

研究生教学用书

专业核心课系列

现代外语教学的理论与实践

The Theory and Practice of Modern Foreign Language Teaching

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内 容 提 要

本书是一本系统介绍现代外语教学理论与实践的专著，着重讨论当今外语教学中最引人注目的一些问题，反映外语教学研究领域的最新研究成果和发展动态，注重理论与实践相结合。全书共分为 11 章。第 1 章简要介绍了现代外语教学所涉及的基本概念和理论。第 2~3 章论述了外语教学法的发展历史以及主要外语教学法流派。第 4 章专门讨论了交际法语言教学。第 5 章分析了当前国外外语教学界对语法教学所持的不同观点。第 6~9 章分别对具体的听、说、读、写四项技能的教学理论和进行了详细的论述。第 10 章专门介绍了学习者自主。第 11 章主要论述了近年来在外语教育领域发生的重要变革以及今后的发展趋势。

本书具有系统性、可读性、理论性、实践性等特点。它适用于外语教师、英语专业本科生、硕士研究生、应用语言学专业和教育学专业的研究生，是广大师生从事外语教学与研究以及外语教育工作者从事师资培训与研究的重要参考资料。本书的出版不仅对外语教师提高教学质量有很重要的参考价值，而且对学习从事学术研究有较大的指导意义。

序

改革开放以来，特别是加入世贸组织以后，我国与世界各国在政治、经济、文化教育等领域的交流日益频繁，这给以交际为目的的外语教学提供了有利的外部动力；同时也给我国的外语教学提出了新的要求和挑战。

尽管近年来我国的外语教学无论在规模还是质量上都有了大幅度的提高，但从整体而言，外语教学水平还不能很好地满足新世纪国家科技和经济发展的需要。这其中的主要原因是：一方面，教师的外语教学理论水平还普遍较低，另一方面，相当一部分教师还缺乏运用理论知识指导实践研究的意识和技能。而作为外语教师，系统学习外语教学理论并及时了解教学实践研究的最新成果，将有助于加深我们对外语学习过程和规律的认识，有助于促进我们对自己教学实践经验的提炼和深化，从而提高我们的自我判断能力和创新能力，最终实现对教学理论正确理解、灵活运用目标，在教学实践中更加自觉地、有意识地摸索适合自己所教学生的外语教学方法。

徐锦芬教授治学态度严谨，多年来一直致力于外语教学法研究，主持完成过多项外语教学法研究方面的省级课题，《现代外语教学的理论与实践》一书正是她多年来理论研究和实践探索的结果。本书比较系统、全面地介绍了现代外语教学所涉及的基本概念和理论、国际上流行的主要教学法流派、近年来外语教学理论和教学方法实践的最新研究成果及外语教育的发展趋势。本书最大的特点是可读性强，读者易于理解和接受，使那些“高不可攀”、“神秘莫测”的理论变得实用和可操作。本书资料较翔实、内容丰富、理论与实践并重，为广大外语师生从事外语教学研究和与此相关的学术研究提供了理论和实践指导，对我国外语教学的改革与发展具有较大的理论和实际指导意义。

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前 言

多年以来,外语教育工作者们一直在寻找或构建一种理想的外语教学方法,于是涌现出了语法翻译法、听说法、直接法、交际法等多种教学法。然而,近20年来,随着社会语言学、心理语言学、教育学、第二语言习得等学科不断发展,外语教学理论与实践也发生了很大的变化,尤其是进入21世纪以来,我国与世界各国在政治、经济、文化教育等领域的交流日益频繁,这对我国的外语教学提出了挑战。如何借鉴语言教学领域已经取得的最新研究成果,建立并发展适合我国国情的外语教学理论与实践,便显得尤为重要。此外,长期以来,我国外语教学理论和课堂教学实践严重脱节,使外语教学的发展和教师素质的提高难以产生明显效果。由此,本书着重讨论当今外语教学中最引人注目的一些问题,反映外语教学研究领域的最新研究成果和发展动态,注重理论与实践相结合。

