



外语教学法丛书之一

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

语言教学的挑战与变迁

Editors
Jane Willis & Dave Willis

上海外语教育出版社

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总 序

近年来随着国内和国际形势的发展,我国对外语人才的需求日益增加,有志于学习外语的学生和社会群体的人数急剧上升,从而使我国外语教学事业蓬勃发展。在这种形势下,外语师资培训和自身建设的重要性与日俱增。在这两方面,当务之急是要了解当今国外外语教学的发展情况,要借鉴国外的最新经验,结合我国的具体情况,大力提高外语师资的水平,使我们的外语教学事业更上一层楼。

有鉴于此,上海外语教育出版社为广大外语教师提供了一套由国外引进的外语教学法丛书。这套丛书所涉及的方面广、种类多,包括外语教学技巧和原则、语法教学、语音教学、阅读教学、写作教学、教学管理、测试、教材选择、第一语言和第二语言习得、儿童英语教学等等。其中绝大多数专著是上世纪九十年代和本世纪所出版。它们反映了当今国外外语教学法研究及相关学科的现状。

这套丛书的最大共同特点,也是与传统教学法类专著的最大不同点在于特别强调理论与实践相结合;更是以实践为主,再以理论去分析评述各种实践活动的优缺点。我们所熟悉的传统教学法类专著,一般都是强调教学原则、教学理论,把各种方法的来龙去脉讲得很详尽;然而如何到课堂上去进行具体教学活动,如何在教学活动中去体现教学原则却不多见。这套丛书则几乎全部是从实践活动着手,以说明对理论和原则的应用。

试举两个例证:

一、斯克里温纳:《学习教学:英语教师指南》,麦克米伦海涅曼出版社,1994。(Jim Scrivener: *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*. Macmillan Heinemann, 1994)

作者前言:“本书旨在帮助你去学习如何更有效地进行教学。它并不给你某一种正确的教学方法。实际上没有任何科学根据可以让我们去描述一种理想的教学方法。我们只能观察教师和学生进行活动的实际,并注意哪些策略和原则更有利于教学。我们没有必要去照搬那些策略和原则,但是要意识到有哪些可能性。”“因此本书并不是告诉你‘就用这种方法’,而代之以‘这几种方法似乎都可行。’主要是

由你自己决定用哪一种方法。”

本书共十二章,涉及教与学的关系、教学安排、课堂活动、语言技能等等方面,绝大部分章节都是先介绍该章内容,然后列出各种具体教学活动(tasks),其后是对各项活动的分析评述。例如第六章“说的技能”共有四小节,即1)为什么要说;2)交际性活动;3)语言交际与流利;4)演戏和角色扮演,每节都提供各种相应的具体活动和作者对各项活动的评述。教师可以根据自己的实际情况选择其中某些活动进行课堂教学。

二、努南:《语言学习研究方法》,剑桥大学出版社,1992。(David Nunan: *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press, 1992)

作者前言:“传统的语言教学研究方法是教老师怎样去进行教学的。作者主观愿望就是对教学作出种种硬性规定。这种教学科研基于逻辑推理,并要求教学人员接受采纳。上世纪八十年代以来情况有了变化,如今教学人员对自身进行科研。他们用实验方法对教学进行探索。这种科研由于教学背景不同而不同。教学人员不再依赖已有科研成果,而是对自己的课堂教学采取一种科研态度。本书目的在于1.促使教学人员认识对自身进行科研的必要性。2.帮助教学人员进行教学方面的科研。”

本书共十章,介绍科研方法的历史背景、实验性科研方法、个案研究、课堂现场观察和科研、自省方法、语言交流分析等等。试以第六章“自省方法”为例。所谓“自省”,就是不仅仅着眼于课堂上的教学实践,而要更进一步去思考教学步骤。教学人员一方面审视自己的教学,一方面回顾课堂教学的具体步骤并提出问题进行研究。这种科研的基础就是教学人员本人的日记、教学日记和其他种种有关记录,以这些资料为依据进行分析研究,得出结论。

