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A Case Analysis of The English Teaching Mode in Junior High School in a Multi-modal Context

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Abstract: With the development of multimedia information technology, “multi-modal” teaching has attracted more attention from front-line educators. This paper reviews the theory of multi-modal Discourse Analysis and its development in teaching, puts forward the analytical ideas of multi-modal classroom teaching discourse, takes a quality class in the 12th junior Middle School English classroom teaching training as an analysis example and evaluates the modal use in each teaching procedure. The result shows that when choosing the right modal to classroom discourse, teachers should, firstly, consider the teaching context and teaching purpose; secondly, strengthen the language modal’s subject status; thirdly, use the body and image modal to enhance the learning experience.

Keywords: Multi-modal discourse; Modal-choosing; English teaching

1. Introduction

With the interpenetration of multiculturalism and the development of information technology, people find that it is impossible to conduct in-depth and comprehensive analysis and research on discourse purely from the perspective of language, because symbols such as images, colors and actions that people traditionally consider as para-language are no longer in an auxiliary position, but participate in meaning construction together with language in modern social communication (Kress, 1996). This change is reflected in classroom teaching, that is, the way of meaning construction of classroom teaching discourse has changed. Language is no longer the only modal or the main modal of classroom teaching discourse(Xu Jinfen, Liu Wenbo, 2019). Space, gestures, gaze, body posture, movement, sound, intonation, music, three-dimensional things, etc. jointly construct multi-modal discourses of meaning (Jewitt 2009: 14). More and more English educators have gradually realized this situation and began to shift from the traditional “blackboard-textbook” single-modal teaching to multi-modal teaching. Based on the theory of multi-modal Discourse analysis, this paper puts forward the way of multi-modal Discourse Analysis, hoping to make a contribution to the English classroom teaching design by analyzing the phenomenon of modal-choosing in excellent English classroom teaching videos.

2. Literature Review

Scholars have long been engaged in multi-modal teaching research. The New London Group(1996) opened up the precedent of multi-modal in language teaching. They put forward the concept of “multi-literacy”, claiming the main task of language teaching is to cultivate students’ diverse reading and writing ability and multi-modal significance. Stein(2000) emphasized the multi-modal teaching method, and believed that the multi-modal teaching method highlights the inseparableness of the body and the brain through multi-modal and sensory coordination. Royce(2002)’s research question was how teachers use textbooks, visuals, language and other modals presented on computer display in classroom teaching to help students develop multi-modal communication abilities. By analyzing a multi-modal text entitled “Water Cycle”, he put forward the “multi-modal teaching methodology” and used it in the teaching of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary lessons.

Since 2007, with the rapid development of the media and information technology, the increase of the multi-modal discourse research production, the introduction of multi-literacy ability, and the reform of foreign language teaching, the research of multi-modal teaching in China has gradually developed. Hu Zhuanglin (2007) explore multi-modal foreign language teaching practice in an earlier time. They explore multi-modal foreign language teaching from a macro perspective, which has certain guiding significance for research in this field. On the basis of theoretical introduction and exploration, other scholars have conducted researches on multi-modal teaching from a micro perspective. From the perspective of levels, these researches covered basic education and higher education teaching activities; from the perspective of teaching part, they covered a number of language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation; from the perspective of research

subject, they covered PPT, classroom discourse, teaching mode, textbook writing, gold class design and other teaching content.

3. The way of multi-modal classroom teaching discourse analysis

According to the observation of corpus, this paper selects language, audio, images, and body modals participated in the construction of the meaning of classroom teaching discourse. Audio modal includes recording voice and teacher voice; image modal includes video images and PPT images. The body modal includes teachers' facial expressions, limb movements and gaze. Thus, in the language modal, the author mainly analyzes the content of the language and its effects; in the audio modal, the author mainly analyzes the pronunciation of corpus, its stress, sound length and sound height; in the image modal, the author mainly analyzes images' correlation and effect; while in the body modal, the author mainly analyzes body intention.

4. An analysis of English classroom modal-choosing based on multi-modal Discourse theory

This paper is based on the analysis of a reading class taught by Teacher Lin Han from Yichang JDF Middle School in the tenth junior high school English classroom teaching training. The text is chosen from Unit 5 *Do you want to watch a game show?* Section B (2a-2e) Reading part. This paper analyzes the modal and significance of each part including lead-in, pre-reading, while reading and post-reading.

