



A Study on the Synergy of Different Modes in MOOC for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Guided by the theoretical framework of dynamic multimodal discourse analysis, this study examines the synergy among different modes in the multimodal discourse of MOOC for TCFL (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language). For this purpose, this study has been carried out using qualitative research methods to analyze the video of HSK Standard Course Level 1 --- Lesson 1 in *Confucius Institutes Online* from the perspective of the context of culture, the context of situation and the synergy between various modes. The results of this study show that on the one hand, in order to achieve different communicative goals, teachers will choose different modes of multimodal discourse communication. On the other hand, in the whole process of communication, auditory mode is the main mode, which is always in the foreground. The visual mode formed by teachers will be in the foreground only when they complement the auditory mode and form the complementary relationship. However, in the process of presentation, auditory mode and the visual mode formed by background images are both in the foreground and play a significant role in helping students understand in the teaching.

Key words: Modes; MOOC; Multimodal discourse; Synergy; TCFL

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, driven by the development of modern science and technology, TCFL teaching has broken through the traditional teaching mode due to the significant improvement of its importance. Learning from the research in computer science, psychology, communication science and other fields, Teachers of TCFL adopt new methods and tools --- MOOC for teaching. "Multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of communication through language, image, sound, action and other means and symbolic resources by using multiple senses such as hearing, vision and touch" (Zhang, 2009). The MOOC for TCFL is of a strong multimodality, teachers' gestures, body postures, facial expressions, eyes, spatial layout, as well as multimedia courseware, network distance teaching, resource sharing and other modern scientific and technological media all play a role in the TCFL.

The study of multimodal discourse mainly focuses on the static forms such as images, symbols and charts from the perspective of functional linguistics. Kress van Leeuwen (2001) studied the relationship between modes and media, especially the phenomenon of multimodal phenomenon expressing meaning regularly, including visual image, color grammar, newspaper layout design and the role of different media, etc.. Royce (2002) analyzed the multimodal text Water Cycle Diagram and Text extracted from the introductory textbook of environmental science and multimodal coordination in second language classroom teaching. Zhang Delu (2009) explored the establishment of a comprehensive framework for multimodal speech analysis based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics. In recent years,

some scholars have also analyzed dynamic multimodal discourse. For example, Zhang Delu and Yuan Yanyan (2011) took the multimodal discourse of TV weather forecast as an example to study the synergy of different modes of dynamic multimodal discourse. Wu Ting (2017) conducted a multimodal discourse coherence study on two winning videos of the national foreign language micro course competition.

However, Compared with the static multimodal research, the research of dynamic multimodal discourse is still insufficient and needs to be further expanded. In this paper, taking MOOC for TCFL as an example, we study the relationship between various modes in dynamic video, hoping to have a positive impact on MOOC for TCFL.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

On the basis of systemic functional linguistics, Zhang Delu (2009) proposed a comprehensive theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis, which consists of four levels: (1) the level of context of culture (2) the level of context of situation (3) the content level and (4) the expression level. Referring to this comprehensive theoretical framework, Zhang Delu and Yuan Yanyan (2011) designed a dynamic multimodal discourse analysis framework. Aiming at analyzing the synergy of different modes in the multimodal discourse, this theoretical framework of dynamic multimodal discourse analysis is applied in this study, as shown in Figure 1.

