侯冰洁 刘希彦 ◆ 编著

英语教学方法论

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Preface

Within the language teaching profession, TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is a dynamic and rapidly growing field. Located at the interface of applied linguistics and education, TESOL is concerned with theoretical and practical issues in teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL / EFL). TESOL is a vast subject, and this is a relatively short book which of necessity has had to adopt a specific and therefore limited perspective. Among the central areas of interest in TESOL, the research and development of language teaching methodologies is of vital importance. Different theories concerning the nature of language and language learning, when applied to the actual ESL/EFL situation, have always given rise to a considerable array of instructional methodologies. With a contemporary account of major trends in ELT methodology, this book is hence to offer valuable insights to teachers of English in China who may wish to keep abreast of current developments in TESOL.

The overall aim of the book is to provide a synthesis between "principle" and "practice" by making links between background issues in applied linguistics (views of language, psychological bases of language learning and so on), and at the same time looking at the practical design of methods. The fourteen chapters of the book are divided into two parts. Chapter 1 to 4 in the first part relate to the conceptual basis of language teaching by looking at the nature of language and language proficiency, the nature of language learning and teaching, and the language teaching background. The second part of the book focuses largely on different methodologies in

language teaching based on the theoretical framework discussed in Part One. Each chapter 5 – 13, is organized in such a way as to show the underlying theoretical assumptions, the salient features, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each methodology. The last chapter in this part is to be seen as a final unifying one that offers reflections on some of the key points of the book.

This book can be used as a textbook in courses on language teaching methodology and teacher preparation, or as a reference book for teaching practice. The sequence of chapters is designed especially for people who wish to use the book as a complete course, working through it from beginning to end. The references at the end of each chapter can provide more background to the topic one is investigating.

We hope this book may fill the gap in the relevant literature in China. Our final goal in writing this book is still that of enabling readers to become better informed about contemporary ELT methods by providing a relatively compact reference package so that they can make wiser judgments about their present and future classroom practice.

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Appendix: Summary of Principles in Language Teaching

	The Grammar-Translation Method	The Direct Method	The Audiolingual Method	The Silent Way	Community Language Learning	Total Physical Response	The Natural Approach	Communicative Language Teaching	Suggestopedia
Goals	Read literature in L2. Develop mind. Learn grammar, vocabulary, and culture.	Communication. Think in L2. Direct association in L2 without translation.	Communication. Automaticity by learning new habits.	Self-expression of students; independence from the teacher.	Near-native mastery. Promote nondefensive learning.	Communication. Oral proficiency	Basic communicative skills. Facilitate acquisition by providing comprehensible input (i+1).	Communicative competence.	Everyday Comm. Tap Ss mental powers by desuggesting barriers to learning.
Role of the teacher/learner	Traditional. T is the authority. Ss learn from the T.	T-centered. T directs.	T-centered. T provides model of L2 for imitation.	T as facilitator, resource, provides what Ss need.	Counselor/client. As S assumes more responsibility, becomes independent of T.	T provides model of L2 for imitation. Later role reversal.	T as facilitator. Primary responsibility is with S.	Facilitator. Manager of learning citivities. Promotes communication among Ss.	S must trust and respect T as authority. Ss adopt childlike roles once they feel secure.
Teaching/Learning Process	Translation. Deductive study of grammar. Memorize vocabulary.	Associate L2 and meaning directly in real context. Use L2 only. Inductive grammar. Syllabus based on topics/ situations.	New grammar and vocabulary through dialogues. Drills. Inductive grammar. Learning is habit formation.	Ss are guided to discover the structure of L2. Initial focus on accurate pronunciation.	Security, aggression, attention, reflection, retention, discrimination. Ss initiate speech in L1, T supplies L2.	Comprehension before production. Modelling by T followed by S performance.	Comprehension before production. Developing model approximates L2. Gradual emergence of speech. Task oriented.	Engage Ss in communication. Ss learn to communicate by negotiating meaning in real context.	Relaxing atmosphere, music, activate whole brain. Reception then activation phase.
Nature of student/teacher interaction	T to S.	Both initiate interaction. Some S/S interaction.	T-directed. S/S in drills.	T is mostly silent. S/S interaction are encouraged.	Changes over time. Importance placed on cooperative relationship between T/S and S/S.	T speaks, Ss respond nonverbally. Later, Ss verbalize.	S-centered. Both initiate interaction. S/S interaction in pair and small group activities.	T arranges tasks for communication. S/S interaction.	T/S and S/S interaction from beginning.
How are students' feelings dealt	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Positive feelings are encouraged, also S/S	S viewed as whole person, no separation of	Ss have fun in a nonstressful situation.	Affective factors over cognitive factors. Optimal	Ss are motivated to learn By doing	Focus on confidence and sense of security

