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英语教学论

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Unit 1

An Introduction to English Language Teaching

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In the 21st century, with the integration of world economies, and China's entry into WTO in particular, the Chinese people have come to view English language teaching as highly significant in the promotion of cooperation and development, and the maintenance of world peace. In fact, English language education in China has never been so strongly emphasized. English training centers and English schools are springing up throughout China. The Ministry of Education has prescribed the English Curriculum Criteria for basic education in this new climate. As a result, teachers of English are actively participating in all levels of reform and research related to English language education. This ranges from practical issues to do with the curriculum, methodology and testing, to

more theoretical questions about the nature of English language teaching and learning. These questions include consideration of the principles of teaching ,different approaches to teaching or learning ,affective variables in the process and so on. All these concentrate on one fundamental question ,that is ,how to teach English so that learners will develop their communicative competence in the shortest possible time ,allowing them to use English effectively for their different purposes.

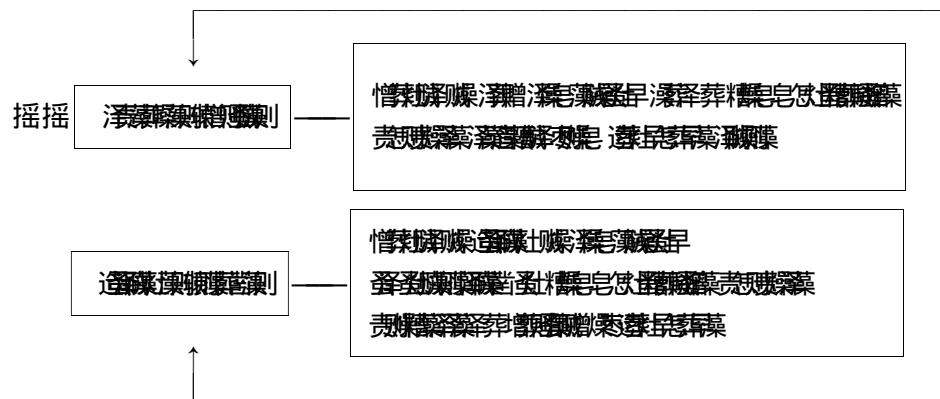
1.1 General concepts and principles in English language teaching

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Language is a tool in communication. People use language to exchange ideas and understand each other. Why do people learn English? There are different reasons. It may be necessary for some people to pass an examination in English to enter a university. Some people hope to go abroad for further study or work in international enterprises. Or it may be needed by people who hope to get a better job or a promotion. Different as the reasons may be ,people study English with the hope to use it in their work or life.

Since English is used to fulfill different purposes ,we should teach English in the way that it is used in real world. That is ,English language teaching must be communicative. To be more specific ,the final goal of English language teaching is nothing but to develop students ' communicative competence.

How do we understand communication? Communication between people is very complex and ever-changing. By effective communication we mean that there is a desire for the communication to be effective both from the point of view of the speaker and the listener. Harmer (员溺溺栽藻糟蚤早早耘且蚤燥葬葬燥皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂皂) describes the nature of communication in this way :



The above figure tells us that whenever communication takes place , there is at least a speaker/writer and a listener/reader. In other words , during communicating , anyone may be a speaker , a writer , a listener , or a reader. The role changes according to the changing situation. As such , in English language teaching , what we ought to do is to help our students to be fluent speakers and writers , and efficient listeners and readers as well.

However , recent surveys show that a considerable number of freshmen in colleges or universities , who have learned English for about six years from junior to senior , are still unable to use English in normal communication when speaking or writing , though they can understand English by reading. The reason for this disadvantage lies in the teacher 's way of teaching. The traditional teaching approach tends to isolate language from its context. Many teachers of English in middle schools , affected by traditional grammar-translation methodology , would teach English knowledge , giving students a system of grammatical rules without pointing out to students the function of language. In fact , all language teaching must be taught as communication. Students can only learn how to use the language through active communication.

教师

process is student-centered with every activity focusing on the improvement of students' language skills. How, then, is the class made student-centered?

Firstly, the teacher must have his students in mind. In lesson preparation, teaching and marking, the teacher should consider what his students think and care for, and know how and what students have learned so that in his next lesson he can adjust his teaching method or procedures.

Secondly, the teacher should not be authoritative in class. Instead of a ruler of the class, the teacher is the guide, assessor, organizer, prompter, participant or resource-provider. For example, when students are actively engaged in a communicative activity, the teacher can be a prompter or a resource-provider. He should not intervene. By "intervene" we mean telling students that they are making mistakes, insisting on accuracy and asking for repetition, etc. This would undermine the communicative purpose of the activity. The teacher may be involved in the activity as a participant, and will also be watching and listening very carefully in order to be able to conduct feedback.

