

Design and Practice of Multimodal Teaching in Oral English Education at Private Colleges

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Abstract: In the 1990s, multimodal teaching theory has become a hot topic in linguistic research, and the development of information technology has effectively promoted the application of multimodal interactive teaching. Taking textbook content as an example and combining the learning situation of students in private colleges, this article actively constructs a multimodal interactive oral classroom under the background of modern information technology in oral English teaching at private colleges, using various modalities to effectively improve student participation in class, stimulate interest in learning, and improve the efficiency of oral teaching. The author introduces the design and practice of multimodal teaching based on the Unit 2—Speaking-Talking about family in the second edition of College Experience English Listening and Speaking Tutorial, actively constructing a multimodal interactive oral classroom under the network environment, which can effectively improve student participation in class, stimulate interest in learning, and improve the efficiency of oral teaching.

1. Theoretical Analysis: Multimodal Teaching Theory

The "multimodal teaching method" was proposed around the end of the 20th century, which means that classroom teaching can leverage the internet, information, and multimedia technology to mobilize students' visual, auditory, tactile, and other modalities to interact and work together to complete the learning process. It emphasizes the cultivation of learners' diverse abilities and advocates the use of multimedia networks, images, role-playing, group activities, and other multi-channel and multi-teaching methods to stimulate learners' various senses, enabling them to work synergistically in language learning. This approach moves teaching activities away from being a monomodal phenomenon where language is the sole focus. The practical research of the "multimodal teaching method" in China is attributed to Professor Zhang Delu. In his work (2013), he explored the application of multimodal discourse theory and media technology in foreign language teaching. He suggested that teachers should create authentic classroom situations and stimulate students' visual, auditory, and tactile modalities to facilitate the easy and smooth completion of teaching tasks that combine listening, speaking, and practice in English classes. The aforementioned research outcomes have made significant contributions to the application of

multimodal theory in foreign language teaching in China.

2. Current Status of College English Learning for Art Students in Private Colleges

The college entrance examination scores in English are usually low for art students in private colleges, and they tend to focus more on professional courses and less on cultural courses. Some students hold the view that "English is useless," believing that the content they learn is not closely related to their future career needs. As a result, students are not enthusiastic about attending classes, and being late or absent is common. They find it difficult to integrate into the teacher's teaching in class, and phenomena such as playing with mobile phones and sleeping during class are serious, which greatly affects the teacher's teaching. In addition, the traditional single teaching model cannot create a good English learning atmosphere and cannot effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for English learning, thus it is difficult to achieve a two-way benefit of "teaching and learning."

3. Teaching Content

Unit 2—Speaking-Talking about family: The theme is family life.

A Fill in the blanks with the words you hear. Then listen again and pay attention to the intonation.

A: What are you doing for the 1 _____ New Year?

B: Not much. How about you? Do you have any plans?

A: I'm going to spend it with my family. Every year, we have a family 2 _____ .

B: That 3 _____ fun. Do you have a big family?

A: Yeah. My mother has seven siblings, so I have more than twenty 4 _____ .

B: Wow! Are they all coming to your place?

A: Oh, no. We're going to a restaurant. Our house is way too small.

B: Well, have a good time.

B Practice the conversation with a partner using the words in blue.

A: What are you doing for the Lunar New Year?

B: Not much. How about you? What are you doing? / What are your plans?

A: I'm going to spend it with my family. Every year, we have a family get-together / gathering.

B: That sounds fun. Do you have a big family?

A: Yeah. My mother has seven siblings, so I have more than twenty cousins.

B: Wow! Are they all coming to your house / apartment?

A: Oh, no. We're going to a restaurant. Our house is much / far too small.

B: Well, have a good time.

C How many people are in your family? Do you have a small family, immediate family or extended family? Talk with your partner(Figure 1)

There are five people in my immediate family—my parents, my two sisters, and me.

Figure 1. The Answer

Exercise A is a listening gap-fill exercise to familiarize students with the dialogue content, Exercise B practices the dialogue by replacing some important words, phrases, and sentences with synonyms, and finally, Exercise C combines students' own family situations for discussion, mainly discussing the relationships among family members.

