

Prepared for China Central
Radio & Television University

顾曰国 主编
Gu Yueguo

English Language Teaching Methodology

(Part 1)

中央广播电视大学“专升本”指定教材

英语教学法

(上)

Help Yourself to a
BA Course Series

“专升本”高级英语自学系列教程

(13)

外语教学与研究出版社

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(Trial Version)

(试用本)

外语教学与研究出版社
Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

(京)新登字 155 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语教学法(上)/顾曰国主编. - 北京:外语教学与研究出版社, 1998. 11

中央广播电视大学“专升本”指定教材

ISBN 7-5600-1537-9

I. 英… II. 顾… III. 英语-语言教学-教学法-电视大学-教材 IV. H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(98)第 32285 号

英语教学法(上)

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外语教学与研究出版社出版发行

(北京西三环北路 19 号 100089)

<http://www.fltrp.com.cn>

北京外国语大学印刷厂印刷

开本 787×1092 1/16 18.5 印张

1998 年 11 月第 1 版 2000 年 7 月第 4 次印刷

印数: 10001—15000 册

* * *

ISBN 7-5600-1537-9

G·656

定价: 19.90 元

如有印刷、装订质量问题出版社负责调换

Help Yourself to a BA Course Series

“专升本”高级英语自学系列教程

Help Yourself to a BA Course is a series specially designed for those self-study learners who want to upgrade their English from intermediate to advanced levels. It is thematically structured and five-skill integrated on activity/task basis. It consists of two modules: English Language Communication Module and Professional Training Module. Module 1 caters for general learners of English, and Module 2 provides up-to-date professional training for senior middle school teachers of English.

English Language Communication Module:

A Guide to Success 1: Orientation

English in Daily Life

English at Leisure

English at Work

English in Current Affairs

A Guide to Success 2: Learning Strategies

English for Studying

Cross-Cultural Communication

English in a Changing World

English Through Literature

Professional Training Module:

A Guide to Success 3: Professionalism

Language and Linguistics — A Workbook

English Language Teaching Methodology (1)

English Language Teaching Methodology (2)

Practical Project Design

Print materials are supplemented with both audio and video cassettes.

Successful completion of the course leads to a *benke* certificate (equivalent to BA non-hons in Britain) validated by the State Education Commission via China Central Radio & Television University.

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The writing team wishes to express its uttermost gratitude to the BC/ODA, Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press, and China Central Radio & Television University for their generous support of the project.

The Third Year Pack

Checklist

Materials Provided:

(trial version available for Autumn Semester)

- ◆ **A Guide to Success 3: Professionalism
with 1 audio cassette**
- ◆ **Language and Linguistics: A Workbook
with 1 audio cassette**
- ◆ **English Language Teaching Methodology (1)
with audio and video cassettes**

(trial version available for Spring Semester)

- ◆ **English Language Teaching Methodology (2)
with audio cassette and video cassettes**
- ◆ **Practical Project Design**

Materials Students Should Provide Themselves:

- ◆ **2 assignment notebooks (standard A4 size recommended)**
- ◆ **1 rough notebook**
- ◆ **1 self-assessment record notebook**
- ◆ **2 blank cassettes for speaking practice**
- ◆ **a tape recorder**

English Language Teaching Methodology (1)

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Preface

Dear Student,

This is Part 1 of the course *English Language Teaching Methodology*. The course consists of two parts, the first of which you will study in the first semester, and the second of which you will study in the second semester. This course is divided into eleven units that cover all the important aspects of language teaching, including the teaching of the four main language skills: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. The teaching of Pronunciation, Grammar, and Vocabulary, are also covered. The practical details of the role of translation in language teaching, lesson planning, classroom management and language testing are also included.

The aim of the course is to broaden your knowledge of the bases on which the Communicative Approach is based and to offer you a wider variety of teaching strategies and skills, which you can experiment with and adapt to the teaching situation you are working in. The course book is however only just a beginning in this learning process and the real learning will only take place when you start to apply the knowledge you have gained and improve your teaching.

