

Content-Based Instruction

以内容为依托的英语教学法

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ISBN 978-7-5609-7345-6



9 787560 973456 >

定价：18.00元

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都建颖 / 著

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前言



华中科技大学出版社

<http://www.hustp.com>

中国·武汉

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

Content-Based Instruction / 都建颖 著. — 武汉: 华中科技大学出版社,
以内容为依托的英语教学法
2011.10
ISBN 978-7-5609-7345-6

I. C… II. 都… III. 英语-教学研究 IV. H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2011)第 182743 号

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出版发行: 华中科技大学出版社(中国·武汉)

武昌喻家山 邮编: 430074 电话: (027)87557437

录 排: 华中科技大学惠友文印中心

印 刷: 华中科技大学印刷厂

开 本: 850mm×1168mm 1/32

印 张: 5

字 数: 180 千字

版 次: 2011 年 10 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

定 价: 18.00 元



华中大

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内 容 提 要

本书的主要目的是帮助读者清楚准确地了解作为专门用途英语(English for Specific Purposes)的主要教学途径之一——以内容为依托的英语教学法(CBI, 即 Content-Based Instruction)。作者分析并总结了该教学法的概念、理论基础及实践模式, 认为 CBI 有强式与弱式之分, 并且在以英语为母语和英语为外语的教学环境中有不同的教学目的和特征; 本书作者还从历史角度阐述了 CBI 在中国自 19 世纪 60 年代至 21 世纪所经历的三个历史发展阶段, 并在介绍中国传统教育文化的基础上, 探讨了 CBI 在当今中国高等教育中具备的优势以及面临的问题。

序

在我国高等教育研究体系中,大学英语改革的呼声反映了目前我国大学英语教学在课程设置、教学方法、教学内容等诸多方面未能满足学习者的需要。目前,我国高等教育体制中的大学英语教学已经由原来以普通人际交流和跨文化交际为目的的单一层次,发展为多个层次,包括普遍意义的大学英语、各专业开设的专业英语等。这些在课程设置和授课内容上的变化说明我国外语教学正努力逐步满足学生的需要。在充分肯定我国外语教学取得令人瞩目的成绩的同时,我们还必须正视一个现实问题:国际交流合作与竞争日趋激烈,社会对外语人才的需求不仅在数量上扩大,更在质量、层次和种类上有更多更高的要求,而我们的外语教育目前仍然很难满足新形势的要求。正如束定芳在《外语教学改革:问题与对策》中指出的,“和国外专门用途英语的系统研究相比,国内方面的研究相当有限,不少发表的文章仍停留在介绍国外的研究成果上。也有少数结合自身专门用途英语从教经历来探讨大学专门用途英语教学模式的”。

本书以大学英语教学的目的和途径为出发点,对“基于内容的语言教学”进行了详尽的研究。作者首先在理论上对这一教学法进行了探讨,包括“基于内容的语言教学”从不同角度阐述的不同定义、该教学法的主要特征以及在教学实践中存在的优势和可能面临的困难。然后从历史发展的角度,总结了自“洋务运动”至今的一百多年时间里,“基于内容的语言教学”在中国教育体制中的作用和影响。最后作者通过自己参加的以法律专业为内容的英语教学实践,总结了“基于内容的语言教学”在提高学习者语言学习动机、培养语言应用技能以及增强学习者批判性思维能力等方面

自序

国外对于专门用途英语 (ESP, 即 English for Specific Purposes) 的研究起源于 20 世纪 60 年代。自 80 年代迄今, 关于专门用途英语的研究角度日益广泛, 理论体系日益完善, 相关课程设置也日趋丰富。20 世纪七八十年代, 专门用途英语的浪潮也波及到了我国。目前, 随着英语学习者需要的转变, 专门用途英语教学再次成为中国高校热烈探讨的话题。我国的外语教师与研究人员也纷纷撰文, 探讨专门用途英语教学理论与实践。然而, 这些文章不但数量有限, 在质量上也不尽如人意。这不仅是因为我们的专门用途英语理论研究仅停留在介绍国外的研究成果, 还因为我们对国外这些理论的研究缺乏系统性, 更因为对相关概念 (如专门用途英语、专业英语、双语教学、英语教学等) 的理解模糊不清。

尽管专门用途英语教学近年来受到广泛热议, 并成为许多高校外语教学研究的重要课题, 然而, 许多研究人员认为“英语+专业”的复合型教师才是专门用途英语的理想师资, 这不免使身处大学英语改革最前沿的许多英语教师对自身的能力产生疑虑。本书从理论、实践和“基于内容的英语教学法”(CBI, 即 Content-Based Instruction) 在我国的发展历史等角度, 重申了 Ken Hyland 教授提出的观点, 即专门用途英语标志着人们对语言认识的发展, 它既不是一门新的语言学科, 也不排斥传统或现代的各种语言教学方法。正如 Tom Hutchinson 和 Alan Waters 早在 20 世纪 80 年代指出的: “与其他任何形式的语言教学一样, 专门用途英语教学也必须以有效和高效学习为前提。尽管专门用途英语课程在内容上可能有所不同, 但专门用途英语学习者与一般英语学习者的学习过程是一致的。换言之, 专门用途英语教学方法并不存在, 专门用

