

# Discourse Analysis of International Chinese Teachers in Multimodal Classroom

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**Abstract:** Using the theory of multi-modal discourse analysis to analyze the multi-modal discourse of 4 teachers of Chinese as a foreign language, it is found that teachers of Chinese as a foreign language can comprehensively use spoken modalities, PPT combination modalities, posture modalities, environmental modalities, etc. Modal utterances make the modalities synergistically cooperate with each other, but novice teachers still have differences in the effectiveness, synergy, and discourse of multimodality compared with experienced teachers. In today's "Internet + education" era, multimodal discourse analysis theory should be used to creatively combine the reality of international Chinese teaching with a multimodal scientific design of Chinese teaching.

## 1. Introduction

In the communication process, in addition to the use of language, the expression and transmission of information is largely realized by non-verbal means, such as space, gestures, expressions, voice intonation, surrounding environment, and so on. These communication channels and media are modalities. People have five ways to perceive the world --- sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, corresponding to the production of five communication modes --- visual mode, hearing mode, tactile mode, olfactory mode and taste mode. The use of two or more of the above five modalities in a comprehensive manner, and the phenomenon of communication through a variety of means and symbol resources such as language, image, sound, action, etc., is multimodal discourse. [1] Since the rise of multimodal discourse research, people have become increasingly aware that "meaning is always constructed through multiple models and media that co-occur in the communication process" [2]. In the teaching process, language, image, sound, color of blackboard writing, teacher's tone, tone, expression, posture and even the layout of the classroom, the spatial relationship between teachers and students can all participate in the construction of meaning. With the development of modern technology, the symbolic resources available to teachers of Chinese as a foreign language are also increasingly abundant, and many teachers spontaneously and consciously use new media and new technologies to enrich classroom teaching.[3] So how do teachers use multiple modalities to achieve their teaching goals in a classroom of Chinese as a foreign language? How do different teachers of Chinese as a foreign language use multimodality? To this end, we use the theory of multimodal discourse analysis as a guide. Analyze the discourse of teachers of Chinese as a foreign language, with a view to providing some useful ideas for promoting the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

## 2. Relevant Research Briefly Study on Multimodal Discourse

Rising in the West in the 1990s, scholars such as O'Toole, Kress and van Leeuwen, O'Holloran extended the social symbolism of language to other symbol resources, and considered that images, sounds, colors, etc. are all social symbols that can be completed. Representation of meaning, therefore, it is necessary to study how multiple symbols work together to achieve discourse meaning, thus starting a new era of multimodal research [4]. Multimodal discourse analysis has also become a hot issue in foreign language research. In 1996, the New London Group proposed the concept of multiple reading [5], and more scholars began to pay attention to the relationship between multimodality and language teaching. For example, Royce explored the synergy of various modalities in second language classroom teaching [6]; Jewitt made it clear that language is not the

only means in classroom teaching and should be realized by multiple modalities together [7]. The earliest research on multimodal discourse in China can be traced back to the 2003 article “Social Semiotic Analysis of Multimodal Discourse” by Li Zhanzi. A large number of scholars, including Li Zhanzi, Zhu Yongsheng, Hu Zhuanglin, Gu Yueguo, Zhang Delu, Dai Shulan, Wei Qinrong, Feng Dezheng, etc., have theoretically discussed a series of issues such as the origin, definition, and analysis of multimodality. As a leading scholar in the field of multimodal discourse analysis in China, Zhang Delu first established a comprehensive framework for multimodal discourse analysis [8], a multimodal foreign language classroom teaching design framework [9], and a multimodal selection framework for foreign language teaching [10]. Created a new era of domestic multimodal classroom discourse analysis. Since then, the research results of applying multi-modal discourse analysis theory to foreign language teaching fields have become more and more abundant, involving various types of teaching such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, teaching design, teaching methods, and textbook writing. Compared with foreign language teaching, there are only more than 10 studies on Chinese multimodal classrooms in foreign countries, and the volume of published articles is far lower than that of multimodal foreign language teaching, which is still in its infancy. These studies are scattered, mainly discussing the application of multi-modal teaching modes in teaching Chinese as a foreign language from the micro level, such as the application of vocabulary teaching, grammar teaching or cultural courses, literacy courses, audiovisual courses, etc.

