

The Use of Body Language in English Teaching

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Abstract—Body language means action, expression and posture with something meaningful. In classroom teaching, the teachers' body language can help to increase the effect of sound language. It is an important method for teachers to learn about the students by noticing the students' body language. Teachers can get feedback information by watching the students' expressions in their eyes, on their faces and noticing their actions, as to adjust and organize the teaching in class timely and effectively. Nowadays nonverbal communication has been used in many fields. With the continual reform of language teaching and learning methods, teachers have great challenge in organize the classes in English and create English-learning circumstances. However, with students' limitation, teachers have to simplify their teaching language with the help of facial expression and body movements.

Index Terms—use, body language, English teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Body language is an important medium in people's communication. It includes gestures and facial expressions. As we know, language is important in communication, but nonverbal communication also can't be neglected. American psychologist Albert said, people get 55% information from expressions.

In classroom teaching, nonverbal communication is more important than verbal one. When teaching, teachers will try their best to arouse the student's interest of learning English. Body language as a secondary means of teaching English is vivid, it can warm up the class atmosphere, help students to understand the point, shorten the distance between teacher and students, stir interest of learning English, improving the quality of education.

So, in teaching, teachers should learn and work hard to master the means of communication in the application of classroom, servicing teaching.

II. THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

Body language is a silent and true language, which can express a person's inner world, it always catch one's eye mostly in non-communicative. As a non-communicative, body language is the support and supplement of teaching, and occupies an important position in teaching. A qualified teacher needs not only profound knowledge and good eloquence, but also dignified and harmonized body language. Just like the educationist Makarenko (1998) said: "If a teacher is no expressions and not good at express to people, it's not a qualified teacher." (P. 52)

A. *The Importance of Body Language*

If a teacher can be just right of using body language in classroom teaching, it's every look, every smiles, every action will have a strong psychological effect on students. At this time, silence is the best words. Therefore, the body language takes an important place that oral language can't replace.

1. To enhance the educational influence

Teaching by example is better than word. Teaching by example of teacher is reflected in many ways, and body language is a part of teaching by example. (Brown, 2002, P.367) On the communication between teachers and students, all of the attitudes, feelings and self-cultivation are displayed through the instrument, facial expression, gestures, glances and even clothing, hairstyle have far-reaching implications on students.

The appearance is the first impression of teachers to students and students' preferences of a subject always begin with the goodwill, admiration of teachers. It will give students a good impression and add the charm of education, if teachers are well groomed, smartly dressed, generous and conversely, if teachers have fluffy and messy hair, wear slovenly and untidy clothes, or indulge in dress up, fancy dress, it will give students an irresponsible, hot-tempered, half-hearted impression, and may lead the students in private discussions, divert the students' attention, affect classroom teaching. The teachers' appearance should be neither dressed up, not old fashioned. It not only maintains modesty, but also follows time fashioned and personal style. The appearance should be just with the demeanor and temperament of teachers, set a good educational style to students. This is a more conducive atmosphere for study, which will make students more relaxed, enjoyable to learning.

2. To improve the effects of sound language

In English teaching, teachers transmit information mainly rely on oral language, but using body language to attract students' attention is more lively, exact and effective. Body language is also indispensable when communicating. On the one hand, body language can transmit information directly. In classroom, teachers can convey the sure or unsure

information with eyesight and expression. Sometimes, an encouraging eyes, a meaning smile, or a scornful expression, will influence students. And when the oral language is not the same as the body language, students always believe what they see. On the other hand, it's the most delicate interpret of oral language and students can find teachers' feeling attitude and illocutionary from body language. On teaching, teachers' change of expression has important influence on students' mood of learning, students don't like the teachers, who are straight, clod and serious. So, teacher should use body language to coordinate with oral language reasonable when teaching.

3. To strengthen the role of information

As one knows, the communication of people is through language and nonverbal language to express. And nonverbal language (body language) as an information carrier, takes an important role that other carrier can't be replaced. American phycologist Meilalissi (1999) thinks: The effect of acceptance of information is the sum of 7% words, 38% tone and 55% facial expression. So we can see that the body language is important on teaching. (P.178)

B. The Necessity of Body Language

In China, teacher impacts student not only on teaching content, but also on the thinking style. If a teacher is preciseness, the students will feel the class boring, and have no passion to learn. On the other hand, the teacher with passion, the students will be full of vigor, and the teaching will become interesting and proceed smoothly.

