use of lesson plans, etc.), and practices (use of textbook vis-à-vis creative teaching etc.) respectively. The final part of the book describes a study of five novice teachers and the experiences they faced in their first year of teaching, while also offering practical suggestions for the kinds of activities that can be used in teacher-education programmes. Although targeted for teacher trainers in language schools and universities, teachers themselves will also find this book useful given the importance it accords to the knowledge, beliefs and attitudes that underlie all teaching practices.

Pictures for Language Learning

By Andrew Wright

Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers
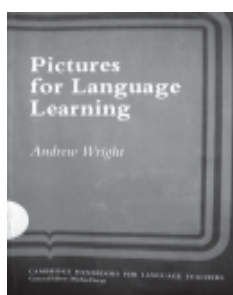
General Editor: Michael Swan

Cambridge University Press

First published 1989

Fourth printing 1993

Pages: 218

ISBN 0 521 35800 0 (Paperback)

This resourceful and innovative book provides an immensely valuable insight into the importance of pictures and other visual materials in language teaching. In demonstrating the vital role of pictures in a wide range of language learning situations, the book also underscores the crucial role played by teachers in using innovative and effective teaching methods that can be adapted by them to suit any kind of learner needs. Such innovative use of pictures and visual material in language teaching also requires limited resources in terms of time for preparation and money or equipment. This richly illustrated book gives concrete examples (chapter 1), of how, for instance, the same picture can be used to emphasize five very different language concepts in teaching (example: grammatical structures, vocabulary, different functions such as requesting, expressing likes/dislikes, etc., describing situations, and honing the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking).

The book is divided into four parts with a total of 16 chapters: Of these, the first section discusses the contributions of visuals towards improving the communication skills of students. Section B emphasizes speaking and writing, and section C stresses listening and reading; together, they have over 200 practical suggestions for picture-generated language work. Section B has various sub-sections dealing with 'mechanical practice', communication, and mini dialogue and role-play/simulation. Section C focuses on meaning-making aspects of pictures that can be used to hone listening and reading skills. Wright's examples are practical in that they make use of readily available visual materials, and where illustrations have been used, these can be easily applied by the teacher.

The final section of the book suggests easy ways in which to set up a 'picture library', and offers guidance on how to look for visuals, categorize pictures and how to store pictures so that they can serve as future teaching tools. Language teachers in particular will find the book useful because the activities that Wright describes can be integrated into different levels of language teaching process. Moreover, he provides several pointers as to how to creatively adapt ideas to suit different teaching environments. Chapter 14 lists the types of pictures and their uses (single object pictures, pictures of famous people, pictures of people in action, pictures from history,

fantasies and news, maps, symbols, pairs, texts, sequences, etc.). Chapter 15 deals with creating and adapting pictures. Both these chapters will be useful for their practical applicability as well as tips for preservation and innovative use of pictures in language teaching.

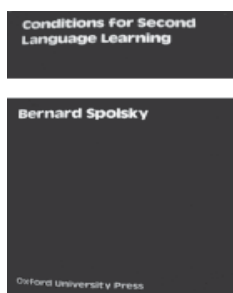## *Conditions for Second Language Learning*

By Bernard Spolsky

First published: 1989

Oxford University Press, UK

Pages: 272

ISBN 19 437086 0 (Hardcover)

Spolsky's book sets out a theory of second language learning in the form of a 'preference model', or a series of typical and categorical rules or conditions. This theory, which he calls *the general theory of language teaching* is distinct from theories of formal classroom learning and of informal natural learning. The task of such a general theory is, as Spolsky notes, being able "to account for the fact that people can learn more than one language, and for the generalizable individual differences that can occur in such learning" (p.2). His theory thus accounts for both, differences between individual language learners, and between different kinds of learning It is characterized by five features: i) generality (that allows consideration within a single model, second as well as foreign language learning, learning for general and specific purposes, formal and informal learning, developing knowledge and skills etc.) ii) emphasis on goals and outcomes of learning iii) integrated and interactive orientation iv) an 'eclecticism' approach (that recognizes various conditions for language

learning) and lastly, v) acknowledgement of language learning as a social context.

The 'preference model' that Spolsky draws upon, involves the interaction of several clusters of interrelated conditions—he lists as many as 74 conditions that are relevant to second language learning. Of these, the first cluster of conditions relates to second language learning as taking place in a *social context*, and includes components such as the "sociolinguistic situation, the general exposure of learners to other languages, the role of the target language and other languages in the outside community and at home, and the general perception of values of the target language and of bilingualism" (p. 25-26). The second cluster comprises *conditions of the learner* who brings into the learning situation not only motivation, but also a number of capabilities, and a body of previous knowledge and experience. Spolsky underscores the fact that the combination of these learner factors "accounts for the use the learner makes, consciously or unconsciously, of the socially provided formal or informal learning opportunities" (p. 27). The usefulness of this book lies perhaps in the delineation of the major conditions of language learning. The 74 conditions explained over the first 12 chapters include within their purview, multiple factors such as 'knowledge of language'; 'language use'; 'measurement of language knowledge and skills'; 'implication of overall proficiency'; individual/psycholinguistic factors and differences in language learning; 'the linguistics basis for second language' and lastly, the conditions required for learning opportunities. The multiple dimensions utilized in explaining these conditions for second language learning as well as the implications drawn for language teaching is the USP of this book.