### **3. The Corpus and Method of Research**

As mentioned above, with the advent of the era of educational informationization 2.0, the utterances of teachers of Chinese as a foreign language in classrooms have already shown a combination of modalities such as exit language, posture, pictures, animation, video streams, and spatial environment. And virtual reality technology has also been applied in Chinese teaching, and the multi-modality of teacher discourse is increasingly prominent [11]. However, although many Chinese teachers have spontaneously and consciously used new technologies to enrich classroom teaching, they lack a certain amount of theoretical guidance, and most teachers' discourse design and application are still in the exploration stage. In order to fully understand the multi-modal classroom discourse of Chinese teachers for foreigners, this study selects 4 teaching videos of Chinese teachers for foreigners as the research corpus. Among them, video 1 and video 2 are language lessons at the initial stage, both of which are about 40 minutes; videos 3 and 4 are comprehensive courses at the intermediate stage, which are about 85 minutes and 45 minutes, respectively. The teaching of 4 videos is complete. Videos 1 and 3 are from the “Excellent Teaching Video of Hanban’s official website” and “Chinese Classroom Teaching Demonstration” by Beijing Language and Culture University. Teachers (Teacher 1 and Teacher 3) are identified as experienced teachers. Videos 2 and Video 4 is a classroom teaching video for a second-year graduate student of Chinese as a Foreign Language at a university in Shanghai. Both teachers have only one semester of classroom teaching experience. The teaching of the four teachers was conducted in classrooms arranged horizontally and vertically, all with PPT projection equipment. The front of the classroom was a blackboard and screen, and the multimedia booth was on the side in front of the classroom. The author mainly adopts the empirical method of qualitative analysis, uses Ve-gas Pro13.0 to play teaching videos, transfer the teacher's utterances, and analyzes and describes the various utterance modes used by classroom observation. Discourse time is counted in order to explore the following questions: First, in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, in order to achieve teaching goals, which discourse modalities are generally used in teachers' discourse? How are the different discourse modalities distributed in various teaching links? Second, how do the discourse modes work together to achieve communicative goals? Third, do novice teachers differ from experienced teachers in terms of multimodal selection, collaboration, and discourse volume?

#### 4. Analysis and Discussion

##### (1) Comprehensive use of multiple modalities by TCFL teachers in the classroom

Facts have proven that the traditional “textbook + blackboard + teacher-speaking student training” model has long been shaken off in Chinese as a foreign language classroom. Teachers are not just using language to teach, but a comprehensive use of multiple modal discourses, mainly manifested as visual modalities. And auditory modalities. Visual modalities mainly include text symbols, pictures, animations, teachers' expressions, actions, physical objects, and student activities on the blackboard and PPT; auditory modalities are mainly teacher's explanations, PPT voices, and of course a large part are students Answer, students listen. The specific analysis is as follows:

Table 1 Selection of Modalities for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Written text symbols (written language symbols written on a blackboard and rendered in PPT)
Accompany written language symbols (font, size, color, bold form, PPT background, PPT space layout)
Picture (still picture)
Visual modality Animation, video (PPT text or picture special effects animation, dynamic video)
Physical object (the physical object displayed during the lecture or drill)
Posture (eyes, expressions, gestures, posture, dress, movement of the body, etc.) Environment (seat layout, classroom space size, distance between teachers and students in the classroom, etc.)
Speaking (teacher's explanation)
Auditory modality With spoken symbols (volume, pitch, speed, rhythm, pause, tone, tone, accent, etc.)
Audio (audio symbols played through multimedia)
Audio music

In addition, teachers use different modalities in different teaching links. Taking videos 1 and 2 of the same class as an example, summarizing the teaching links of the two teachers, you can see the modal usage of different teaching links (see Table 2). In the organizational teaching stage, teachers can complete the tasks of this stage through spoken language, so the spoken language mode is mainly used to cooperate with the teacher's body language. As a language point lecture, the introduction, explanation and practice of language points are the most important links. Therefore, in these links, a lot of other modalities will be used to complete the construction of meaning together with the spoken modalities, and the diversity of modalities is reflected. Most obvious.

Table 2 Multimodal Discourse Distribution in Different Teaching Links

Modal choice		
Teacher 1		Teacher 2
Organizational teaching	Spoken mode, body mode	Spoken mode, body mode
Language point introduction	Spoken language mode, body mode (smiling expressions, actions, ask students to speak sentences with language points), modal combinations based on PPT (text, text, animation, color highlighting)	Spoken mode, body mode (smiling expression) Modal combination (text, picture), text card based on PPT
Language point drill	Spoken language mode, body mode (smiling expression, expected look, gesture, action display), modal combination based on PPT (video, audio, picture, animation, text, font bold), physical, environment modal	Spoken modes, posture modes (expressions, gestures), modal combinations (pictures, text, animation) based on PPT, environmental modes
Summary	Spoken modalities, modal combinations based on PPT (pictures, animations, text)	Spoken modalities, modal combinations based on PPT (pictures, animations, text)
Homework	Spoken mode, body mode	Spoken mode, body mode