全书共分为11章。第1章简要介绍了现代外语教学所涉及的基本概念和理论。第2~3章详细论述了外语教学法的发展历史,并对几十年来国际上流行过的一些主要外语教学法流派及其特点进行了较为详细的分析和介绍。第4章专门讨论了交际法语言教学,不仅对交际法产生的历史和理论背景进行了详细的阐述,而且系统介绍了“交际能力”这一概念的发展过程,并结合国外学者对交际法语言教学的各种解释分析了在我国外语教学环境下交际法的教学原理。第5章从语法教学对培养学生交际能力的影响出发,分析了当前国外外语教学界对语法教学所持的不同态度及观点,并对当前国外流行的几种语法教学方法进行了介绍。第6~9章分别对具体的听、说、读、写四项技能的教学理论和方法进行了详细的论述,并对近年来国外在这些领域研究的最新研究成果进行了介绍。第10章专门介绍了学习者自主。鉴于学习者自主是近年来外语教育界研究的热点,也是今后外语教学的新趋势,本章不仅详细论述了“学习者自主”这一概念产生的历史背景和理论基础,而且重点介绍了“学习者自主”这一概念自诞生以来被不同学者赋予的不同定义,最后还讨论了与学习者自主密切相关的教师角色以及教师自主。第11章主要论述了近年来在外语教育领域发生的重要变革以及今后的发展趋势。

本书具有以下四个显著特点。(1)内容充实、全面。本书从现代外语教学所涉及的基本概念和理论、国际上流行的主要教学法流派到最后的外语教育的发展趋势,无不反映出近年来外语教学理论和教学方法实践的最新成果。(2)理论与实践相结合。在强调教学理论指导作用的同时,注重理论与具体的教学实践相结合。(3)视角新颖、有启迪意义。作者对各主要的语言教学流派进行了全面详细的论述后强调指

出，外语教师不应拘泥于某一种教学理论和方法，而是应该通过对各种理论和方法的正确理解，结合自己的语言观以及所处的教学环境等灵活且创造性地应用各种理论和方法。这一观点对学习有着积极的启示意义。(4)附有讨论题和相关参考资料指南。本书每章后都附有讨论题及相关参考资料供有兴趣的学习者进一步思考、讨论和研究。有些讨论题侧重理论思考，而有些问题则要求学习者用学到的理论知识分析具体的实际问题。

总之，本书具有系统性、可读性、理论性、实践性强等特点。它适用于外语教师、英语专业本科生及硕士研究生、应用语言学专业和教育学专业研究生，是广大师生从事外语教学与研究以及外语教育工作者从事师资培训与研究的重要参考资料。本书的出版不仅对外语教师提高教学质量有很重要的参考价值，而且对学习从事学术研究有较大的指导意义。

本书是作者在多年授课、研究、学习、探索的基础上在美国访问期间完成的，是作者理论研究和教学实践相结合的结果。在写作过程中，作者参考了大量国内外资料和研究成果，但由于篇幅有限，未能一一列出，书后只列出了部分主要参考文献，谨在此向所有作者表示衷心的感谢。

最后需要说明的是，作者在本书的写作过程中得到多方面的支持和帮助，在此表示衷心的感谢。首先要感谢华中科技大学外国语学院院长樊葳葳教授在百忙之中为全书作序，感谢秦傲松教授对全书进行审稿并提出了宝贵的修改意见。其次要感谢华中科技大学外国语学院领导给予的热情鼓励和支持，使作者得以顺利完成本书的撰写。第三，要感谢华中科技大学研究生院和外国语学院，是他们的资助和支持，本书才得以出版。最后还要感谢本书的责任编辑华中科技大学出版社的梅欣君女士，感谢她在本书的出版和编辑过程中所做的大量细致的工作。

由于作者水平有限，书中有疏漏和不妥之处，恳请广大读者、同行和专家批评指正。

徐锦芬

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Chapter 1

Basic Concepts and Theories

Although foreign language teaching (FLT) is not a new discipline, when asked about some basic concepts and theories related to FLT such as “What is foreign language teaching”, “What is foreign language learning”, and “What is a method”. Many FL teachers and students even today are still not clear about them. So we consider it extremely important to clarify these basic concepts in the very first chapter of this book. Besides, it has been widely accepted that linguistics and language teaching are closely related. To be more specific, modern language teaching theory has been strongly affected by developments in linguistics. Therefore, modern linguistic schools and theories are also covered in this chapter.

1.1 Key Terms in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

1.1.1 Teaching

According to Hammerly (1982:119), a broad definition of teaching is “helping someone to learn”. In this broad sense, not only teachers but also parents, ministers, journalists, even policeman teach. In a narrow sense, teaching is the interaction between a teacher and his students whereby planned learning takes place by the latter.