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
with?				cooperation.	intellect and feelings. T "understands" Ss.		learner has low affective filter.	sth.useful with the language.	via suggestions.
View of language/ culture?	Literary language over spoken language.	Spoken language over written.	Language is a system of rule-governed structures hierarchically arranged.	Language expresses the spirit of a culture.	Language for developing critical thinking. Culture integrated with language.	Spoken over written.	Language as a tool for communication. Language function over linguistic form.	Language in social context, for communication.	Communication as a 2-phase process: language + extra-linguistic factors.
What language skills are emphasized?	Vocabulary/ grammar. Reading/ writing.	Vocabulary over grammar. Focus on communication.	Structure important. Listen-speak-read-write.	Pronunciation & intonation. Structure. Oral before written.	Ss determine syllabus by what they what to say.	Grammar and vocabulary (initially via imperatives). Comprehension precedes production.	Vocabulary over grammar. Function over form. Comprehension– early production– speech emergence.	Function over form. Discourse and sociolinguistic competence + all 4 skills.	Vocabulary. Explicit but minimal grammar. Language use over linguistic form.
Role of the native language?	L1 is used in classroom. Two-way translation.	Not used.	L1 habits interfere with L2. Avoid L1.	Used to form sounds in L2 and for feedback. Otherwise not used.	Used in the beginning, less in later stages.	Not used.	L1 can be used in preproduction (comprehension) activities.	Generally not used.	L1 used in translation of dialogues. As course proceeds, L1 reduced.
How does evaluation occur?	Written translations. Apply grammar rules.	Use of language (interview).	Discrete point testing for accuracy.	Continuous observation. Ss develop their own criteria.	Integrative tests. Self-evaluation.	By observation.	Communicative effectiveness. Fluency over accuracy. Task oriented.	Communicative tests. Fluency and accuracy.	In-class performance.
Treatment of errors?	T supplies correct answer.	Self-correction.	Avoid errors by overlearning.	Self-correction; peer correction.	Nonthreatening. Correction by modelling.	Unobtrusive correction.	No error correction unless errors interfere with communication.	No error correction unless errors interfere with communication.	No overt correction T models correctly.

Based on

Diane Larsen-Freeman, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (1986).

Alice Omaggio Hadley, *Teaching Language in Context* (2001).

H. Douglas Brown, *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (1994).

Table of Contents

Part One

The Conceptual Basis of Foreign Language

Teaching

As teachers of English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL), we are members of an established worldwide profession. As Richards (1985: 1) reminds us, "the current status of English has turned a significant percentage of the world's population into part-time users or learners of English". Wherever we work, we share many assumptions about what we do; we prepare and use teaching materials and classroom methods based on similar, or at least comparable, principles. Despite this commonality, different countries have widely differing educational systems and philosophies, resulting in teachers being subject to different expectations and pressures. In this part, however, we shall take some time to look beyond our individual teaching circumstances to what can be thought of as a professional "common core", which has relevance to all teachers.

The idea of a "common core" is dealt with in considerable depth by Stern who, in his *fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (1983), proposes a very detailed "conceptual framework", designed as a model that is intended to capture what he sees as the complexity of language teaching. After surveying a number of earlier models, he then sets out his own scheme. Its main components are:

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1. Views of the nature of language

   Language teaching requires a concept of the nature of *language*. Implicitly or explicitly the teacher works with a theory of language. Therefore, one of the central questions to ask of a language teaching theory is: What is the view of language in this language teaching theory? The main disciplines that can be drawn upon to deal with this question are linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and the study of particular languages.

2. Views of the language learner and language learning

   Language teaching demands a view of the *learner* and of the nature of *language learning*. The fundamental questions are: What language learner does this theory envisage, and how does it view language learning? The disciplines that most directly relate to this question are psychology, particularly educational psychology, and psycholinguistics for language learning and language use.

3. Views of the language teacher and language teaching

   Language teaching implies a view of the *language teacher* and *language teaching*. The question to ask is: How does the theory interpret teaching? What role and function does it assign to the teacher? How can teaching be described or analyzed? The discipline that most directly relates to this concept is the study of education.