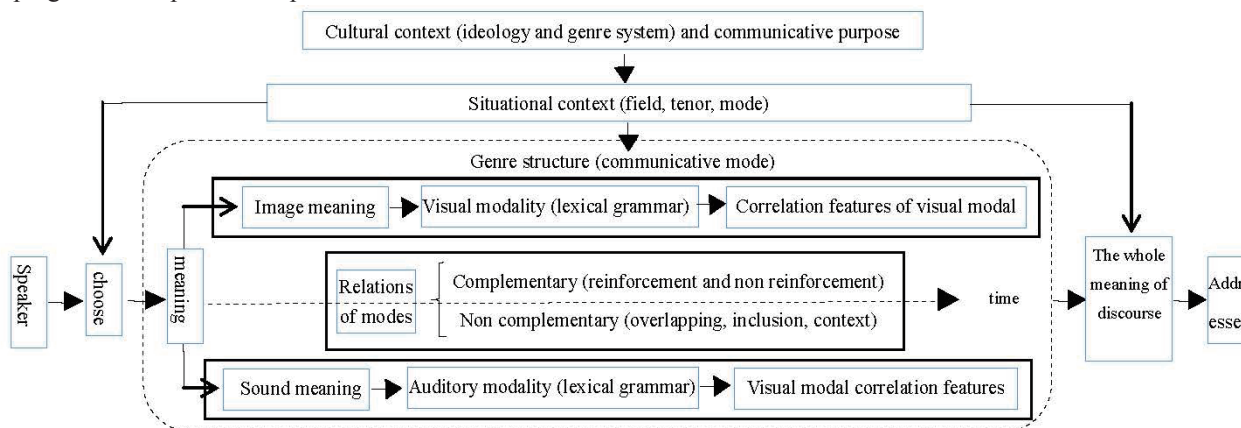


Figure 1
A framework of dynamic multimodal discourse analysis (Zhang & Yuan, 2011).

In a certain cultural context, subject to the domination of ideology and the restriction of genre system, the speaker should choose the meaning expressed according to the specific situation context (field, tenor, style) and communication purpose, and reflect it in a proper mode and genre structure. The selected meaning can be embodied by image, that is, by visual modality (lexical grammar), or by sound, that is, by auditory modality (lexical grammar). In the system selection, the most critical factor is to make good use of the relationship between different modes to make different modes cooperate with each other, so as to build the overall meaning of dynamic multimodal discourse. Because the meaning of different modes belongs to the same communication event, it needs to be integrated into one to have communication significance. This kind of synergy between modes is mainly manifested in the formal level of modes, that is, in the lexical and grammatical level. Zhang Delu (2009) classifies the relationship between multimodal discourse forms into two categories: complementary relationship (reinforcement and non reinforcement) and non complementary relationship (overlapping, inclusion and context). (Zhang & Yuan, 2011)

DATA AND METHOD

The dynamic data selected in this paper is the video of HSK Standard Course Level 1 in *Confucius Institutes Online* --- Lesson 1. Originally produced by the *Confucius Institutes Online*, the new online HSK Standard Course integrates educational information technology with international Chinese education, as well as establishes a standardized online Chinese education system satisfying both teaching and testing. There are many videos of TCFL. The reasons for choosing this material are as follows: on the one hand, the corpus we study should be a typical online teaching, that is to say the teaching goal should be more in line with the typical goal of MOOC Teaching. Based on the HSK Standard Course textbooks, this online course is designed for HSK Level 1, aiming to encourage the Chinese learners to learn Chinese in their fragmented time, the teaching goal of which is more in line with the typical goal of MOOC Teaching. On the other hand, in order to analyze the cooperative relationship among various modes comprehensively, we should try our best to choose the teaching video which is composed of auditory mode, visual mode, gesture and other modes. Each 10-minute session includes vocabulary, language points, text and exercise, which was designed in a professional way, supported with effective practice and

presented in a fun way. Lesson 1 of HSK Standard Course Level 1 teaches how to greet each other in China, therefore, the teacher will use more modes to achieve this goal.

Aiming at describing and analyzing the synergy of different modes in MOOC for TCFL, the analysis was conducted using the multimodal discourse analysis. In this paper, we use Zhang Delu's dynamic multimodal discourse analysis framework, mainly using qualitative research methods, to analyze the video of HSK Standard Course Level 1 --- Lesson 1 in *Confucius Institutes Online* from the perspective of the context of culture, the context of situation and the synergy between various modes.