As we all know, teaching, the attempt to induce learning, does not always succeed. In order to teach successfully, one has to be able to answer with considerable precision a lot of questions such as “What is to be learned”, “When is it to be learned”, “What are the characteristics of the learner”, “Was it learned”, and “If not, what can be done about it”. There are other important factors one has to take into consideration: the instruction setting (classroom, etc.), the time available for instruction, the opportunity for the students to communicate, the availability of technological aids, etc.

1.1.2 Foreign Language Teaching

Language teaching can be defined as the activities which are intended to bring about

language learning (Stern 1983: 21). Foreign Language teaching is a systematic effort by a teacher to induce the learning of a foreign language by one or more students who are native speakers of a different language or languages. It differs in nature and objectives from other school subjects. The main difference is that in foreign language learning, one learns a new code that is quite different from or conflicts with a known code, not something new via a known code. Besides, unlike natural language acquisition, which simply is what it is, foreign language teaching can be what we make it to be, on the basis of principles we choose because they fit our subject matter and our purposes.

A teacher's understanding of the nature of language will determine to a large extent how he teaches a language. At the same time, a teacher's understanding of how the learner learns a language will determine his philosophy of education, his teaching styles, his approach, methods, and classroom techniques. For example, if he, like B.F. Skinner, regards language learning as a process of habit formation, he will teach accordingly. If he views foreign language learning basically as a deductive rather than an inductive process, he will probably present the grammar rules to his students directly rather than let them "discover" those rules indirectly.

1.1.3 Learning

Learning may be defined as a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior resulting from experience. This is a general definition of learning which applies both to formal learning resulting from instruction and natural acquisition in which knowledge or behavior patterns are "picked up" unconsciously. The concept of learning, as it is understood today, has been greatly influenced by the psychological study of the learning process. The psychological concept of learning includes not only the learning of skills (swimming for example), but also the modification of attitudes, the acquisition of interests, etc. It also refers to learning to learn and learning to think.

1.1.4 Foreign Language Learning

Foreign language learning refers to the development of foreign language competence resulting from instruction. It involves not only developing knowledge about a language but primarily developing knowledge of a language, that is, the ability to function in it, fluently and accurately. This involves a long-term learning task, not just something that can be done in a few days or weeks. It is a difficult endeavor. Naturally a long-term, complex learning task requires a high degree of commitment on the part of the student. Usually foreign language learning involves a number of factors: who learns, why he

learns, how he learns, what he learns, from whom he learns, and by what means he learns, etc.

1.1.5 Foreign Language Competence

Foreign language competence is that knowledge of a foreign language that enables a speaker to understand and use the language accurately, fluently, and appropriately to meet all communication needs in the corresponding cultural settings. It is made up of three types of competence—linguistic, communicative, and cultural. The language (linguistic competence) is used to communicate (communicative competence) within the framework of a culture (cultural competence).

1.1.6 Curriculum

A modern English dictionary defines “curriculum” in the following way: “All of the courses, collectively, offered in a school, college, etc. or in a particular subject.” (Webster’s New World Dictionary 1988) As is seen from the definition, the term is commonly used in two related senses. It refers to (a) a program of study at an educational institution or system and (b) content in a particular subject or course of studies. In the latter sense, “curriculum” is synonymous with the British term “syllabus”. In fact, the use of the two terms in Europe and North America has caused a great deal of confusion in second language teaching.

Curriculum is the totality of an organized learning experience; it provides the conceptual structure and a set time frame to acquire a recognizable degree, and describes its overall content, e.g. the curriculum of a three-year-degree program in “Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics” at a certain higher education institution. **Course** is the totality of an organized learning experience in a precisely defined area, e.g. the course on “Language Teaching Methodology” within the curriculum “Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics”.

1.1.7 Syllabus

Syllabus is the prescription of details on a specific course, such as what will be learnt (and when), the texts to be read, the areas in which expertise is expected to be demonstrated.

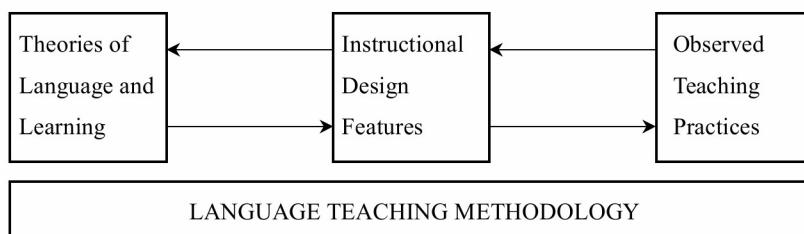
Here is a definition by J. P. B. Allen, which is adequate to our purposes: “Curriculum is a very general concept which involves considerations of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an

educational program; syllabus, on the other hand, refers to that subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught.”

