

Research on the Use of Teachers' Body Language in Oral Classroom Teaching for Learners of Chinese as a Second Language

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Abstract. Based on the previous research, this article analyzes and studies the use of the teacher's body language in different stages through the collection, analysis, identification and classroom observation of a large number of materials, and finds that the body language used by Chinese teachers in different stages has similar and different characteristics. The primary stage students lack the overall cognitive ability of Chinese, the intermediate stage students have certain cognitive ability to Chinese, and the advanced stage students' cognitive ability to Chinese is more obvious.

Introduction

Body language is a common language phenomenon in non-verbal communication. In Chinese, it is also called "gesture language, including eye contact, gestures, posture, smile, facial expression, body contact, distance between speakers, speech volume, time concept, and the use of space, and so on[2]. Albert Mehrabian gives such a formula: a complete message = body language 55%+ voice 38%+ content 7%. It can be seen that body language plays an important role in communication. In recent years, the study of body language in China is more inclined to teaching Chinese as a foreign language, however, the empirical study is still relatively weak. In order to make the body language widely and efficiently used in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, more research is still needed.

A Survey of Teachers' Use of Body Language in Oral Teaching at the Primary, Intermediate, and Advanced Stages

The Purpose of the Investigation. The author regards the Chinese teachers of international students at the primary and intermediate stages as the focus of observation and the Chinese teachers of international students at the advanced stage as assistant observation objects, thereby investigating the characteristics of body language in Chinese teaching at the primary, intermediate, and advanced stages

The method of the Investigation. The classroom observation method refers to record the situation of teachers using body language in different stages in class. The contents of the record mainly include the number of times the Chinese teachers using body language in the classroom at different stages, and the classroom performance of the students is observed in conjunction with the use of body language by the teacher.

The Object of Investigation

Table 1 The basic situation of the object of investigation

The object of investigation	3 primary oral teachers			3 intermediate oral teachers			1 advanced oral teachers
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
Gender	female	male	female	female	male	female	female
Professional title of Teachers	Contract teacher	lecturer	lecturer	lecturer	assistant	Postgraduate	Contract teacher

Table 1 is the basic situation table of 7 oral teachers at the primary, intermediate and advanced stages. In this classroom observation, the 7 teachers are teaching students of non-professional Chinese classes. The author uses T1, T2, T3... to represent 7 teachers respectively. It is a non-professional Chinese study class, so the student number in class is small, and it belongs to a small class. The number of students is usually around 10-15.

Investigation and Analysis. In this classroom observation, the teaching objects of 7 oral teaching teachers are different, but in the use of body language, there are some of the same characteristics. In Table 3, through five weeks of classroom observation, the author counts the average number of teachers using body language and the level of students' participation in the teachers' one class hour at different stages of the oral classes:

Table 2 The statistical table of the average number of using body language in the teacher's classroom and the classroom participation of the students

Body language	Primary oral class			Intermediate oral class			Advanced oral class
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
Expression language(joy, anger, sorrow and happiness)	18	15	16	12	14	17	15
Eyesight language (gazing, looking around)	26	20	24	22	20	25	18
Body language (signs of limbs)	30	34	32	28	25	28	22
Personal space and body distance (number of teachers moving to students)	30	28	25	20	23	19	10
Student participation in class (very active, active, less active, not active)	very active	active	active	Less active	very active	active	Less active

The first one is the expression language analysis. Expression language mainly refers to the tendency of emotions and attitudes revealed by facial activities. The representation of all face activities belongs to the expression category [2]. The number of times in Table 2 shows that the number of facial expressions used by the primary, intermediate and advanced teachers is roughly the same. See Table 3 for details:

Table 3 The usage of expression language

Expression language	Primary oral class			Intermediate oral class			Advanced oral class
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
Total number	18	15	16	12	14	17	15
The number of smiles (proportion of the total number)	11 (61%)	10 (66%)	10 (62.5%)	8 (67%)	10 (71%)	9 (53%)	8 (53%)
The number of other use	7	5	6	4	4	8	7

The second one is the eyesight language analysis. The eyesight language of the researchers' statistics includes the teacher's looking around and gazing. The teacher's looking around is to look around the whole class. The teacher's gazing is the teacher's attention to individual students. From the statistical data of Table 2, we can see that the number of eyesight language used by teachers at the primary and intermediate stages is roughly the same, and the number of use at the advanced stage is slightly lower than the primary and intermediate stage. Through observation and analysis, statistics are shown in Table 4:

Table 4 The usage of eyesight language

Eyesight language	Primary oral class			Intermediate oral class			Advanced oral class
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
Total number	26	20	24	22	20	25	18
The number of gazing (proportion of the total number)	18 (69%)	14 (70%)	17 (71%)	14 (64%)	14 (64%)	19 (76%)	7 (38%)
The number of asking students	15	10	14	12	10	16	3

Firstly, through observation, it is found that teachers' use of eyesight language in questioning can encourage students to answer questions. Especially for students who are weak at the primary stage of Chinese, the teacher's eye contact can encourage them to speak. Secondly, teachers and students' eye contact during questioning can enable students to concentrate and think carefully. Finally, if the students answer the question, the teachers give the eye hint to the answer of the wrong question, and the students may find the mistake in time and correct it. If the teachers do not give the suggestion and directly negate the answer, the students' enthusiasm for learning may be confused to some extent.

The third one is the body language analysis. The body language studied by the researchers includes ancillary movements performed by the limbs. In the process of consulting the relevant papers and books, many scholars have found that the Chinese level of the intermediate and advanced stage students has been improved, and the body language can withdraw from the Chinese class. However, according to the statistics in Table 3 and the personal observations of the researchers, it is found that this is not the case.

