

David Nunan 主编

体验英语教学

Practical English
Language Teaching



高等教育出版社
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David Nunan, Editor

Practical English Language Teaching, First Edition

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Vision and purpose

Practical English Language Teaching is designed for the practicing teacher who may or may not have had formal training in teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Methodology texts currently available make too many assumptions about the background knowledge of their readership. The authors of the chapters in this book keep such assumptions to a minimum. This is not to say that the concepts underlying the chapters are dealt with in a trivial manner. Rather they are given an accessible treatment which is richly supported by teaching materials and ideas, and illustrative extracts from a wide range of classrooms.

Practical English Language Teaching consists of three sections: Exploring skills, Exploring language, and Supporting the learning process. The first main section, Exploring skills, begins with an introductory chapter that defines and illustrates the concept of methodology. The next four chapters introduce the four key “macroskills” of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the second section, Exploring language, we look at language from a somewhat different perspective. Here the chapters are organized in terms of the different systems that make up the language: the sound system, the vocabulary system, the grammatical system, and the discourse system which shows how language itself is organized and reflects the communicative purposes that bring it into existence in the first place. The final section, Supporting the learning process, looks at some of the ways in which the learning process can be supported – through teaching styles and strategies, effective use of commercial coursebooks, and by a variety of other means.

Practical English Language Teaching brings together the work of 15 world-class specialists in ESL/EFL. The value of publishing an edited collection, rather than a single-authored volume, is that we have been able to draw on the knowledge and experience of the top specialists in our field.

One of the problems with most edited collections is that they are uneven in terms of their treatment and approach, and in terms of the assumptions that they make about the reader. This collection has a degree of coherence unusual in edited collections. The coherence has been achieved through a clear chapter-by-chapter framework, and the use of detailed writing guidelines.

The length of each chapter has been controlled for accessibility. Each chapter could have been a book in its own right. However, we wanted to present readers with the essentials in terms of conceptual background, theory, and research. These provide the basis for a series of key teaching principles which are illustrated with pedagogical materials and authentic classroom extracts.

Features

- Critical areas of language teaching are comprehensively addressed with a specific focus on practical techniques, strategies, and tips.
- World-class specialists offer a variety of perspectives on language teaching and the learning process.
- *Reflection* questions invite readers to think about critical issues in language teaching, while *Action* tasks outline strategies for putting new techniques into practice.
- Thoughtful suggestions for books, articles, and Web sites offer resources for additional, up-to-date information.
- Expansive glossary offers short and straightforward definitions of core language teaching terms.

Audience

This book is designed for both experienced teachers and those who have only just entered the profession. It will update the experienced teacher on current theoretical and practical approaches to language teaching. The novice teacher will find step-by-step guidance on the practice of language teaching.

Chapter structure

Each chapter is constructed upon the following format.

1. **Introduction:** Defines the subject of the chapter.
2. **Background:** Provides an overview of what theory, research, and practice have to tell us about the subject.
3. **Principles:** Describes and provides examples of key principles for teaching the subject that forms the basis for the chapter.
4. **Classroom techniques and tasks:** Provides examples of practical classroom procedures.
5. **In the classroom:** Takes the reader into a range of classrooms where the principles spelled out earlier are exemplified.
6. **Conclusion:** Summarizes key parts of the chapter.

Additional resources:

- **Further reading:** Introduces additional sources for exploring the subject in question.
- **Helpful Web sites:** Points the reader to relevant Web sites.

A glossary at the end of the book defines the key terms related to language teaching and learning that are introduced in the book. These key language terms are printed in bold in the body of the text. Note that section titles and bulleted lists of items throughout the book also appear in boldface type. The glossary does not necessarily provide definitions for all terms mentioned in these section titles and bulleted lists.

Interspersed throughout each chapter are *Reflection* and *Action* boxes. The *Reflection* boxes pose questions inviting readers to reflect on issues, principles, and techniques in relation to their current or projected teaching situations. *Action* boxes invite the reader to apply the ideas through action-oriented tasks.

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Exploring skills

1

This first section of the book introduces you to language teaching methodology from the perspective of language skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Before looking at the skills in detail, there is an initial chapter on language teaching methodology that provides a framework, not just for the four other chapters in this section, but for the book as a whole.

Each chapter follows a set format. Firstly, the skill dealt with in the chapter is defined. Next comes a section providing background information on the skill. This section provides a brief history of the teaching of the skill, summarizes important research findings, and elaborates on key concepts. Section Three sets out key principles that should guide you when teaching the skill concerned. The next two sections provide examples from published and unpublished materials as well as from direct classroom experience illustrating the principles in action. The chapters conclude with useful follow-up text and resources, including Web sites, to provide you with further information and ideas.

Chapter One

Methodology

David Nunan, University of Hong Kong (China)

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

Goals

- ✓ **define** methodology.
- ✓ **explain** how methodology is related to curriculum development and syllabus design.
- ✓ **describe** the “methods” debate.
- ✓ **explain** the basic principles of communicative language teaching, and describe its current importance in language teaching pedagogy.
- ✓ **discuss** some of the research findings that have influenced language teaching methodology.
- ✓ **create** instructional sequences that incorporate the pretask, task, and follow-up cycle.