In order to help you reflect upon and apply the methodology you gain from the course, you are required to keep a **diary**, which will form the basis of the seminars with your tutor. At the end of each unit there is an evaluation questionnaire. You are expected to answer those questions in your diary and be prepared to share your answers at the seminars. You are also expected to record in the diary anything you try out in your lessons with an evaluation of its success or failure. By doing this right the way throughout the course (Parts 1 and 2), you will be well prepared to cope with the *Practical Project Design*, your final course of your 3-year study.

Note that at the end of each unit, there is a bibliography attached. It is for your reference only. That is, if you want to further pursue the topic in question, you can go on to read the books or papers included in the bibliography. If you do not want to do any further study, you do not have to look for those books and read them. They are optional, and you will not be examined on them.

We hope you will find this useful and practical. We wish you every success in your studies!

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Unit 1 Introduction

Objectives

By the end of this unit you should have:

- reflected upon how and why you are teaching English;
- reflected upon how and why your students are learning English;
- understood the main trends in the recent history of English language teaching;
- understood the beliefs upon which the methodology you are using is based;
- reflected upon your own development as a teacher.

Warm-up

Read through these quotations from middle school teachers and decide which ones you agree with most:

1. The most important thing for me is to get my students through the state exams. That is my job.
2. The most important thing for me is to get my students to love English and to enjoy the English lessons as much as possible. That way they will learn naturally. My job is to motivate them.
3. The more practice I give my students in communicating in English (all four language skills), the more able they will be to use English in the real world and to pass any proficiency exam they are given.
4. In order for my students to succeed in English, they need as much exam practice as possible. The best way I can help them is provide that exam practice, so they will be confident about passing the state exams.
5. What gives me most satisfaction is teaching a good class of students and seeing them get high marks in the exams.
6. What gives me most satisfaction is taking a low level class and seeing them make progress in English during the course, even though their exam results are still lower than the best classes.
7. For me the best type of student is one who is able to memorise the textbook, learn vocabulary and grammar and pass the exams.
8. For me, the best type of student is one who enjoys learning English, puts a lot of effort into it in class, contributes to the lesson and experiments with language creatively.

9. I am training students to get through the education system as successfully as possible. That is how I am judged by my colleagues and the school leaders.
10. I am training students in skills that they might need in life. My satisfaction comes from hearing from my students, long after they have graduated from school, that what I taught them was useful to them in their life.

Maybe you could write your own opinion on your teaching, if it is different from those above.

I see my job as _____

There is no feedback to this task, but I will ask you to come back to it later. The purpose of it is to get you thinking about your job and why you are doing it, what gives you satisfaction in it, and what your students really get out of it.

Activity 1 Learning and Teaching English in China

Task 1 Why Are Our Children Learning English?

First of all, can you try to answer the question in the title in your own words?

Chinese schoolchildren learn English because _____

Here is a list of reasons given by other teachers. Tick the ones you agree with.

Chinese schoolchildren learn English

1. . . .because the Ministry of Education insists, so they have to pass exams in it.
2. . . .so that they can help foreign visitors in their district.
3. . . .because it's necessary if they want to enter university.
4. . . .because learning a language is an intellectual challenge, so English is learnt in order to train certain intellectual skills.
5. . . .as computers are used more commonly these days, and if you have English you

can more easily extend your use of computers.

6. ... because once they are professionals, they need English to keep in touch with what is going on in their profession world-wide.
7. ... because if they eventually get a job in trade (import-export) , English will be very important to them.
8. ... because one can't succeed in China these days without proficiency in English.
9. ... because it gives them greater access to scholarships abroad.
10. ... as in a few years nearly all Chinese people will be able to travel abroad, so English will be useful for that purpose.
11. ... because being able to read and listen in English gives them access to more information and can improve their knowledge of the world.
12. ... only because they have to, it will be of no use to them in their future lives.