途英语课堂上使用的教学方法很可能也用在任何英语教学的课堂上。”

本书的主要目的是帮助读者清楚、准确地了解作为专门用途英语的主要教学途径之一——基于内容的英语教学法。本书第一章分析并总结了以内容为基础的教学法(CBI)的概念、理论基础及实践模式,提出了CBI有强式与弱式之分,并且在以英语为母语和英语为外语的教学环境中有不同的教学目的和特征。本书第二章划分了CBI与学术英语(EAP,即English for Academic Purpose)、双语教学、基于任务的语言教学、语法-翻译教学之间的区别与联系。第三章论述了CBI的理论和实践基础,第四章分析了CBI的优势和在教学实践中面临的挑战。第五章为本书的重点章节,在介绍中国教育文化的基础上,总结了CBI从19世纪至21世纪在中国的历史发展过程,以及CBI教学法在当今中国高等教育中的特点,并通过案例分析进一步说明CBI在中国高等教育中存在的优势和问题。

本书明确了我国高等教育中英语教学与学生专业学习的接口问题,提供了大学英语从普通交际英语向专门/学术用途英语过渡的理论基础和实践模式。我国高校的英语教师有着丰富的语言学习与教学经验,对中外文化有着较深刻的了解,完全可以利用自己在语言、文化以及语言教学方面的优势,将专业学科内容作为英语教学的必要辅助,从而使“大学英语”真正成为满足大学生需要的英语。但是,作为大学英语教育工作者,我们也必须面对这样的现实:语言与其承载的内容密不可分,语言教学必须服务于学习者的实际需要,语言是工具,使用才是目的。

由于时间、精力与学术水平有限,本书的编写还存在许多疏漏之处,望读者给予批评指正。

都建颖
2011年6月

致 谢

本书从撰写到发表历时近八年,其间,我的身份也经历了从应用语言学硕士、应用语言学博士到华中科技大学外国语学院英语教师的成长和转变。在本书即将出版之际,我希望能有机会对帮助过我的前辈和同仁表示深深的谢意!

在南安普顿大学(University of Southampton)留学 5 年期间,我的导师 George Blue、Rosamond Mitchell 教授和 Christopher Brumfit 教授给予了我极大的支持,他们严谨的治学态度、崇高的敬业精神以及高尚的人格深深地感动了我,并最终促成了我回国从事中国大学英语的教学与研究工作。雷丁大学(University of Reading)的 Pauline Robinson 教授也为本书的后期整理和编写提供了宝贵的意见。

在本书的写作过程中我得到了华中科技大学外国语学院的热情支持和鼓励,我在此表示衷心的感谢。首先要感谢樊葳葳教授和易元祥书记,他们的大力支持使我顺利完成本书的撰写和修改工作。其次要感谢徐锦芬教授和徐喜文老师以及华中科技大学外国语学院学术委员会的多位专家,他们为本书提供了许多建设性的意见和帮助。我还要特别感谢华中科技大学出版社的熊新华书记和梅欣君女士,感谢他们在本书的出版和编辑过程中提供的无私帮助和大量细致烦琐的工作。

都建颖

2011 年 6 月

Preface

It is probably the case in a very large number of language classrooms throughout the world that students' biggest wish is to be able to speak the target language as fluently (and maybe accurately) as its native speakers. The stereotype was broken one day when I asked my students whether they would like to be a fluent English speaker or a competent user of the language in their subject field. The latter was preferred by most of my students. A question is thus raised: What kind of English should we teach in language classes at Chinese universities? To be more specific, should we teach them the English for general communication or the English for their future profession? Furthermore, will the students be automatically motivated when they are taught what they want to learn?

English is a foreign language in China. Very few college students learn English for the purposes of studying, living or working in English speaking countries. However, most students have realized the significance of English as an international language for global communication, in which China plays a significant role. Here comes another question: For what purposes do we teach English in higher education in China?

Most language classes in Chinese colleges and universities are presented by Chinese teachers who are normally non-native English speakers. The traditional grammar-translation approach is widely used in these language classes with basic interpersonal

second language (L2) communication as the pedagogical objective. To a certain extent, traditional language classes are effective in introducing fragments of language rules and uses. However, the students' interpersonal L2 communicative skills are far from native-like. For example, they can understand "what are you doing" but do not have a clue about "what are you up to". Moreover, as a non-native speaker, the language teacher is not always able to tell whether an expression is native-like or not. Thus a third question comes into play: How do we teach English in Chinese universities? It is driven by these three questions that this book is composed.