Thirdly, the teacher should give students more opportunities for practice. As the saying goes, "language cannot be taught; it must be learned". It is impossible to learn English well without a great deal of practice. In the course of learning, if students are motivated to participate in the language-learning activities, they will learn how to use the language in real situation and thus speed up their improvement in communicative competence.

裁释猿

Do you prefer a teacher-centered or student-centered style in class activities? Talk with your partner and give your reasons.



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Linguistic knowledge refers to pronunciation , vocabulary and grammar while language skills refer to listening ,speaking ,reading ,and writing. These two parts together make up the fundamental components in communicative competence.

There are two means of communicating—oral communication and written communication. When people communicate ,they have to use the sound language (listen and speak) or the recorded language (read and write). If there is a lack of linguistic knowledge ,there can be no effective communication. We can say that linguistic knowledge is the basis for developing language skills. Therefore ,the goal of our language teaching must include the mastery of linguistic knowledge and the development of language skills ,which should be put into effect in our teaching. Language teaching involves not only the imparting of knowledge and mastery of knowledge ,but also developing students' skills in listening ,speaking ,reading and writing. Conversely ,the four language skills cannot be improved quickly without the solid foundation of pronunciation ,grammar and vocabulary. The teaching of linguistic knowledge must go hand in hand with the practice of listening ,speaking ,reading and writing. How can we integrate the teaching of linguistic knowledge well with the practice of language skills ?

Firstly ,we should combine the teaching of pronunciation with listening and speaking practice. Students are made to participate in the listening activities and express themselves in the target language. With the development of their intelligence and the improvement of their listening skills ,students will attain a certain degree of fluency and accuracy in pronunciation.

Secondly ,we can combine grammar teaching with reading and writing practice. Explanation of grammatical points ought to be concise and instructive. This can be done by providing cues ,having students observe ,discover ,compare and summarize ,avoiding overemphasis on

mechanical practice. Of course , at beginners ' level , imitation is undoubtedly a good way to learn English as a foreign language.

Thirdly ,we should link vocabulary teaching to reading ,writing , listening and speaking practices. The vocabulary tasks we require students to do should not always be for rote learning. With meaningful practice ,students learn to settle problems on their own through various approaches :consulting books or reading other materials ,asking for teacher 's help ,or by means of discussion with partners. In this way language learning becomes interesting and the integration of linguistic knowledge with language skills is possible. What is more ,students learn English for real tasks and thus improve their communicative competence.

裁译原

Discuss in a group of four the necessity of integrating linguistic elements with language skills. Give an example if possible.

员另豫瑶陕陕理菲蚤与慧早幸早刺藻糟蚤早憎译梁糟造职职藻

Modern linguistics suggests that language is not only a communication tool ,but also a carrier of culture. There is little doubt that every language is part of a culture ,for “culture consists of all the shared products of human society ” (Robertson ,员德员). Because of close relationship between language and culture ,it is impossible to teach English language without introducing the culture of English-speaking countries.

Some people say that learning a foreign language means having mastery over a set of rules for grammar and pronunciation ,and a set of vocabulary ; once he grasps the three linguistic elements in English language ,the learner can exchange his ideas with other people freely. Such an opinion is not entirely right. It is true that pronunciation ,

grammar and vocabulary are the basic elements of a language ,but armed only with a good knowledge of the three ,communicating with other people is still a problem. Lots of examples have proven the disadvantages of communicating without considering the target culture. An American socio-linguist ,Hymes ,summed up four elements in effective communication. They are possibility ,feasibility ,appropriateness and what is actually performed. The last two elements have something to do with culture. “ Appropriateness ” refers to the appropriate use of language according to different persons ,discourses ,occasions and social status ,which is related to culture. “ Actually performed ” means to use authentic and idiomatic English ,which is also connected to culture. Accordingly ,language teaching must include culture.

Integrating language teaching with culture to let students achieve effective communication ,we should pay attention to two aspects. One is how to understand foreign culture. It is not enough to just introduce foreign culture to students. We must help students learn foreign culture in two ways. The first is to understand the concrete culture ,such as the literature ,history ,art and religion ,and from them deducing concepts of morality ,values ,outlook on life. The second is that our attitude towards the foreign culture ought to be objective and tolerant. We should not , however ,follow or blindly imitate the foreign culture. And we must reject those decadent elements of the culture which go against our own criteria of morality ,values and outlook on life.

