ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Theory & Practice

英语教学

理论与实践

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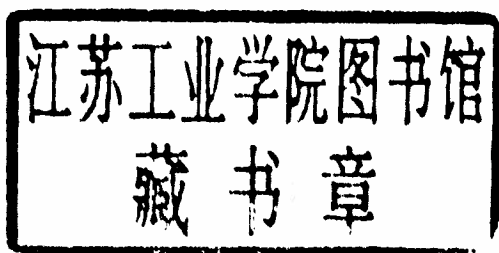
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前　言

21世纪是创新与发展的时代。外语教师的创新能力最直接、最日常、最大量和最显性地表现在与外语教学相关的方面。时代的发展不仅要求外语教师具备足以授业解惑的专业知识与技能，还要求掌握必要的外语教学理论，能够根据人的思维活动规律选择并运用恰当的途径帮助受教育者获得知识并学会运用所学知识。外语教师的创新能力应从课堂教学上体现，是基于对目标语语言系统、学习者认知过程认识的外语教学方法与技巧的创新。

《英语教学：理论与实践》一书是从即将走上讲台或刚刚走上讲台的英语教师的视角，陈述相关教学概念与教学理论，探讨这些理论与课堂实践的结合点，提供相关教学设计思路，力求体现以学生为中心的教育思想的运用，将教师与学生关系的重心放在教师如何引导、帮助学生接触语言、理解语言、使用语言。从学生的学习经历和认知基础出发，通过反思、讨论、探究和实践，启发学生思考，激发学生创造性思维，帮助他们构建语言知识与概念，培养他们运用知识的能力。

本书试图展现给读者一个认识、思考、尝试的园地，一个小小的资源中心，为英语教师进行教学探索和教学方法与技巧的创新"抛砖引玉"。作者认为，任何一种方法都具有可行性与不可行性。教师的教学能力就在于能够依据自己的教学环境、特定的教学条件和学生的需求以及语言教学的规律，对教学方法和技巧进行选择和再创造，实现教学思想与方法在具体教学环境里的最大可行性。

本书共有7个部分，15个章节。第一部分简要介绍外语教学相关基本术语，简要回顾外语教学法演变与发展历程，引导初次接触英语教学

的教师进入英语教学领域。第二部分以课堂为中心，讨论优秀英语教师的基本素质以及如何成为一名优秀的英语教师；善学者具有哪些特征以及影响学生外语学习的主观与客观因素，帮助教师从理论高度深入了解学生，为实现个性化教学目标打下基础。这部分同时还讨论如何进行科学的课堂教学管理。第三部分着重讨论备课和教案设计，同时讨论如何选用教材，提供了一些交际法教学思想基本概念在课堂运用的教案以及选用教材的基本原则。第四部分从语言系统入手，对语音、语法和词汇的教学相关问题逐一讨论，重点讨论课堂教学方法与技巧。第五部分讨论听、说、读、写四项语言技能相关的理论和教学方法，并提供各种课堂教学活动参考与教案。第六部分是关于教学评价的讨论，重点讨论教学评价的理论框架，为教师开展课堂教学评价提供参考。最后一部分为参考资料，主要是与英语教学相关的常用术语、名称及英文解释；国际国内英语教学相关网站的网址、期刊目录、主要学术机构等。

本书是作者在多年英语教学实践的基础上参考大量理论书籍与资料反复修改而成。其实，在阅读与写作交替进行的同时，本人也时而发出"知之胜少"的感叹！故而写作过程也成为自身学习提高的过程。因此，书中定有不尽人意之处，诚恳希望读者提出批评与建议。

值得特别一提的是，在撰写此书的过程中，英国语言专家Michael Zammett为本书提供了有价值的指导，并对全文进行审阅；书中图表均由左雯制作。对他们的支持和帮助本人表示最衷心的感谢。

作　者

2008年8月于南京

CONTENTS

Part I Introduction to Second Language Teaching

The practice of language teaching, especially second or foreign language teaching has been subjected to a tremendous change, especially the second or foreign language teaching throughout the twentieth century. It has been practiced more than any other discipline, in various adaptations, in language classrooms all around the world. As Celce-Murcia (2006) claims that second language teaching is a field in which fads and heroes have come and gone in a manner fairly consistent with the kinds of changes that occur in youth culture (p.3). Though language teaching, especially foreign/second language teaching (FLT/SLT) has undergone a long history with the development of a human history, the twentieth-century approaches of language teaching are believed to be the most influential in the development of language teaching tradition, which the book will briefly touch upon in the opening chapter, in an attempt to reveal the importance of research in the selection and implementation of the optimal methods and techniques for FL/SL teaching in reality.