4. Oral Teaching Unit Design and Practice

The teaching objectives of this oral class are to discuss family relationships in English. The specific objectives are as follows: Objective 1 - to ask and answer "Do you have an extended family?" and "How many people are in your family?"; Objective 2 - to understand the knowledge of family trees and some important holidays for family gatherings; Objective 3 - to be able to connect the learned vocabulary into sentences, apply them orally, and communicate in situations. The teaching design mainly unfolds from three aspects: auditory modal interaction, visual modal interaction, and body language modal interaction.

4.1 Auditory Modal Interaction

(1) Audio Modal Interaction

The initial audio modal interaction can effectively capture students' attention and mobilize classroom atmosphere. In the warm-up stage, using the exercise in the textbook's vocabulary section 2.2 as an introduction, students complete the filling of family relationships by listening to an audio about family relationships. Then, play a video of Ken Lejtenyi introducing his family history, which also comes from the textbook and matches the corresponding exercises in the book. For students with poor foundations and limited vocabulary, allocate 3-5 minutes for mobile-assisted learning. During this stage, the teacher supervises and urges throughout, and provides one-on-one guidance when necessary.

Then, in the form of learning mutual aid groups, conduct a question and answer relay race. The design of the questions is based on simplicity and operability, and the answers should be concise and to the point. Teams that succeed in passing the levels will receive group points. The introduction of a competitive mechanism can not only improve student participation but also enliven the classroom and create a lively atmosphere.

At the same time, supplement vocabulary and expressions related to family relationships and holidays related to family gatherings, such as "father-in-law and mother-in-law," "nephew and niece," "Spring Festival." The teacher gives requirements - to read in class, memorize after class, and apply, to connect the learned vocabulary and phrases into sentences, to be able to speak fluently, and to use them as the assessment content before the next class, and the assessment scores will be included in the regular scores.

(2) Discourse Modal Interaction

Discourse modal is the main form of auditory modal. The teacher's speech plays an important role in teaching. Before class, the teacher carefully designs the teaching language from the perspective of students being able to understand, replacing "high-end" advanced vocabulary with commonly used language.

In the Explanation stage, which is planned to take about 10 minutes, discuss the meaning of the dialogue text in groups or in the form of a translation relay race, and master the key sentences involved in the dialogue.

In the presentation stage, which is conducted in pairs, two students introduce their family situations based on their own families, asking and answering questions. Implement tiered requirements: for students with a good foundation, they should be able to speak a complete paragraph; for those with a poor foundation, they can answer with simple keywords. The situational performance should apply two groups of basic sentence patterns learned: "How many people are there in your family?" "Do you have a small family?". At the same time, apply the vocabulary expressions from the vocabulary at the beginning of the unit, such as "brother-in-law" and "mother-in-law". The teacher needs to keep a detailed and truthful record of the students' performance. For students who have improved their speaking, the teacher will make bonus records

in the scorebook. Situational simulation is the core of oral teaching. For each group of students' stage presentations, the teacher should make timely encouraging and affirmative evaluations, such as "you can do it"; "try it"; "good job"; "nice guy"; "you're great", to reduce students' nervousness and timidity.

Students who are not invited to present on stage can record short videos or audio and send them to WeChat or QQ English learning groups, which is convenient for teachers to grasp the learning situation and make learning guidance. In addition, in teacher-student interaction, to mobilize the classroom atmosphere as much as possible, teachers need to use appropriate means such as speed, tone, voice, and rhythm.

4.2 Visual Modal Interaction

(1) Text Modal Interaction

Text modal mainly includes the text in the teaching materials and the text in PPT, which occupies a dominant position in college English teaching. The text setting of PPT, such as font size, font, and color matching, strives to be harmonious and clear at a glance. The content of each page of PPT should not be too much, and it is better to be simple and clear. Teachers can add introductions to family trees, family members, and appropriately add ideological and political education according to the theme of the dialogue, so that students understand that the family is the smallest unit of this harmonious society, and only when the family is harmonious can everything prosper.

(2) Image Modal Interaction

Image modal is more intuitive and vivid than text modal and can greatly capture students' attention.