The whole corpus is a video about 6 minutes and 27 seconds. For the convenience of analysis, we can segment the whole video according to Zhang Delu's segmentation criteria for dynamic multimodal discourse: (1) Discourse structure: the overall meaning of a discourse consists of several stages, each stage contains several steps, or sub units, so the minimum meaning unit of a discourse is realized by the image of the minimum unit of video segmentation. (2) Empirical significance: find out the

turning point that marks the change of the process, which marks the beginning of a new process, including its participants and situational factors. (3) Foregrounding features: These are the salient features of a text, so they should be considered. In image grammar, the unit of image component can be divided into image pixel, schema and image. The image element is the component of the schema, while the different schemata constitute the image that reflects an event. At the discourse level, each image realizes an event, a series of communication events form a plot, several plots can form a story, or a discourse. (Zhang & Yuan, 2011)

The genre structure of this video includes four stages (Lead-in, presentation, review and homework), which can be further divided into 11 specific steps, with 13 images in total: each stage can be divided into several steps, each step is a discourse structure unit, which can be divided into several images. Each image marks a text unit, a grammatical process and an information unit, as shown in Figure 2; the specific transcribing of 13 events (images) that make up the video recording is shown in Appendix A.

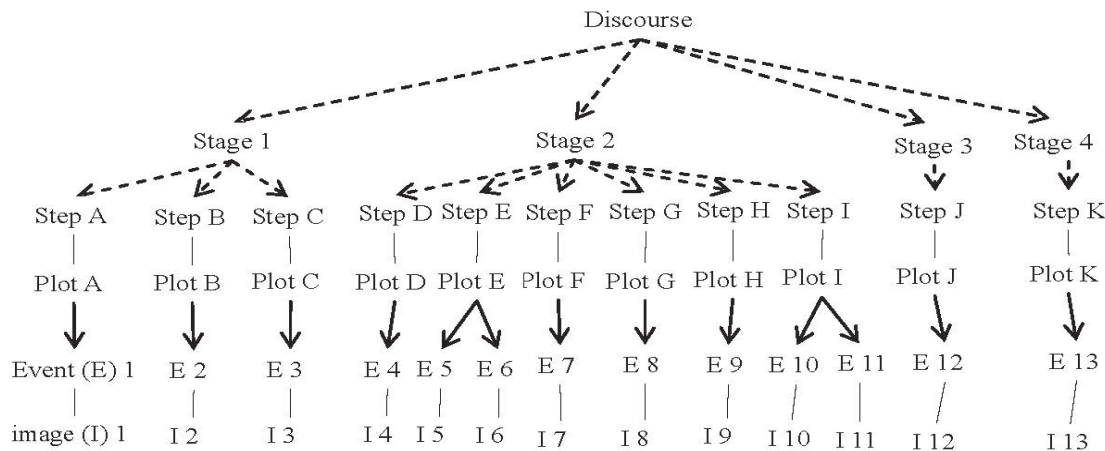


Figure 2
Video segmentation of HSK standard course level 1--- Lesson 1

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Context of Culture

The Context of Culture is the key level to make multimodal communication possible; including the ideology composed of human's thinking mode, life philosophy, living habits and all social potential rules, and the communicative procedure or structural potential that can realize this ideology. Cultural context determines the different stages and steps of communication that people adopt according to the different purposes of communication, that is, genre. The communicative purpose of a text is achieved by genre. (Zhang & Yuan, 2011)

In MOOC for TCFL, teachers mainly satate their opinions clearly and completely in the form of spoken language, with the help of words, images, body language and other means to a certain knowledge point, so as to help students understand Chinese language and culture.

At the beginning, TCFL only takes the form of classroom teaching. However, with the further development of science and technology and the need of language communication, people have realized the form of online teaching. This kind of teaching method takes the computer or mobile phone as the medium, integrates the picture, sound, text and color, and becomes one of the convenient and intuitive teaching methods. In online teaching, teachers should teach the learners knowledge accurately in a limited time. The teaching video selected in this paper is divided into four stages: lead in, presentation, review, home work.

a) Lead-in: the teacher shows students the beginning of the lesson, introduces China to arouse the students' interest and begins to teach Chinese

b) Presentation: the gestures of greeting; the teaching of “你好” ; the practice of “你好” ; the teaching of “您好” ; the teaching of “你们好” ; the key point of this lesson

c) Review: the review of “你好”, “您好” and “你们好”

d) Home work: the teacher reminds the audience that the lesson is over.

The Context of Situation

According to systemic functional linguistics, the context of situation consists of field, tenor and mode. Field refers to the activities involved in the text, i.e. what to do; tenor refers to the participants involved in the text, i.e. the roles and social relations of both sides of the communication; mode refers to the medium and channel of communication. In this video:

Field: Yu Miao’s teaching of HSK standard course level 1 --- Lesson1.

