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剑桥英语教师丛书

# Communicative Language Teaching

## 交际语言教学论

William Littlewood 著

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An introduction

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Howard B. Altman and Peter Stevens

William Littlewood 著

李 力 导读

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# 总序

刘润清

外研社和人教社联合推出这套“剑桥英语教师丛书”，以配合全国中小学英语教师的培训工程。付印之前，他们把这套丛书拿给我看，并让我写个总序。说实话，一看到这20个书名，我就十分喜欢，因为它们都是外语教师培训中经常提到的题目；再看作者，大部分是应用语言学领域里颇有名气的研究者，如 Gillian Brown, William Littlewood, Jack C. Richards, David Nunan 等，于是我就愉快地接受了他们给我的任务。

我翻阅了这20本书，并阅读了《面向21世纪教育振兴行动计划》和其他有关中小学骨干教师的培训计划和实施方案。可以说，“剑桥英语教师丛书”涉及的知识面广（包括外语教学理论、外语教学实践、外语测试理论、外语教学研究中的方法），内容实用，文字通俗易懂，是中小学英语教师培训的好教材，它的引进出版必将加强外语专业的教材建设，一定会推动基础外语教育的改革。

细心的读者会发觉，在英语文献中，师资培训这个概念已变化三次。开始，人们都使用 teacher training 一词，但后来许多人认为，training 一词更多是指技术、手艺上的培训，是培训教书工匠的，对教师的通才教育和智力开发是不加过问的。于是出现了 teacher education（师资教育）这一用法，意思是说，这种培训不再只教给老师明天的听力课或阅读课如何如何去上，而是开设普通语言学、应用语言学、语言测试和评估、科研方法等课程，提高教师的理论意识，扩展他们的思维空间，很像我们讲的素质教育。但是，后来人们还是觉得“师资教育”对教师限制多了一些，因为这仍然只是把现成的理论或发现告诉教师。于是，最近常使用的概念叫 teacher development（师资发展），更加强调在“教育”的基础上，鼓励教师去反思自己的教学，观察自己的课堂行为，评估自己的教学效果，开展“教学行为中的科研”（action research），也就是说，教给教师如何在教学实践中验证别人的发现，形成自己的信念，反思自我，使每一次决定都有根有据，每一个判断都有理论支持。此外，还有一个中性的词叫 teacher preparation。这里不妨引用两段话加以说明。在 *Beyond Training* 一书中，作者强调说：Without discounting the importance

of basic teaching skills in teacher preparation, the orientation to teaching discussed in this book is an attempt to look beyond these dimensions of teaching to the beliefs, knowledge, and thinking that underlie their successful use. The argument pursued throughout the book therefore is that teacher education needs to engage teachers not merely in the mastery of rules of practice but in an exploration of the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and thinking that inform such practice。在 *Second Language Teacher Education* 一书中,作者说: An alternative approach to the study of teaching and to the development of goals for teacher preparation programs is the examination of the total context of classroom teaching and learning in an attempt to understand how the interaction between and among teacher, learner, and classroom tasks affect learning. This can be called a holistic approach, since it focuses on the nature and significance of classroom events and involves both low-inference and high-inference categories. Such an approach implies different goals for teacher preparation:

“Holistic approaches work towards training goals not all of which can be broken down into individually verifiable training objectives, and they stress the development of personal qualities of creativity, judgement and adaptability. . . The formulative or prescriptivist nature of a mere ‘Vocabulary training’ approach to [teacher training in TESOL] is contrasted by holists with an ‘education’ in more general principles”。(Britten, 1985a: 113)