For a better understanding of the issues discussed in this book, it is necessary to clarify some basic terms in the language teaching field.

1 Basic Terms of Language Teaching

Focus on

- *First language / Second language*
- *Second language / Foreign language / Target language*
- *Acquisition / Learning*
- *Approach / Method / Technique*
- *Activity / Task / Exercise*

As language teachers, we inevitably encounter such terms as *second language, foreign language, target language; language learning, language acquisition*, etc. It is assumed that such terms are quite familiar in our language-conscious profession. But in fact, they are often ambiguous and sometimes downright confusing. Therefore, it is crucial for second/foreign language teachers to be aware of these terms at the outset of their profession, at least try to minimize the misunderstanding or confusion of them since the appropriate understanding of them will be of great help in their forthcoming or later teaching practice.

1.1 First language / Second language

The common-sense definition of first language was introduced by Catford in 1959. He claims "One may, for convenience, use the abbreviation 'L1' for primary language, and 'L2' for secondary language. L1 is usually, but not always, the language first acquired in childhood; it is the language of its speaker's intimate everyday life; it is also, to a large extent, the language of counting and other forms of self-stimulation, or 'thinking in words'" (Catford 1969:137- 8). The second language, as defined or accepted by the ELT (English Language Teaching) professional world, is a language that a person can speak which is not the first language they learnt naturally as a child (e.g. German is my second language).

The L1/L2 distinction became common in the 1960s, particularly in Britain. It has remained in use and is now quite widely used in professional parlance in the English-speaking world.

The relationship between *first* and *second* language is the same as the relationship between *foreign* and *native language*. This distinction is expressed in the following two sets:

L1	L2
first language	second language

native language	non-native language
mother tongue	foreign language
primary language	secondary language
stronger language	weaker language

<div align="right">(Stern 1987:9)</div>

These two sets of terms — like such words as "up" and "down", "black" and "white", "at home" and "abroad" — are always relative to a person or a group of persons. They indicate a subjective relationship between a language and an individual or a group. They never refer to any particular language, for example, French, English, Japanese or Chinese. It is perfectly true to say that for most French Canadians, French is the *first language* or *mother tongue* which they acquired first in their early childhood and they have a "full" or "perfect" command of it. For them, English is a *second language* which is less important in their lives and less perfect in use. However, for the English native speakers in Canada, French is their *second language*. It is not so important or perfect as the mother-tongue English in everyday use.

To sum up, L1 is used to indicate that the language is acquired in one's infancy and early childhood (also referred to "first" or "native" language) and generally used within the family while L2 is learnt with effort and for some purposes (e.g. for office work).

1.2 Second language/Foreign language/Target language

Before entering the classroom, teachers need to consider whether the language to be taught is referred to as *second language* or *foreign language*. And what is the difference between *second/foreign* language and *target* language. In the past, the term *foreign language* was widely used in contrast to *native language*. In recent decades the other term *second language* has been increasingly applied to all types of non-native language learning. Mostly the two are used synonymously, but in some cases a conceptual distinction is expressed in the use of *second* or *foreign*.

In contrasting second and foreign language there is today consensus that a necessary distinction is to be made between a non-native language which is spoken within a country or a community (e.g. English in Quebec, Canada) to which the term *second language* is applied, and a non-native language which is not spoken within a country or a community (e.g. English in China and French in Singapore) to which the term *foreign language* is commonly given.

In applied linguistics and second-language pedagogy, the term *target* simply refers to any language that learners are trying to learn in addition to

their native language, whether as a *second* or *foreign* language.

It should be noted that in this book, the author uses second language (L2) instead of foreign language (FL) for the purpose of conciseness.

1.3 Acquisition / Learning

From around the middle of the 1970s the term *language acquisition* has been given a special meaning and contrasted with *language learning* by the American applied linguist Krashen (1981, cited in Stern 1987:19). Krashen defines an unconscious process of language as *acquisition* which involves the naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding language and through using language for meaningful communication. *Learning*, by contrast, refers to a process in which language knowledge is gained through conscious understanding of the forms of language, for example, through the grammatical rules of the language. *Learning*, as a conscious language development process, necessarily occurs in formal school-like settings. According to Krashen, consciously learned knowledge can function only as a monitor or editor that checks and repairs the output of the acquired system, to correct errors in the language use. *Learning* can not lead to *acquisition*. There is "no interface position" with respect to the relationship between *acquisition* and *learning* (Krashen 1985:38)