以上两书的内容安排大体上可以概括整套丛书的全貌。换言之,各书的最大特点就是以实践为主,而实践都来自相应的理论并与理论密切结合;其实用性强,可操作性强。有大量的实践举例,还有不少个案研究(case study),在其后多数有分析评述。这些例证分析、评述给予教师很大的空间去进行思考、探索。各种例证并不是仅仅给教师提供方便,让教师有所参考。更重要的是促使教师结合自己的具体教学情况,通过思考和探索有所发展,制订出切合自己需要并切实可行的教学方法去进行教学。

我相信这套丛书能为促进我国外语教学事业的进一步发展作出巨大的贡献。

李观仪

2002年6月

出版前言

随着我国改革开放的深入和进入世界贸易组织的需要,英语教学在国内有了进一步的发展,对英语教师的需求量日益增大。为了培养一大批高素质的英语教师,必须有组织地开展师资培训工作。在职的英语教师也必须继续充电,通过种种途径进一步提高业务水平。然而,许久以来,系统介绍英语教学法的专著极为匮乏。因此,上海外语教育出版社特地从国外知名出版社,如牛津大学出版社、剑桥大学出版社和麦克米伦出版社引进一批有关外语教学法和二外习得研究的学术专著,出版了外语教学法丛书。《语言教学的挑战与变迁》(*Challenge and Change in Language Teaching*)就是其中的一本。

本书精选了16篇有关外语教学改革与创新的论文集,对传统的教学模式进行了批判性分析,并在此基础上提出了多种新的教学模式。该论文集的两位编者J·威里斯和D·威里斯分别执教于英国奥斯顿大学和伯明翰大学,有丰富的教学经验和理论基础,并发表过多本专著。

在外语教学的历史长河中,语法翻译法、直接法、以口语教学为主的情景法(英国)、听说领先法(美国)、交际法都曾引起外语教育者和学习者的重视。然而,语言教学法也是随着人们对语言认识的变化而不断变化着的。因此,在本论文集中,各位学者对以PPP为代表的教学模式提出了质疑,并主张采用各种新的教学模式。本书奉献给读者的是一组“百家争鸣”的教学模式探讨。

全书分为五个部分。第一部分“理论透视”(Theoretical perspectives)从宏观上分析了外语教学变革的原因,指出变革归根结底在于作为外语教学基础的理论 and 原则起了变化。第二部分“课堂应用”(Some classroom applications)从理论过渡到实践,结合个案分析对新的模式进行验证。第三部分“教学专业的发展及师资培训”(Professional development and teacher training)主要是从师资培训的角度来看外语教学中的变革。第四部分“新教学法探索”(Investigating new approaches)通过对新教学法的实践和思索来探索新的模式或方法。第五部分“教学效果评估及


运用”(Assessing and managing change)向读者介绍了目前教学领域里其他分支所发生的变化。

本论文集强调外语教育者应勇于面对教学变革,积极地、乐观地接受挑战。这种态度值得提倡。当然,对于本书供稿者提出的种种教学方案在实践中的适用性还是要根据具体的教学目的和环境加以分析和取舍。本书的读者对象是从事外语或第二语言教学的教师和研究人员、高校英语专业高年级学生及研究生。

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Introduction

uch of the language produced in language classrooms is language for display. Teachers offer students a model of the language forms which provide the focus of a particular lesson. They produce model sentences and ask learners to repeat. They ask questions designed to elicit specific responses which practise the target form for a particular lesson. In a lesson on *Likes and Dislikes*, for example, a teacher will ask questions designed to elicit responses such as *I like playing tennis*; *I don't like watching television* and so on. These activities are designed to ensure a precise focus on the forms under study. Teachers control the form of student responses by shaping them towards the desired form:

T: Do you like watching television?

S: Yes, I like.

T: Yes, good. Listen to the question though. Do you like watching television?

S: Yes, I like watching.

T: I like watching television.

S: I like watching television.

If you look at the sequence of utterances above you will see that it could only happen in a language classroom. Sequences like this are not intended to have any real communicative content. They are designed to focus on form.