##### (2) Coordination among multiple modes in Chinese as a Foreign Language classroom

In teaching, the choice of various modes is not random, but is subject to various factors such as

teaching goals, teaching content, teaching media, teaching context, and so on. Zhang Delu believes that the dominant modal choice factors in foreign language teaching are the scope of discourse, the discourse style and the tone of discourse. [1] In teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the scope of discourse is the content of teaching. Express and communicate with laymen. [12] This should be the most important factor restricting the modal choice of teachers, and Kress and Van Leeuwen pointed out that this is the only factor [2]. The tone of discourse mainly includes the characteristics of teachers and students, their hobbies, teachers' grasp of language points, students' original knowledge reserve and language expression level, etc.; the discourse mode is reflected in teaching equipment, teaching links and communication channels. Constrained by these factors, in general, the spoken language mode in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language should be the main mode adopted by teachers, but other modes (status, text, pictures, video, animation, color, kind, environment, etc.) play a very important role in the realization of teacher discourse and the achievement of teaching goals. It can be seen from Table 2 that in different teaching links, the modes of choice for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language are not the same, but generally speaking are mainly spoken modes, and other modes provide the background and complement each other as a supplement to the main mode. Effectively achieve communication goals. During the teaching process, the spoken language mode determines the entire teaching process [13]. Especially in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, students first need to listen to the teacher to express correct and decent sentences, and receive for themselves through the auditory mode. At the same time, the spoken modal is the glue that runs through the other modalities. Along with the teacher's spoken language, the rhythm, re-reading, pause, tone, intonation, and other modes of spoken language have become important means for teachers to express important information, which strengthens and optimizes spoken words. In line with the teacher's words, the teacher pays great attention to the use of smiling expressions, listening ears, expectant gaze, etc. These posture modes can make students feel kind and relaxed, and improve teaching efficiency through interpersonal meaning. Secondly, the environmental mode determines the space environment of the entire teaching. In Chinese as a foreign language classrooms, teachers usually overlook the students in front of the teachers. This spatial arrangement highlights the authority of the teachers. However, the teacher does not always stand in front of the classroom. By moving his position, especially in the practice session, he often walks into the middle of the students, which can shorten the distance with the students. In addition, with the development of multimedia technology, the use of multimedia courseware has become a common phenomenon. "Although the foreign language classroom is not a real social communication environment, multimedia technology can provide it with as realistic a context as possible" [9], which can provide strong support for the spoken language modality, which is also currently widely used in foreign Chinese classrooms to PPT is a very important reason for the combined mode of the carrier. PPT can provide multi-modal stimuli such as text, accompanying text symbols, music, pictures, videos, etc., provide real scenes through pictures and videos, through the size of font size, different fonts, color distinction, framed, bold, and other methods Strengthen the important information, and through the use of animation effects, accompanied by the teacher's spoken language, text, pictures, etc. appear on the screen in a timely manner, which effectively strengthened and supplemented the spoken language modality.

(3) There are differences in the use of multimodality between novice teachers and experienced teachers

Through the annotation analysis of the multi-modal discourse of 4 foreign Chinese teachers, on the whole, novice teachers and experienced teachers have no significant difference in the diversity of modal choices. Foreign Chinese teachers will consciously choose the spoken language mode Multiple modes such as posture, posture mode, and combination mode with PPT as the carrier are used to teach to better achieve the teaching effect. This is also reflected in Table 2. However, novice teachers are obviously inferior to experienced teachers in terms of proficiency and effectiveness in modal selection. For example, by observing two novice teachers in the video, they found that they are basically standing in front of the classroom for the entire lesson, and the range of their movement is limited to the distance between the blackboard and the first row of students, even if it