1. What is methodology?

The field of **curriculum development** is large and complex. It includes all of the planned learning experiences in an educational setting. Curriculum has three main subcomponents: **syllabus design**, **methodology**, and **evaluation**. Syllabus design has to do with selecting, sequencing, and justifying content. Methodology has to do with selecting, sequencing, and justifying learning tasks and experiences. Evaluation has to do with how well students have mastered the objectives of the course and how effectively the course has met their needs. The following diagram shows how these different elements fit together.

Curriculum component	Focus	Defining questions
Syllabus design	Content	What content should we teach? In what order should we teach this content? What is the justification for selecting this content?
Methodology	Classroom techniques and procedures	What exercises, tasks, and activities should we use in the classroom? How should we sequence and integrate these?
Evaluation	Learning outcomes	How well have our students done? How well has our program served our students' needs?

Figure 1 Subcomponents of a curriculum

This book is basically about language teaching methodology. In other words, the focus of the chapters is principally on techniques and procedures for use in the classroom, although most chapters also touch on aspects of content selection and evaluation.

The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* defines methodology as ...

1. ... the study of the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them.

Methodology includes

- a. study of the nature of language skills (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening, and procedures for teaching them)

- b. study of the preparation of lesson plans, materials, and textbooks for teaching language skills
- c. the evaluation and comparison of language teaching methods (e.g., the audiolingual method)

2. such practices, procedures, principles, and beliefs themselves.

(Richards, et al. 1985, p. 177)

From the table of contents you will see that this book addresses most of these areas. Section 1 focuses on the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Section 2 looks at aspects of language—discourse, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Section 3 explores elements that support the learning process, including learning styles and strategies, content-based instruction, using textbooks, using computers, fostering autonomy and independence, and classroom-based assessment and evaluation.

2. Background to language teaching methodology

The “methods” debate

A language teaching **method** is a single set of procedures which teachers are to follow in the classroom. Methods are also usually based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning. For many years, the goal of language pedagogy was to “find the right method”—a methodological magic formula that would work for all learners at all times (Brown, 2002). Methods contrast with **approaches**, which are more general, philosophical orientations such as **communicative language teaching** (see page 6) that can encompass a range of different procedures.

The dominant method for much of the last century was the **grammar-translation** method. This was challenged in the 1950s and 1960s by **audiolingualism**, a method that is still very popular today, and whose influence can be seen in a variety of drill-based techniques and exercises.

Audiolingualism was the first method to be based on a theory of learning—**behaviorism**, which viewed all learning as a process of forming habits, and on a theory of language—**structural linguistics**. Behaviorism and structural linguistics provided the following key characteristics of audiolingualism:

- Priority is given to spoken rather than written language.
- Language learning is basically a matter of developing a set of habits through drilling.

- Teach the language, not *about* the language. (Avoid teaching grammar rules. Get learners to develop their skills through drill and practice—teach through “analogy” not “analysis.”) (Moulton, 1963)

In the 1960s, behaviorism and structural linguistics were severely criticized as being inadequate representations of both the learning process and the nature of language. In place of behaviorism, psychologists proposed cognitive psychology while the linguist Chomsky developed a new theory called **transformational-generative grammar**. Both approaches emphasized thinking, comprehension, memory, and the uniqueness of language learning to the human species. Methodologists seized on the theories and developed a method known as **cognitive code learning**. This approach promoted language learning as an active mental process rather than a process of habit formation. Grammar was back in fashion, and classroom activities were designed that encouraged learners to work out grammar rules for themselves through inductive reasoning. (For examples, see Nunan, Chapter 8, this volume.)

In addition to methods based on theories of learning and language, there emerged a number of methods that were based on a humanistic approach to education. These methods emphasized the importance of emotional factors in learning, and proponents of these methods believed that linguistic models and psychological theories were less important to successful language acquisition than emotional or affective factors. They believed that successful learning would take place if learners could be encouraged to adopt the right attitudes and interests in relation to the target language and target culture. The best known of these methods were **the silent way, suggestopedia** and community language learning. The best introduction to humanistic learning within language education is Stevick (1997). Stevick became interested in humanism after he observed both audiolingual and cognitive code learning in action. He found that both methods could either be quite successful or extremely unsuccessful. “How is it,” he asked, “that two methods based on radically different assumptions about the nature of language and learning could be successful or unsuccessful, as the case may be?” He concluded that particular classroom techniques mattered less than establishing the right emotional climate for the learners.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)

During the 1970s, a major reappraisal of language occurred. Linguists began to look at language, not as interlocking sets of grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules, but as a tool for expressing meaning. This reconceptualization had a profound effect on language teaching methodology. In the earliest versions of CLT, meaning was emphasized over form, fluency over accuracy. It also led to the development of differentiated courses that reflect-