

英语教学研究论文选

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河南人民出版社

序

六十年代初，艾尔伯特·马克华德特曾经说过，世界上有**两亿七千万**操英语的人把英语当做**第一语言**来学习，还有大约**一亿三千五百万人**把英语当做**外国语或第二语言**来学习。今天，在中国，学习英语和使用英语的人数大概比上述两个数字之和也少不了多少。足见英语教学在中国教育事业中占有多么重要的地位，也足见英语教学理论的研究具有多么重大的意义。近年来，随着我国对外政治、经济、文化交流的发展，怎样才能**更多更快更好**地培养通晓外语的人才的问题也逐渐提上日程。全国召开了不少英语教学研讨会，研究英语教学理论的人也一天天多起来。这是一个十分可喜的现象。《英语教学研究论文选》一书就是这种形势的产物。

该书收入的论文既有一定的广度，也有一定的深度。我在阅读这些论文的时候，深深受到作者们献身英语教学事业的精神的感动。我对他们不能不肃然起敬。我认为，他们对于英语教学改革的许多真知灼见，也都值得认真学习和借鉴。

欲达同志和霖欣同志对英语教学理论一向有深入的研究。承蒙他们邀请我担任本书的审校并为本书写序，我感到非常光荣，更是义不容辞。由于我对英语教学理论素无研究，我也讲不出什么新的意见，只能谈几点感想，就教于广大读者。是为序。

张 今

1992.12.31于河南大学

前 言

《英语教学研究论文选》是我们献给外语教学园地的一束小花。她也许并不艳丽，没有惊人的风采。然而，她是园丁们辛勤劳作的结晶和见证。

在编辑本书的过程中，我们首先认真地学习、研究了国家教委颁布的各类学校的英语教学大纲及有关文件，以期使本书起到落实大纲的作用。在筛选论文的时候，我们兼顾了英语教学的各个层次和各个方面，以便全面地反映英语教学研究的成果。

本书收入的论文，均系初次公开发表。有的出自从事英语教学工作数十年的老专家的手笔，更多的则是中青年老师近年来钻研英语教学的成果。其中有些论文曾在不同范围的教学研讨会议上宣读或交流过。在收入本书的时候，编者征得作者的同意，对论文作了不同程度的修改。从这些论文的字里行间，可以看到不辞劳苦地奋斗在英语教学岗位上的老、中、青三代人对于教育事业的无私奉献精神和他们对于学生的一片爱心。本书论文作者遍及全国各地。为了便于英语教学界的朋友们互相联系，共同商榷英语教学改革大计，论文后均附有作者简介。

本书在编辑过程中，得到了许多同行朋友和英语界前辈的热情关怀和支持。著名莎学专家、翻译家裘克安教授欣然命笔为本书题写了书名。翻译理论家、英语语言文学专业博士生导师张今教授于百忙中担任本书审校并写了序言。趁本书出版之际，对于他们的精心扶掖，一并致以衷心的感谢。

由于我们才疏学浅，书中不免有不当与谬误之处。敬希读者不吝指教。

编 者

一九九三年一月

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING THEORY (1940s—1980s)

Lu Shouchun

The primary aim of this paper is to examine the change of second language teaching theory since the 1940s in terms of linguistic theory change and the change in the role of language in society. Various social and psychological influences will also be taken into consideration in the development of language teaching theory.

1. The first impact of linguistics on language teaching theory: structural linguistics and audiolingualism

Until the forties of this century, the field

of language teaching had been very quiet. It had been dominated by the traditional "grammar translation" method through the ages (Kelly 1969). This method, while it "has little or no basis in experimental linguistics", "is best understood as a way to teach classical languages such as Greek or Latin" (Ovando & Collier 1985:72) and as a preliminary to the study of literary works. Through deductive instruction of grammar and large use of the native language, the students learn to read and write in the target language or vice versa. Here, language learning is viewed as a mental exercise for the purpose of appreciating literary works and is taught in the same way as any other academic subjects. There is no difference between teaching mathematics and a foreign language in principle and practice. The target language is only a set of written symbols to the students. The learners can neither listen nor speak the language. There is no communication taking place.

The first revolution came in the forties mainly in the United States. It appeared to both a

practical and theoretical summons. Practically, World War II required a large number of people who had the listening and speaking ability in foreign language which the traditional method could not supply. Theoretically, with the establishment of structural linguistics, "linguistics has come of age" (Hamp 1961: 180) as a science of language. Linguistics had become strong enough to lead and influence language teaching theory. This new situation brought about what we refer to as American "Army Method" in language teaching. Generally, it had the following characteristics:

1) It placed linguistic scholars in a leading role in the solution of the language teaching problems that had to be faced.

2) It demonstrated that language training does not necessarily have to be done in the conventional school type language course.

