Multi-modal Discourse Analysis in Second Language Teaching Class

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Abstract

At the end of 2019, the COVID-19 epidemic spread globally, and the outstanding performance of China in the epidemic caused a new Chinese language craze. However, the epidemic is a double-edged sword. With the continuous development of the epidemic, the international Chinese education has also been greatly impacted. Due to the epidemic situation, offline classes is difficult to achieve, and the cultivation of the teaching practice ability of international Chinese education postgraduates is limited. The postgraduate course Chinese teaching design and management of X University breaks through this limitation by simulating classroom teaching practice. Based on multi-modal discourse analysis theory, this research analyzes various modes of second language classroom: speech modality, image modality, action modality and animation modality. In addition, this research also proposes five strategies: focus on language content, accuracy and humor; add 'Picture Modality', both content and form; cooperate with 'action modality', guide and interact; use 'animation mode' skillfully and help students increase interest; modal multi-pronged approach, jointly promote teaching.

Keywords

Multi-Modality, Chinese Teaching, Teaching Class, Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

At the end of 2019, the sudden COVID-19 epidemic spread globally. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for international Chinese education.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreign students coming to China to learn Chinese has plummeted, and the opportunities of offline teaching for international Chinese education postgraduates are lacking. Therefore, *Chinese Teaching Design and Management*, the postgraduate course of X University, mainly simulates foreign students' classroom to train students' Chinese teaching ability.

1.2 Theoretical basis

The theory used in this paper is multi-modal discourse analysis theory.

The main theoretical basis of multi-modal discourse analysis is systemic functional linguistics established by Halliday.

In foreign countries, the famous French semiotician R • Barthes first made a systematic analysis of multi-modal discourse (Venti Wulan Sari & Romel Noverino, 2021). In China, Li Zhanzi first introduced this theory into the social semiotic analysis of multi-modal discourse, thus created a precedent for the study of multi-modal discourse analysis in

China. Nowadays, with the deepening of the theory in theoretical research, the research in application has become a hot spot (Haiyang Cao, 2020).

What is multi-modal discourse analysis? Mr. Zhang Delu believes that multi-modal discourse refers to the phenomenon of communication through various means and symbolic resources such as language, image, sound and action, using auditory, visual, tactile and other feelings.

1.3 Research object

The second language teaching classroom in this paper refers to the teaching classroom of Chinese as a second language. Taking the simulation classroom of *Chinese teaching design and management* in X University as an example.

Research course: *Chinese Teaching Design and Management* (X University International Master of Chinese Education Practice Course).

Teaching purpose: to improve Chinese teaching ability and guide teaching practice accordingly.

Teaching method: *Be suitable for epidemic*. Take the way of simulating Chinese teaching classroom. (fragment teaching)

Length of fragment teaching: 5-10 min

Textbooks and teaching content: *Road to success*, a knowledge point (new words, grammar, text).

Teaching Evaluation: Student Evaluation and Teacher Evaluation

Teaching content selection basis: the same knowledge point, different teachers' teaching methods, more can highlight the 'multi-modal ' phenomenon in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Number of lesson students: 25

2. Multi-Modal Phonomena in Second Language Classroom Teaching

Through the investigation of *Chinese teaching design and management* simulation classroom in X University, the author found that there are many modes in teaching (Ngoge Tabley Amos & Imelda Hermilinda Abas, 2021).

2.1 Speech modality and its function in classroom teaching

The ultimate goal of teaching is to communicate (Peng Zhang, 2021). The speech modality in teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a special Chinese language: in order to achieve the purpose of communication, teachers will consciously use the variant of the target language system in classroom teaching and extracurricular communication.

For example when teachers explain the noun *'egg'*, because there is no physical object at hand, so on the blackboard with yellow chalk to draw an ellipse, and explain that *'this is the child of the chicken'*, students instantly understand the new word *'egg'*. *'Chicken's child'*, this is not a regular expression in Chinese communication. However, in the second language classroom, this seemingly absurd explanation makes students quickly accept the meaning of the word and invisibly understand the relationship between *'chicken'* and *'egg'*.

2.2 Image modality and its function in classroom teaching

In our simulated Chinese class, 19 second language teachers' speech are very intuitive and easy to understand, their common feature is the use of image mode. Especially in the teaching of nominal new words, in order to avoid the emergence of learners ' mother tongue in the classroom, Second language teachers will try to avoid using learners' mother tongue to explain, so the best way to teach noun new words is to use "image mode" -- physical picture display. According to statistics, 80 % of the teachers in this class will use image modes in their teaching, such as vocabulary cards, physical pictures and so on.

Among the 25 second language teachers, one added image modality to the courseware used in the classroom. The teacher is teaching grammar '多么⋯⋯啊', '多么⋯⋯啊' does not need to add the degree adverb in front of this attention point, give two sentences for students to judge right and wrong. The emoticon is placed after sentence 1 (Fig. 1) and after sentence 2 (Fig. 2). The novel expression package enables students to intuitively understand which sentence is right and which sentence is wrong.

