Developing Second-Language Skills:

THEORY TO PRACTICE

SECOND EDITION

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KENNETH CHASTAIN

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Developing Second-Language Skills

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Developing Second-Language Skills:

THEORY TO PRACTICE

SECOND EDITION

KENNETH CHASTAIN
University of Virginia

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To Jan, Brian, and Michael, and to the memory of Kevin

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Fray Luis de León was teaching at the University of Salamanca when he was arrested and taken to prison. The story is told that upon being released, he began his first lecture with the following words, "As we were saying. . . ." The second edition of any work should be much more than a repetition of what the author was saying in the first. The selection of approach and content is perhaps more of a problem in the second edition than in the first. On the one hand, abandonment of the total content of the first edition would certainly arouse suspicions as to its validity. On the other hand, failure to incorporate new insights and to consider new directions in the field would be tantamount to admitting a lack of awareness of the new growth in an ever-changing field. Too, in my own case the omission of new material would constitute a repudiation of the necessity of staying abreast of current developments in order to achieve the goal of "educational engineer," which I espoused in the first edition.

The title of the second edition has been changed to *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice* because the term *second language* is broader than *modern language* and creates a more positive image than *foreign language*. However, the basic philosophy of this second edition is in harmony

with that of the first. To be prepared to grow in their chosen profession, teachers must have a basic understanding of and familiarity with both the "science" and the "art" of teaching; and comprehension of the "science" must precede the development of the "art." Just as in Chomsky's theory of linguistics, the acquisition of some degree of competence is a prerequisite to productive and growing performance in the classroom. Both prospective and practicing teachers must be concerned with their ability to grow. Each of us should be evolving into what we can be. In no fundamental sense can a "bag of tricks" substitute for an expandable "blueprint."

Too, the second edition continues the systematic and conscious polarization of various dichotomies currently being discussed in professional journals. Although the first edition concentrated on cognitive factors in second-language learning, this edition treats the affective domain as well. The examination of extreme positions has been selected purposefully as a means of clarifying differences and of promoting more complete comprehension of each position. As does any teacher, I have my own particular preferences, which should become clear to the reader, but there is no conscious attempt to brainwash any reader just as there is no intent to deny modifications and/or blends of any of the extremes discussed in this edition. My goal in preparing this edition was the development of intelligent practitioners of the science and art of teaching, not the subtle philosophical entrapment of the unwary into any given "camp."

Nor have I, in any sense, rejected my original contention that teaching style is personal. No teacher should feel obligated to conform to any general theory or movement. Her style should be her own, and it should grow out of knowledge of theory, familiarity with current practice and methodology, insight into student individuality, her own personality, and the results she obtains in the classroom. However, ineptitude cannot be justified by the untenable rationalization that the classroom situation is due to personal style. That is obviously true, but it is also obviously true that good teaching and bad teaching do exist. Whatever the teacher's style, it must produce good results to qualify as good teaching. Most teachers prefer to sample, select, and discard as they grow personally and professionally. Having a variety of teaching skills will give them much greater flexibility and will allow them to provide much more adequately for individual differences among students. At the same time, no teacher can justifiably ignore what is happening in society, education, psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and second-language teaching. Change for the sake of change is unwise, but refusal to remain receptive to productive innovations is synonymous with stagnation.

No major organizational changes have been made in the format of this edition. The first part still deals primarily with theory, and the second part attempts to put the theory into practice. The discussion of the teaching process

itself is still based on three components· (1) defining objectives, (2) developing teaching procedures to accomplish these objectives, and (3) evaluating the results. This model is applicable to audio-lingual classes and to cognitive classes; it is equally applicable to the traditional classroom organization and to the more recent "individualized" classes.

The content and arrangement of the treatment of theory have been altered considerably. The chapters on first-language learning and research now precede the chapters dealing with audio-lingual and cognitive approaches to teaching. The research chapter now treats both cognitive and affective-social factors in learning. Results of studies comparing audio-lingual and cognitive methods or components of these methods are included in the chapters treating each approach. In line with the more recent trends to emphasize the individual in the instructional process in second-language teaching, two new chapters have been added: "The Student" and "Diversifying Instruction." Another new chapter, "Why a Second Language?," has been placed first in the book, reflecting my opinion that our profession must concern itself with answering this question.