1. To arouse the atmosphere of classroom

It'll make a comfortable and loose class atmosphere to students, if a teacher has good appearance; generous gesture; and reasonable eyes. This also can be a good foundation of a lesson. For example, when I teach the sentence "what's this / what are these?" I can take one pen and three books to ask them. Using body language I can convey information more directly. And through the practice, students can understand how to use the sentence and distinguish singular from plural form. Using this method, practicing again and again, all of the students' attention can be attracted, and most of the students can grasp the knowledge.

On teaching, whether we always use body language flexible and skillfully depend on the needs of students. At this time, students' attention is obviously focused, the consciousness of practice in classroom activities is enhanced, the interest, feeling and will of students are stimulated, then the effect of teaching can be improved.

2. To inspire students' imagination

Body language has strong defining and performance, it can make the language visualize and materialize. Teachers' body language can create a imagine space to student when it shows vivid and interest. When I practice in Xin Yu NO.3 Middle school, my instructor always uses body language to inspire students. She always does some action, and let students guess. And then ask students to use their imagination to make a dialogue of what she did. This method can not only make students grasp the knowledge, but also improve their imagination.

After students answer the questions, we usually use eyes, expression to repeat students. A kind of look, a courage word, a sure gesture can stir students' positive feeling, produce interest and responsibility of study. On the contrary, it'll take despair, depress, or even terrified feeling to students. So, in classroom, we should use body language appropriately, and use positively, encouragement methods to arouse the learning interest of the students.

3. To grasp the students' mood

The famous educator Johann Helnrich Pestalozzi (2000) said "Any good-education is required to be like parents' eyes, which can very accurately see a child's psychological state and various change from his eyes, small mouth and cheeks every day, even every moment."(P. 45)

In classroom, the exchange feeling between teachers and students can narrow the gap of them and make the relation more harmonious. It'll help to create a good learning environment, and improve the learning effect. The use of body language is a good way to improve the relationship of teachers and students.

It is said that "人逢喜事精神爽" people feeling and emotions are often manifested from the external organs, teachers should catch the information on time. We can push the teaching to climax, when students have natural appearance absorbed in class. If students wear a woebegone look, we should adjust teaching, find the reason, and resolve it. Teachers also can check the teaching effect, adjust the method and pace, relying on the students' focus eyes, avid attention, and unpredictable look. Teachers and students are influenced and attracted each other with body language.

In teaching, we should make the body language yield well, and arouse the curiosity of students, in order to create a good and harmonious classroom atmosphere, grasp the knowledge efficiently and qualitatively, improve the teaching quality effectively.

III. THE USE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

The use of body language is the need of English teaching goal. The use of body language can arouse students' interest of learning, and keep the curiosity. Body language can help students do some things or actions in accordance with teachers' commands. The use of body language can enhance the learning effect.

A. The Skill of Use Body Language in English Teaching

The use of body language is not only to embody the new curriculum, but also the need of the goal of English teaching. Teachers' body language can explore students' intellects, develop the potential of right brain. It has alternative function,

accessibility function, feedback function. In classroom, teacher's body language mainly includes: eyes, physical, appearance, gesture, body language, and distance. Different classroom needs different body language. (Zhang, 2005, P.298)

1. The use of eyes

Eyes are an important part on our faces. There is an old saying, "eyes are windows of the soul." Eye contact plays an important role in the communication between teachers and students. A good teacher always knows how to use eye contact. Teachers often have a face to face communication with students, so eye contract can be described in the following kinds: survey, focus.

Survey is to look around students regularly. In teaching, teacher can remind students to listen to the teacher careful relying on survey. After asking the question, the survey of teacher can find the student who wants to answer, and remind the students who don't think about.

Focus is to use eyes staring at a student for a long time. Focus includes serious one. Instruction watch can make a congenial learning atmosphere. And the close watch is the most important focus. When students feel nervous, teacher's smiling eyes will let students relax.

2. The use of smile

A smile gives positive feedback and impacts the affective domain by communicating pleasure, trust, friendliness, interest, excitement, or surprise. A frown communicates displeasure, disapproval, and anger, a deadpan expression communicates distrust, low energy, and disinterest.

