

E<sub>nglish Education and Cognitive Development</sub>

# 英语教育与认知发展

曹志希 何玲梅 著



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清华大学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

本书作为湖南省教育厅 1999~2001 年大学英语教育科学立项资助课题 GW9934(湘教通[1999]140 号)的最终成果,吸收了益阳师专同期的教育科学立项资助课题《英语专业素质教育问题研究》KT9901(益阳师专教字[1999]18 号)的成果,从大学英语教材建设的实践出发,通过对大学英语教材建设和整个高等学校英语教育中一些现实问题的讨论和研究,发现高校英语教材建设和整个英语教育改革具有紧迫性和方向性,从而对高校英语教材建设和英语教育领域的某些问题,特别是对外语学习、认知发展和思想品德修养等问题进行了认真讨论。本书还比较深刻地讨论了影响整个英语教育质量的个性品质、学习动机、社会文化因素、行为主义观点、认知科学等理论问题。本书可用作师范院校英语专业教材、大学英语专业英语阅读教材和教育教学理论研究参考资料。

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## Foreword

This book makes an attempt to solve two problems facing English education of junior colleges. It starts with the construction of teaching materials for non-English majors in junior colleges. Then it discusses the matter of the cultivation of English education majors. Finally it analyzes the relationship between English education and cognitive development for the ultimate purpose of the improvement of teaching materials and for reasonable measures to train qualified citizens and practical junior English professionals.

The English language has been given more and more priority in China's colleges and universities since 1980s. Therefore, gratifying successes have been achieved in the development of English education. Nevertheless, relatively little attention is paid to the research and development of English textbooks for non-English majors in junior colleges. And it has become necessary to speed up the improvement of English teaching materials in such colleges.

In terms of their educational values, teaching materials are not only indispensable elements of education, but also important ways and means in the course of the development of the students' practical ability, ideology and cognition. The development of teaching materials is essential to the accomplishment of educational reforms.

The rapid development of science and technology has resulted in great changes in the social and educational environment. This requires that the content of English courses should be reformed so as to help students to grasp practical knowledge for life, to develop their intellect and their mode of thinking, and to cultivate competent technicians and

scientists. Hence, the reformation of college English teaching materials is of importance.

But in reality, there is still a long way to go before the professional training colleges can provide suitable English textbooks for non-English majors. This is a crucial issue related to the cultivation of qualified citizens for the new millennium when English (like Chinese) will become a universal language.

The solution of the problem requires the correct understanding of the concept that the development of man's mental and intellectual competence is not spontaneously achieved but conscientiously cultivated with definite aims and well-planned teaching materials. The analysis of the present situation in the development of college English teaching materials for the sake of educational humanism helps to find the essence of the English education of non-English majors in professional training colleges. It also helps to advance the new concept of the construction of college English course-books, laying emphasis on the establishment of a scientific syllabus, and on the realization of its cognitive objectives through the reforming of the tradition of textbook development.

Meanwhile the training of English majors at these junior colleges has been confronted with the same kind of problems and others. What have the English majors been doing at teachers colleges and other junior colleges where they are trained as professional teachers? This question seems very easy to answer. But, although these students know that they are receiving professional training as teachers, the present situation in most colleges is far from satisfactory. In fact very few students can tell what kind of English education they should receive and what kind of education they are receiving. What's more, very few teachers know what kind of education they should provide for their students.

Statistics from various Chinese magazines and papers show that very little investigation has been made into these issues. Generally, efforts are made only to successfully lead to discussions on how to impart to the students the knowledge of English phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. We may well agree that the important advance in this field was the birth of a national English syllabus in 1993 for all the teachers colleges to follow. But the present situation of the education of English majors in China's teachers colleges shows that this syllabus is already out of date owing to the development of society, both political and economic. Social development has changed people's ideas on such a large scale that the content of the syllabus is widely considered to be too limited. Not only does it lack the emphasis on comprehensive qualities developed through moral education and character training, but it also fails to find out ways and means to achieve this purpose. Recent data given by Western periodicals and books tell that this issue is likewise neglected. Their emphasis is mainly laid upon the development of the students' ability to communicate in the language.

Undoubtedly, all discussions about educational issues need the theoretical basis of educational humanism, which helps to dig into the depth of the education of English majors in China's junior normal colleges in search of proper ways and means to solve the problems. Reasonable analyses can offer us a logical explanation of the present situation in the education of junior English majors, and provide us with the humanistic purpose of the education of English majors in junior teachers colleges. This entails the training and cultivation of citizens of discipline, morality, civilization, and ideals, and people who are well entitled to be professional teachers of elementary and intermediate English.