Changes made in the discussion of practice involve emphasis more than actual reorganization. Additional classroom exercises have been included to supplement the more general descriptions of the first edition. The goal has been to provide a clue to the direction and types of activities that might be used in the classroom without giving so many as to stifle the potential creativity of the teacher. No book can provide all the types of exercises that teachers will require, *if* they are to satisfy the needs of all their students. Therefore, they should begin immediately to originate new ideas for student activities. A new chapter on meeting student needs has been added. It seems irrefutable that meeting the needs of modern-day students must be a prime consideration in the classroom, second-language or otherwise. Another new chapter, "Teaching Culture," has been included, reflecting the increased emphasis on cultural goals in second-language teaching.

The revision of the chapter format to include a chapter outline at the beginning of each chapter and a list of words to be defined, discussion questions, and activities at the end of each chapter has several objectives. First, hopefully the chapter outline will focus the students' attention on the general goals of the chapter. The definitions will help the students to learn the terms needed to comprehend the basic concepts of each chapter. The discussion questions at the end of the chapter should help the students to review the content of the chapter and to organize the information. (I agree wholeheartedly with Ausubel that true comprehension can only come about through meaningful learning. Each reader should summarize the basic concepts presented in each chapter in his own words before proceeding to new material.) The activities should also help him to begin the direct application of

the ideas contained in the chapter to practical contexts. In addition, many of the discussion questions and suggested activities should help the students to go beyond the confines of this text. I urge both instructors and students to consider other questions and activities that would serve to broaden the understanding and the application of any of the concepts presented in this book.

One of the most interesting and exciting rewards of having written the first edition has been the gratifying privilege of meeting so many teachers and students who have used the book. I have most truly appreciated their many kind comments, and I have enjoyed becoming acquainted with all of those who have taken the time to introduce themselves and to chat for a few moments. I am indeed grateful to have the opportunity to prepare a second edition. My desire is that the second edition will be an asset to teachers and prospective teachers alike in considering and questioning the various components of the teaching process as they formulate their individual teaching philosophies. My hope is that the second edition will bring me into contact with as many new friends as the first.

In closing, I readily acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude to Charles H. Heinle and Rand McNally College Publishing Company for encouraging, promoting, and publishing this second edition; to Carlyle Carter for her careful work in editing my original manuscript; to Terry Gamba and Gilbert Jarvis for providing examples in German and French respectively for the chapter on evaluation; to Gary Dielman (German), Gilbert Jarvis (French), and Kathryn Orth (German) for assisting with various examples in the language skills chapters; to Virginia Kruse for her dedication to teaching and her inspiration to her methods students; to Gil Jarvis for the insights that have stimulated much of my thinking and influenced many of my ideas; to Ben Christensen, Pierre Cintas, Ernie Frechette, Alan Garfinkel, Roberta Lavine, Ted Mueller, Phil Smith, Dave Wolfe, and the authors of reviews for the various journals for their many helpful suggestions; to my methods students for their stimulating questions, observations, and discussions; to Jan for preparing the manuscript; and to Jan, Brian, and Michael for their continued love and patience.

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Part One: Theory

In each era certain problems receive more attention and recognition than others. Similarly, proposed solutions vary according to the prevailing attitudes favored during that particular period. These tidelike movements of action and reaction, however, are not representative of the entire pool of ideas available to the "educational engineers," who make use of all available resources, combining them into the most propitious mixture given their own individuality and that of their students. Only in the classroom at the scene of the action and in concert with all the individuals involved can the most appropriate and productive decisions be made. These decisions are not spontaneous and extemporaneous, because they are based on knowledge and experience. Neither can they be prepackaged and shipped to the anxious teacher like some convenience food in the supermarket, because the truly germane proposals must be geared to the exigencies of the situation and the participating students within the realistic limits of the teacher's own capabilities.

During the fifties and sixties, methodology was the guiding light that was to lead second-language teachers along paths to increased student achievement and fluency. When the expected bilingual products failed to materialize, many of the leaders in second-language education turned away from methodology and began to seek new solutions to old problems. Currently, the emphasis is on curricular organization of classroom instruction as a means of diminishing the undesirable attrition rate in second-language classes, of increasing enrollment in second-language classes, and of responding to the needs of individual students.

As was true at the time when the first edition was prepared, teachers and/or prospective teachers are faced with several important dichotomies in the field of second-language teaching. Do they favor a mechanistic or a mentalistic approach to teaching? Do they believe in inductive or deductive explanations of new material? Do they plan to utilize conditioning drills or reasoning exercises? Should they be "educational broadcasters" or "facilitators of learning"? Do they intend to promote extrinsic or intrinsic motivation? Do they hope to establish a teacher-centered class or a student-centered class?