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the language. Nor do they have a linguistic demand for immediate content success. Secondly, the learners may not be motivated to learn the language which they do not see the practical value of. Thirdly, it might be ideal but impractical for a teacher to have full information of the learners' language and content learning experiences. Concerning the fourth rationale, contextualized use should be at the centre of language teaching; however, this does not necessarily diminish the significance of focusing on sentence-level usage. Sometimes, the language teacher may find explicit instruction on language rules necessary and effective. Finally, understanding the language input does not always lead to the acquisition of the language. Nor does it improve the learners' cognitive abilities. Other factors including teaching techniques, learning environment and educational culture, etc. also have impact on the learners' linguistic and cognitive development.

It is not my intention to deny the effectiveness of the CBI approach by questioning the five rationales. However, CBI teachers in EFL settings should be aware of the impact of social and educational culture on language learning, which is discussed in chapter one and chapter three of this book.

In educational practice, there are a number of types of CBI. Due to the different perceptions and applications of content, language and integration, the CBI umbrella can be even broader. Brinton *et al.*'s (1989) classification seems to be well known and frequently quoted. They identify three basic types of CBI: theme-based instruction, sheltered instruction and adjunct instruction.

Theme-based instruction is named as theme-based language instruction. In this approach, language activities are organized

by a major theme or a series of themes related to non-linguistic areas. Language skills are the primary target of theme-based instruction. Allowing great flexibility of the range and difficulty of content topics, the theme-based approach is applied to learners at various levels of L2 proficiency.

Sheltered instruction is specified by Brinton *et al.* as sheltered content instruction. It is provided as a subject course to L2 students. These students are sheltered from their peers who are native-speakers of the target language. The course is taught by the subject teacher and the language used in the sheltered classes is normally modified and simplified for the sake of effective communication. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to teach important new words for concept development in mathematics, science, history, home economics and other subjects. The goal of the program is to mainstream the students gradually. Therefore, both content mastery and language development are expected of the students.

Adjunct instruction is identified as a paired model by Wesche (1993). In this CBI model, L2 students are enrolled with mainstream students in a content course, and are sheltered from them in a language course. The language course aims at specialised discourse and academic skills in the content subject, while the content course instruction bears a certain degree of language sensitivity. Although language teachers and content instructors maintain priorities in their own field, they work as a team to help the students with their academic success.

Brinton *et al.*'s classification of CBI is identified as prescriptive and criticised for being theoretically problematic by

Davison and Williams (2001). As they claimed, “at the theoretical level, this categorisation has the problem of incorporating two different entities in the labels being proposed, and therefore leads to problems in classifying different types of practice”. Adjunct and sheltered instructions are classified according to the form of the program, whereas theme-based instruction refers to the content in the course. Meanwhile, sheltered and adjunct models seem irrelevant to an EFL setting where there are no native speakers of the target language.

1.1.3 CBI as subset of integrated language and content teaching

Brinton *et al.*'s (1989) term “content-based (language) instruction” is rejected by Davison (cited in Davison and Williams, 2001) since the term conflates a variety of integrative models with different emphases. Based on some further understandings of the complexity in language and content integration, Davison proposes a descriptive framework. (See Table 1.2)

Table 1.2 Davison's (1993) descriptive framework of integrated language and content teaching

Curriculum Focus	Theoretical model/ap-proach	Teaching materials	Curriculum function	Program type/student groupings	Teacher roles
Language teaching	Pre-commu-nicative ap-proaches	e. g. Learning English in Australia	Language syllabus	ESL in-tensive or similar needs classes	Direct ESL instruction, no content influence

continued

Curriculum Focus	Theoretical model/ap-proach	Teaching materials	Curriculum function	Program type/ student groupings	Teacher roles
"Contextualised" language teaching	Early "weak" communicative approaches	e. g. Cambridge course materials	Language syllabus with contextualisation	(ESP/EAP oriented classes)	Direct ESL instruction
	Situational approaches, e. g. Action Sequence approach	e. g. Using the System	Language syllabus with content dimension		
	Functional-notional approaches	e. g. English in Focus	Language syllabus loosely linked to content syllabus		
	Genre-based approaches, e. g. Genre Theory	e. g. ESP materials	Units of work/ "de facto" language syllabus built around content syllabus		
	Topic approaches	Teaching English through topics	Units of work/ "de facto" language syllabus presenting as content syllabus		(content teacher as resource)

continued

Curriculum Focus	Theoretical model/ approach	Teaching materials	Curriculum function	Program type/ student groupings	Teacher roles
“Simultaneous” integrated language and content teaching	Intuitive practices			Main-stream class with some similar needs ESL classes	Collaborative teaching and / or ESL support / team teaching
	Genre-based approaches, e. g. Genre Theory		Partial language-based “syllabus” embedded in content syllabus	Main-stream class or ESL adjunct / parallel classes	
	Activity-based approaches		Language-based units of work in content syllabus	Main-stream class or ESL adjunct / parallel classes	