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# Chapter One

## Introduction

With the swift and violent development of science and technology, and with the modernization of traffic and communication equipment, the distance and space among people have become shorter, narrower and smaller. People's mutual exchange and association are increasing, foreign languages, therefore, are playing a more and more important role. In the past, as well as present, the most commonly used foreign language is and will continue to be English. This is why most of China's schools mainly offer English as a foreign language. English education, on the other hand, is the major way to train and bring up various qualified high-level personnel in the field of English specialty.

English pedagogy is a course in the specialty of higher English education. It, as a new branch of learning, studies the phenomena and laws of higher English education. As a branch in the field of educational science, English pedagogy has close relations with other branches of learning, having good knowledge of English pedagogy, therefore, is of great significance to raising Eng-

lish teaching quality, and satisfying the demands of China's modern socialist construction.

## Section One

### English Pedagogy is a Rising Branch of Learning

Pedagogy originated from the ancient Greek *naueazozoc*, which means the care of children. As pedagogy was originally a science of child-care, it gradually developed into a science of studying the general laws of conducting education for people of all ages. Pedagogy, therefore, is a social science dealing with educational phenomena and bringing to light educational laws, that is, it is a science that studies how to train and bring up people.

Just like the production and development processes of other sciences, pedagogy is an effect that human beings have made while constantly deepening their understanding of the world in the practice of transforming it. It is also an outcome produced when society and educational practice develop in a certain historical context. It has only been three hundred and sixty years or so since pedagogy split off from philosophy and became an independent branch of learning. Alongside the development of science and studies it may comprise survey of education, theories of teaching, theories of education, science of school management, the science of educational administration, theories of moral education, theories of aesthetic education, theories of physical culture, etc. With the rapid development of science, the infiltration

and strengthening among all the branches of learning, many new frontier sciences have come into being.

English pedagogy is a branch in the huge system of educational science and is a newly-born independent branch course that yet to be matured. It is a split from higher pedagogy, which itself, split off from pedagogy only in the recent thirty years or so. After World War II, the economic restoration and development of all the countries, and the rapid increase of people's needs for scientific knowledge sped up the great progress of the world's higher education. The social status of higher education was raised day by day, and research in higher education theory was attributed more importance. A number of research institutes of higher education appeared in the world, with a contingent specializing in higher education research. Many countries published monographs and publications, one after another, which were devoted to studying higher education. This raised a series of questions to be solved or studied. From this, the research of higher education gradually split off from pedagogy and formed a separate domain of research.

Learning Notes in China's pre-Qin days was the world's first monograph in education. It was a book that mainly discussed university education. With its limitations, many of the principles, teaching methods, teacher-student relationship and other matters discussed in Learning Notes are still applicable today. Learning Notes is an honor and pride of the Chinese nation and will keep shining forever in the history of education. However, research on modern university education theories have only been carried out in the last ten years or so in China.

Foreign language education as a branch of learning in higher education has been given widespread attention in all countries. Foreign language teaching (FLT) has already had a history of more than 2,000 years. This is according to the recorded historical data, figuring from the earliest period when the Roman people studied Greek between the third century B. C. and the second century A. D. Yet modern FLT began only after the seventeenth century. Since the last century or so various new ideas in teaching have constantly emerged in large numbers. This advanced FLT rapidly and enabled foreign language education to become substantial and develop continuously. England, during the imperialist era, was very prosperous and powerful. It made unprecedented territorial expansion and established colonies. As a result of this, the English language became the most widely used language and the one spoken by most people in the world (except Chinese). The teaching of English, therefore, holds a position of importance in the FLT in all countries.

China's students began to learn foreign languages in the first year of Tongzhi (1862) in the Qing Dynasty in the Tongwenguan, School of Combined Learning. The Tongwenguan principally offered courses of English, French, Russian, etc. In the year of 27 of Guangxu (1901) the Tongwenguan was merged into Jingshi Daxuetang, which later became Beijing University. In 1919, the sections of Beijing University were raised to the status of departments. Foreign languages were offered respectively, French, German and Russian. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the day to day rise of China's international status and the rapid increase of international contacts and

exchanges, China's foreign language education, although experiencing failure, twists and turns, made great strides forward. Especially since the implementation of the open-door policy, English has become one of the principal subjects in China's universities and colleges. Besides foreign studies universities and institutes, all teachers' colleges have English departments and offer English speciality. A great number of people with high-level professional skills of English, as a result, have been trained for China's modernization movement. At the same time, English education and teaching research are also deepening gradually. Social progress and favorable situations of China's reform and opening the door to the outside world are in urgent need of deepening our research in English education, revealing education laws, probing teaching methods so as to suit the needs of the development of the technological revolution, train and bring up qualified personnel in the field of English suitable for the development of the 21st century. Guided by the general principles of pedagogy and English education, however, has had its own specific characteristics. Times called for the birth of English pedagogy and English pedagogy emerged from the womb of pedagogy.

In another aspect, with the rapid increase of knowledge and development of science, new branches of learning has constantly developed. In about ten years, a kind of pedagogy classified according to the branches of learning is rising. Now, foreign language pedagogy, physics pedagogy and others have emerged. This has brought the close attention of many scholars and experts. In the near future, more pedagogies may appear. From this perspective, English pedagogy is also an educational branch

of learning or course split off from general pedagogy. It is still a new and developing branch of learning, whether it is split off from general pedagogy, or other pedagogies.

## Section Two

### Study Contents and Tasks of English Pedagogy

#### **1. *Contents English Pedagogy Studies***

Chairman Mao Zedong once pointed out, "The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science." (P. 297, Volume 1, *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*) As a branch of learning in higher education, English specialty in universities and colleges has considerably strong specialized characteristics and laws. Although, we may add, it shares some common laws of education with middle school English, it also shares some common laws with other courses in higher education. So, English pedagogy is a branch of learning in the science of education. It specializes in the contradiction and phenomena peculiar to the English education in colleges and universities and reveals the teaching laws of English specialty. It is, therefore, a required reading course for university teachers of English, research workers, university students majoring in English and other scholars of English. The following aspects are included mainly in the re-



search of English pedagogy.

English education is an important educational phenomenon in China. English pedagogy studies the relation between higher education of English and China's social development. It attempts to bring to light the demands of China's modern socialist construction. This understanding would help people have a correct understanding of China's higher education of English, its social functions and training objectives.

China's education of English accomplishes its social functions through teaching, scientific research, political and ideological education, extracurricular activities, practice teaching, etc. English pedagogy studies the whole process of English teaching and its laws. This can include theories and various schools of FLT, teaching methods and models based upon teaching theories and judged by practice, concrete models and techniques in teaching operation. This inquiry reveals the complex nature of the inner laws of English teaching.

The work of English education is accomplished through the joint efforts of educator and student. So English pedagogy also studies teacher-student relations, characteristics of the work of teachers of English in universities and colleges, the study psychology and composition of intellectual faculties of English majors, the process of study and the methods used to direct them to learn effectively on the basis of these characteristics.

## ***2. Research Tasks of English Pedagogy***

In China, theory and teaching research of higher foreign language education in universities and colleges has made slow