Nowadays, however, there is a general acceptance that language learners need plenty of opportunities for language use. By language use we mean the production and comprehension of language to achieve some communicative objective. Carefully designed games and problem-solving activities are used to provide opportunities for this. Discussions are carefully organized to ensure real student participation. There is a range of techniques for encouraging learners to produce language in the context of reading and listening activities. Teachers employ sophisticated information gap and opinion gap techniques to promote interaction on a range of topics and issues. We have on the one hand a basic methodology which focuses clearly on language forms. We have on the other hand a range of established techniques which provide opportunities for communication in the classroom. The challenge is to propose a methodological framework which integrates formal and communicative activities.

In theory there is no difficulty in combining a focus on form and a focus on communication. One very widely used approach which aims to do just this is based on a three-part cycle:



Presentation

The teacher highlights a particular form for study. The form is contextualized in some way to make the meaning clear. Learners are encouraged to produce the target form under careful teacher control until they produce it with some consistency.

Practice

The teacher begins to relax control. Perhaps learners are encouraged to ask each other questions to elicit a response of the appropriate form or perhaps pictures are used to elicit the response.

Production

When the teacher feels reasonably confident that learners are able to produce the required form the lesson moves on to the production stage, sometimes called the free stage. This usually takes the form of a roleplay or discussion or problem-solving activity in which the target form has a high likelihood of occurrence. The important thing here is that learners are no longer working under close teacher control. The focus at this stage is said to be on language use. Learners are engaged in the negotiation of meaning in a context which requires the use of the target form.

This methodological cycle, often referred to by the acronym PPP, is so widely accepted that it now forms the basis of many teacher training courses. Indeed on some teacher training courses this is the *only* methodology offered to trainees. Yet all of the contributors to this collection of papers have some doubts about this dominant approach to English language teaching. Some accept the cycle as one way of teaching in certain circumstances, but believe that other teaching cycles and sequences should have a similar prominence. Other contributors have serious doubts about the principles which underlie the PPP sequence.

The dissatisfaction within the ELT profession with a PPP methodology is, I believe, well-founded and widespread. Skehan (Paper 3) goes so far as to say:

The underlying theory for a PPP approach has now been discredited. The belief that a precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught) no longer carries much credibility in linguistics or psychology.

Many teachers would reinforce these doubts on the basis of their experience in the classroom. We know all too well from bitter experience that what is 'taught' is not always learned.

We have all taught carefully prepared and apparently successful lessons only to discover later that what learners appeared to have learned they had not really learned at all. Question tags, for example, are notoriously resistant to teaching.

They play a large part in many English courses, but no matter how often they are presented it takes a long time before learners begin to use them consistently. But the PPP approach appears to be based on the assumption that what is taught is indeed learned. We believe that we are justified in focusing precisely on one particular item because this ensures that the item will be assimilated by learners in the presentation and practice stages of the lesson and will therefore be available for use in the production stage. The research into second language learning, however, suggests that this does not



happen. However hard we may work at it, we cannot predict what learners are going to learn at a given time. Not only do they often fail to assimilate what has been explicitly taught: they often assimilate language which has not been 'taught' at all. Quite clearly the business of learning is much more complex than anything that can be accounted for within a presentation methodology.

Woodward (Paper 1) suggests that the profession is at a stage of 'paradigm shift'. There is dissatisfaction with the dominant paradigm, but there is no clear consensus as to the way forward. There is a fear, often openly expressed, that one rigid methodology will simply be replaced with another. This fear is understandable, but it should not prevent us from challenging existing practice. There is, of course, the danger of 'throwing out the baby with the bath water'. This very metaphor is often invoked in defence of the status quo. Again this danger should be recognized. But again it does not relieve us of the responsibility of searching for viable alternatives.

On the one hand we have a profession which is informed by established practice. On the other hand that practice is challenged by theory and also by the experience of many practitioners. We must take these challenges seriously. One thing is sure. If teachers are to be able to offer their learners a range of language learning activities, if they want to find out how best to meet the needs of their students, if they are to take full advantage of a range of teaching materials and to keep abreast of new teaching opportunities, then they need to adapt to new values, new approaches to language, to learning and to students. They need to assimilate a range of new techniques and procedures. They need to be prepared to experiment and innovate.

