

# *The Application of Strategies of Teachers' Talk in Social Work Teaching: the Perspective of Multi-Modal Discourse Analysis*

**Nana Zheng**

*Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Nanjing, China*

**Keywords:** Teachers' talk, Multi-modal discourse analysis, Social ability

**Abstract:** In classroom learning, teachers' talk is an important tool for teachers to organize their teaching activities and for students to acquire social work ability. It is not only a means for teachers to implement teaching plans, but also an important way for students' ability input. Multi-modal discourse analysis analyzes multimodal social symbols and their relations, meanings, characteristics and functions. It is of great significance to conduct the research on the application of multimodal discourse analysis theory to social work teaching. Based on the theory of multimodal discourse analysis, the paper explores the application of teachers' talk in college Social work teaching in China. The purpose of the study is to understand the current situation and development trend of multi-modal discourse research in college Social work teaching in China, and to provide suggestions for the construction of teachers' talk.

## **1. Introduction**

Teachers' talk plays an important role in classroom teaching and social work ability because it is not only a tool for teachers to effectively implement teaching plans, but also the main source of comprehensible target language input for learners of social work students (Barcelona, 2000). Teachers use their language to control and promote what happens in classrooms. The quantity and quality of teachers' talk will affect or even determine the success or failure of classroom teaching. If used properly, teachers' talk can not only promote the language communication between teachers and students or between students, but also stimulate more students to participate in classroom activities. A large number of studies have shown that active classroom participation, whether verbal or nonverbal, has a positive effect on second ability. However, it can be seen from relevant studies that some teachers' talk becomes a tool to control the classroom and classroom interaction process is largely ignored. Teachers' questions, explanations or comments account for the majority of classroom discourse. Teachers decide the content of the class discussion and the order of the speech in classrooms (Musolff, 2016).

Social work teaching in China has been following the traditional teacher-centered mode for many years, and teachers have an absolute advantage in classroom teaching. Researchers from China found that 65-90% of class time are occupied by teachers, while students have little chance to participate in classroom activities and express their opinions. It seems that the proportion of teacher

talk does not fit in with the teaching goal of “taking students as the center” and cultivating students' communicative competence (Zhanzi, 2003). Of course, we need to consider many other factors, such as the type of discourse, teaching objectives and so on.

Multi-modal discourse analysis (MDA) analyzes the relationship, meaning, characteristics and functions of multimodal language symbols. Meaning is not only conveyed by language, but also has discourse meaning through body language, audio-visual images, pictures and other non-verbal forms. Therefore, the analysis of verbal and nonverbal modes of discourse is gradually emerging (Bateman et al. 2017). Based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics, the construction of multimodal discourse analysis framework is becoming increasingly significant. In recent years, many studies have applied MDA to the analysis of classroom teachers' talk. Teachers and students make full use of various information transmission channels to transmit information to achieve teaching objectives. It is of great significance to increase the research on the application of MDA to college Social work teaching. This paper aims to understand the current situation and development trend of multimodal discourse research in college Social work teaching in China, and to promote social work teaching in the context of multimodality.

## 2. Reviews

As a relatively independent and cutting-edge academic research category, MDA, emerging in the 1990s, refers to the process of communication in which people use visual, listening, touching, tasting, empty and other senses to communicate and obtain information through various symbolic resources such as language, sound, image and action. In 1977, R. Barthes, a western scholar, published his paper “Rhetoric of the Images”, which pioneered multimodal discourse analysis. In the 1990s, the new London Group, composed of 11 linguists, combined multimodal discourse analysis with language teaching and put forward the concept of “multiliteracy” for the first time. The research on MDA in China started in early 2000s. MDA was introduced into China in 2003. After more than 10 years of theoretical development, Chinese scholars have applied MDA to language teaching and achieved fruitful results. MDA based college Social work teaching breaks through the limitations of traditional teaching and creates a vivid three-dimensional ability environment for students. These attempts provide students with multi symbol language resources such as language, sound, image and action, which optimize the teaching process and improve the teaching effect.