is an exercise activity that is completely performed by the students, The teacher's mobile position also determines that he pays more attention to the situation of the first two rows of students. In contrast, skilled teachers are much more flexible: they often move between the blackboard and the first two rows during the lesson, and their eyes and gestures often take into account the students in the back of the classroom. Take a tour, lean over and listen to the students' discussions with affection, and close the relationship between the two sides through the distance with the students. In the video 3, the teacher explains the word "adjustment", which is more in line with the situation of the same sex students in the class, let the male and female students exchange seats, let everyone understand the meaning of the word in the classroom scenario, and ask questions in the homeopathy How is the adjustment? "To enable students to master its usage. It can be seen that the use of environmental modalities by skilled teachers is higher. Secondly, novice teachers have a certain gap with experienced teachers in terms of multimodal coordination and synergy. Facts show that experienced teachers pay more attention to supplementing and strengthening their discourse through various modalities, such as the use of intonation, volume, and expression changes to highlight important knowledge points, and in order to allow students to acquire relevant language skills for communication, they also Will consciously carry out multifaceted and multiple enhancements to the teaching content. For example, when the teacher in the video 1 explained the "Ba" sentence, he asked him "What is this? Where is the bag now? What did the teacher do?" While instructing the students to say the correct sentence ("The teacher hung the bag on the wall.") At this point, the spoken and auditory modes are the main modes, and the posture mode (such as the teacher's action display) provides background information as a supplement. Then the teacher designed the question "Does the teacher put the bag on the table?" Naturally leading to the negative form of the word "put". After the students read it, the sentence was played out via PPT, and the negative word "Not" was animated to highlight its position in the sentence, and the teacher's spoken language visually attracted the students' attention. Subsequently, the teacher guided the students to speak the correct sentences through two videos and two action demonstrations. The characters in the videos were all students in the class, and the actions they made were common actions in daily life. People and things are familiar to students, which in a way becomes a further enhancement of language expression. In contrast, novice teachers need to improve in multimodal collaboration. This manifests itself in:

1) When choosing a body mode, the use of body language cannot be effectively matched with the spoken mode. For example, the teacher in video 4 shakes his body randomly while waiting for the students to answer the questions. Neither teacher used emoticons, intonation, volume, or rhythm to emphasize important knowledge. One of the teachers had a relatively heavy accent, which was not conducive to students learning standard Mandarin.

2) When using PPT combined mode, the design is not rigorous enough. Although the two novice teachers in the survey both used PPT, they showed a certain arbitrariness in the organization of the PPT combination mode: the page layout of the PPT was not considered as a whole, and the selection of pictures was not typical, but only accompanied by the teachers. Spoken language shows written discourse and rarely highlights important information.

Third, the amount of discourse of novice teachers in the classroom is significantly larger than that of novice teachers. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is different from ordinary teaching. As mentioned above, as a second language teaching, it is the primary teaching goal for students to use Chinese to make correct and fluent expressions. Kress and Van Leeuwen believe that teaching should be a procedure [2]. To help students master the skills, this requires students to speak in the classroom for teaching Chinese as a foreign language to improve their ability to express Chinese. The reason why the principle has become the first principle in Chinese as a foreign language classroom. And by counting the classroom talk time of the four teachers, we see a difference.

Table 3 Analysis of The Talk Time of Four Teachers of Chinese as a Foreign Language

	Total class time	Teacher talk	Teacher talk time as a percentage of class time	
Video 1	39 minutes 20 seconds	11 minutes 43 seconds	29.8%	
Video 2	39 minutes 54 seconds	23 minutes 56 seconds	60.0%	

Video 3	85 seconds	29 minutes 20 seconds	34.5%	
Video 4	44 minutes and 1 second	21 minutes 31 seconds	48.9%	

Generally speaking, the proportion of students 'drills and teachers' explanations is: "For comprehensive courses, students 'practice time must not be less than 60%; for oral courses, students' practice time cannot be less than 70%" [14]. It can be seen from the above table that the speaking time of two experienced teachers generally accounts for about 30% of the classroom time, which is in line with this proportion, while the speaking time of two novice teachers in the classroom is significantly higher than that of the experienced teachers. Although the speed of each teacher's speech will be different, this data shows to a large extent that novice teachers have a larger amount of speech in the classroom than experienced teachers. This means that in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, experienced teachers will be more concise in class explanations, can better change roles, provide more opportunities for students to express their speech, and make them the senders of spoken and auditory modalities. Not more as a recipient, and novice teachers need to improve in this regard.

## 5. Conclusion

Teachers' multi-modal discourse is the result of the integration of multiple symbol resources, which can complement the advantages of multiple symbols and optimize the expression effect. In Chinese as a foreign language classroom, the multi-modality of teacher discourse is the overall development trend. An analysis of the multi-modal discourse of 4 foreign Chinese teachers' classrooms shows that Chinese teachers can use multi-modal discourses extensively in the classroom, and choose and cooperate with the modality according to the actual teaching content. There are still some gaps between proficient and effective proficiency, the synergy of multimodal discourse, and the amount of discourse with skilled teachers. Of course, there is a certain relationship between the choice of modalities and the teacher's teaching style and teaching ideas. Different course types and specific teaching goals will also show differences in the choice of modalities. The limited number of corpora used in research will also affect The research results, therefore, the research in this paper needs to be further deepened and optimized.

## 6. Notes

① The teacher's discourse time counted here does not include the common discourse time of teachers and students (the teacher and the student say a sentence containing the language point together)

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