However, research evidence for the separation of *acquisition* from *learning* is hard to find. Cook (1993) points out that Krashen et al cite the use of error correction in L2 teaching as relying on a separate process of learning, which is more an assumption than a discovery (p.63). His evidence for the Monitor Hypothesis also can not prove that consciously learned knowledge does not convert into acquired knowledge. Cook (2000:64) also stresses that many generations of students who were taught English in Dutch and Scandinavian universities by studying English grammar books are among the most fluent L2 speakers of English, which gives the obvious counter-evidence of the relationship between natural acquisition and volitional learning. The eminent psychologist Hilgard, drawing attention to the same distinction between learning with or without understanding, claimed long ago in *Theories of Learning* (cited in Stern 1987:404) "Some things we appear to acquire blindly and automatically; some things we struggle hard to understand, and can finally master only as we understand them".

In the second language acquisition research area, there is obviously the opposite idea to "non-interface position", claiming that a "cross-over" of some kind does occur on the language development continuum. Researchers who hold such an idea claim that new target language forms can be and are acquired directly in something like the way children acquire the first

language. They also posit a process whereby forms are initially learned with some kind of awareness of the learning, and then transformed, e.g. from learning to acquisition, or from explicit to implicit knowledge, or from controlled processing and short-term memory to automatic processing and long-term memory (Larsen-Freeman and Long 2000:324). The debate on the distinction between acquisition and learning is ongoing and a lot of related issues need plausible answers.

1.4 Approach / Method / Technique

In the language teaching profession, the terms of *approach*, *method* and *technique* are often confusing teachers. What is an approach? How can we distinguish *approach*, *method* and *technique*? More than four decades ago American linguist, Edward Anthony (1963), provided a useful set of definitions of them which is known as a three-leveled conceptualization and organization. By Anthony, the three terms are arranged hierarchically with *techniques* carrying out a *method* which is consistent with an *approach*.

According to Anthony's model, an *approach* to a language teaching is something that reflects a certain model or research paradigm — a theory. In this sense, your approach to language teaching methodology is your theoretical rationale that underlies everything that you do in the classroom. *Approach* is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about the nature of language teaching and learning are specified (Anthony 1963, cited in Richards & Rodgers 1986:15).

A *method* is an overall plan for systematic presentation of materials of the target language based on a selected approach, or a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student roles and behaviors and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. *Method* is procedural. It is the level at which theory is put into practice.

A *technique* is a classroom device or activity or task which actually takes place in the classroom. Techniques are the product of choices made by the teacher. We can think of a lesson as consisting of a number of techniques, some teacher-centered, some student-centered, some production oriented, some comprehension oriented. Moreover, some techniques are highly manipulative (e.g. ask factual questions), and some are very communicative (e.g. interview). Technique is implementational. It is the level at which classroom procedures are described.

Today Anthony's three levels of conceptualization are still in common use among L2 teachers. However, his original proposals remain controversial in

theory. They fail to give sufficient attention to the nature of method itself. They also fail to account for how an approach may be realized in a method, or for how method and technique are related. *Approach* and *method* are sometimes overlapping in theory and practice. A couple of decades later, Richards and Rodgers (1986) propose a reformulation of the three terms *approach*, *method*, and *technique* for *approach*, *design* and *procedure* respectively.

Richards and Rodgers maintain Anthony's term of *approach* with its original concept, but see *method* as related through *design* to *procedure* for the purpose of separating the theoretical principles from the practices, and *technique* as *procedure*. In their concept, designs specify the relationship of those theories to classroom materials and activities. Procedures are the techniques and practices that are derived from one's approach and design (see Figure 1.4).

Richards and Rodgers' attempt to give new meaning to an old term, though soundly conceived, has not caught on in the pedagogical literature. Method is now more comfortably referred to as *methodology*, reserving the old "method" for somewhat specific, identifiable clusters of theoretically compatible classroom techniques (Brown 2001:49).

1.5 Activity / Task / Exercise

Activity, a very popular term in the literature of language teaching and learning, may refer to virtually anything that learners actually do in the classroom. Because an activity implies some sort of active performance on the part of learners, it is generally not used to refer to certain teacher behaviors like "giving instructions", or writing a list of words on the blackboard". The latter, however, can indeed be referred to as a technique.

The term *task* came into deliberate use in applied linguistics in the early 1980s. Today it is a widely used concept both in second language syllabus design and in second language acquisition research (SLA). *Tasks*, according to Ellis (2003), are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language while *exercises* are activities that call for primarily form-focused language. *Task* provides a purpose for the use and learning of language other than simply learning language items for their own sake. However, we need to recognize that the overall purpose of tasks is the same as exercises — learning a language — the difference lying in the means by which this purpose is to be achieved.