Teachers' multimodal teaching means that in the process of classroom teaching, teachers choose and integrate multimodal design of teaching links and teaching contents, help students mobilize multi senses to obtain and internalize information, and finally output information in multimodal form (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Multimodal social work teaching in colleges puts forward high requirements for teachers. Generally, these requirements include: (1) professional knowledge about second social work ability and high-quality oral expression. Teachers must keep the information transmission channel unobstructed. (2) Ability to organize and manage classroom teaching. In classroom teaching, teachers should be able to switch between different modes flexibly and improve the quality of classroom teaching with the help of language, action, gesture, blackboard and slides. They can, by making full use the existing environment, create some new situation to optimize the classroom teaching effect. (3) Proficient in multimedia technology. Teachers should adapt to the requirements of modern teaching, learn to use network information technology and modern teaching tools, to present rich information for students. (4) The transformation of the roles of teachers and students. Social work teaching should change from “teacher-centered” to “student-centered”. Teachers become the organizer, designer, director and helper of teaching activities. Student has also changed from the dominated and passive recipient of knowledge to the

participants and explorers of classroom learning (Chuanfeng, 2011).

Students' multimodal learning mainly refers to the ability of students to input and internalize information through the cooperative operation of vision, listening, touch, taste and emptiness in classroom learning, and finally output information through verbal and non-verbal symbols (Delu, 2009). The main process includes: (1) Multimodal information input. In College Second language classroom teaching, teachers guide students to mobilize a variety of senses and management to work together through multimodal teaching. According to their own background experience, students actively select, process and process knowledge, and display and communicate in classrooms to achieve highly interactive classroom learning. (2) Multimodal information output. By understanding various verbal and non-verbal symbols, students can identify the overall meaning produced by the interaction of various modes such as images, words, actions, colors and sounds. With the help of autonomous learning, mobile learning, cooperative learning and other learning methods, students can process and sort out the acquired information. In a relaxed and natural ability environment, students understand the potential of various symbols, and ultimately express and improve their own meaning through multi-modal symbols (Litthmore, 2015).

### **3. The Use of Multimodal Discourse in Social Work Teaching**

#### **3.1 Strengthen Multimodal Design in and out of Class**

Multimodality of college Social work teaching should include both multimodal design of in class teaching and multimodal extracurricular learning of students. Multimodal classroom design refers to the detailed design of teaching content and teaching process. Diversified classroom teaching design includes teacher questioning, teacher-student interaction and so on. With the help of various multimodal teaching methods, teachers assist students in active learning. Teachers try to encourage students to actively participate in classroom activities to promote students' discourse output. Teachers' teaching experience and emotional control affect classroom teaching. Multimodal extracurricular learning design refers to the expansion of Second language classroom learning by students using various resources. Teachers provide students with multimodal learning conditions and meet the learning needs of different students.

#### **3.2 Enrich Teaching Resources and Environment**

In classroom teaching, teaching resources affect teachers' teaching mode to a certain extent. Therefore, the choice of teaching materials is one of the key factors to determine the teaching mode. According to the guidance of multimodal discourse analysis theory, teachers should choose textbooks that use multiple modes in writing and typesetting. The teaching materials should be illustrated and illustrated, and the color matching should be harmonious. The effect of complementing each other by pictures and words with appropriate number and location is far better than that of single text, which helps students better understand the content of the materials.

In addition to textbooks, teachers can also make full use of multimedia network resources and use e-books. Teachers can guide students from many aspects and implement the multimodality of teaching resources transmission. Teachers can recommend students to listen to Second language radio, log in excellent Second language forums and Second ability websites, watch Second language TV programs and so on. Students' learning channels are no longer limited to books. Teachers can also establish a online group to interact with students and transmit information to students, which help students to carry out Second language autonomous learning.

In addition, the teaching environment, an important factor in Social work teaching, should also be multimodal. The traditional teaching environment in China only includes blackboards, desks and

blackboards. This kind of atmosphere aggravates the boring feeling of Second ability. Therefore, second language teachers should change this situation. Teachers can arrange the classroom into a social or workplace scene similar to the teaching content. Teachers can even lead students out of the classroom. Its purpose is to change the single teaching environment and stimulate students' learning motivation.