Can you add any more? Maybe you could ask your students to provide their own reasons for learning English.

Feedback

Of course there are no right and wrong answers. I do hope you didn't tick number 12 though. It may be impossible to know now what sort of skills your students will need in the future, but you should not rule out the other possibilities. You never know what changes might take place in the future. Your answers may depend very much on the area you live in, as the opportunities are greater for those living in the more developed coastal areas of China, but don't forget that students from less developed areas may be in greater need to develop language skills in order to advance. You will notice that a lot of the statements have to do with information — getting and giving information are very common and necessary skills in life. If your students want to further their education, professional training, and improve their careers, English might always be useful to them. Try to get their minds beyond the feeling that they are just learning English to pass exams, but that what they are doing in the English class is gaining skills that might help them in life.

Task 2 How Was English Taught in the Past?

I think you will agree that the purpose for learning English in China has changed in recent years due to the Open Door Policy. China now has far more contacts abroad, in education, culture, trade and the professions. There are many development projects taking place in the country, for example in agriculture, which often involve an English-speaking foreigner passing on certain skills to the local Chinese community. In the past one didn't need to listen and speak in English; everyday communication was not a goal. These days things are different. Communication is very much a goal and you will have noticed that your school textbooks have changed accordingly. Have you found that your teaching has changed over the last few years? The purpose of this course is to broaden

the range of teaching skills you have available to you. We would like to open your eyes to what have proved to be effective methods of teaching English with communication as a goal and give you a chance to try them out and evaluate them for yourself.

Before we go any further forward, let's give ourselves the chance to look back, to see where we've come from. Do you remember how you were taught English at school? Take a few minutes to think back over that and try to describe the method that was used. The following questions have been given in order to help you.

1. What happened at the beginning of each lesson?
2. How did you as the student have to prepare for the lesson?
3. How did you feel during your lesson?
4. What steps did the teacher follow?
5. What was the textbook like?
6. What did you do in class?
7. What did the teacher do?
8. Where did he or she sit or stand? Did he or she move around?
9. Did the teacher bring anything into class?
10. How much homework did you have? What sort of tasks were they? How were they corrected?
11. What did you enjoy most about your classes?
12. What did you not enjoy at all?

Now, only you can answer those questions. You might have had a very dynamic and conscientious teacher who inspired you and motivated you to learn English. If that was the case, then it probably had more effect on you than the method that was used. That's something that you should always keep in mind as a teacher: your relationship with your students and with the subject you are teaching, will always have an important effect on the students' learning. Let's have a look at the method used.

In most traditional teaching situations, the students had to learn lists of new vocabulary with their Chinese translations before the lesson. The teacher would come into the classroom, sit or stand at the front, and rarely move away from the blackboard. The textbook probably contained a lot of texts on Chinese topics, many of which would have been translated from the Chinese (often stories the students already knew in Chinese), lists of new vocabulary, comprehension questions, examples of grammar structures with some Chinese explanation, and exercises practising the structures. The structure of each unit was the same, so the students knew what to expect from it. In class, the students probably had to read the text, maybe aloud after the teacher, or individually as nominated by the teacher. The students would have to do the comprehension questions and the teacher probably asked students to answer the questions orally. If a student made a

mistake, he or she would be very embarrassed. The teacher probably explained the structures included in the text and the students had to do the exercises in the book, writing them in their exercise books. These were probably checked orally in class, student by student. Finally, the students would probably have to prepare a summary of the text and stand up and deliver it to the class. Sometimes this wouldn't be a summary at all but a memorised version of the text. Students sat in rows, faced the front, and the teacher had absolute control over the activities and over the language used. Students didn't speak unless they were asked to by the teacher.

Is that situation familiar to you? Clearly the aim of the class was not communication.