Liao Shiqiao  
Professor of English

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We are also greatly indebted to Professors Hu Zhuanglin of Beijing University, Jiang Jiansong of Hunan Normal University, Luo Xuanmin of Changsha Railway University, and Liao Shiqiao of Changsha University of Electric Power. Their lectures and their devotion to the cause of English education influenced us so greatly that we began to treat the teaching job as a grand career, learning to combine teaching with academic research.

We should also like to record our long-standing professional debt



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# CHAPTER 1 ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF NON-MAJOR ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES

## 1. The Status Quo

Teaching materials produce an effect on the development of education, science and culture. Considering their scientific and educational value, teaching materials have important potentialities of social sciences, symbolizing the developmental capacity of science and technology of the society. Therefore, in the wake of the advancement of education, the construction of teaching materials has become more and more of responsibility and of significance. Teaching materials and other science writings have formed the cultural basis for the modernization of the country. They have a double significance. They are means of both propagation and accumulation of knowledge and culture. From a modern point of view development consists in the economy and in the education as well. Of the two, education plays a more fundamental part in the development of society. Teaching materials make a great contribution to the development of education and of course, junior college teaching materials, play an elementary role in the development of junior college English education.

English has been the chief foreign language course in colleges and universities since the 1980s. College English has received more and more attention. And many teaching materials including reading materials and reference materials have been compiled. The most

popular teaching materials for non-English majors include *English* (Dong Yafen, Meng Yifan: 1981, The Commercial Press) in 6 volumes, *English* (Wu Yingeng: 1981, Shanghai Jiaotong University) in 4 volumes and *English Course* (Lu Ci: 1981, Tsinghua University) in 4 volumes, *College English* (co-built by Renmin University of China, Huadong Normal University, Peking University, Fudan University, Wuhan University, Nanjing University: 1989, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press) in 28 volumes, including 6 volumes for Intensive Reading, 6 volumes for Extensive Reading, 6 volumes for Listening Comprehension, 6 volumes for Fast Reading, 4 volumes for Grammar. All these materials have received a warm welcome from among most of the regular 4-year colleges and universities, as they have promoted the implementation of the regular 4-year college English teaching program and the quality of college English education for non-English majors. The *College English* series, in particular, have achieved the three purposes: serialization (in grades), multi-variation (in course types) and complementation (in teacher's manuals, student books and audio-video materials). The series have also provided readers with materials for reference, for self-study and for practice. They have contributed a great deal to the foreign language acquisition on the part of all non-English undergraduates, thus finding a lot of favor in the eyes of the readers.

However, junior colleges (regular 2-year or 3-year colleges) are faced with a different situation. Their failure to have a unified national Syllabus results in their failure to have a unified set of textbooks for themselves. What they can do is only copy and imitate the 4-year colleges and universities. An investigation into the application of teaching materials in 1998 showed that, among the 15 junior colleges

in Hunan Province, about 69.01 percent of them were using the *College English* series as course-books. About 19.01 percent of them were using a mixture of English course books, about 8.45 percent of them were using materials prepared of their own and about 3.52 percent of them were using self-compiled materials.

Out of the 142 teachers of college English from the 15 junior colleges, only 4.93 % think the current course-books to be "very appropriate" for junior college students. About 45.77% (of them) regard their textbooks "basically appropriate" for their students, about 38.73% of them consider their teaching materials lacking in suitability and about 9.86% think them to be unsuitable at all. But out of the 1500 sample students from the 15 junior college, 12.33% of them think the teaching materials suitable, 25.8% think them to be basically suitable, 29.06% think them to be lacking in suitability and 32.73% think them to be unsuitable. As receivers of the teaching materials, the students usually have a deeper understanding than the teachers do. Therefore, it is shocking to have 61.79% of the students feeling displeased with the current teaching materials.

The key reasons for both teachers and students to be unsatisfied with the teaching materials are as follows: (1) there are some differences between 4-year college students and 3-year college students in educational systems and training objectives. This is not that undergraduate course-books are of poor quality, but that they are not appropriate for junior college students. The compiling of teaching materials is to serve a specialized purpose. There is a difference of one or two years in schooling between junior colleges and universities, but that does not imply that their knowledge and ability are to be of such a difference. Therefore, to use undergraduate course materials is to

make junior college education fragmentary, as the junior college students cannot have equal amount of time and energy to spend at college for this. If they use the same materials, the junior college students will fail to give priority to the knowledge that they should grasp and fail to emphasize the development their professional ability as required for specialized junior college students. (2) The new series of *College English* course-books in 28 volumes are never easy to deal with in the 240 hours at the junior college. These test books have achieved success in serialization, multi-variation and complementation, but there are too many of them even for the 4-year undergraduates, let alone the 2-year or 3-year college students. Teachers at junior colleges can hardly find time and energy to revise or to redesign so as to perfect the alignment and structure of these teaching materials for their own students as they are shouldering heavy teaching tasks. (3) The vocabulary and the content of undergraduate course-books are difficult for junior college students, as they are relatively weaker when they enter college on a weaker basis and at a lower starting point. Even at college these students have less lessons for this course. Most of the texts are about 600 words long, but with about 55 new words in each, how can the students find interest in them. Heavy burdens and boring textbooks of course will fail to ensure the efficiency and quality of college English teaching and learning at junior colleges.