### **3.3 Establish Diversified Evaluation System**

The traditional classroom assessment mode is based on the final examination, supplemented by the usual results. Under such circumstances, students often fail to immerse themselves in ability. Therefore, multimodal assessment system is necessary in multimodal teaching. Multimodal assessment system run through the whole college Social work teaching, including process evaluation and result evaluation. In the form of process evaluation, attention should be paid to the assessment of details in the teaching process. Teachers should abandon the single test, adopt audio assessment, video assessment and other modes. In this way, students' ability can be more objectively assessed.

## **4. The Current Situation of Discourse Use by Teachers in China**

### **4.1 The Classroom Situation is Monotonous, and the Input of Corpus Lacks Authenticity**

Languages are always used in certain situations. If the students contact, experience, understand and learn the language in a relatively complete and real situation, they can better understand the meaning and usage of the language, and better grasp the form of the language (Machin, 2013). Most teachers can realize the importance of creating situations and try their best to create situations. However, they often fail to create teaching situations according to the actual situation of life, and most of the teaching activities are directed at the teaching of grammar knowledge.

### **4.2 The Forms of Classroom Feedback Are Monotonous, and Teachers Often Fail to Encourage Students to Try**

Another important aspect of evaluating the effectiveness of teacher talk is that teachers give timely feedback to students' answers in class. Teachers' classroom feedback can be divided into two types: positive feedback and negative feedback. A large number of studies have proved that positive feedback from teachers is helpful to stimulate students' learning motivation. The most common way for teachers to give feedback is to praise and repeat the answers. If students can't answer questions, in order to save time, teachers will choose to let other students help answer, rarely encouraging the students to try again. This in fact makes students lose the opportunity to improve their ability to some extent.

### **4.3 The Interaction between Teachers and Students Lacks Diversity**

Teachers' strategies of raising question are important in ability. Classroom strategies can create learning environment, stimulate more classroom interaction, and improve students' ability ability. The strategies of raising questioning mainly include repetition, simplification and re-elaboration. Teachers should encourage students to think actively and participate in the classroom discussion.

### **4.4 Teachers' Feedback is Simple and Abstract**

Teachers are the judges of students' academic performance. However, it seems that many

teachers have not done a good job in the evaluation of students' academic performance. The evaluation of students' performance is not conducive to students' continuous interest in Second language classroom teaching. Moreover, teachers' discourse analysis in the evaluation is too simple, which easily leads to students' inability to understand the teacher's real intention and limits students' thinking on ability. Therefore, in the process of assessment, teachers should keep a real and detailed evaluation, and have a good and comprehensive feedback for students' classroom learning, so as to ensure the diversity and authenticity of the assessment.

## **5. The Optimization Strategy of Teachers' Multimodal Discourse**

### **5.1 Increase Students' Speaking Time and Opportunities for Interaction between Teachers and Students**

The traditional classroom is teacher-centered, and students' speaking time is extremely limited. In this case, it is difficult for teachers to understand the learning effect of students, which limits the further communication and interaction between teachers and students. Teachers' talk volume in high-quality classroom is significantly higher than that of interns. In addition, in student-centered classrooms, teachers' talk provides students with more discourse power, which is conducive to social work ability. Therefore, second-language classrooms should require teachers to balance the time of teachers' and students' discourse, ensure the opportunities of students' speech output as much as possible, and create more opportunities for students' speech output (Feng & O'Halloran, 2013.).

### **5.2 Teachers Often Use Positive Feedback**

Teachers' positive feedback discourse can stimulate students' enthusiasm to participate in classroom activities, let students dare to put forward their own ideas and opinions, so as to improve the quality of students' discourse output. Teachers' positive feedback makes students become the real masters of the classroom and promotes positive and beneficial interaction between teachers and students. The significance negotiation and supportive function of excellent teachers' classroom discourse is particularly prominent, which creates favorable context for students' cognitive and emotional development (Machin, 2016.). Teachers should attach importance to the use of positive feedback discourse in the classroom, promote students' emotional development and cultivate students' awareness of autonomous learning.