All the questions in the preceding paragraph condense to a single issue, the external versus internal control of learning. Is the learning process to be controlled and shaped externally by the teacher and other agents of the educational system, or are the learners to be granted an important role in their education? Is the student to be viewed as a piece of clay to be molded or as an active participant in the learning process? This is not to imply that the teacher must choose one or the other. All teachers have the option to position themselves at any point on the continuum between the two extremes, and they do not have to remain in the same position indefinitely. They may change from year to year, from class to class, from student to student, from one type of

learning situation to another, and from one type of learning task to another, as circumstances warrant. Too, it must be recognized that seating arrangements and curricular organization are no guarantee that a particular stress is indeed being put into practice. An individualized class may be characterized as teacher-centered and externally controlled just as the traditional classroom setup may emphasize student-centered, internally focused learning activities.

The question of position on the continuum is not so important as whether or not the stance taken by the teacher is the most facilitative one for maximum student achievement given student background, cognitive style, personality, self-concept, interests, goals, and needs; available school facilities; and teacher personality and capabilities. In order to make intelligent choices, the teacher needs to be familiar with contemporary, and past, currents in society, education, linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc. as well as methodological and curricular trends. It is doubtful that any teacher ever acquires all the information needed in all possible situations, but it is this responsibility for continuing to learn, to evaluate, to reconsider, and to create that constitutes one of the most exciting aspects of a teaching career.

Since no single text can incorporate all topics, a decision must be made as to those areas that are most important in the formation of a knowledgeable base from which to develop an intelligent personal teaching style. The present text is seen as a springboard to further reading plus additional examination, discussion, expansion, extrapolation, and practice of the contained concepts. The reader is urged to grow beyond what has been presented here.

This book has been prepared keeping in mind the aforementioned teachers' needs to make intelligent choices. The purpose of part I is to examine theoretical and research support for each extreme of the external-internal continuum. Chapter 1 summarizes support for second-language study. Chapter 2 provides a historical perspective to the current situation. Chapter 3 surveys differing viewpoints of first-language learning. Chapter 4 presents results of research studies in both the cognitive and affective domains. Chapter 5 outlines the audio-lingual method, giving its principal theoretical bases, its basic classroom practice, and the major research studies supporting it. Chapter 6 does the same for the cognitive approach. Chapter 7 stresses student individuality. Chapter 8 deals with the diversification of instruction to provide for student individuality. The Conclusion summarizes Part I.

WHY A SECOND LANGUAGE?

Breaking the Barrier

Benefits of Breaking the Cultural and Linguistic Barriers
- Internal Benefits
- External Benefits

Handling the Persistent Critic

INTRODUCTION

There are many valid reasons for studying a second language. Second-language teachers should be "ready, willing, and able" to expound on any and/or all of them to fellow teachers, guidance personnel, administrators, interested public, and students whenever the opportunity arises. In fact, they will hopefully be prepared to create the appropriate situations. All reasons may not be valid for all groups, and the teacher should be cognizant of the varying needs. Too, the advantages cited may be presented in different terms to the different groups involved. Individually and collectively, second-language teachers should be able to outline clearly and forcefully why they believe in second-language study and to explain how any given classroom activity contributes to the accomplishment of these goals. The focus of this chapter is on this "why" of second-language teaching.

One day a mother mouse was taking her children for a walk. As the unsuspecting family rounded the corner of a building, they suddenly found themselves confronting the twitching whiskers of a hungry cat delighted to find such a tantalizing and unprotected delicacy within striking distance. Surveying the dangerous situation instantly, the quick-witted and learned mother raised herself to her greatest height, drew in a huge breath of air, and

barked, "Wuff! Wuff!" at the top of her voice. As the startled cat disappeared down the street, she turned to her darlings and said knowingly, "See how it pays to know a second language."

Nothing could change the complexion of second-language teaching more than a clientele committed to the study and learning of second languages. In this respect, second-language teachers in many other countries are more fortunate than those in the United States. While we in this country discuss ways and means of justifying the inclusion of second languages in our curriculum, the *UNESCO-FIPLV Survey of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Today* (1975) reveals two principle concerns in other parts of the world: (1) at what age to begin the second language, and (2) at what age to begin the third language. It would be wonderful if the public and students could be imbued with a sense of need for language study. It would be marvelous if the profession could demonstrate to them the relevance of language learning as easily as the mother mouse did to her offspring.

