oral Approach, Audio-lingual Method, Natural Approach, Eclectic Approach, etc. The Communicative Approach, including its theory, features, principles, objectives, techniques, etc. is presented. It also discusses the effect of the Communicative Approach on China's English language education through the information obtained from questionnaires and interviews. Causes are analyzed for the failure of employing this approach in Chinese classroom English teaching. Concurrent approaches within the communicative framework: Content-Based Instruction, Task-Based Instruction, and Interactive Language Teaching, etc. are introduced to the readers in order to help them to have a clear and thorough understanding of all of them.

Chapter 6 talks about the learning approaches and methods, including cooperative language learning, experiential learning, and inquiry learning. Their theories, development, features, techniques, etc. are elaborated respectively. Besides, some practical and effective activities related to these learning methods are presented for readers to choose according to their own teaching situation.

Chapter 7 is a detailed explanation of the Integrated Approach in Chinese context. It not only presents the definition and principles of this approach, but also elaborates the theories and their impact on the approach. A detailed explanation is given to the teaching procedure with a sample in order to help English teachers understand it clearly, thoroughly and completely so that they can put it into practice in their classroom English teaching.

Chapter 8 is about the teaching of language skills. It covers not only the conventional aspects, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, but also teaching of translating. Special attention is given to the teaching of English songs in order to arouse the students' learning interests and enhance the teaching and learning efficiency.

Chapter 9 concerns the teaching of language knowledge: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary. Culture teaching is added to this chapter in order to meet the needs and requirements of the National English Curriculum.

Chapter 10 focuses on the teaching of learning strategies. First, it offers detailed information about learning and teaching strategies, on the basis of which the teaching of learning strategies are discussed and some constructive suggestions are provided based on the teaching materials provided by textbooks.

Chapter 11 gives a special attention to cultivating learners' moral quality by using the language teaching materials. The authors of this book suggest some practical and effective activities commonly employed for moral education in the process of classroom teaching based on the language teaching materials. Some tips for cultivating learners' morality have been offered, too.

Chapter 12 keeps an eye on language teaching with modern teaching technology, especially, computer-assisted language teaching and learning, language teaching with multimedia, using the Internet in English language teaching, etc. First of all, it defines the multi-media and summarizes the advantages of multi-media in English teaching. It suggests some practical and effective ways of using multi-media in English teaching. Some tips for using multi-media in English teaching are provided so as to help English teachers to use it successfully and effectively.

Chapter 13 covers the major aspects in classroom management. It gives a detailed

description about routines of a lesson, usual patterns of classroom interaction, and how to deal with problem students in class. Some suggestions are given on how to make proper use of teaching aids in order to help students to learn the language effectively.

Chapter 14 deals with lesson planning. It covers such aspects as the nature and format of a lesson plan, principles of lesson planning, samples of lesson plan, etc. It offers 4 samples of lesson plans, one of which is offered by a professional, the second is contributed by a Chinese English teacher based on the Chinese context with PPP model. The third sample is a recorded lesson based on the weak version of Task-Based Model, given by a middle school English teacher in No. 2 Middle School in Wangdu County, Hebei Province. The fourth one, based on the strong version of Task-Based Language Teaching, presents a series of tasks designed by the English teachers in No. 2 Middle School in Wangdu County, Hebei Province based on Lesson 30 in *Learning English*, Book 5. (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press, 2006)

Chapter 15 focuses on the learning and teaching style. On the basis of elaboration of the learning and teaching style, this section mainly discusses how to accommodate teaching styles to learning styles in classroom English teaching. It offers some practical and feasible advice to English teachers on how to design learning activities according to the Multiple Intelligence Theory in order to meet students' different learning needs.

Chapter 16 discusses reflective language teaching, which covers the following aspects: definition and characteristics of reflective language teaching, process and contents of reflective language teaching, methods of reflection and reflection questions, etc. so as to help English teachers to develop their professional abilities based on regular and timely self-reflection after teaching.

Chapter 17 offers major definitions about action research, a very popular research method at present for practitioners of English language teaching. It also gives special attention to the principles, processes, aims, etc. while doing action research. Some suggestions on how to choose a topic and how to plan and implement the action research are given to those who are interested in personal, academic and professional development.

Chapter 18 covers not only the traditional measures for assessing learners' achievement during the process of language learning, but also lists some new and popular ways of assessing students' overall abilities, such as presentation, interview, project work, portfolio, etc.

Compared with the previous published books on language teaching, this book has made the following improvements:

- **Guided by the National English Curriculum.** This book has been shaped and compiled

under the guidance of the National English Curriculum. The new teaching concept, new teaching goals, new teaching content, etc. advocated by the National English Curriculum are included in this book.