4.1 Lead-in

Here, four modals of language, audio, images and body are involved. From the perspective of language modal, Mr.Lin posed 6 questions, through which, he guided students from Kungfu Panda to Monkey King, and to Mickey Mouse; Mr.Lin used 4 imperative sentences to lead students enter the state quickly; When the teacher said "I can do Chinese Kungfu", he made a small stop between every word, trying to elicit answers from students. From the perspective of audio modal, the teacher played background music, which can attract students' attention. At the same time, during the whole lesson, the teacher showed a relatively exciting state and a powerful voice, which can grasp the students' attention. From the perspective of image modal, the picture is in line with junior high school students, which can attract students' attention and promote the development of classroom content. From the perspective of the body modal, the most prominent in this part is the physical movement shown by the teacher when leading the students do Chinese kungfu.

4.2 Pre-reading

First of all, the teacher showed a picture of Mickey and supplemented by the language "Let's Come to Mickey's World!", marking the beginning of the study of this lesson. At the same time, the stress of "anything" encouraged students to speak freely; then in the interaction, based on a student's answer "Mickey Mouse has two round ears and round faces", the teacher drew a mind map in Mickey's shape, closely linked to the core figures of the lesson. In the process of drawing, the teacher continued to scratch through the limbs, in order to leave a deeper impression on students.

4.3 While Reading

Here, the teacher gave the classroom instruction and presented the timeline with PPT image modal to reinforce its effect based on the teacher's language modal; While students answering the question, teacher Lin inspected the whole class and leaned down to check the students' completion, indicating that the teacher was inspecting students at any time. This belongs to the body modal; in the "check" session, the teacher played a video of the Steamboat Willie. The video is vivid, which belongs to image modal; in the process of answering the question, teacher Lin carefully realized that the students had word pronunciation errors, therefore Mr. Lin stressed the word and read it for three times, which belongs to audio modal; In the following two questions, the teacher showed the photos of Walt Disney and Hollywood Walk of Fame. This belongs to the image modal. The picture plays an interpretation role here.

4.4 After reading

First of all, teacher Lin used six cartoon characters' pictures, accompanied by a question. Language modal and image modal both here were more in line with the students' cognitive characteristics; then the teacher deliberately stressed "a group of four" when he arranged the task. The audio modal here emphasized and strengthened the language modal; after the students gave a wonderful answer, teacher Lin asked everyone to applaud for the students to inspire more students to participate, which belongs to body modal.

5. The suggestions of English classroom teaching modal-choosing

Firstly, choose the modal according to the teaching context and its purpose. The periodicity of English classroom teaching discourse determines different stages have different purpose. The purpose of the lead-in stage is to introduce topics, so audio images can be used as the main modal; the purpose of the pre-reading part is to establish the link between the students' existing experience and the content of this lesson, so the language of the teacher can be used as the main modal; In while-reading part, the main purpose is to expanded students' knowledge, so the entire process is usually based on the teacher's language modal; In post-reading part, the main purpose is to create more opportunities for

students to use knowledge, so it mainly focuses on language and physical modals.

Secondly, strengthen the main position of language modal. In the specific classroom teaching, there are various types of language modals. Teachers can choose any language modal in spoken, audio, video, PPT text, panels, and textbooks to achieve the purpose of strengthening language teaching effect.

Thirdly, use the body and image modals to improve the learning experience. The teaching design of English classrooms should pay more attention to the choice of physical modal and image modal, enhance the learning experience, and assist in the understanding of teaching content and the training of language skills.

6. Conclusion

This paper uses multi-modal Discourse Analysis theory to explore the modal-choosing of English classroom teaching. Based on a high-quality lesson as an analysis material, the author find that language should still be the main modal, and the audio and image modals are supplemented to it. Apart from this, the author proposes several suggestions including selecting modals in accordance with the teaching context and teaching purpose, strengthening the subject status of the language modal, and using image and body modals reasonably. The multi-modal English classroom teaching discourse analysis of this paper is based on the study of individual case. The research on the effect of modal-choosing is also conducted mainly through analyzing. In the future, the research needs to expand the corpus and use empirical methods to further explore the modal-choosing ways of English classroom teaching.

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