The need to formulate a list of rationales acceptable to our various clientele is one of the highest priorities, if not the highest, in second-language education in the United States. In order to affirm the value of second-language study we must believe in ourselves and what we are trying to do. Otherwise, no one will take our discipline seriously, and our worst nightmares will become an unfortunate reality. Jarvis (1974) refers to this possibilility as a "self-fulfilling" prophesy in which "we feel worthless and thereby become useless." Belief in ourselves and what we are attempting to accomplish must become a reality. Only then will we be capable of establishing a supporting base of operations among the public, the administrators, and, last but not least, the students. The good will and encouragement of each of these groups must be cultivated carefully and constantly if second-language study is to flourish. Public good will must be earned and maintained. We must become conscious of and sensitive to our public image, and we must adopt positive public relations practices.

This pressing need for appropriate and acceptable justifications for second-language study is characterized by two basic implications. First, the reasons for language study may be, and likely will be, different for the varied and varying clientele; and second, we must be prepared to deliver the skills, or the knowledge, or the abilities, or the sensitivity, or the values that we profess.

BREAKING THE BARRIER

The urge to know and to grow intellectually, to push one's knowledge into new areas, is so strong and so universal that one of the most severe punishments known to man is stimulus deprivation. Almost before children are

entirely aware of their beds, they are eager to explore their rooms. The individual's learning is a process of liberation, of freeing oneself from the confines of present circumstances in order to gain a greater comprehension of the world.

As we grow out of the confines of our immediate environment, we find other limitations—our cultural and linguistic heritage. The outer boundaries of the growing awareness of each individual is determined to a large extent by language experience, including first- as well as second-language experience. The same statement can be made of the third language and even beyond, but the liberating hurdle is the second. An acquaintanceship in breadth with the contemporary, interdependent world can be expanded considerably by one's linguistic and cultural abilities to benefit from the accumulated knowledge in languages and cultures other than one's own.

One acceptable manner in which to break through these cultural cocoons is the experience of becoming familiar with and gaining insights from another language and another culture through the study of a second language. The liberating value of stepping outside one's own language and one's own culture explains why language study has traditionally been a cornerstone in a liberal education. Language study is the only satisfactory way of gaining these cultural and linguistic insights. Substitutes may be more palatable, but they are likely to be less rewarding.

Of course, the individual, and society in general for that matter, is under no obligation to pursue an education in breadth. Chastain (1974, p. 374) says:

> The concept of education in breadth can be abandoned, but such action in no wise eliminates the need. It only ignores that basic need and eventually leads to a sad state of unrealized shallowness and myopia, a condition usually not correctable by the victim himself, because he is unlikely to be aware of his vacuity. The condition is not painful, of course, and it may even be characterized by a state of light-hearted euphoric bliss, i.e., ignorance is bliss.

The lack of concern among some segments of the public and of the student body merely serves to place an even greater responsibility upon the members of the profession to make the students and public aware of these needs and to meet them.

The image problem facing second-language education is serious, as the following table well illustrates:

Table 1.1: Percent Growth (Second-Language Study) Between Surveys (Major Languages)

1960–65	1965–68	1968–70	1970–72
59.9	9.2	−1.8	−11.5

Source: Brod (1973, p. 59)

Surveys indicate, however, that second-language study is supported by a much higher percentage of students, even among those who are fulfilling a language requirement, than commonly held opinion would lead us to believe. (See chapter 2, "Perspectives," for additional information.) Too, we should not lose sight of the fact that other traditional academic subjects, such as English, mathematics, and science, are suffering from some of the same problems of image and enrollment as second languages.

BENEFITS OF BREAKING THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BARRIERS

One of the basic components of growth and expansion of awareness is comparison. As one becomes acquainted with other people, he learns more about himself by comparison. Knowing other people makes it possible for individuals to develop a greater understanding of themselves, just as exploring the variations in another culture presents the necessary contrasts needed to enable individuals to see more fully into the complexities of their own society. The same fundamental principle applies to language study as well. Studying a second language provides a comprehension of the connotations of words and the building blocks of expression that is unimagined prior to the study of a second language. Can there be any doubt that a more complete knowledge of oneself, of one's culture, and of one's language is a valid and worthwhile goal of any educational program?

One word of caution at this point. None of the desirable outcomes of second-language study presented in the preceding paragraph are automatically attained in a second-language classroom. The teacher must present opportunities for the students to learn about the lives, the social patterns, and the values of people in other countries, and to become acquainted with the phonological, semantic, and syntactical system of the language they are studying. The profession must not only sell the product, but the teachers must see to it that the goods are delivered.