Tenor: the teachers of HSK standard course level 1, the students participating in this course and *Confucius Institute Online*.

Mode: *Confucius Institute Online* broadcast HSK standard course to the world in the form of network. Teacher dresses appropriately, speaks formally, and speaks at a moderate speed, using clear and fluent spoken language as auditory mode to transmit the sound meaning of the lesson. While expressing the theme mainly through oral form, it combines other modes such as image, text and gesture to complete the transmission of communicative meaning.

The Synergy of Different Modes in HSK Standard Course Level 1 --- Lesson 1

Analysis of the Synergy Between Modes

In this teaching video, visual mode and auditory mode are prominent. They cooperate with each other and give students enough input. Teacher will choose different modes of communication in different stages to achieve different communicative goals. Next, we analyze the coordination among different modes of the video according to different communication goals.

a) Communication mode at the beginning and the end (Event 1-3, Event12-13)

This is the communicative mode adopted at the beginning and the end of this lesson. The teacher uses oral English to teach courses, stands in place with body facing the students, hands crossed in front of the abdomen or left hand extended to the picture, eyes on students. Here, the auditory mode and the visual mode formed by the background images are the main modes, the visual mode formed by the background images has the contribution to the meaning of the auditory mode, both of them play an important role in arousing students’ interest. The visual mode formed by the teacher does not participate in the communication process, but it still appears as a mode, providing context information for the auditory mode. Therefore, the visual mode formed by the teacher is not complementary to the auditory mode.

b) Communication mode in presentation stage (Event 4-11)

This is the communication mode adopted by teacher when he teaches students, including the following two sub types:

In the process of questioning: Teacher uses spoken language to ask questions and stands in place, with body facing students, hands spread out or extended to students, eyes on students. At this time, the auditory mode is the main mode. The visual mode formed by the teacher has little contribution to the auditory mode, only indicating the pose of asking questions. The visual mode formed by the background images provides more detailed information for the auditory mode, and is a kind of reinforcement for the auditory mode.

In the process of knowledge teaching: Teacher uses spoken language to teach and stands in place, with body facing students. Teacher has different postures when teaching different knowledge points. When teaching how to say hello in China, the teacher’s hands and head changed their posture according to the teaching content, the teacher shakes hands, waves hands and nods (Event 4); when teaching the words “你好”, in order to facilitate understanding, the teacher divides a word into two words, and spreads out his hands to both sides respectively, and when combining the two words finally, he combines his hands (Event 5). In this process, the visual mode formed by teachers, the visual mode formed by background images and the auditory mode are indispensable. They complement each other to express the overall meaning of the communicator. Therefore, the relationship among the three modes belongs to the coordination strengthening relationship. Here, the auditory mode is the main mode. There is a strong complementary relationship between visual mode and auditory mode.

In the process of emphasizing: This is the communicative mode adopted by the teacher to remind students to pay attention to the language point. Teacher uses spoken language to teach and stands in place, with body facing students, hands crossed in front of the abdomen, eyes on students. The teacher says words with nods to emphasize the importance of the knowledge and promote memory efficiency for Students. Here, the auditory mode is the main mode. The auditory mode can not fully express its communicative purpose. The visual mode formed by the teacher and the visual mode formed by background images can strengthen the auditory mode. Therefore, the relationship between visual mode and auditory mode is enhanced complementarity.

Discussion on the Synergy Relationship between different modes

Through the analysis of teaching video, it can be seen that in the whole communication process, oral form is the main means of transmitting information, that is to say, auditory mode is always in the foreground position. This is determined by the linearization of auditory modes, and also in line with the characteristics of gradual information

acquisition. In the whole teaching process, the proportion of auditory mode in foreground alone is about 38%, the proportion of visual mode and auditory mode in foreground together is about 62%. Visual mode is mainly used as supplementary reinforcement or coordination of auditory mode. Sometimes hand gestures can also supplement and strengthen the auditory mode, but most of the time, the visual mode formed by the teacher and hand gestures does not make much contribution to the transmission of meaning. However, the visual mode formed by background images plays a significant role in helping students understand in the teaching, which is also the reason why the visual mode and the auditory mode are in the foreground position together in the online teaching process. It can also be seen from the analysis results that the synergy among modes is not arbitrary. If the auditory mode (spoken language) can complete the transmission of meaning, then other modes are not necessary. If the auditory mode can not fully express the speaker's information, the visual mode, gesture or facial expression will complement and strengthen the auditory mode.

