

Multimodal Teaching Mode of Junior English Based on Rain Classroom

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Keywords: Multimodal teaching mode, Rain Classroom, Junior English.

Abstract. The purpose of the study is to discuss the process of construct the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom and explore the teaching effect of the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom. This paper concludes that the main links of the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom are preview, interactive classroom teaching, and reviewing after class. In addition, the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom has significant effect on improving junior students' English performance.

1. Introduction

The theory of multimodal discourse analysis arose in the Western countries in the 1990s. On the basis of critical discourse analysis, the theory of multimodal discourse analysis developed from the fields of social semiotics, systemic-functional grammar and traditional discourse analysis (Hoffman, 2018). The theory holds that language is a social sign, but other non-language symbols such as painting, music and dance can also express the meaning. The modals of non-language symbols are independent, but produce meaning together with language symbols (Erfanian, Elahi & Akbari, 2019). The theory breaks through the limitation of the traditional discourse analysis to study language itself in isolation, and extends the study of discourse to the modal symbols expressed by images, colors, fonts and other meanings besides language to focus on the role of multimodal signs in discourse (Marchetti & Cullen, 2016). With the development of nearly 30 years, the multimodal discourse analysis has been widely used in various disciplines, and the multimodal discourse theory plays an important role in foreign language teaching.

In a sense, the multimodal theory also includes the way that human beings interact with external environment through their senses. In the multi-media and network environment, there are multimodal interactions between teachers, between teachers and students, between students and problems, between teachers and network environment, etc. These interactions are reflected in their exchange and by means of evaluation and feedback can jointly promote the development of the teaching process (Thompson & McInay, 2019). The interaction between teachers and teaching resources is no longer confined to the traditional lesson preparation, but more embodied in the creation and updating of teaching contents and the design of teaching activities. The interaction between students and learning resources is also an important part of effective learning for students. The network environment not only provides a learning platform for the multimodal interactive teaching between learners (Herring, 2015), but also provides a variety of teaching means and a large number of information resources for teachers. The network environment provides a variety of information presentation methods, highlights resource sharing, and realizes friendly human-computer interaction (Brône & Oben, 2015), which is helpful for teachers to actively explore and complete the construction of knowledge and ability, moreover, by which teachers can fully mobilize students' multimodal cognition by playing Flash, PPT and other courseware related to learning contents, and supervise and check students' learning process through forum and email. The multimodal of the interaction between students and the network environment includes vision, hearing, touch, etc. The network organically combines text, graphics, animation, static image, dynamic image and sound media. In such an integrated environment, the network environment can arouse students' enthusiasm for learning.

2. Rain Classroom

On June 16, 2016, the Rain Classroom was officially launched. Developed jointly by Classroom Online and Tsinghua University's Online Education Office, the Rain Classroom aims to connect smart terminals for teachers and students, giving the pre-class, in-class and post-class links a new experience, maximizing the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and promoting teaching reform (Xiangming & Song, 2018). The Rain Classroom will be a complex means of information technology into PowerPoint and Wechat, and establish a bridge of communication between the extra-curricular learning and classroom teaching, so that the interaction between learning and teaching will never be offline. Using the Rain Classroom, teachers can push the pre-class courseware with MOOC videos, exercises and voice to students' mobile phones (Ren, Zhang & Sui, 2018). Teachers can communicate with students and give timely feedback to students. Real-time communication and bullet-screen comments in class provide perfect solutions for the less interaction between teachers and students in traditional classroom teaching. The Rain Classroom scientifically covers every teaching link of pre-class, in-class and post-class, and provides the three-dimensional data support for the teachers and students. In addition, the functions of personalized report forms and the automatic task reminder make the teaching and learning easy.

3. Research methods

In this study, two classes in Grade Two of Zhiyang Middle School of Huining County were selected to conduct the experiment, one an experimental class (EC) and the other a control class (CC). The multimodal teaching mode based on the Rain Classroom was applied in the EC, and the traditional teaching method was used in the CC. The experiment lasted one year. This paper will compare the scores of two classes and analyze the effectiveness of the multimodal teaching mode based on the Rain Classroom. This paper puts forward two research questions. (1) How is a multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom constructed? And (2) what is the teaching effect of the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom?

4. Results and discussion

4.1 The multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom

The platform of the Rain Classroom connects teachers and students through the Internet. Therefore, the combination of teaching in class and online teaching is realized. The Eighth grade, for example, has the following teaching mode.

4.1.1 Preview

The content of junior English curriculum involves the social, cultural, historical, language, literature and other aspects of background knowledge. Take the second volume of English Course for Grade Eight by the People's Education Press as an example, each unit involves lots of language knowledge, but each unit focuses on a grammar point. From the perspective of students, after seven years of English learning, students not only have certain language knowledge and reading ability, but also gain the basic English learning methods. In this case, it is necessary to transfer part of the teaching content to the preparatory stage. Before class, teachers use the function of "Pushing Courseware" to push vocabulary and some grammar knowledge to students in PPT form. Students can conduct self-study, click on the button "Not Understand" for the content that they do not understand on the PPT, and finish self-test exercises. MOOC videos and web-based videos can be inserted in the Rain Classroom.