How did you train to become a teacher? Were you taught any teaching methods that were different from the one described above? Who taught you? Did you observe anyone teaching during your training? If so, what did you observe for? What did you learn from the observation? Who observed you when you first had to teach a class? What did you learn from your observer/supervisor? Think carefully about your own training and try to describe it. Write it down and be prepared to summarise it to your colleagues at your first tutorial. It might be interesting to compare notes and experiences.

I was trained as a teacher in this way: _____

Now you are an experienced teacher, in what ways do you think your training prepared you well for the classroom? In what ways did it not prepare you? How have you managed to cope with unfamiliar situations? Do you think that teachers go on learning all their career? Are you prepared to learn more about teaching and learning English now? I hope your answer is yes!

Task 3 What Are Your Objectives?

You have been asked a lot of questions, which have probably made you think very deeply about your experience as a teacher and learner. You probably have some ideas now about what you want to gain from this course in order to improve your teaching. Take a few minutes to think about them and write them down now.

What I would like from this course: _____

Feedback

I can't promise that we will grant you all your wishes, but I hope you will try to gain some-

thing very useful from the course.

Before we go on to look at the methodology currently being used throughout the world in the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL). Let's take a look at how and why it came about. The next part of this unit will be about the main changes that took place in the methodology of TEFL.

Activity 2 Developments in English Language Teaching Methodology

Task 1 What Is Language For?

Try to answer the questions below before you read the following passage.

1. What is language? _____
 2. What is the purpose of language? _____
 3. Why has the purpose of learning a language changed in China? _____
-

What is language and what is the purpose of language? You can now give complicated answers to these two questions after you have finished *Language and Linguistics — A Workbook*. We can do well here with a simple answer: Language is a means of communication with other people. If that is so, then what is the purpose of teaching and learning language? We all learn our mother tongue in order to function in our home community. When we come across people brought up in a different language community, we might need to communicate with them too; they might have food that our community lacks, so we have to engage in commerce and trading, for this we need a common language. This was the earliest need for learning another language, a second or foreign language. These days our lives are more complicated than that, but trade between nations is still one of the most common reasons for learning a foreign language.

Why do schoolchildren in China need to learn English? Many of them would say that they do not need to learn it, especially those in remote farming areas. Those in the big cities, however, can see that an ability to communicate in English might help them get a better job that would mean dealing with non-Chinese people, in tourism, education or trade. Those who enter other professions such as medicine or scientific research might

also see the need to be able to communicate in English in order to attend international conferences in their profession or read professional journals, so that they can benefit from the research done in other countries. They might even have the opportunity to study abroad. For those who might not have such close links with foreign nationals, they might learn English for enjoyment: for reading books, newspapers, and magazines in their local library; for listening to English-medium radio broadcasts or pop songs; or for watching films or television programmes in English. If they are very ambitious they might see learning English as a means to progress educationally and move out of their local community, or bring trade into it.

Task 2 The Grammar-Translation Method

Before you read the next part, try to answer these questions. If you know nothing, then make a guess at the answer. Anyway, please write down what you think before you read. Then once you have read, check back with your answers and see if you still agree with them.

1. What is the Grammar-Translation Method? _____

2. What was the purpose for learning Ancient Greek and Latin in the west in the past? _____

3. What language skills did the students of Ancient Greek and Latin have to have? _____

If communication is the main goal of learning a language, then how should it be taught? Language learners must be given opportunities to communicate in the language in the classroom, in the way that they would need to in real-life situations. Learning activities should then have a communicative purpose and they should be a rehearsal for real-life performance. But why is it not always taught like this? Let's look back to the history of language teaching and learning.

Language teaching was first formalised in the west for the teaching of Ancient Greek and Latin. It was considered important for well-educated students to learn these classical languages in order to understand the bases upon which western democratic society was founded. In order to truly understand the writings of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, it was considered that they had to be read in the original. They would lose something essential if read in translation. For example, there are several words in Greek