● **China-based language teaching concept.** In recent years, the field of language teaching in China has experienced a sharp shift from traditional language teaching to communicative and task-based language teaching. Teaching theories and approaches, teaching methods and techniques, teaching goals and assessments, etc. are reflected in the book based on those proposed by the National English Curriculum and the information from both teachers and students in middle schools through investigation in Hebei Province in China, on the basis of which, the Integrated Approach under Chinese teaching context has been proposed by the authors of this book (refer to Chapter 7).

● **New focus on language teaching in Chinese context.** Some new areas of language teaching focus are highlighted in the language classroom, such as teaching translation and English songs in Chapter 8, teaching culture in Chapter 9, teaching learning strategies in Chapter 10, cultivating learners' morality in English teaching in Chapter 11, teaching learning style in Chapter 15, reflective language teaching for English teachers' professional development in Chapter 16, action research in Chapter 17 which aims to help English teachers to become not only successful practitioners but also researchers in language teaching field.

● **Updated assessment proposals.** In Chapter 18, besides summative assessment on learners' achievements, formative assessment is advocated according to the National English Curriculum. Alternative assessment methods and items on learners' achievements are offered according to the authors' experiments and other professionals' suggestions.

We do hope that this book is helpful and beneficial to those who want to develop themselves and continue to grow professionally so as to most fruitfully meet the challenges that lie ahead and strive to do better and better jobs of teaching as required by the National English Curriculum.

Li Zhengshuan, Hao Huizhen

August 18, 2009

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Chapter 1

English Teaching in Chinese Context

1.1 Present Situation of English Teaching in China

With economic globalization and multi-polarization of the world, especially the popularization of the Internet, English, as the tool for absorbing and communicating information, becomes important. This poses much higher requirements on English teaching, that is, students under modern English teaching should be able to integrate the world. However, the current English teaching in China is not satisfactory. Although English educators and teachers have strived to reform it and great achievements have been made, English teaching still has a long and tough way to go.

1.1.1 New syllabuses for different levels

In order to raise the level of modern English teaching and foster high-quality talents for international communication, the Department of Education has begun to constitute new syllabuses for different levels of English teaching in China. The syllabus for middle school strongly promotes quality-oriented education, stressing creative and practical ability. The aim of senior English teaching is to: consolidate and extend students' knowledge on the basis of junior English teaching, develop the basic skills including aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, improve the preliminary English communicative competence, nurture students in ideological and moral, patriotic and socialist education, enhance the understanding of foreign cultures, especially that of the English-speaking countries, develop students' intelligence, cultivate their innovative ability and practical ability, form effective learning strategy, and lay foundation for their sustainable development.

The National English Curriculum, for the first time, specifies the humanistic and social significance. It proposes that senior English teaching should meet the need of the development of students' mind and affect, meet the need of employment, higher education, future survival and development. Meanwhile, it should meet the requirements of talent training for economic construction and science and technology development.

In the year of 1986, the syllabus of college English prescribes that college English teaching is to cultivate students' higher level of reading, listening, speaking, writing and translating abilities. In 1992, the syllabus for graduate English teaching was widely implemented at various universities and colleges in China which stipulates "the purpose of the graduate English teaching is to enable graduates to master the language as a useful tool for their academic learning and research, and for international communication." In the year of 2000, a syllabus for English majors was issued, which emphasized that the purpose of college English majors is to cultivate compound talents of English who have solid basic skills and wide range of cultural knowledge and can proficiently apply English in foreign affairs, in economic, trading, educational, scientific, technological, cultural and other fields. These syllabuses set guiding standards for English teaching to follow. Since the respective execution of the syllabuses, textbooks for different levels have been put to use with new ideas and theories of modern English teaching.

Since 1978, different English syllabuses and curriculums for middle school English teaching have also been established with different requirements and different teaching goals, from focus on developing students' language skills to focus on students' personal development, which presents a vivid picture of constant change of teaching and learning concept. (Please refer to "3.7 Difference between syllabus and curriculum" in Chapter 3 for detailed information.)

1.1.2 Rapid elevation of teachers' qualities

The development of education, to a great degree, is decided by the qualities of teachers. With the rapid development of economy after the reform and opening-up to the outside world, the higher education all over China has boomed up these years which definitely elevated the qualities of English teachers. According to the data of a survey carried out in Hebei Province in 2002, among 496 middle school English teachers, graduates with B.A. degree from normal universities constitute 11.5% of the total, while according to the data of the same survey carried out in 2006, 44.05% of the middle school English teachers in Hebei Province are graduates with B.A. degree, and 3.33% even with M.A. degree from normal universities. Now, 98% of the teachers of English majors in most colleges and universities around the country have M.A. or higher degree. The higher professional qualities of the English teachers help guarantee high-quality English teaching.

