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现代英语 教学原理与实践

魏立明 孙长顺 著

引导教师步入职业生涯的新境地

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE IN
TEFL: DEVELOPING THEORY
THROUGH PRACTICE

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杨 忠

魏立明、孙长顺合著的《现代英语教学理论与实践》将付梓。这部著作是他们长期潜心研究英语教学理论与实践的又一成果，为英语教师培养培训提供了一本颇有价值的教材，也对从事英语教学研究的同行颇有启发。

这部新作有两个特点。一是外语教学理论与实践的紧密联系。全书由七章构成，大体上可分为理论篇与实践篇。前四章重点阐述英语教学的基本概念、体系、原理、原则和方法。后三章重点介绍如何在理论指导下进行英语技能训练和英语分层面的教学，如何撰写教案、如何组织课堂活动、如何批改作业等具体问题。在解析舶来之说的同时，充分重视中国英语教学经验的理论升华，这是此书又一难能可贵之处。虽说我国外语教学的历史也很久远，但作为学历教育的组成部分大规模的开展英语（作为外语）教学才仅仅二十来年。借鉴他国

经验，介绍西方的语言教学和语言习得理论都是必要的。但是理论必须经过检验才有广泛的指导价值。照搬理论，削足适履，是不会有好结果的。从中国的实际出发，充分考虑中国学生的特点，创建符合外语教育规律的英语教学理论体系是我们面向新世纪的历史任务。

探索英语教学理论不仅是专家的任务，也是英语教师提高教学水平的必经之路。外语教学系统工程是由四个层面构成的：决策层面，由政府决定教什么语言，在什么范围教，在学历教育中占什么地位等；筹划层面，由专家撰写大纲，编写教材，解决教什么内容，以什么原理、原则为指导等问题；操作层面，即课堂教学；评估层面，以测试、调查等方式检验教学效果。整个系统工程的各项工作的目的性极强的理性行为。理论与实践的最重要结合点在课堂教学。课堂教学的效率效果取决于三个主要因素：教师、学生、教材。学生是主体，教师起主导作用。教师面对的最直接问题是怎么教。然而，外语教学行家的共识却是“教必有法，教无定法，贵在得法”。这就要求教师必须研究理论，反思教学实践。教学法不只是具体的方式方法，更重要的还包括原理、原则。了解语言教学的诸因素及其作用，把握教学大纲和教材及其背后的理论基础，学会创造性的运用教学资源，善于调动学生的积极性，

你的教学就会进入新的境地。

本书的两位作者早已经历了这样的过程，他们的教学可以说进入了炉火纯青的境地。愿他们的力作能引导众多青年英语教师步入职业生涯的新境地。

2001年3月10日

于东北师范大学

内 容 提 要

《现代英语教学原理与实践》是两位英语教育学硕士生导师合作的科研专著，是国内不多见的全用英语写成的多年研究成果。全书分七章，系统地探讨了英语（作为外语）教学的基本原理与实践。

书的前四章重点在理论，后三章主要阐述实践，全书理论紧密联系实际。第一章开宗明义，提出英语教学改革应从教师专业化发展入手的观点。本章以崭新的视角打开教师专业化发展探讨之窗，以便使“立足发展，集从业者与研究者为一身”这一二十世纪末外语教师发展研究的前沿成果成为共识。本章还论述了英语毗邻学科（语言学、教育学、心理学及其分支学科等）的新发展及其对外语教学的启示。第二章从历史唯物主义角度审视我国英语教学的发展过程，对历史的经验与教训进行了理性的思考，重点谈及以辩证唯物论为指导思想的我国外语教学的基本特征。第三章专论世界英语教学发展的体系、方法及途径，几项有影响的中国学者提出的英语教学法体系在本章中亦予以介绍，与国外外语教学法体系相映生辉，构成本书与其它同类著作迥然相异的一大特点。第四章论述教学原理。在当前外语教育领域人们已更强调原理的指导而不再热衷‘最佳教法’之时，本书提出教学原