The other aspect is how to treat our own culture. As globalization sweeps across China ,opportunities for the use of English are increasing greatly. More and more people greet one another in English ,or in a mixture of English and Chinese. Moreover ,advertisements and many product descriptions , in top hotels and restaurants , shops and companies , etc. are bilingual. English is so emphasized that many people , especially young people , only know foreign culture and remember great events of western countries. Some students even go so

far as to forget or criticize our native culture. Teachers of English should be aware of this tendency ,and explain to students how a good mastery of our own culture is helpful for the learning of foreign language , understanding of alien culture , and for better cross-cultural communication.

裁释缘

How do you understand the saying that “ every language is part of a culture ” ?Discuss with your partner and state your views.

员爱瑶阴地集理晴录上燥切藻糟蚤早皂藻燥岩泽

A teaching method is a way for language teachers to achieve the goals and fulfill the tasks of teaching. The first language teaching method that can be traced back to is the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) which was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since then different teaching methods and approaches came in succession ,such as the Direct Method ,Audio-Lingua Method ,Communicative Teaching Method ,etc. The historical development of teaching methodology is the expression of the development of linguistic theories and learning theories in different ages. Changes in theories of the nature of language and of language learning bring about the changes in language teaching methods throughout history. The experience of foreign language teaching tells us that no teaching method can resolve all the difficulties in teaching ,nor can it satisfy the comprehensive requirements of the learner in his mastery of a foreign language ,because each of these methods has its own advantages and disadvantages ,and each has its specific goal of teaching. For instance ,the Grammar-Translation Method ,which has received more attacks than recommendations ,bears its own strengths. It benefits those learners who endeavor to understand the grammatical system of the foreign language ,and it can also be used as a contributory



method in conjunction with other strategies. Though we reject the continual use of the mother tongue as the only instruction medium in class as in GTM ,we do not encourage the complete rejection of the mother tongue as in the Direct Method. A certain amount of imitation , repetition and memorization featured in the Audio-Lingual Method may be useful at the beginners ' level when learners do not have much linguistic input ,while research-based learning and inquiry-based learning will be more suitable for advanced students because these approaches require a higher level of previously acquired linguistic and cognitive structure.

Obviously ,each method serves its own special goal. What we aim for is that teachers should not go to extremes in the adoption of these methods ,admiring one highly while completely rejecting the others. What teachers should do is to combine all these methods ,drawing the strengths and avoiding the weaknesses of each one ,thus optimizing the teaching process. Only by making good use of each of them and applying different teaching methods can we obtain good results in our teaching.

裁解远

Do you think that it is necessary to combine different methods in your teaching? Talk with your partner and give your reasons.

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蚤藻孽藻造苦藻藻皂藻械

Students' intellectual development is the key to developing their abilities in further learning. How to integrate it into teaching is now a hot topic in language teaching. We believe that one critical task for a teacher is to encourage students to think. In other words, the teacher should often design questions or problems for students and encourage them to discuss the problems before solving them. At the same time, the teacher shows students the way to learn, the way to think, the way to obtain information and the way to express it. Through various tasks, students learn to think independently and use the knowledge they have learned to create better results in their work. So long as students do their best to use the language, they are inspired to learn and practise the language further. When students accomplish the desired tasks, the teacher should praise them and give them more challenging tasks to do, when students fail or have difficulty in the tasks, the teacher should give necessary help by explanation, guidance and encouragement, or give them easier tasks so that they will gain confidence in learning.

To be keen in thinking and active in participation is the key to developing creativity in accomplishing tasks. Although English language learning requires repeated exercises and mechanical practice, it is closely related to thinking, imagination and association, with which students will build up their own strategies in learning. In learning English sentences, for instance, if students understand the grammatical rules of making a sentence and master the basic sentence structure, they will be skillful in

using the rules to create a great variety of sentences and will use them appropriately on different occasions. On the contrary ,without the necessary training in thinking ,imagination and association ,students will be passive in learning ,and passive learning will certainly lead to laziness and confusion in receiving information ,thus causing awkwardness in expression , and greatly restricted progress. Therefore , developing students ' intelligence proves to be of great importance.

栽釋苑

How can students ' intelligence be developed ? Do you have any better ways ?

员弱惹瑶悦像则膜勒亨城磁志冀爆普列世泽淼志读办译 藻则便译

In the process of learning ,students often make mistakes or errors. It happens so often that learners can become doubtful about their abilities in learning a foreign language ,and the teacher can lose confidence in his own teaching. How should we treat students ' errors ?A behaviorist holds the view that by making mistakes the learner is practising the wrong things and developing undesirable habits ;therefore ,learners should never be put into the position of making errors. Conversely ,a mentalist believes that errors are inevitable ,that learners at any given point of their growing competence have imperfect knowledge ,and that we actually learn from our mistakes.