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of the teaching video of MOOC for TCFL, this study finds that on the one hand, in order to achieve different communicative goals, teachers will choose different modes of multimodal discourse communication. On the other hand, we also find the relationship between the performance of different modes. In the whole process of communication, auditory mode is the main mode, which is always in the foreground. The visual mode formed by teachers will be in the foreground only when they complement the auditory mode and form

the complementary relationship. However, in the process of presentation, auditory mode and the visual mode formed by background images are in the foreground and play a significant role in helping students understand in the teaching.





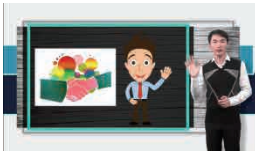




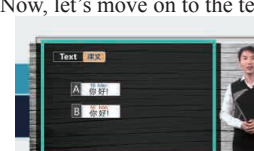

Multimodal discourse plays an important role in influencing students' understanding. Therefore, they deserve further study. This study further broadens the practical application of dynamic multimodal discourse analysis theory. It is hoped that it can enlighten the mode selection of teachers and improve the mutual cooperation among modes.






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APPENDIX A

Multimodal Text Transfer Table

Plot Event Expression of the modality Media	Linguistic		Non-linguistic				
	Teachers' oral English	Sight	Physical		Non physical		
			Head movements	Upper limbs and hand move-ments	Body movements	Lower limbs movements	Background image
					Upper left	Middle left	
					Title box	Teaching picture	Teaching content
Start	1	I'm very glad to meet you here. I'm one of your Chinese teachers. My name is Yyv Miao. From today on, I will teach you the HSK Standard course Level one, and take you into the amazing Chinese language world.					
The introduction of China	2	China is in the east of Asia, and it is one of the four Ancient civilizations in the world.					
Class Begin	3	Are you ready to talk with 1.4 billion people in Chinese? Let's start learning!					
The gestures of greeting	4	In china, we don't hug or kiss the cheek, we usually shack hands, wave hands or just nod as greeting.					
The teaching of "你好"	5	When you meet someone for the first time and want to say hello, you can say "你好". "你" means you "好" means good, fine. "你好" together means hello.					
Practice of "你好"	6	Now, let's move on to the text.					
	7	So, when you check in in the hotel, What can you say to the people at the reception? Yes, you can say "你好". And he or she will say "你好" back to you.					

Plot Event Expression of the modality Media	Linguistic		Physical			Non-linguistic		
	Teachers' o r a l English	Sight	H e a d m o v e - m e n t s	U p p e r l i m b s a n d h a n d m o v e - m e n t s	B o d y m o v e - m e n t s	L o w e r l i m b s m o v e - m e n t s	Non physical Background image	
							U p p e r l e f t T i t l e b o x	M i d d l e l e f t T e a c h i n g p i c t u r e
								And when you first meet an elder people or you want to show respect, it's better to greet by “您好”.
The teaching of “您好”								
								If you meet more than one people, you can change “你” to the plural form “你们”.
The teaching of “你们好”								
								We can use this structure to greet others. And the pronouns we have learned today are you (singular) “你”, you (singular in a polite form) “您”, you (plural) “你们”.
Key point								
								Now, let's move on to the text. Look at this picture, there is an elder person on the right, so how do we greet him? Yes, it's “您好”. and on the left, there are two people, so how do we greet them? Yes, it's “你们好”. Very good.
								
								Today, we have learned how to greet Chinese people by three ways, “你好”, “您好” and “你们好”.
Review “你好”, “您好” and “你们好”								
								Why don't you surprise your Chinese friends by greeting them in Chinese? And tell them you start learning the Chinese language? Good luck and good bye. Hope to see you next time.
The end								