Fig 1.   **Fig 2.**

In terms of content, vocabulary cards, physical pictures and pictures related to the course content can be used; in terms of form, appropriate amount of memes pictures are added to the courseware. This is conducive to concentrating students' attention, so as to achieve better classroom teaching.

2.3 Action modality and its function in classroom teaching

Teachers' eyes, gestures, smiles, facial expressions and so on in classroom teaching belong to 'action mode'. When students were asked to answer questions, teachers all have the same gesture -- slightly flexing biceps, gently raising forearm, leaning toward the student, and then affectionately calling out the student's Chinese name. This action is very unimpressive, but it can let students better understand the teacher's respect for their own, so as to create a good classroom atmosphere (Zannie Bock, 2016).

2.4 Animation mode and its function in classroom teaching

In the class, two teachers use the animation mode—to play the animation of Chinese character writing stroke order and Chinese character writing animation, so that students can clearly and intuitively see the order of Chinese character writing. Students can follow the animation to practice writing, which is helpful to master the structure of Chinese characters and understand the significance of Chinese characters.

Similarly, in teaching, we can properly play videos related to the course content, which not only enables students to understand the course knowledge, but also better feel the charming of Chinese culture.

2.5 Multiple modes and their roles in classroom teaching

In our simulation class, 100% of the teaching classes are multi-modal teaching classes. In particular, with the increasing number of simulations and the relatively rich teaching experience of graduate students, the more modes are used in the class.

According to observation, there is a teacher's classroom: language, image, action, animation, text, music, video and other modes, through sound, body language, information carrier (text, picture, audio, video), environment and other multi-modal channels for teaching. The student's teaching effect is more prominent, the classroom atmosphere is more active.

3. Strategies for Multi-Modal Application in Second Language Classroom Teaching

3.1 Focus on language content, accuracy and humor.

The input and output of language depend largely on speech mode. Therefore, in classroom teaching, teachers always pay attention to their language output and try to be slow, concise, detailed and humorous. On the basis of accurate teaching of language knowledge, teachers should try their best to achieve humor in language. Teachers' humorous language helps students to input knowledge.

3.2 Add 'Picture Modality', both content and form.

Teachers should consider a lot of things when preparing lessons, but do not prevent adding some image mode during the preparation process, there will be unexpected results.

In terms of form, when making courseware before class, teachers can appropriately add current popular memes. Appropriate use can enhance the classroom atmosphere and stimulate learners' learning enthusiasm. In terms of content, the use of new word cards, physical pictures and other pictures related to the course content can promote teaching well.

3.3 Cooperate with 'action mode', guide and interact.

Teachers attract students' attention and prevent students from distracting. The important way is to exaggerate their behavior and focus students' attention on themselves. Teachers' rich language explanations and exaggerated actions often attract students' attention, especially the age differences of the second language learners is large. The theatrical actions can attract the attention of young learners, and can also make the middle-aged learners who face the pressure of work feel the pleasure of learning Chinese all day long, rather than just learning Chinese as a need for work.

3.4 Use 'animation modality' skillfully and help students increase interest.

When it comes to animation, we often think of videos, and many teachers will play relevant videos to import lessons. It is a very good mode of import, which is vivid and intuitive, and very helpful for teaching (Zhu Jie, 2021).

The complex structure of Chinese characters makes it very difficult for learners and it is impossible for teachers to teach each student "hand in hand". When the teacher is writing in the blackboard, his attention is focused on writing, and it is difficult to pay attention to the students. Now the emergence of "Chinese strokes writing animation" appropriately solves this problem. Students can imitate it while looking at it, and can also play the animation repeatedly if they encounter difficult Chinese characters which are poorly accepted by students.

3.5 Modal multi-pronged approach, jointly promote teaching.

In today's advanced science and technology, we can use modern teaching aids. The same knowledge point with multiple modal communication to promote teaching, then the effect is exceedingly good. For example, when explaining the new word "ice sculpture", teachers can explain it in language, show the pictures of ice sculpture with courseware, play the video of writing the two Chinese characters "ice sculpture", mark the two characters "ice sculpture" in red in the example sentences, teachers and students can ask questions interactively and add expressions into the courseware, etc. Select several ways, under the condition of no burdensome, multi-modal modes is easier to promote the improvement of teaching quality.

4. Conclusion

In recent years, multi-modal theory has begun to flourish in China. As a second language teacher, can we apply multi-modal theory to Chinese classroom teaching? In fact, multi-modal theory is an interdisciplinary and multi-field theory, and its application in the second language teaching classroom needs further exploration. I hope this paper can contribute some ideas for Chinese teachers in teaching.

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