Based on the "problem learning" principle, in the practice and consolidation stage, teachers can choose a set of family photos of celebrities or great people that students are interested in and familiar with for questioning and assessment, using the learned key sentence patterns "Is the family an extended family?" "What is their relationship?" "Could you name their relationship?" to carry out questioning throughout, repeatedly stimulating students' sensory cognition and stimulating students' desire. By presenting images, organize students to discuss the relationships among family members. Students can discuss in groups to find solutions: the teacher organizes each group to arrive at the best answers and constructs the thematic content.

4.3 Body Language Modal Interaction

Body language is an indispensable teaching tool in the teaching process, which includes eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, etc. Teachers use attentive gazes to remind students who are daydreaming; infect students with a friendly smile and full spirit; and convey positive messages to students with approving looks. Compared with verbal language, body language is more vivid and direct, effectively conveying implicit information beyond text and images. Therefore, the appropriate use of body language during teaching can directly affect the effectiveness of teaching. During the free discussion about each other's families, teachers should use more body language. For those who are timid and dare not speak, teachers should walk more to these students, encouraging them with a friendly smile, encouraging eyes, and a gentle pat on the shoulder, helping them overcome their inner fear. At the same time, divide the whole class into several groups, appoint roles according to the personality characteristics of the students, such as planners, speakers, group leaders, etc., which not only ensures the participation of all, but also gives play to the students' strengths; it not only mobilizes the students' enthusiasm but also ensures the effect of their active learning.

4.4 Other Modal Interactions

In addition to auditory, visual, and body language modalities, teachers can also use other modalities, such as taste, smell, and touch modalities, to help promote student participation in the classroom. When introducing the differences in etiquette culture between China and the West, teachers can encourage students to demonstrate hugs and handshakes on stage; when explaining vocabulary related to taste, teachers can explain core vocabulary through demonstration and allowing students to taste. Vocabulary taught based on a specific situation is easier and more intuitively interesting for students to accept, and the impression is more profound.

5. Teaching Summary and Reflection

In the summary stage, teachers reserve 5-8 minutes to guide students to review the content of this class, summarize the teaching points, reflect on the teaching stages such as warm-up, explanation, presentation, practice, and consolidation, and make a good teacher's summary and student's summary and evaluation: Are the teaching objectives achieved? Is the teaching method accepted by the vast majority of students? How is the processing of knowledge input and output? Finally, in the assignment stage, teachers send oral homework through the online learning platform APP to consolidate and test the students' learning effects.

The implementation of the multimodal oral teaching classroom through the above teaching design can not only stimulate the learners' senses well visually and auditorily but also mobilize students' enthusiasm to participate in the classroom from various aspects and angles, creating an atmosphere of teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction. Through the practice of multimodal oral teaching design, teachers evaluate students' learning effects from classroom activities and homework. The results show that most students (80% of the total number of students in the class) can grasp the teaching objectives of the oral class well, can communicate orally with the basic sentence patterns learned, and can communicate simply around the dialogue theme with question-and-answer skills. Students who dare not speak, known as "mute students," are also willing to speak under the mobilization of a good classroom atmosphere, even if it is very difficult for them, but they are at least gradually willing to speak English. For these students, it is both a challenge and an exercise. In addition, the autonomous learning ability of most students in English has also improved.

At the same time, teachers understand the students' satisfaction with multimodal oral teaching through interviews and surveys. 65% of the students are very satisfied with this teaching model; 21.5% prefer the application of multimodal teaching; 13.5% think it is acceptable but average; there are no dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. It can be seen that compared with traditional single teaching methods, the vast majority of students recognize, support, and are willing to actively cooperate with teachers to carry out multimodal teaching under the guidance of teachers.

In the above teaching, multimodality does not exist in isolation but is interrelated and collaborative. In the process of multimodal teaching, teachers should make full use of multimedia to effectively combine auditory modality, tactile modality, visual modality, and other modalities to help students perceive, understand, encode, store, and use the input information in various ways, thereby obtaining better learning effects. At the same time, it lays the foundation for the large amount of knowledge acquired and accumulated, constructing a cyclical system that helps students "acquire knowledge, improve memory, and perfect cognition."

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