“中小学骨干教师国家级培训方案”恰好符合“师资发展”这个基本精神。文件规定的培训内容包括:1. 教育理论与教学技能。着眼于提高中小学教师的理论文化素养,开拓视野,更新知识结构,提高职业成熟度,增强学术能力和自我提高能力;2. 教育教学实践与考察。着眼于提高中小学教师在教学中实施素质教育的能力,加强理论指导教学实践的能力,为形成教学风格和教学特色打基础;3. 课程研究。着眼于提高中小学教师的科研意识和研究能力,善于发现和掌握教育教学规律,善于反思性地总结,增强创新能力。这套“剑桥英语教师丛书”为这个实施方案的落实提供了教材上的保证。这 20 本书中,有几本是关于外语教学理论的,如 *Foreign and Second Language Learning*、*Psychology for Language Teachers*、*Affect in Language Learning*、*The Context of Language Teaching*,有几本是关于语言教学技能和实践的,如 *Teaching Listening Comprehension*、*Developing Reading Skills*、*Beginning to Write*、*Lessons from Nothing*、*Teaching the Spoken Language* 等;有两本是关于语言测试与评估的: *Testing for Language Teachers* 和 *Classroom-based Evaluation in Second Language Education*;有两本是关于外语教学中的科研方

法的: *Understanding Research in Second Language Learning*、*Action Research for Language Teachers*; 还有三本是关于师资发展的: *Second Language Teacher Education*, *Beyond Training* 和 *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*。有关教师培训的这三本书也可以看做是有关教育理论和外语教学理论的著作。对一项中小学英语教师培训工  
作来说, 这样几种内容就是足够用的了。

我建议, 本套丛书的使用者注意两点: 第一, 这套书不仅仅传授技巧, 更重要的是提供思想和方法; 不是提供对问题的现成答案, 而是告诉你各种理论观点和看法; 阅读它们的最终目的不是要知道一篇课文如何来教, 而是要知道如何进行创造性的思维。换句话说, 这套书不是培训“教书匠”的, 而是培训善于思考的教师和研究者的。每位语言教师对外语应该如何教和如何学都是有自己的信念的, 只是有的教师的信念不可明白而已。学习语言教学理论, 就是把你的信念理论化, 让你在见到多种不同看法之后, 根据自己的经历, 形成自己的、有根有据的、可以言明的教学观点, 并在实践中不断完善这种观点。只有这样, 你在将来的实际工作中所作的决定才不是盲目的, 而是有根据的, 有一种自我反思和自我纠正的机制。

第二, 本套丛书的读者应该努力初步掌握外语教学中的科研方法, 学会设计小型的科研项目, 学会进行课堂观察, 设计问卷, 经常写教学日志, 会抽样, 会收集各种数据, 会统计和分析数据等。一旦学会进行研究, 教学过程就不会再那么枯燥(因为你随时都在反思眼前所发生的一切), 学生的语言错误不再那么令人愤怒(因为学生的中介语系统能告诉你许多鲜为人知的学习理论), 教、学、科研将会成为一个有机的整体(教与学不断向科研提出新的问题; 科研不断反馈于教和学)。可以设想, 如果我们的绝大部分中小学英语教师都能做到以上两点, 我国的基础英语教育会出现质的变化。

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## **Acknowledgements**

My work at courses and conferences for practising teachers, notably on the British Council London Summer School, has been a stimulus to organise my own ideas on communicative language teaching. I am grateful for all the opportunities for discussion. I am also grateful to Rod Bolitho, Adrian du Plessis, Carl James, Ulla Littlewood and Jerry Moraru, who read and commented on some or all of the chapters. The maps at the end of chapter 4 were designed by David Cobb and are reproduced with his permission.

# Introduction

## Purpose of the book

The purpose of this book is practical: to help teachers broaden their repertoire of techniques, so that they can enable learners to communicate more effectively in a foreign language.

The book is not intended as a first introduction to foreign language teaching. I have assumed that the reader is already familiar with basic techniques for teaching the structures of a foreign language, such as presenting new language through situations, conducting question-and-answer practice, or using oral drills. My purpose has been to suggest activities through which teachers can help learners to go beyond the mastery of these structures, to the point where they can use them to communicate meanings in real situations.