This collection of papers addresses the challenge of innovation. There are plenty of ideas around for what might be done to enrich teaching and teacher training. What we have tried to do here is draw together some of those ideas. In selecting and commissioning material for the book we have tried to anticipate the kind of concerns teachers have and the kind of questions they want answered. All of the papers are written by people who wish to explore and extend classroom practice in ways which they hope will be of use not only to themselves but to others as well.

As the title says, this book sets out to explore challenge and change in language teaching. Innovative proposals should be based on theory. That theory must be realized through an appropriate methodology. But theory and application should not be taken for granted, so research and evaluation have a place in any programme of change. Such programmes also need careful management if they are to be assimilated within an institution. Finally, if they are to have any lasting impact, the values and principles which lie behind any innovation must be transmitted to the profession through teacher training and education. All these aspects of change are covered in this volume. We hope that you will find it challenging, and that you will find the challenge relevant to your own teaching.

Dave Willis

外语教学法丛书

Challenge and Change in Language Teaching 《语言教学的挑战与变迁》

J. Willis & D. Willis

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A. Cunningsworth

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M. P. Breen & A. Littlejohn (ed.)

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J. C. Richards

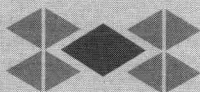
Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy 《词汇:描述、习得与教学》

N. Schmitt, & M. McCarthy (ed.)

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Theoretical Perspectives



This section looks first at a particular theory of change and then at the theoretical basis for innovation in TEFL. In Paper 1 Woodward draws on Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift. This provides a background for the understanding of change. Woodward then goes on to look at change in the ELT profession, anticipating the ways we, as readers, may react to the papers in this book and the implications they carry.

Like other disciplines, English language teaching normally works within a dominant paradigm, a broadly defined set of values and procedures to which practitioners subscribe. This paradigm has powerful advantages. It provides a common framework for the transmission of knowledge and experience. It unites the participants in the process – learners, teachers, teacher trainers, academics – around a set of shared values. But, as Woodward points out, the benefits of the paradigm must be balanced against its drawbacks:

One of the good things about having a shared paradigm in a professional community is that it helps members to talk to each other. One of the drawbacks is that it hinders discussion with people from other communities working inside different paradigms.

The paradigm is also a source of tension *within* a given community, particularly when a dominant paradigm is challenged. The dominant paradigm in ELT faces challenge. It is challenged by new views of language learning, by new language descriptions and by new values which emphasize the centrality of the learner. 'How,' asks Woodward, 'will we deal with this newness? Will we perceive it or deny it? Resist it or embrace it? Even if converted, will we use the new paradigms like foreigners in an unfamiliar land, or will we slowly cope with the new categories, new language, new materials, new theories?'

Woodward lists possible ways forward. We need to look carefully at current practice and to ask a number of critical questions. Do we accept the values and attitudes implicit in our practice in the classroom? How can we best evaluate the challenges to the existing paradigm? How can we maintain an open view of the possibilities in our own classrooms and exchange ideas with others? If we are to answer these questions we need to read and research:

Whether we prefer to gain our information and ideas from colleagues or concordances, from books or from our own students, we need to keep deliberately seeking fresh views.



Papers 2–4 set out the theoretical basis for a shift in the currently dominant paradigm in ELT. They look at current research into language description and language learning. This research raises serious problems for those who see language as a set of discrete structures. It challenges those who believe it is possible to present these structures to learners in a predetermined order. The writers of these papers start from very different points but the recommendations they offer are strikingly similar.