4.1.2 Fully interactive classroom teaching

In the mode of the Rain Classroom, the PPT courseware will be synchronized to the students' mobile phones. Students can mark the knowledge they do not understand, and teachers will accordingly adjust the teaching progress at any time, and focus on the key points. Students can use the "Submission" function to send opinions and other content in the form of text or photos to teachers' mobile phone. Teachers can send the students' submissions to the big screen to promote learning

effectiveness and exchange of ideas among students. Teachers can also open the “Bullet Screen” function, so that students can send comments to express their views, and take the initiative to participate in classroom teaching. The Rain Classroom also has an instant quiz function. Teachers insert exercises in advance in the courseware. Students submit answers via their mobile phones, and the system automatically produces the scores of the test.

4.1.3 Reviewing after class

The Rain Classroom can become the effective way of consolidation and extension of classroom teaching. After class teaching, PPT courseware will be saved in the Rain Classroom. Students can check and review on their mobile phones at any time. According to students’ feedback, teachers can answer students’ questions. Teachers can also put expanded topics in the discussion area, and students are free to express their views to promote the interaction between students and teachers and to develop students’ ability to think critically. Take Unit 3 “Could you please clean your room?” as an example, the lesson deals with the problem of taking care of the household. Teachers can ask students to share their views on the Chinese saying “One cannot make a big success without being self-reliant.” in the discussion area. Post-class discussion makes up for the limited classroom teaching time. Students can speak freely to broaden their minds.

4.2 Effect of the multimodal teaching mode of junior English based on the Rain Classroom

This study collects the data on students’ test scores before and after the one-year experiment. The result of descriptive statistics in EC and CC in Table 1 shows that the higher score means in posttests of both EC and CC than those in pretests illustrates that students both in EC and in CC make progress in their one-year English leaning. In either EC or CC, standard deviation (SD) in posttest is lower than that in pretest. So are the standard error means (SEM) in pretests and in posttests in both EC and CC. All the data above show that students in both EC and CC make certain progress after the one-year English leaning.

Table 1. Results of T-Test of tests

	Descriptive Statistics				Paired Samples T-Test			Independent Samples T-Test				
	Tests	N	Mean	SD	SEM	T	df	P	Tests	T	df	P
EC	Pretest	48	77.52	11.758	1.697	-8.506	47	0.000	EC: Pretest	-0.284	90	0.777
	Posttest	48	83.88	9.099	1.313				CC: Pretest			
CC	Pretest	44	78.20	11.243	1.669	-2.199	43	0.033	EC: Posttest	2.183	90	0.032
	Posttest	44	79.34	10.809	1.630				CC: Posttest			

In Table 1, the result of Paired Samples T-Test shows that the T value in EC is -8.506, and -2.199 in CC. The different T value leads to different mean differences. Larger absolute value of T value shows larger mean difference. According to the P values (both are lower than 0.05), there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest in EC or CC. The above facts can be considered as the evidence that all students in both EC and CC make much progress in their one-year English leaning.

In Table 1, the result of Independent Samples T-Test of pretest and posttest shows that students’ English level in both EC and CC has no significant difference ($P=0.777>0.05$) in pretest, while students’ English level has significant difference in posttests ($P=0.032<0.05$) between EC and CC. The result reveals that students in EC have achieved greater process. All the above facts can be the convincing evidence of a significant improvement of students’ English level in EC.

5. Summary

In this study, the multimodal teaching is carried out through the application of the Rain Classroom to teaching practice, so that students can enjoy a new learning experience before, during and after class. With the help of the Rain Classroom and WeChat, the environment of multimodal learning is constructed. The study solves the problems of traditional learning and online learning, and puts forward the concrete implementation mode and application scheme of multimodal teaching.

Here are some reflections of the multimodal teaching mode based on the Rain Classroom. First of all, the multimodal teaching mode puts forward higher requirements for teachers. Teachers are under

more pressure to prepare lessons. The Rain Classroom subdivides each class into three stages, which undoubtedly adds to teachers' lesson preparation (Chenglong, 2016). Secondly, the multimodal teaching mode also makes students face challenges. The academic pressure of junior school students is relatively large. In addition to English class, students have other courses every day. Besides, students have homework for every subject. The multimodal teaching mode may take up students' rest time. Whether the students can finish the preview and review work assigned by teachers or not depends on the students' consciousness and autonomic learning ability.

Acknowledgement

This work was financially supported by the 2019-year Project of Education Science in the Period of the 13th Five-year Plan of Gansu Province (Grant NO. GS[2019]GHB0469).

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