The discussion is directed mainly towards a teacher whose learners need to acquire a general communicative ability, which will enable them to cope with everyday situations. It is concerned primarily with the type of learner whose needs are described in the Council of Europe's 'Threshold Level', to which I will refer again in chapter 7: 'people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal life when they visit another country'. Accordingly, the main focus of the book is on the development of oral skills rather than the use of the written word, though many of the activities discussed can be adapted to provide practice in writing or reading.

My personal experience of foreign language teaching has been both with adults and with young school learners. In writing this book, I have had both types of learner in mind. It goes without saying, however, that the reader will consider some activities as more suitable for adults, while others are more suitable for schoolchildren. In any case, quite apart from age, groups differ in what they enjoy doing and what helps them to learn most effectively. It is therefore only the individual reader who can judge whether a particular activity is suitable for the groups that he or she teaches.

As I have already indicated, the focus of the book is on the practice rather than on the theory of foreign language teaching. However, if the practice of teaching were completely divorced from theory, it would merely be random activity. I have therefore tried to provide a coherent rationale for the techniques, in the hope that this will help the reader to relate them to the goal of communicative ability and integrate them into his or her own teaching methodology.

## **Background to the book**

The book has its main roots in the so-called 'communicative' movement, which has been influential in foreign language teaching since the early 1970s.

There is nothing new, of course, about the basic idea that communicative ability is the goal of foreign language learning. This is the assumption that underlies such widely used approaches as situational language teaching or the audio-lingual method. If developments since the 1970s have any special claim to the label 'communicative', it is because the implications of this goal have been explored more thoroughly and explicitly than before. These implications form the subject matter of this book, but two of them are so fundamental that I will pick them out in advance:

- 1 A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language. In particular, it makes us consider language not only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs. In other words, we begin to look not only at language forms, but also at what people *do* with these forms when they want to communicate with each other. For example, as we shall see in chapter 1, the form 'Why don't you close the door?' might be used for a number of communicative purposes, such as asking a question, making a suggestion or issuing an order.

We can therefore combine the newer *functional* view of language with the traditional *structural* view, in order to achieve a more complete *communicative* perspective. This enables us to give a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language as a means of communication. It also suggests an alternative basis for selecting and organising the language items that we need to teach.

- 2 A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language learning. In particular, it makes us more strongly aware that it is not enough to teach learners how to

manipulate the structures of the foreign language. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time.

We must therefore provide learners with ample opportunities to use the language themselves for communicative purposes. We must also remember that we are ultimately concerned with developing the learners' ability to take part in the *process of communicating* through language, rather than with their perfect mastery of individual structures (though this may still be a useful step towards the broader goal).

These points will become clearer in the course of the book.

## **Description of the book**

The starting point is a discussion, in chapter 1, of what it means to take a communicative view of language and language learning. The chapter leads to a description of communicative ability, from which I have drawn the main framework for the rest of the book.

The main core of the book (chapters 2 to 6) is concerned with classroom methodology. Chapter 2 discusses some ways in which familiar activities, such as drills, can be adapted so that they help learners to relate language forms more clearly to their communicative functions. Chapter 3, chapter 4 and chapter 5 are all concerned with various kinds of communicative activity, through which learners can increase their ability to convey meanings with the foreign language. Chapter 6 looks at activities for developing learners' listening skills.

Chapter 7 moves the focus from 'how to teach' onto 'what to teach': it considers how a communicative approach might affect the teacher's decisions about the content of a course. Finally, chapter 8 draws some threads together and considers some more general implications of a communicative approach to foreign language teaching.

In a short book such as this, it is obviously impossible to include as much detailed discussion as one would like, either of the underlying rationale or of the practical examples. I have therefore included a section 'Further Reading' at the end of the book. This contains suggestions, chapter by chapter, for readers who would like to pursue the main topics further, whether in a theoretical or in a practical direction. It also identifies publications which I have cited by title only in the text and

includes additional references to published teaching materials which exemplify the techniques discussed.

Where I have used specific language-examples, these are in English. Otherwise, however, the activities are equally suitable for learners of other languages. I have taught German and French in addition to English as a foreign language, and have always been aware of the concerns shared by the teachers of different languages, especially where classroom methodology is concerned.