理的六项理性思考和可操作的实践性五大基本原则，在理论与实践上给读者以启迪。其中认知原则，语言学原则，情感性原则及MMC体系和交际因素的权重变化理论等，可使读者接触到该领域的理论前沿。后三章论及英语语言技能与语言知识教学的具体原理与实践，侧重实践做法指导。其中有不少作者多年的成功经验和对他人实践的总结，特别对一些同类专著没有涉及的具有原创性的方法进行了介绍，如听力发展七法，词汇记忆九着，口语水平的五层分级，英语精泛读材料选用的三性要求，写作评分设计四则等，体现出本书作者主张的“新为主，创为先，可用到步骤”的原则，均可给有心的读者以帮助。英语课堂教学原理与实践一章的论述融入实践教师的技艺与睿智，可为新、老教师提供有益的教学思路与技巧。

全书强调从实践中发展理论，理论为实践服务。书内中西观点相映互补，有益的传统与近年的创新各有地位。此外，宏观论证与微观程序并重，体现出理论应简约新深，实践应可操作的主导思想。“学”的地位在本书中较以往同类专著占有更重要地位，英语素质教育的内容亦有所体现，以上均是撰写此书的出发点。本书用浅显的英语写成，由美国学者S·Boone女士，J·Allen和B·Berron博士审读全稿。易读、易教、易学、易用是本书的特色之一。本书除适用于广大英语本、专科师范生，外语教育专业研究生，中、小学及大专院校英语教师以外，对外语教学研究人员及教学管理人员，亦有学术参考价值。

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Chapter One: Theoretical Position

1. Views on theory and practice

The discrepancy between theory and practice in the language teaching profession has long been recognized. "It's fine in theory, but it doesn't work in practice". Such is the objection frequently heard from practicing teachers. As we endeavor to make our theoretical position be known, it is appropriate for us to focus on what we can say with some certainty, about the link between theory and practice in relation to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

There is no doubt that theory is important. A good theory shows great foresight and enables us to view language teaching in a much better perspective. However the language teaching research has not always been the best example of the integration of theory and practice. In the history of language teaching, there has been a tendency of equating the theory of teaching with theories derived from supporting disciplines such as linguistics, psychology and education. The problems caused by such a narrow view on theory can be diffi-

cult to be remedied.

As noted by Brown (1994), when disciplinary schools of thought have come and gone, so have language teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. Rather than theorizing about practice, or verifying theoretical positions by empirical research, language teachers are usually encouraged to follow the latest theories of teaching. Often the result is that theories accepted with readiness by teachers have no expression in practice, or are even contradicted in classroom practice.

Is theory an unattainable goal in the light of our teaching profession? How to unify theory and practice? This has been our concern and we write this book in an attempt to resolve the dichotomies between theory and practice. Our view is that hypotheses about teaching should be tested through classroom practice, while classroom practice has to be examined against its wider theoretical position. (Wei Liming 1998) Thus we have named our book: *Principles and practice in TEFL: developing theory through practice*. The integration of theory and practice will be dealt with in the section 'teacher development' below.

2. Teacher development

Concepts of teacher development

Teacher development is used in the literature to describe a process of continual, intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers (Lange 1990: 250). In using the term, according to Lange, "the intent is to suggest that teachers continue to evolve in the use,

adaptation, and application of their art and craft". While it is possible that such development can be generated in teacher training programs, some writers (e.g. Freeman 1982, 1989; Lange 1990; Wallace 1991) have made a distinction between teacher development and teacher training.

Development versus training

Freeman (1989) sees teacher development and teacher training as two different strategies by which teachers are educated. Previously he made a distinction between training and development summarized as follows:

- Training assumes that teaching is a finite skill, one that can be acquired and mastered. It addresses certain immediate needs, for example, helping a person with little or no previous teaching experience enter a class with some degree of confidence in what he/she is doing.
- Development assumes that teaching is a constantly evolving process of growth and change. It is an expansion of skills and understanding, one in which the teacher is responsible for the process in much the same way students are for learning a language. It speaks to broader, long-term concerns: how a teacher can be encouraged to grow, to explore new avenues and ideas, and, thereby, to avoid professional atrophy or the feeling that one has done it all before.