### **5.3 Construct Open Classroom Interaction**

Multimodal discourse encourages learning initiative, cooperation, communication and construction. Learning is a process of cooperative construction between learners and teachers, and interaction is an important way of knowledge construction. Communication between teachers and students is the most basic part of classroom interaction, and it is an effective way to improve students' language ability and thinking mode (Halliday, 2005). By adopting an open interactive mode, teachers can cultivate students' critical thinking, and then achieve the goal of organic combination of students' social work ability. The change from the teacher-centered classrooms to classrooms with the two-way interactive structure is conducive to the construction of open classrooms.

### **5.4 Respond Positively to Students' Classroom Performance.**

In second-language classroom, teachers should give a positive and effective feedback to students' performance in class, so as to help students enhance their interest in classroom learning and improve their active participation. Positive feedback will have a certain impact on students' own learning (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Teachers should carry out more effective evaluation on students in their daily learning life. Teachers' feedback should include: the mastery of knowledge in class, the output of classroom discourse, the number of times to communicate with teachers, the number of times to answer questions and test scores. Teachers can also further understand the students' problem-solving methods in answering questions, so as to understand students more concretely and comprehensively.

## 6. Conclusion

The study of teachers' talk is the focus of social work teaching. Teachers can not only encourage students to participate in communication through teacher talk, but also adjust their own language to make it easier to understand (Zhuanglin & Jia, 2006). Through teachers' talk, teachers trigger information exchange. Teachers' talk has a direct impact on the quality of social work teaching and is also an important resource for students' learning. The optimization of teacher talk directly affects the realization of the ultimate goal of Social work teaching. Teachers' discourse should fully mobilize students' initiative and give full play to students' subjectivity in the classroom (Forcevillh, 1996). How to deal with and improve the level of interaction between students and teachers, and correctly treat the relationship between teachers and students in the classroom, is an important and practical research problem

In China, teachers always occupy most of the classroom discourse time intentionally or unintentionally. Teachers are worried that less or no speaking will affect students' ability. However, this is challenged by social work teaching under the guidance of multimodality. It emphasizes that the teaching process should be student-centered, realize the transformation of the role of subject and object and create a variety of channels. With help of the diversity of teachers' discourse, students can input more information and establish their meaning structure. Language teaching under MDA includes not only teachers' multimodal teaching, but also students' multimodal learning.

## References

- [1] Barcelona, A. 2000. *On the Plausibility of Claiming a Metonymic Motivation for Conceptual Metaphor. Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads.* Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- [2] Bateman, J., Wildfeuer, J., Hiippala, T. 2017. *Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis, A Problem-oriented Introduction.* Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- [3] Chuanfeng, L. 2011. *A review of the application of systemic functional linguistics in foreign language teaching: achievements and shortcomings -- Based on the statistical analysis of three core foreign language journals in the past 10 years (2000-2009) [J]. Shandong foreign language teaching (6): 58-65. (in Chinese)*
- [4] Delu, Z. 2009. *Application of multimodal discourse theory and media technology in foreign language teaching. Foreign Language Teaching (4): 15-20. (in Chinese)*
- [5] Feng, D., O'Halloran, K.L. 2013. *The Visual Representation of Metaphor: A Social Semiotic Approach [J]. Review of Cognitive Linguistics 11(2): 320-335.*
- [6] Forcevillh, C. 1996. *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising.* London: Routledge.
- [7] Halliday, M. A. K. 2005. *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse.* Webster: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.
- [8] Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh.* New York: Basic Books.
- [9] Litthmore, J. 2015. *Metonymy: Hidden Shortcuts in Language, Thought and Communication.* Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Machin, D. 2013. *What Is Multimodal Critical Discourse studies? Critical Discourse Studies, 10(4): 347-355.*
- [11] Machin, D. 2016. *The Need for a Social and Affordance. Discourse & Society 27 (3): 322-334.*
- [12] Machin, D., Mayr, A. 2012. *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis.* London: Sage.

- [13] *Musolff, A. 2016. Political Metaphor Analysis: Discourse & Scenarios. London: Bloomsbury.*
- [14] *Zhanzi, L. A. 2003. sociosemiotic analysis of multimodal discourse. Foreign Language Studies, (5): 1-8. (in Chinese)*
- [15] *Zhuanglin, H., Jia, D. 2006. Multimodal construction of meaning: a discourse analysis of a PPT demonstration contest. Foreign Language Audio Visual Teaching (109): 3-11. (in Chinese)*