Finally, a word of apology to female readers. The words 'learner' and 'teacher' are conveniently neutral as regards sex, but the English pronoun system has forced me to choose between 'he' and 'she'. The fact that I use 'he' from this point on is of only superficial significance: learners and teachers are female as well as male.

# 导 读

李 力

本书是交际外语教学法的经典著作之一。在肇始于 70 年代初的交际能力理论和随之而来的交际教学运动的影响下,人们对语言的本质和语言教学的目的有了更为深刻和广泛的认识。本书便是对在该领域的探索与实践的总结和提炼。自 1981 年问世以来,这本书一直受到应用语言学界和外语教学界的重视。

作者利特尔伍德(Littlewood)目前是香港浸会大学教授,承担英语交际技巧、语言教学方法和第二语言习得等方面的课程。其研究主要集中在语言交际技巧、交互式语言学习和跨文化交际等方面,在国际外语教学界颇有影响。

交际教学法的基础是有关交际能力的理论。交际能力这一概念最初是由美国社会语言学家海姆斯(Hymes)提出来的。海姆斯的交际能力可以概括为一个人对语言知识和能力的运用,主要包括 4 个方面: 1. 语法性,即某种说法是否(以及在什么程度上)在形式上是可能的,这主要是从语言的形式上来检验。2. 可接受性,即某种说法是否(以及在什么程度上)能被接受,这主要是从心理学的角度来分析。3. 得体性,即某种说法是否(以及在什么程度上)得体,这主要是从广义的文化角度来评价。4. 实际操作性,即某种说法虽可能合乎语法性、可接受性和得体性,但实际上本族语使用者是否(以及在什么程度上)这样说,以及这样使用会引起什么样的结果,这主要是从概率的角度来认识。

交际能力理论的出现,为语言研究,特别是社会语言学的研究拓宽了视野,对外语教学的影响更大。人们纷纷从不同的角度对交际能力进行了探讨,设计和编写了大量的以交际能力为理论基础的教学大纲和教材。这场发轫于海姆斯的交际能力理论的“交际运动”,在很短的时间内就取得了大量令人瞩目的成果。

交际能力是一个极为复杂的知识和技能体系,包括一个人的语言知识、社会文化背景知识、文体知识、认知能力、情感因素和其他知识。因此,外语教学的任务就不能仅仅局限于传授语言知识。交际教学法(communicative approaches)并不是一种单一的、固定的教学模式,它的核心内容是“用语言去学”(using language to learn)和“学会用语言”(learning to use language),而不是单纯的“学语言”(learning language),更不是

“学习关于语言的知识”(learning about language)。其教学的最终目的是让学生获得足够的交际能力。在课堂学习中,学生在多数情况下处于某种“交流”、“交往”、“交际”的场景中,通过听、说、读、写等具体的行为去获得外语知识和交际能力。

交际教学法看重语言的功能意义和社会交往意义,而对语言知识的系统性重视不够。由于我国的具体情况,推行交际教学法也受到很大的限制。如每个教学班的人数一般偏多,因而存在管理和组织上的问题。又如,我国的汉语语文教学长期以来重视的是书面表达,对学生的口头表达能力的培养则重视不够,因此在学习外语时缺乏来自母语的有效的正迁移,这对提高学生的外语口语能力是一个较大的障碍。另外,还存在师资力量上的问题。

尽管有缺陷,交际教学法仍不失为一种可取和可选的教学方法,因为它基本上是符合语言习得的规律的,如果掌握得好,可以提高学习效率,达到培养学生交际能力的目的。由于长期以来我们过分重视语言知识的传授而忽略了交际能力的培养,交际教学法的引进无疑是对旧的教学方法的一种反拨,实际上已对我国的英语教学产生较大的冲击力,引起我们对传统教学方法的反思。但必须指出的是,交际教学法并不是提高教学效率的惟一有效的方法,其他很多教学方法也有其合理而有效的成分。而且,交际教学法本身也接纳了其他教学方法中的不少技巧。因此,我们应该通过研究交际教学法,并与其他教学法对比,结合中国的实际情况,摸索出一条(甚至可以是多条)适合我国情况的路子。