Lewis is forthright in his dismissal of PPP. He argues that a grammatical description of language is inadequate as a model for teaching and learning. Although 'well-established grammar structures clearly provide some economizing frameworks' this is no more than a very small part of the learning task. Lewis's model of communicative language use emphasizes the lexical mode. Natural language use depends on a huge stock of lexical items and fixed phrases. Taking this as a starting point Lewis sees language learning as involving a constant cycle of *observation*, *hypothesis* and *experiment*. Learners observe and assimilate language forms in use, but the forms they assimilate are not abstract grammatical patterns but 'prefabricated chunks, often, perhaps usually, much larger than single words'. Learners draw conclusions from the language they observe. As they assimilate a range of patterns they begin to form hypotheses about the system which lies behind the patterning they observe. As they experiment with these hypotheses and compare their own output with authoritative input they begin to construct and reconstruct their own language system. They become less dependent on processing prefabricated chunks and more able to assemble language independently. This process feeds on exposure to language. Only wide exposure can provide learners with the information they need about the collocations and fixed phrases which are essential to natural language use. But it must be, for the most part, exposure to natural language, not to language designed to illustrate mistaken conformity to an idealized grammar. 'It is,' says Lewis, 'the quality and quantity of the input to which the learners are exposed which is the single most important factor in their progress.' This challenges the present generation of EFL coursebooks, and suggests much more extensive use of resource banks of tapes, texts and video, maximizing both the quality and, equally important, quantity of language to which learners are exposed.

Skehan takes note of the same developments in language description – the predominance of prefabricated chunks or lexical phrases. As his starting point, however, he offers a brief review of recent research into second language acquisition. This research shows clearly that there is no direct correspondence between 'teaching' and 'learning'. We can never be sure that what is presented to learners will be assimilated. Learning will proceed in a fashion determined by psychological processes beyond the conscious control of teachers and learners. Learners will assimilate features of the target system in their own good time, not at the time and in the order determined by a teacher. At first sight this seems to deny the value of language instruction. But Skehan asserts the value of instruction in that it obliges learners to focus on language form. Without this focus learners may rely on a lexicalized mode which stitches together prefabricated utterances. Without a language focus they will not be encouraged to attend to syntax. They will not, in Lewis's terms, be encouraged to hypothesize and experiment. But the instructional process can ensure that we draw learners' attention to certain features of the input. This does not ensure that these features will be mastered at once – but it does increase the chances that the learner will

be aware of them and sensitive to them so that they will be processed more efficiently at some time in the future.

Skehan concludes that the findings of second language acquisition research are supportive of task-based approaches to language learning. But he is concerned that we should maintain a proper focus on language form: 'There needs to be a balance between a focus on form ... and a focus on communication.' Learners need to develop a language system that will work in real time. Skehan, like Lewis, argues that the process of real-time language processing demands a 'lexicalized mode' in which patterns are holistic and can be rapidly called to mind and deployed in communication. The learner operates with lexicalized 'chunks' without being fully aware of the syntactic patterning which lies behind them. An appropriate focus on form prompts learners to re-examine and refine these lexicalized 'chunks' to bring them in line with the learners' growing awareness of the form of the target language. But these refinements will be real and lasting only if they can be incorporated into a real-time operating system, a lexical mode. We need therefore to prompt learners to move to increasing levels of grammatical awareness and, at each stage, to encourage them to make their increased awareness work in real time by refabricating units of language. In looking at ways of achieving this outcome in the classroom Skehan sees task design as central. His paper looks at ways of analysing and constructing task procedures which will ensure a balance between a focus on communication, using a lexicalized mode, and a focus on learning with an emphasis on highlighting and analysing language form.

In Paper 4, Shortall, like Skehan, asserts the importance of form-focused activities in the classroom. He begins by showing that learners already know a lot about language in general, and therefore about the target language as well as their first language. It seems reasonable to suppose that the main source of knowledge about language is the learner's first language. If this is indeed the case we might expect the learning process to be one of gradually replacing one set of realizations with another. Roughly speaking this is the process envisaged by contrastive analysis. According to contrastive analysis one would expect Japanese learners to have great problems with word order. But they do not seem to have these anticipated problems. Shortall shows how systematic similarities underlie some of the surface differences between one language and another. He goes on to consider the implications for language teaching of Chomsky's *Universal Grammar*, and to draw a distinction between *core* features of language, which are shared by many languages, and *peripheral* features, which are specific to a particular language. He argues that core features will be readily acquired by learners, and that our teaching effort should be directed towards peripheral features.