1.1.8 Language Teaching Methodology

Methodology in language teaching has been characterized in a variety of ways. A more or less classical formulation suggests that methodology is that which links theory and practice. Within methodology a distinction is often made between *methods* and *approaches*, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. This distinction is probably most usefully seen as defining a continuum of entities ranging from highly prescribed methods to loosely described approaches.

Theory statements would include theories of what language is and how language is learned or, more specifically, theories of second language acquisition (SLA). Such theories are linked to various design features of language instruction. These design features might include stated objectives, syllabus specifications, types of activities, roles of teachers, learners, materials, and so forth. Design features in turn are linked to actual teaching and learning practices as observed in the environments where language teaching and learning take place. This whole complex of elements defines language teaching methodology.



(From Theodore S. Rodgers, Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii)

1.2 The Concept of Methods

Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the 19th century. Central to this phenomenon was the emergence of the concept of “methods” of language teaching. The method concept in language teaching—the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning—is a powerful

one. And the quest for better methods was a preoccupation of teachers and applied linguists throughout the 20th century.

Most of us in the language teaching profession hear and use the term *method* so much and so often that we hardly pause to think about its meaning. As the study of teaching methods and procedures in language teaching assumed a more central role within applied linguistics from the 1940s on, various attempts have been made to conceptualize the nature of methods and to explore more systematically the relationship between theory and practice within a method. William Mackey, a distinguished professor of language teaching at the University of London and the author of an authoritative book on method, *Language Teaching Analysis*, lamented that the word *method* “means so little and so much” (1965: 139). “The reason for this,” he said, “is not hard to find. It lies in the state and organization of our knowledge of language and language learning. It lies in wilful ignorance of what has been done and said and thought in the past. It lies in the vested interests which methods become. And it lies in the meaning of method” (Mackey 1965: 139). What Mackey said nearly four decades ago is true of today as well.

Mackey’s book *Language Teaching Analysis* (1965) elaborated perhaps the most well-known model of the 1960s, one that focuses primarily on the levels of method and technique. Mackey’s model of language teaching analysis concentrates on the dimensions of selection, gradation, presentation, and repetition underlying a method. In fact, despite the title of Mackey’s book, his concern is primarily with the analysis of textbooks and their underlying principles of organization. His model fails to address the level of approach, nor does it deal with the actual classroom behaviors of teachers and learners, except as these are represented in textbooks. Hence it cannot really serve as a basis for comprehensive analysis of methods.

In describing methods, the difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles, and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language, is central. In an attempt to clarify this difference, a scheme was proposed by the American applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963. He identified three levels of conceptualization and organization, which he termed *approach, method, and technique*.

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach.

An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught.

A method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part

of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods.

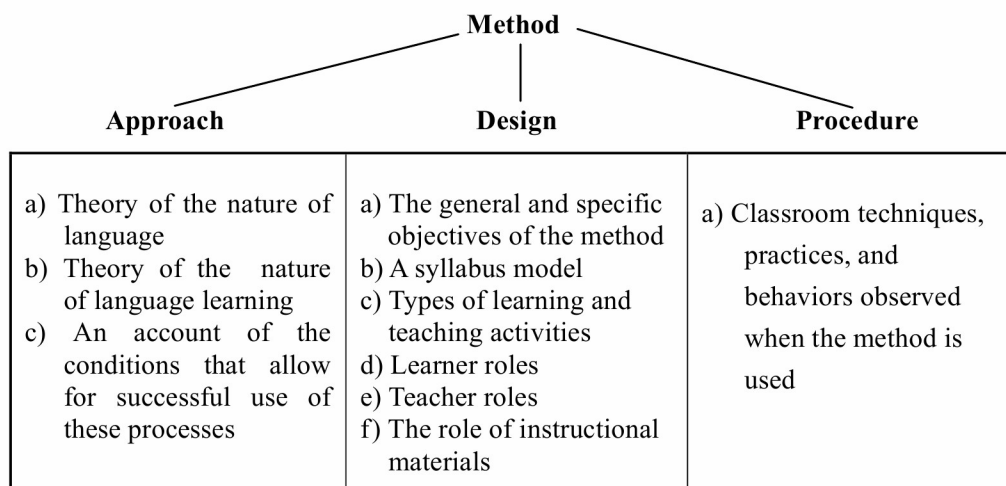
A technique is implementational — that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well (Anthony 1963:63-67).