4. The whole context

   Finally, language teaching occurs in a given *context*. The interpretation of context is an essential part of a theory. Language, learning, and teaching must always be viewed in a context, setting, or background. Accordingly, there are three

elements: (a) the language context. (b) the educational setting. (c) the language teaching background.

(Stern, 1983:48)

The chief characteristics of the model are that it is comprehensive, covering any type of language teaching operation; that all factors under each heading are interdependent, so that no "single factor, for example, the teacher, the method, the materials, a new concept, or a technological device, can by itself offer a general solution to most language learning problems" (Stern, 1983: 47); and that it sees language teaching as multidisciplinary. Stern's perspective will be evident in most chapters of this book.

In what follows, this notion of a "framework" is set out in a little more detail. We then subdivide it under the four headings of "The Nature of Language and Language Proficiency", "The Nature of Language Learning", "The Nature of Language Teaching", and "The Language Teaching Background: a Brief History of Language Teaching". The theories and principles explored in this part serve as an organizer for the discussion of theory and practice that unfolds in the rest of this book.

Chapter 1
The Nature of Language and Language Proficiency

Strevens, one of the foremost theoreticians in Britain to make linguistics known to language teachers, advocates that: "The teaching of English as a foreign language has become a joint activity, containing on the one hand both education and methodology... and on the other hand, a sound background of linguistic thought and up-to-date descriptions of the present-day language..." (Strevens, 1981: 19). The theory of language with which the teacher operates may not be consciously formulated; it may simply be implicit in the teaching traditions, in the concepts employed to talk about languages, in the way textbooks are arranged, or in the content and format of dictionaries and grammars; but "it is hardly imaginable that a language could be taught without some underlying conception of the general nature of language" (Stern, 1983:219).

In other words, one cannot teach or learn a language for long without being faced with some of the great puzzles about the nature of language. What is language? How should we set about learning a language? What is the best way of dividing up this enormous task and of arranging the various features that we recognize as parts of a language? Most of us in the foreign and second language field consider teaching for proficiency our ultimate goal. Yet what does the term "language proficiency" mean precisely? What does one have to know in terms of grammar, vocabulary, sociolinguistic appropriateness, conventions of discourse, cultural understanding, and the like in order to know a language well enough to use it for some real-world purpose?

To explore these questions is what we set out to do in what follows. In the present chapter different theories about the nature of language and language proficiency that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching will be considered as a study in its own right. Points of contact with language teaching will be examined as well.

1.1 Structuralism

Instead of reviewing all trends in linguistic theory, we only look closely at those models that have exercised a great influence on language teaching. The first, and the most traditional one, is structuralism, which views language as a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning.

1.1.1 The Structural View of Language

One of the earliest and most significant contributions of modern linguistics to foreign/second language teaching was structural linguistics. In the earlier part of the 20th century the structural or descriptive linguistics school emerged. It dealt with languages at particular points in time (synchronic) rather than throughout their historical developments (diachronic). Structural linguists stress language as an abstract system with a certain structure: "The linguist must take the study of linguistic structure as his primary concern, and relate all other manifestations of language to it" (Saussure, 1983: 4). The basic ideas of structuralism were developed in Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916).

Rather than looking at language as a set of names for things, or even as a set of words with meanings, Saussure's structuralism considers language as a multitude of signs, where each sign links a

phonic sound (the signifier) with an idea (the signified). One characteristic of Saussure's synchronic analysis of the language system is a series of binary oppositions or differences and the most notable distinction is that between:

la Parole – the utterance, the act of speech;

la Langue – the underlying system of language.

The significance of any element in a language lies in its relation to other elements in the language system. There are two sorts of relations between the elements:

distributional – the relationship between elements at the *same* level;

integrative – the relationship between elements at *different* levels.

An example of a distributional relation may be found in the relation between parts of speech within a sentence. An example of integrative relation may be found in the vertical relation between phrase-word-morpheme-phoneme.

Saussure sees the sentence as the maximal unit whose form is the constituent structure. The meaning of a constituent at this level is its contribution to the sentence. Within the sentence there are two fundamental modes of relationship:

syntagmatic – the possibility of combination: e.g. s.v.o., noun verb noun.

paradigmatic – the possibility of substitution. In the language system the role of an item depends on the difference between it and other items that might have filled the same place in a given sentence. A verb goes in one slot, a noun in another.