Development is achieved by the unity between conflicting elements. The contradiction between the students and their teaching materials lies in the identity and divergence, which are represented by the identity and divergence on the part of the qualities of both the students and of the teaching materials. As for the identity in here, the students' linguistic competence, mental, psychological, physical,

academic and practical, requires the agreement on the part of the teaching materials in content, range, degree, amount, means and methodology. Only when this agreement is achieved is it possible for the students (as the subject) and the teaching materials (as the object) to achieve interrelation and interaction between the two for the improvement of the competence on the part of the students. However, the disagreement between the students and teaching materials will fail the interaction between the two elements of contradiction and affect improvement of the quality of the students learning. And teaching itself will fail. As for divergence, there should be some difference between the students and their learning materials. That is to say, the course-books should be a little more difficult for the students than otherwise. The textbooks should be understandable and comprehensible for the learners. The lack of appropriate divergence will affect the quality of learning in the same way. And the students' interest in their learning will also be spoilt.

Considering these problems, the Ministry of Education issued the Fundamentals for Non-major English Teaching in Junior Colleges in 1993. And the higher Education Press Published a series of course-books for non-English majors at junior colleges, including *Comprehensive Practical English* (3 volumes) and *Practical English Reading* (3 volumes) and *Practical Professional English* (1 volume). But there are still some problems found in the course of teaching and learning. (1) The combination of intensive reading and listening materials has caused the lack of coherence and systematicity in listening. (2) So many academic fields and specialties exist in junior colleges that only a *Practical Professional English* book is not enough for all these different purposes. Therefore, the moment the set of

textbooks came out, they began to receive gradually a cold welcome.

## 2. Principles Guiding the Compilation of Teaching Materials for Non-English Majors in Junior Colleges

The construction of teaching materials is based upon the ideology of education. It is the soul of all teaching activities, guiding the reformation of the teaching materials, teaching methods and the types of lessons. With its functional orientation and management, it exercises the role of the key to the quality and efficiency of college English education.

Concerning education, ancient Chinese theorists laid emphasis upon the students' complete imitation of the teacher's examples, thus forming the injection type of passive teaching and learning theory. Later it developed into the kind of concept, which emphasized the combination of learning with thinking. Students were encouraged to learn more, think more, question more, discern more and act more. From the 1600s to 1930s, with the development of science and technology, the Europeans put forward some new ideas about teaching to meet the requirements of the new times. Johann Amos Comenius (1592 ~ 1670) said that teachers should obey the natural law of teaching and encourage students to perceive more, memorize more and theorize more. John Dewey (1859 ~ 1952), thinking that the elements of teaching methodology are similar to the elements of thought said that thinking originated from puzzles and therefore, learning collective experiences should start with individual experiences. Иван Андреевич Каиров (1893 ~ 1978) thought teaching was a special process, which symbolized the particularity versus generality, thus suggesting that teaching consisted in the following stages: perceiving the knowledge in



the materials, understanding it, consolidating it, applying it and assessing it. In the 1960s, great changes took place in educational research. One of the educationalists Jerome Seymour Bruner (1915~) emphasized quality versus quantity, which symbolized the idea of the combination of knowledge structure with teaching thus forming the theory of the transfer of learning. In this way, the students were encouraged to speed up the procedure of learning. Learning behavior was regarded as an important part of the content for teaching and discovery was encouraged as an important method of study.

Through the ages, many educationalists have expounded their views of curriculum and materials construction. And the 1970s and 1980s witnessed great changes in the theoretical development of education:

(1) The relationship between basic courses and specialized courses is to be well handled. History has told us that many an invention takes place on the bonding point of two or more branches of learning. Therefore, the mastery of specialized courses should be combined well with the study of general courses. To achieve this, the relationship between the two should be well handled. With the formation new courses based on interdisciplinary theories, the interdisciplinary research has been paid more and more attention to in the educational world. Many of the achievements have resulted in the appearance of many works of interdisciplinary researches, which have promoted the construction of higher education curriculum and teaching materials. Besides, all college students are required to have such abilities as to organize well, analyze and plan well, administer well, and educate well. They should not only learn specialized knowledge, but also management science and educational engineering. Therefore, all