According to Anthony's model, approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented; technique is the level at which classroom procedures are described.

Anthony's model serves as a useful way of distinguishing between different degrees of abstraction and specificity found in different language teaching proposals. Thus we can see that the proposals of the Reform Movement were at the level of approach and that the Direct Method is one method derived from this approach. The so-called Reading Method, which evolved as a result of the Coleman Report (Coleman 1929) should really be described in the plural—reading methods—since a number of different ways of implementing a reading approach have been developed.

Although Anthony's original proposal has the advantage of simplicity and comprehensiveness, and serves as a useful way of distinguishing the relationship between underlying theoretical principles and the practices derived from them, it fails to give sufficient attention to the nature of a method itself. Nothing is said about the roles of teachers and learners assumed in a method, for example, nor about the role of instructional materials or the form they are expected to take. It fails to account for how an approach may be realized in a method, or for how method and technique are related.

So in order to provide a more comprehensive model for the discussion and analysis of approaches and methods, Richards and Rodgers (1986) revise and extend the original Anthony model. They see method treated at the level of approach, in which theory of language and theory of language learning are discussed, and at the level of design, that level in which objectives, syllabus, and content are determined, and in which the roles of teachers, learners, and instructional materials are specified. The implementation phase (the level of technique in Anthony's model) they refer to by the slightly more comprehensive term procedure. Thus, a method is *theoretically* related to an approach, is *organizationally* determined by a design, and is *practically* realized in procedure. The following is a summary of elements and sub-elements that constitute a method.



The above model presented by Richards and Rodgers (1986: 28) demonstrates that any language teaching method can be described in terms of the issues identified at the levels of approach, design, and procedure. Very few methods, however, are explicit with respect to all of these dimensions. So in analyzing a method, we should try to make each of these features of approach, design, and procedure explicit.

Richards and Rodgers also point out that the model they present is not intended to imply that methodological development proceeds neatly from approach, through design, to procedure. Methods can develop out of any of the three categories. One can, for example, stumble on or invent a set of teaching procedures that appear to be successful and then later develop a design and theoretical approach that explain or justify the procedures.

A number of other ways of conceptualizing methods in language teaching have been proposed. For example, Larsen-Freeman (1986: xi) points out, “A method comprises both ‘principles’ and ‘techniques’. The principles involve five aspects of second- or foreign-language teaching: the teacher, the learner, the teaching processes, the learning processes, and the target language/culture. Taken together, the principles represent the theoretical framework of the method. The techniques are the behavioral manifestation of the principles — in other words, the classroom activities and procedures derived from an application of the principles.”

The relatively new analysis of the concept of methods is made by Kumaravadivelu (2003). According to Kumaravadivelu (2003: 24), the term *method*, as currently used in the literature on second-and foreign-language (L2) teaching, does not refer to what

teachers actually do in the classroom; rather, it refers to established methods conceptualized and constructed by experts in the field. The exact number of methods that are commonly used is unclear. Mackey's book (1965) published in the mid sixties, for instance, provides a list of fifteen "most common" types of methods "still in use in one form or another in various parts of the world" (Mackey 1965: 151). Two books published in the mid eighties (Larsen-Freeman 1986, and Richards and Rodgers 1986, 2nd edition 2001) — which have long-occupied the top two ranks among the books prescribed for methods classes in the United States — provide, between them, a list of eleven methods that are currently used. They are (in alphabetical order): Audiolingual Method, Communicative Method, Community Language Learning, Direct Method, Grammar-Translation Method, Natural Approach, Oral Approach, Silent Way, Situational Language Teaching, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response.

"It would be wrong to assume that these eleven methods provide eleven different paths to language teaching. In fact, there is considerable overlap in their theoretical as well as practical approaches to L2 learning and teaching" (Kumaravadivelu 2003: 24).

For the purpose of analysis and understanding, Kumaravadivelu (1993a) classifies the methods into three types: (a) language-centered methods (e.g., audiolingual method), (b) learner-centered methods (e.g., some versions of communicative methods), and (c) learning-centered methods (e.g., the Natural Approach).