Internal Benefits

Internal benefits refer to the changes that occur within the individual during second-language study. These benefits are primary. Other related benefits are secondary and depend upon the internal pluses for their validity and practical importance. This is not to say that the student, or even society, will stress the internal benefits. They may well stress the external, practical possibilities to a much greater extent. As second-language teachers we may even have to emphasize the external in order to accomplish the internal.

This section deals with internal benefits only. The discussion treats the following internal benefits of second-language study: insight into life, tolerance, knowledge of the complexities of language, flexibility, discipline, and the acquisition of new learning skills. One internal benefit that students can acquire through second-language study is an insight into life and life styles that enables them to appreciate more fully their own situation both personally and culturally. This insight helps them to begin to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "How do I fit in?" As they gain a more complete understanding of themselves and their environment, they are more capable of directing their own activities and of relating to surrounding circumstances.

As students become more familiar with other cultural and societal patterns, they can develop tolerance for different life styles. The word *can* is used because individual reaction depends upon the manner in which this information is presented and studied. Certainly, in the modern world and in modern pluralistic societies, the goal of tolerance is an important one, and the second-language teacher should be conscious of the need to strive for positive reactions toward others and other cultural systems without alienating the students or without attempting to denigrate their own cultural values. The acquisition of this ability to operate comfortably in the presence of dissimilar attitudes and values will spare the individuals a great deal of psychological discomfort.

Having a greater insight into the complexities and the potentials of language is a definite plus to the individual who seeks to comprehend the world and to cope with it. Language, it must be remembered, controls not only one's speech, but one's thoughts and one's view of the world as well. For example, different cultural viewpoints are reflected in such an everyday occurrence as a mother's words of caution to a misbehaving child. In the English-, Italian-, and Greek-speaking worlds, the mother says, "Be good." The French-speaking mother says, "Be wise." The German-speaking mother says, "Get in line." In Scandinavia the mothers say, "Be kind." The Hopi Indian mother says, "That is not the Hopi way." (Goldschmidt).

It has been theorized that second-language study can enhance the individual's ability to cope with new situations. Forced by the nature of the discipline to deal with previously unencountered cultural ideas and linguistic structures, the learner acquires the flexibility needed in a fast changing world. Alter (1970) maintains that society has entered a stage of accelerated change and that the study of second languages can help the student adapt to a world in transition. She argues that second-language learning is the only subject in the curriculum that can serve this purpose since other subjects, such as mathematics, are not entirely new and strange to the student. Jarvis (1974) echoes these thoughts, saying that second-language study can prepare the student for the trauma of "future shock" in that "the ability to cope with the unfamiliar can be a powerful outcome of foreign language study." He chides second-language

educators, however, stating that "too often *we have made our students victims of the unfamiliar, rather than beneficiaries.*"

Flexibility in this case relates principally to psychological factors. However, an intellectual flexibility, which enhances the individual's cognitive powers, is also a possible outcome of second-language study. Educational psychologists have been able to promote the development of certain aspects of creativity, especially in the area of divergent thinking, by means of selected learning activities (Treffinger & Gowan, 1971). Landry (1974) reported that scores of FLES students obtained from tests of divergent thinking, especially flexibility and originality, were higher than those of students who had not studied a second language. Potential investigators of the effects of second-language study would be well advised to attempt to replicate these findings with students at the junior high and high school levels.

Although the word *discipline* may be less than popular in some quarters at the present time, discipline is necessary for the successful completion of innumerable tasks. Language is one of those subjects in the curriculum that does require consistent effort and energy to progress successfully. The ability to persevere is a definite asset in school as well as out, and a certain persistence and "stick-to-itiveness" can be one of the positive outcomes of second-language study. Second-language study is one of the most beneficial content areas in this respect, because students are forced to learn the material rather than to rely on a base of information that they may already have. Too, it is a subject area that must be mastered in small segments as the students proceed through the course.

Few would argue with the statement that the study of a second language is different in many respects from the study of other subjects in the curriculum. As a result, the student needs to adopt different and varying approaches to learning when studying a second language. Since it is now rather widely and readily recognized that there is a variety of learning skills, the study of a second language can be an asset in the acquisition of new learning skills. One study conducted several years ago found that students who had studied a second language in high school had a higher grade-point average in their studies at the university than those students who had no second-language experience. These findings persisted even when the students from the same percentile ranges on intelligence were compared (Skelton, 1957).

External Benefits

External benefits encompass what can be done with the knowledge, skills, insights, and sensitivities gained from second-language study. They may be beneficial in a practical, social way as people come into contact with persons