1.1.3 Emphasis on teaching approaches and research

With the implementation of different levels of new syllabuses, and elevation of the qualities of English teachers, great emphasis has been put on ELT research and approaches, to which schools and universities contribute a lot. More and more teachers have updated their teaching beliefs, raised the awareness of the study and application of different teaching approaches. Take the data collected in 2002 from 496 middle school English teachers in Hebei Province for example, none of the teachers know the theory and goals of Communicative Language Teaching, 2 teachers know the background of it, 5 teachers claim to know the features of it, 9 teachers confirm to know the steps of CLT and 35 know the practical skills for CLT, while the data collected in 2007 shows that among 588 middle school English teachers, more than 50% know clearly the five common teaching approaches, namely Grammar-Translation Approach, Oral Approach, Audio-Lingual Approach, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Approach. Some respondents have even listed some other teaching approaches such as affective language teaching, game teaching, TPR, etc. In colleges and universities, teachers nowadays have great enthusiasm in applying for and doing research projects on SLT of different levels. And hundreds of research papers have been published in scientific research magazines of different levels each year, which greatly promote English teaching all around the country.

1.1.4 Increasing amount of English language learners

The number of Chinese English learners ranks the 1st in the world. All around China, English learners, from 3 to 80 years old, who start studying English even from kindergarten to retirement, have reached an overwhelming number. English is a required course from primary schools to universities. Graduates from colleges and universities have at least 12 years of English study in school. However, what they have learnt in school sometimes cannot meet the need of their work and society. Therefore, a large amount of people further their English study in some part-time universities or open universities such as evening universities, TV universities and correspondence universities. And there are some who take part-time courses in order to get a diploma. English education in China has great potentiality.

1.2 Problems of English Teaching in China

1.2.1 Incorrect guidance of exams and monotonous teaching approach

Although improvements have been made, the actual English teaching has not changed significantly. The present English teaching still keeps the exam-oriented feature instead of the quality-oriented one. Teachers nowadays are somewhat aware of the meaningful application of various teaching approaches,

but still their teaching is geared unconsciously by exams. Both in school and outside, there are varieties of English tests for English learners to pass, for example, National College Entrance Examination, PETS, TEM4, TEM8, CET4, CET6, etc. The scores of students and the passing rate are used to evaluate teachers' teaching abilities, teaching effects and learners' achievements as well. Severely influenced by such incorrect educational guidance, although teachers nowadays are well-informed of some useful teaching approaches and skills, they seldom put them into use in class, because, otherwise, they cannot achieve so-called desired results. Therefore, in class, most teachers, especially those in middle schools and of non-English majors still take great advantage of the "Cramming method of teaching". Most teaching in class still focuses on vocabulary and grammar, cultivating the students' reading, writing abilities and strategies for passing exams instead of the comprehensive one involving listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating abilities. Teachers in class are the dominators, neglecting the motivation, affect and strategy of the students, who are merely the passive receivers. Students' ability of applying English in communication is not enhanced at all. Hence, most English learners in China are still dumb-deaf English learners, which cannot meet the requirements of the society. Students, after 12 years of English study, are considered as a failure by English educators and linguists.

1.2.2 Desperate need of coherent teaching material

Teaching material plays a crucial role in the input of language knowledge to students. It is the conveyer of language, culture and knowledge and is the perfect reflection of teaching ideas including teaching goals, teaching content and teaching approaches. To a great degree, the teaching material decides the efficiency of teaching and learning. After the issue of the new syllabuses for different levels of English teaching, a variety of new teaching materials are used in primary schools, middle schools, colleges and universities, and even graduate schools to satisfy the respective teaching needs. However, textbooks of different levels violate the cognitive law and lack cohesion between each other. Some textbook series disrupt the natural growth of difficulty level, which results in a waste of time and energy. The seemingly rich contents of the textbooks are more superficial than profound. The most serious problem is students' loss of interests.

1.2.3 Insufficient knowledge structure of teachers

Most English teachers have solid basic skills, but there are some whose basic skills need great improvement. Some elementary school English teachers' pronunciation and oral English greatly influence the beginners. And the teaching attitudes affect the students' interest and motivation. Because of the pressure of exams, middle school English teachers focus on the accumulation