Language-centered methods are those that are principally concerned with linguistic forms, also called grammatical structures. These methods seek to provide opportunities for learners to practice pre-selected, pre-sequenced linguistic structures through form-focused exercises in class. And they treat language learning as a linear, additive process. In addition, language-centered methods generally advocate explicit introduction, analysis, and explanation of linguistic systems.

Learner-centered methods are those that are principally concerned with language use and learner needs. These methods seek to provide opportunities for learners to practice pre-selected, pre-sequenced grammatical structures as well as communicative functions (i.e., speech acts such as apologizing, requesting, etc.) through meaning-focused activities. Learner-centered methods aim at making language learners grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent.

Proponents of learner-centered methods, like those of language-centered methods, believe in accumulated entities. The one major difference is that in the case of language-centered methods, the accumulated entities represent linguistic structures, and in the case of learner-centered methods, they represent structures plus notions and functions.

Furthermore, just as language-centered methods advocate that the linguistic structures of a language could be sequentially presented and explained, learner-centered methods also advocate that each functional category could be matched with one or more linguistic forms and sequentially presented and systematically explained to the learner.

Learning-centered methods are those that are principally concerned with learning processes. These methods seek to provide opportunities for learners to participate in open-ended meaningful interaction through communicative activities or problem-solving tasks in class.

According to the learning-centered methods, language development is a nonlinear process, and therefore, does not require pre-selected, pre-sequenced systematic language input but requires the creation of conditions in which learners can engage in meaningful activities in class.

To summarize, any language teaching method consists of a *specified* set of theoretical principles and a *specified* set of classroom procedures. Theoretical principles are insights derived from linguistics, second language acquisition, cognitive psychology, information sciences, and other allied disciplines that provide theoretical bases for the study of language, language learning, and language teaching. Classroom procedures are teaching and learning techniques indicated by the syllabus designer and/or the materials producer, and adopted/adapted by the teacher and the learner in order to jointly accomplish the goals of language learning and teaching in the classroom.

1.3 Fundamental Principles of Language Teaching and Learning

1.3.1 Principles of Language Learning

Children learn their first language subconsciously with relative ease and little if any stress. When all circumstances are normal, most children learn the basic structures and vocabulary of their first language within the first four years of their life. The language continues to develop through life in sophistication and complexity depending primarily on the child's eventual level of education and use of the language in question. Generally speaking, all people are successful in the acquisition of their first language, and their speech tends to be marked by the accent and regional expressions of the area where they grow up.

Although people are capable of learning any number of languages during their

lifetime, many experience failure to different degrees in the process of learning other languages. Adults often complain that the target language (second or foreign language) is difficult to understand or pronounce. Anyone who has ever seriously attempted to master another language knows that it is a time consuming and challenging effort. Yet, research and experience demonstrate that the only area most negatively affected by a “late” onset of language study is pronunciation; in other words, a second or foreign language speaker can often be recognized by an accent caused by the characteristics of the first language phonology; few second or foreign language learners can ever “disguise” themselves as native speakers of the target language. This issue is of no concern, however, since there are so many distinctly different accents and even varieties of English itself throughout the world that all English speakers have an accent in someone else’s ears. If one considers language study to mean only the memorization of some vocabulary and sentence structures with “good” pronunciation, the entire effort is doomed to failure from the beginning. The study of another language is far more extensive than that. The reader should refer to Freeman and Freeman (2004) for a simply and clearly written explanation of the components of language which one needs to know in order to teach language. In short, the linguistic components the learner and the teacher need to delve into are syntax (sentence structure), phonology (sound system), lexicon (vocabulary), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (usage). Language is a complex whole, the mastery of which requires the learner’s total commitment for life, especially if the standard sought is the educated native speaker. Language learning is a process which takes time under the best of circumstances, when the learner is motivated and has everything available to help him to reach his goals.

It is important to note that language learning is never a linguistic phenomenon only. It is affected by several sociolinguistic and psychological factors which are all intertwined in unique ways in the case of each learner. The learner’s prior experience as a student in general and self-image specifically as a language learner will determine how the learning task is viewed, whether it, for example, will seem impossible or doable. The person’s prior knowledge, attitudes, personality, learning styles and skills and motivation, to mention a few, are all factors related to the eventual outcome of the language study. (For a comprehensive overview of the process of second language acquisition, see Brown 2000.) The most critical element, however, which appears to determine the relative failure or success of language acquisition, is the learning environment itself.