利特尔伍德的这本书就是在交际理论的指导下,对“怎样教”和“教什么”进行探讨。作者在书中介绍的一系列交际性教学活动方式,并非他所首创,而是对其他教学法中常用的方式加以改造和利用。这从一个侧面说明,交际教学法并不是一成不变的,它的特点之一便是根据具体的学生和其学习需求,灵活使用各种方法,其目的在于提高学生的交际能力。

本书的第一章从语言的结构观(即把语言看成是一种结构)和语言的功能观(即从功能的角度认识语言)入手,指出我们不仅要系统地认识语言的结构,还应系统地认识语言的功能。语言不仅具有功能意义,还具有社会交往涵义。也就是说,交际双方的身份、地位、相互关系和交际的具体场合等因素决定应该使用什么样的语言(例如正式的还是亲密的)以及如何使用这些语言。这也是交际能力的一个重要组成部分。

作者提出了交际能力的4个方面,即:具有自然而灵活地传递信息的语言能力;能识别语言的形式和这些形式所能表达的交际功能;具备



在各种具体场合有效地进行交际的技巧和策略;能意识到语言的社会交往涵义。

第二章从介绍传统的结构性操练开始,循序渐进地过渡到让学生学会把语言与其社会交往意义联系起来,并把语言作为社会交往的工具。本章介绍的练习方式,主要还是要让学生在学习了某种语言形式的基础上逐渐掌握一些交际技巧来把自己学到的语言形式与交际功能、非语言现实和社交情景之间建立联系。这比较适合初学者。

在第三章、第四章和第五章中,作者重点介绍和分析了一些以交际为目的的教学活动。作者认为,交际性教学活动对语言学习的作用共有4个方面。首先是可以让学生循序渐进地获得综合使用语言的能力。其次是通过课堂教学中的交际活动让学生更清楚地意识到语言的交际功能,使他们的学习成效更大,因此学习动机也就更强。第三是交际活动可以使学生在一个比较自然的环境下学习。此外,交际活动可以营造出一种有利于学生学习的师生关系。

在交际性教学活动中,学生应是核心。但教师的作用仍然很重要,如在知识上、心理上帮助和支持学生;观察和分析学生的活动,了解和分析每个学生的长处和短处,发现教学中的不足并加以弥补等。这种交际性的教学活动要比传统的教学活动对教师的要求更高,教师必须具备很强的观察能力、分析能力、对教学内容的临时整合能力和对课堂教学的组织能力,特别是在教学班人数较多的时候,这种组织能力就更为重要。

作者把交际性教学活动粗略地分为“功能交际性活动”和“社会交往性活动”。第一类的重点是要让学生尽可能地表达某种功能,第二类则不仅要表达某种功能,还要培养学生使用语言时考虑其社会交往意义。在第二类活动中,评价其成绩的不仅仅是看其使用的语言在表达某种功能时是否成功,还要看其语言的“可接受性”如何,这种可接受性包括语言本身的准确程度,也包括语言是否得体。

功能交际性活动的重点是有效地表达某种功能,因此教师可以暂时不必过多地注意学生使用的语言是否得体,或是否有语法方面的错误。由于课堂教学的局限,这类活动主要的形式为传递信息和处理信息,一共可分为4类。

社会交往性活动的主要目的,在于让学生不仅注意语言的功能意义,也注意其社会交往意义。这类活动一般都在课堂外的实际环境中发生,但课堂中的活动也可作为一个起点。这是因为,课堂本身不仅是一种具体的社会交往环境,而且,在某一种社会交往环境中学到的语言结构和行为规则也可迁移到其他场景中去。作者介绍了把课堂环境作为一种社会交往场景的4个方式。