Widdowson (1998: 323-33) has pointed out that learners will need to pay attention to both meaning and form in both tasks and exercises. For example, learners involved in "making an airline reservation" will need to find the linguistic forms to explain where they want to fly to, what day and time they want to fly, what kind of ticket they want, etc. Also, learners completing

Figure 1.4 Elements and Subelements of Method (Richards and Rodgers, 1986)

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                    ┌──────────┐
                    │  Method  │
                    └────┬─────┘
        ┌────────────────┼────────────────┐
   ┌──────────┐     ┌──────────┐     ┌───────────┐
   │ Approach │     │  Design  │     │ Procedure │
   └──────────┘     └──────────┘     └───────────┘
```

Approach

a. **A theory of native language**
   - an account of the nature of language proficiency
   - an account of the basic units of language structure
b. **A theory of the nature of language learning**
   - an account of the psycho-linguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning
   - an account of the conditions that allow for successful use of these processes

Design

a. **The general and specific objectives of the method**
b. **A syllabus model**
   - criteria for the selection and organization of linguistic and/or subject-matter content
c. **Types of learning and teaching activities**
   - kinds of tasks and practice activities to be employed in the classroom
d. **Learner roles**
   - types of learning tasks set for learners
   - degree of control learners have over the content of learning
   - patterns of learner groupings that are recommended or implied
   - degree to which learners influence the learning of others
   - the view of the learner as processor, performer, initiator, problem solver, etc.
e. **Teacher roles**
   - types of functions teachers fulfill
   - degree of teacher influence over learning
   - degree to which teacher determines the content of learning
   - types of interaction between teachers and learners
f. **The role of instructional materials**
   - primary function of materials
   - the form materials takes (e.g. textbook, audio visual)
   - relation of materials to other input
   - assumptions made about teachers and other learners

Procedure

a. **Classroom techniques, practices, and behaviors observed when the method is used**
   - resources in terms of time, space. And equipment used by the teacher
   - interactional pattern observed in lessons
   - tactics and strategies used by teachers and learners when the method is being used

a blank filling exercise designed to practise the use of the past simple and present perfect tenses in English will need to pay attention to the meanings of sentences to determine which tense to use. Widdowson argues that what distinguishes a *task* from an *exercise* is not "form" as opposed to "meaning", but rather the kind of "meaning" involved. Whereas a *task* is concerned with "pragmatic meaning", i.e. the use of language in context, an *exercise* is concerned with "semantic meaning", i.e. the systemic meanings that specific forms can convey irrespective of context.

In addition, a *task* requires the participants to function primarily as "language users" and give focal attention to message conveyance in the sense that they must employ the same kinds of communicative process as those involved in real-world activities. Any learning in this context is incidental. In contrast, an *exercise* requires the participants to function primarily as "learners" and pay attention to deciding what forms to use; here learning is intentional. In short, as Widdowson (ibid) notes, there is a fundamental difference between task and exercise according to whether linguistic skills are viewed as developing through communicative activity or as a prerequisite for engaging in it.

2 Introduction to Second Language Teaching History

Focus on

- *Overview of second language teaching methodology*
- *Communicative language teaching*
- *Current approaches*

The theoretical position of second language teaching methodology we are adopting in our classrooms can best be understood against the background of the historical development of second language teaching methodology. It is crucial for second language teachers, especially those who are preparing to embark on the profession, to have a brief history of methods or approaches adopted for the training of foreign language learners in certain period of time. By tracing back the historical events on which certain methods or approaches were established, teachers and would-be teachers in the second language teaching profession can get insight to the theories being discussed at present, and look at them in a new and more rational way.

2.1 Overview of second language teaching methodology

In the old days, language was taught in most schools by teaching grammar as a set of rules (e.g. verb conjugations) after the classical languages, Latin and Greek; practice was done through written exercises; the medium of instruction was the mother tongue; vocabulary was learnt via translated lists, often related to the comprehension of written texts; written texts were seen as the "real" language, superior to the spoken version; written texts were translated and composition in L2 was regarded as the apex of language ability; speaking and listening were seen as less important, and mediated via "conversation classes" which were tagged on as extras to the main course.

During the Renaissance, the formal study of the grammars of classical languages became popular through the mass production of books made possible by the invention of the printing press. But later, people found that the grammar of the classical Latin texts was different from that of Latin being used for everyday purposes. This occurred at about the same time that Latin began to be abandoned as a lingua franca.

With the development of exchange between the European countries, people in one country or region began to find it necessary and useful to learn