The distinction between training and development is revealing. We can see that at the heart of teacher development is the idea of self-development (Edge 1992). As Wallace (1991: 3) puts it, "training is something that can be presented or managed by others;

whereas development is something that can be done only by and for oneself”.

The need to develop by and for oneself has been voiced by Underhill (in Edge and Richards 1993: 5) “How can I develop to become the best teacher that I personally can be?” Such is the question many practicing teachers would ask.

Inquiry, reflection and change have become widely recognized as crucial elements in teacher development. The question addressed by Roberts (in Edge and Richards 1993: 5) best reveals these core elements, “I hope to rethink, and to change my practice. Isn't that teacher development?” Thus it is easy to see why terms such as ‘reflective teaching’, ‘inquiry-oriented teacher education’, ‘teacher as researcher’, and ‘reflective practitioner’ have become quite prolific in discussing classroom practice and professional development (Calderhead and Gates 1993: 1). These terms lead us to the orientations of teacher development.

While teacher development is generally seen as a systematic self-conscious inquiry with the purpose of understanding and improving teaching practice, it is conceptualized through varied orientations. In considering the variations, two powerful trends emerge: classroom research and reflective practice.

Classroom research

The classroom research movement was oriented by Stenhouse, whose ideas and work have remained influential over the last twenty years. Crucial to an understanding of this research orientation is the notion of emancipation on the part of teachers. A quotation from Stenhouse (in Hopkins 1993: 34) will bring us to the point: “Good

teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgement. They do not need to be told what to do. They are not professionally the dependents of researchers or superintendents, of innovators or supervisors”.

Inspired by the ideas and work of Stenhouse, practicing teachers start to assume a research role. Of research conducted by teachers, action research has a strong influence on teacher professional development. In an action research, teacher researchers do not necessarily start with the setting of precise hypotheses, which, as Rees (1993: 54) notes, can daunt practicing teachers for a variety of understandable reasons. There are many ways a teacher can approach an action research. He/she may begin by identifying something that is puzzling or problematic, then collect data and form a hypothesis based on review of the data, and finally develop some form of intervention to bring about the improvement or change. Or he/she may start from an open position and develop hypotheses about his/her teaching by using classroom procedures, subsequently provide a basis for action.

The combination of the action and the research components has a powerful appeal to teachers. However there are professional people who have misgivings about the quality and validity of such research done by the grassroots teachers. Nunan (1993) argues that action research is a systematic process of inquiry and it incorporates the three elements which are essential to research: 1) a question, problem, or hypothesis; 2) data; 3) analysis and interpretation of data; therefore it can be justified not only on professional development grounds, but also on research grounds.

The essence of classroom research is to bridge the gap between

theory and practice by merging the role of the researcher and the practitioner. Of the advantages of teacher-initiated research listed by Beasley and Riordan (in Nunan 1990: 17-18), two of them have been widely recognized as directly associated with teachers' professional growth:

- It sharpens teachers' critical awareness through observation, recording and analysis of classroom events and thus acts as a consciousness-raising exercise.
- It helps teachers better articulate teaching and learning processes to their colleagues and interested community members.

However being a teacher and being a researcher at the same time is not an easy task. As Brumfit and Mitchell (1990: 10) point out that it would be unwise to pretend the processes of researching and teaching can be combined without effort. The most common problems and difficulties, according to Nunan (1993), can be : lack of time, lack of expertise, and lack of on-going support.

In presenting the general issues of the language classroom as a focus for research, Brumfit and Mitchell suggest that research into educational matters should depend on combinations of research from external perspectives, collaborative research by researchers and outsiders, and research from within teaching itself.

Reflective practice

Reflective practice is another currently influential orientation in teacher development. It is viewed as a means by which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance, an awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development. Like the classroom re-