

Probes Into Application of Multi-media Technology in Teaching Chinese as the Second Language Acquisition Class*

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The multi-media teaching method refers to using computer as a teaching assistant in the teaching Chinese as the second language (TCSL) class. The purpose of employing multi-media technology is to encourage students' class participation, giving them explicit and specific impression of abstract contents and cultivating their intuitive grasp of linguistic points. Based on the current study of usage of multi-media technology in class teaching, this paper attempts to investigate mainly on its positive influence of multi-media technology in teaching.

Keywords: multi-media technology, second language acquisition, active class participation

Introduction

According to Rod Ellis (1985), Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is used as a general term that embraces both untutored (or “naturalistic”) acquisition and tutored (or “classroom”) acquisition. Additionally, the study process for learners of the second language in class is a conscious study process with clear learning purposes and proper instruction by teachers. Learners may practice and imitate repeatedly under teachers' guide and instructions until full mastery of phonetic and grammatical points of the target language (JIANG, 1999). As Krashen (1985) claimed that creating a “language-rich environment” for second language learners can stimulate organs in brain to function autonomously. Therefore, teachers are expected to create such an linguistic environment through appealing way which can put students immerse in.

Since above characteristics of SLA, teachers should pay more attention to the impart knowledge especially grammatical points and cultural background information of the target language rather than the language itself. Consequently, presenting knowledge in an alluring way may effectively capture students' attention, combining entertainment with learning in the meantime. Employment of multi-media technology may be beneficial to class teaching to achieve corresponding teaching goals. The effective assisting teaching methods are as follows: powerpoint slideshows, videos, pictures, website, songs and self-study software or platforms, and so on. The aim of this paper is to focus on the positive influence of technology on class teaching Chinese as the second language (TCSL).

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Benefits of Using Multi-media Technology in Class Teaching

Emphasizing the Difficult Points and Focal Points of Teaching Contents

Apparently, every teaching plan intends to attain corresponding goals within allocated time as requested. To a large extent, how to present knowledge (especially those tedious grammar points and related cultural background information) in an attractive way becomes a key issue for all the linguistic teachers during their class teaching. Application of multi-media technological tool can be advantageous to emphasize on the teaching contents themselves in a clear fashion. For instance, given a clear layout of each lesson contents with bullet points in slideshows, students may quickly acquire the essential issues of the lesson within a few minutes.

LIU Ying-kai (1989) pointed out that enhancing students' cultural awareness may stimulate their incentive and interests of understanding other ethnics and countries, laying a solid foundation of learning its language. A demonstrative example would be introducing of a traditional Chinese festival (Mid-Autumn Day) by playing a culture video with English subtitles to students, combined with some related pictures. The author compared the two methods with/without introductory video in two parallel classes, the class with video memorizes the festival after one week, while the other does not during the review lesson. This representation way of abstract and unfamiliar cultural elements creates an environment in which overcomes cultural barriers for international students.

Motivating Students' Class Involvement and Harmonizing the Class Environment

Due to the teaching costs and the limited number of qualified teachers, the majority of universities tend to teach Chinese in a larger class size (normally from 10-24 people for each class) (WANG & YU, 2008). Linguistic teachers are expected to invite more students to participate in class learning activities even under such unfavorable environment.

If teachers impart knowledge always as the oral interpretation or narrative performance in class, the majority of students may get drowsiness or boredom no less than 20 minutes. As a result, one of the main tasks of teaching is encouraging students' class involvement, particularly those students who are lack of study drive. Employment of some modern technology to seize students' attention, such as playing a Chinese song covering new vocabulary in the lesson or playing a movie clip with related content, can present in-class and extra knowledge in an attractive way. Hence, it may lead to strengthening students' information collection capacity and comprehensive study capacity. Moreover, application of technology can practise students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, maximizing the potentials of students' memorizing ability.

Once students receive the message in a diversified and enchanting way, it may stimulate their study enthusiasm. In the meantime, it can also avoid repeated and mechanical memory of grammar points or vocabulary, leading to intuitive grasp of target language.

For those students who need relatively longer time with information process, usage of multi-media technology may present explicit and concrete knowledge, thus can give them more opportunities to participate in class, balancing the schedule of quick learner and the slow, harmonizing the class environment.

Shifting Teacher-Oriented Study Mode Into Student-Centered Study Mode

The traditional role of teachers is leading students to focus on the teaching content and teaching focal points under teachers' guidance with limited students' response. One disadvantage of this conventional teaching mode

is students' insufficient study feedback and ability of autonomous discovering students' study difficulties. By contrast, the effective way of learning is students' active involvement in the process of autonomic learning. This new study mode does not neglect teachers' instructing role in teaching, but lead students to discover their study difficulties, similarities, and differences between target language and their mother tongue, rectify their mistakes through employment of relevant technological methods. For instance, designing a linguistic game after showing a movie clip of Chinese acupuncture therapy, required students to use and explain language points learned in this lesson. During the game, teachers can gain corresponding students' feedback of mastery, thus abstract study points can impart to students more easily and smoothly. Teachers may design the teaching activities with immediate response from a student-centered angle. Teaching results must be based on the students' class performance as a method (LIU, 2012).

Conclusion

In China, teaching Chinese as a second language has its unique characteristics. Firstly, a normal size of each class is usually comprised of 10-24 people, which determines fewer opportunities to communicate with teachers about to what extent they receive and master the linguistic points during the class. Secondly, tedious grammatical rules and complex Chinese characters may require more captivating way to present and explain, followed by the corresponding practices to check students' feedback during the class teaching. Therefore, application of multi-media technology in an appropriate way could be favorable for capturing students' attention and receiving students' feedback within short time.

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