In our opinion ,making errors is an unavoidable and necessary part of the learning process. When a learner studies a new language ,very often he does not know how to express what he wants to say. So he makes a guess on the basis of the knowledge of his mother tongue. As the student develops a growing competence in the new language ,he moves from ignorance to mastery of the language through transitional stages ,and the errors he makes are to be seen as a sign that learning is taking place.

Indeed ,errors help the teacher find out a solution to the learners ' problems and improve his teaching as well.

Different errors should be treated with different approaches. For errors in speaking ,we tend to concentrate on the communication of meaning and fluency rather than on accuracy. Sometimes we allow errors to go uncorrected ,because in practice of dialogues or conversation , encouragement is more important. For errors in written work ,we should place emphasis on accuracy ,and errors need to be corrected at once .the correction should be done first by the student himself or herself or by the whole class before the teacher 's correction.

Errors are inevitable. Making errors in learning is not a sign of failure but a sign of continual learning. If the teacher is always drawing attention to students ' mistakes ,they will feel very frustrated and demoralized ,and finally lose interest in further learning. Therefore ,in the process of gaining mastery of the English language ,students should be encouraged instead of facing constant nitpicking.

裁释保愿

Do you agree that errors are inevitable ?How do you treat students ' errors in their dialogue practice ?

1.2 Linguistics and foreign language teaching

Is there any relationship between linguistics and foreign language teaching ?Some linguists say that they can see little of value of the language teacher in their descriptions. Some language teachers argue that linguistics has little to contribute to efficient and effective language teaching and learning ,because the linguist wants to describe a language , viewing language as a system to be investigated ,but the language teacher wants to teach a language ,regarding language as a set of skills to

be learned or acquired ; moreover ,the goal and method of linguistics are not the same as those of English language teaching. Linguistic research is concerned with the establishment of theories which explains the phenomena of language ,whereas language teaching aims at the learner ' s mastery of a language. However ,few people would deny that linguistics has actually had a strong influence on language teaching.

In fact , both linguistics and language teaching are centrally concerned on language. They are closely related. Applied linguistics serves as the bridge to connect the theories of linguistics with the practice of foreign language teaching. It interprets the results of linguistic theories and makes them useful to the language teacher and learner. On one hand ,applied linguistics helps the language teacher to make better decisions on the goal and content of the teaching. For example ,when faced with the task of designing a syllabus ,the teacher has a number of choices. Should he set out to teach the language used in literary works , or that in daily communication ?Should he teach the general system of the language ,or a part of this system ? What are the principles of teaching steps ?What kind of exercise is most suitable ?To answer these questions , the teacher is consciously or unconsciously using his understanding of the nature of language learning. Applied linguistics provides the teacher with a formal knowledge of the nature of language and language system ,and this increases his understanding of the nature of language teaching and learning. As a result ,the teacher makes more reasonable decisions on what approach to take and what to teach. On the other hand ,applied linguistics states the insights and implications that linguistic theories have on the language teaching methods and approaches. Once the goal and content of the teaching are settled ,the teacher has to consider such questions as the dominance of the teaching-learning process ,the treatment of the learner ' s errors ,the techniques adopted in the classroom ,etc.

The following are some major linguistic views which affect language

learning and teaching :

(员) The traditional view

This is a pre-19th century language description based on early grammars of Greek or Latin ,with emphasis on correctness ,literary excellence ,the use of Latin models ,and the priority of the written language. This view holds that grammar has always been important and central to the teaching and learning of languages. Based on such a linguistic view of languages , the grammar-translation method was created and practised in language teaching. In the view of many modern linguists ,however ,such an approach is damaging to language learning. They argue that one should teach the language ,not teach about the language. In communication ,one should learn first to “ speak ” the language ,not to “ read ” the language.

(圆) The structural view

This view describes linguistic features in terms of systems or structures. It holds that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The target of language learning is seen to be mastery of the elements of this system ,which are generally defined in terms of phonological units ,grammatical units ,grammatical operations and lexical items. Structuralist linguists are influenced by the behaviouristic view that one learns a language by building up habits on the basis of stimulus-response chains. From this structural view developed the audiolingual method.

(猿) The transformational-generative(TG) view

According to Chomsky ,language learning is not a matter of habit formation ,but an activity of building and testing hypotheses. Some applied linguists find that TG grammar offers useful ideas for language teaching. In designing teaching materials ,for example ,sentence patterns with the same deep structure can be closely related ,such as the active and the passive. Transformational rules may assist the teacher in the teaching of complex sentence construction. In the teaching of literature ,