First, the researchers find from the data analysis of the table that there is no big gap between the number of teachers using the body language at primary and intermediate level, and the number of teachers using the body language at the advanced stage is only slightly reduced. From this we can see that the intermediate and advanced stages also need the help of body language. When the primary level learners' Chinese language foundation is relatively weak, the teachers use physical aids to express simple vocabulary or Chinese pronunciation in order to promote students' better

understanding, such as some classroom instructions, such as “sit down please”, “stand up” and so on, therefore, their number of use will be higher. However, according to the researchers’ observations, it is found that the number of words in the text is not reduced by the body language at the intermediate and advanced stages. For example, at the primary stage, when the teacher “kicks”, he will use his feet to assist and make “kick” action. But at the advanced stage, we will also learn the other similar words. In the advanced class that the researchers have observed, there was a teacher explaining the word “passing the ball” which Chinese often say when playing football, but the teacher also made a “kick” action. Therefore, with the increase of vocabulary difficulty, it is more important to make use of body language flexibly and appropriately in order to make students understand easier. The senior class teacher observed by the researchers used the body language to explain the “suffer a disastrous decline” “front chest sticking back”, “red in the face and fuming”, “look cheerful”, and “the hungry stomach is flat”, and it has made a good effect. Therefore, the use of body language is equally important at the primary, intermediate and advanced stages, but the intention of the primary stage is not only to explain the meaning of the words, but also to activate the atmosphere of the class, while the intention of the middle and advanced stages tends to explain the meaning of the word.

The fourth one is the analysis of personal space and physical distance between teachers and students. The so-called personal space and physical distance refers to the space or distance maintained between one person and another [2]. The researchers here are looking at the distance between the teacher and the student. The number of statistics is the number of times the teacher moving toward the student when the teacher and the student communicate.

From Table 3, it can be seen that at the primary and intermediate stages, the number of teachers moving to students is similar. And according to classroom observations, the researchers find that during the questioning process, teachers at the primary and intermediate levels move toward the students. On the one hand, this kind of behavior can increase students’ attention. On the other hand, moving appropriately to students can bring students closer to the students’ psychological distance. Therefore, the enthusiasm in the classroom is very high. At the advanced stage, the number of teachers moving towards the students is very few. The teacher who was observed by the researcher did not move very much to the students, so the enthusiasm of the class was not very high. From this it can be seen that at any Chinese learning stage, teachers should keep proper physical distance between students. When conducting the overall explanation, teachers should stand in the position of commanding the whole class. When questioning students, teachers come to students. These are all good ways to improve classroom effectiveness.

The Results of the Investigation. According to the observation results, it is found that the number of body language usage is proportional to the class enthusiasm of students. The use of body language is necessary in any teaching stage. It is not to say that at the basic stage of the student’s weak foundation, the body language is used as a bridge of communication, and at the middle and advanced stages, students master the basic reading and writing, then we can give up the use of body language. In fact, using body language is an art. If the TCSL teacher (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language teacher) can use it effectively, it will bring unexpected results to the classroom.

The seven teachers observed by the researchers all used body language in the classroom and achieved ideal teaching results. In the teaching of language elements, the seven teachers who were observed mostly used vocabulary teaching. However, as the class observed by the researchers is oral class, the content of the class is based on the contents of the textbook, and there are not many cases involved in the teaching of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and Chinese characters with body language, so there is no detailed record of the use of body language in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and Chinese characters. This is the deficiency of this study.

Relevant Teaching Suggestions

In order to make the results of the study better used in different stages of Chinese teaching, the researchers refer to various literature and carefully observe the teaching. According to the results of the observation, the following suggestions are put forward to the teachers who will or have been

engaged in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

Flexible Use. Body language is widely used at any stage, but with different intentions. At the zero starting point and the primary stage, the students' cognitive ability in Chinese is poor. In order to cultivate students' enthusiasm for Chinese learning and to help both sides understand each other, teachers may use body language more frequently. However, in the intermediate and advanced stages, the body language is also very important, especially in the vocabulary teaching. If the body language is used properly, it can often achieve twice the result with half the effort. As a Chinese teacher, it is necessary to have the ability to use the body language flexibly.

Acculturation. From a cross cultural perspective, The groups faced by the TCSL teachers are the Chinese learners from different countries. They have different cultural backgrounds, so when using body language, teachers should take cultural factors into consideration. As the disseminator of language and culture, the TCSL teachers are also the image ambassadors of the country. They should not only possess a profound cultural accomplishment, but also have the ability to deal with problems and solve conflicts flexibly and tactfully. In addition, the body language does not have a set of symbols with definite meaning, so there is ambiguity in the process of using it. If the teachers do not understand students' culture, do not abuse the teaching of body language.

Carefully Watch What Sb is Doing and Saying. Finally, TCFL teachers must learn to observe students' emotional changes in the course of teaching. Some students will be disgusted with the frequent use of body language for teachers, so at this time, teachers should pay attention to changing the teaching strategy to achieve the targeted use and achieve the best teaching effect.

Conclusions

The efficient use of teaching methods is the difficulty in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. By observing the application of the body language of oral teachers in the primary, intermediate and advanced stages and classroom effect, this paper has a certain understanding of the teachers' use of body language. On this basis, the author provides some own teaching methods, strategies and reflections, hoping to provide some suggestions for the teachers who are engaged in teaching Chinese as a foreign language or the scholars who have doubts in the use of the body language in the Chinese class.

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