3) It claimed to show that languages can be taught to much larger populations of ordinary learners and much more quickly than had previously been thought possible.

4) It demonstrated the possible advantages

of intensive language training and of an oral emphasis (Stern 1983 : 102).

Structural linguistics laid a solid theoretical foundation in this development. According to Bloomfield (1933), linguistics is concerned with the corpus of utterances to discover regularities and structures. Or in Saussure's terms, language is in the specimens of parole. "In the division of scientific labor, the linguist deals only with the speech signal" (Bloomfield 1933 : 32). Bloomfield also believed in an empirical, descriptive linguistic science whose principles and concepts turn into a well balanced and unified structure. As the founder of structuralism, Bloomfield was very well aware of the role that linguists could play in language teaching. He expressed the general principles in his book, Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Language (1942), in which he emphasized the presence of a trained linguist in language teaching. He also argued that language learning is based on recording, imitating, practising and memorizing. At the same time, he attacked the theory and practice of the period by writing, "The textbooks are

far from perfect and some teachers have not sufficient command of the foreign language. Often enough the student, after two, three, or four years of instruction, can not really use the language he has been studying" (1942).

Based upon structuralism and the "Army Method", there came a new method in language teaching--what we refer to today as audiolingualism. Audiolingualism is the first breakthrough in language teaching theory under the influence of a linguistic theory and in response to the social demand for language use. "It was not until the early years of the World War II that linguistics was recognized as an important, perhaps even as the most important component in language teaching theory" (Stern 1983:156). Although the clearly defined period of audiolingualism as a distinct language teaching theory and of greatest influence was comparatively short(1959-1966), the influence of the theory is far beyond that. The term was first proposed by Brooks(1964:263) and the ideas were expressed in five slogans (Moulton 1961:86-90) which reflected the influence of structural

linguistics:

- 1) Language is speech, not writing.
- 2) A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.
- 3) Languages are different.
- 4) A language is a set of habits.
- 5) Teach the language, not about the language.

The techniques employed by audiolingualism are best presented by the idea of "Practice makes perfect". Discrete pattern drills, memorization of dialogues, stimulus-response process and conscious repetition are carried out in the hope of forming the students' habit in the target language. It is believed that, when time comes, the students can transfer what they have consciously learned in class into unconscious practical use. The focus is geared to the parole instead of language. "It was not until the mid-sixties that, under the influence of transformational generative grammar, the linguistics of these tenets was seriously questioned" (Stern 1983 : 158) .

2. The second shock wave: transformational generative grammar and cognitive approach

With the publication of his first major work, Syntactic Structures (1957), Chomsky brought about a revolution in linguistic theory in the sixties by establishing the transformational generative grammar. Linguists before Chomsky treated language as a static entity or finished product which can be objectively examined, analyzed, and described. The Chomskyan approach treats language as a "rule-governed" system, emphasizing the "creativity of language" and recognizing the process of linguistic production and interpretation, which structural linguists had disregarded. According to Chomsky, the statement of syntactic structure should not be a collection of utterances that have already been produced. Instead, the grammar statement should be a set of rules which, if followed rigidly, leads to grammatically correct sentences. A grammar must be so de-

signed that "by following its rules and conventions we could produce all or any of the possible sentences of the language" (Palmer 1971: 150). Chomsky's theory, based upon rationalism, may be understood as a view from "forest to trees", while the structural theory, based upon empiricism, from "trees to forest". As Aareleff wrote, "Transformational generative grammar was linked to antecedents in the 17th and 18th centuries, both as a matter of intellectual interest and to serve the purpose of polemics against its own immediate predecessor in linguistics, the tradition which can be called Bloomfieldian..." (1982: 101). The major contrasts between transformational generative grammar and structuralism that have important implication for language teaching can be summarized in the following issues:

1) Language is a "rule-governed" system instead of a collection of habits. In language teaching, imitation, memorization and mechanical drill of unrelated items do not lead to the mastery of these rules which are "not only in-

tricate but also quite abstract" (Chomsky 1996: 47).

2) While transformational generative grammar distinguishes surface structure from deep structure, structuralism can only deal with surface structure. Pattern practice is not effective in providing better insight into language. "The learning of fundamental syntactic relations and processes will not be accomplished by drill based on analysis of surface structure alone" (Spolsky 1970: 151).

3) Transformational generative grammar emphasizes the productive or creative character of language, while structuralism is based on the analysis of the given corpus. "The most obvious and characteristic property of normal linguistic behavior is that it is stimulus-free and innovative" (Chomsky 1966: 46). "An infinite number of sentences can be produced by what seems to be a rather small finite number of grammatical rules. A speaker does not have to store a large number of ready-made sentences in his head; he just needs the rules for creating and understanding these sentences" (Diller 1978: 25).