Smile is the most frequent using in teaching, "teacher's smile can conquest students' mind." Smile can not only build the interaction between teacher and student, create a harmonious classroom atmosphere, but also convey the feeling what can't express by word, let students feel the teacher's love.

In school English teaching, the use of smile is particularly important. As most of pupils, study is difficult and boring, and their English knowledge of is limited. So they usually feel anxious, nervous. Teacher's natural smile in the classroom can ease the students' pressure on learning English, and help students to create hopeful and optimistic mind.

3. The use of gesture

Gesture is a very complex kind of body language, which is the most useful tool for communication before people create and use spoken language.

Usually, people use hand contact or hand movements to interpret each other's mental activity or state of mind, and express our intent by hand.

In English classroom, we usually use English to teach, but pupils' knowledge and teachers' oral English limit the teachers' expression. In classroom, teacher can use gesture to express the meaning of words, concisely and comprehensively, and visually. For example, when we teach pronoun: I, you, he, she, we, teacher can point to himself says I, point to a girl says she ... students can understand easily. Through gesture, students feel interesting, and the teaching effect will good.

B. *The Interaction of Body Language between Teachers and Students*

The performance of body language is to help to release of the student's emotion. Using body language can help them reduce the anxiety and pressure of expressing in English, and gain confidence and achievement. Body language is an effective teaching method to help students to perceive key points, participate in classroom and cooperate with other students when study. Students' participation is just what the New Curriculum advocated. Body language can also play the role of evaluation in learning, it's a formative evaluation. The attention of teacher will encourage students to think, and answer the question leisurely. If the teacher gives a smile to the students after he finishes the question, the dullest students can understand the commendations and rewards. Students' learning motivation and self-confidence will grow unconsciously. In short, the interpretation of body language can be a good basic idea of English language course.

1. The sound development of body language

Good interaction between teachers and students can build a good relationship. When teacher find there're crack in the teacher-student relationship, they'll try their best to communicate with students, under the specific circumstances of each students, using different helps. At the same time, they reflect on their own teaching process and teaching effectiveness, continue to enhance and improve their teaching skills.

Body language is the bridge of teacher-student communication. It's not only important method of teacher's feedback, but also the way of students to know teacher. Teachers being aware of using body language to transmit information indirectly, can help them have the initiative of teaching, in order to achieve the effect not only by oral language.

2. The improper use of body language

Body language can promote the sound development of teacher-student interaction. But, body language is also a double-edged sword. If teachers use body language improperly, body language will give a negative impact on students. On the one hand, it can range from destruction of classroom atmosphere. And transferring knowledge can not be correctly. On the other hand, it will damage the professional image of teachers and mislead the behavior of students. To be worse, it will result in harm to students in Psychology and personality. Those are adverse consequences. Moreover, violent body language will greatly stimulate students' psychology to revolt and lead to more serious consequences.

C. *The Principle of Teachers' Body Language*

Because body language is very important, we advocate teacher, especially, teachers use body language to regulate the classroom atmosphere, improve the teacher-student relationship, and raise teaching effect. But we should pay attention to the principle when use body language.

1. To be appropriate.

Although, body language can replace the words, our students are not deaf ones. In English class, we should use English to teach as possible as we can, and encourage students to say, use body language to help communicate at proper time.

2. To be natural

Students always imitate teachers' every movement. If teacher's body language is unnatural, it'll impact on the teacher's image, make students difficult to be friend with her/ him. In teaching, we not only need the natural body language, but also need the natural opportunity. We should use body language when we can't express with words. At this time, the natural use of body language plays the effect of silence or silent speaking. So, teacher's body language should be natural and harmonious.

3. To be clear

What the teachers say and do will have a profound impact on the lives of your students, so the use of body language should be clear. Teacher should also pay attention to the consistency when using body language. Otherwise, the communication between teacher's and students will confuse, and it's difficult for students to learn.

IV. CONCLUSION

Body language as a supplementary method of teaching English is vivid. It can help students to understand, enliven the classroom atmosphere, and improve the students' interest of learning English and the quality of classroom teaching. In teaching, if teacher can use the body language correctly, properly and naturally, it'll help to exploit the complex thinking of students. Furthermore, body language teaching can help students to know the background of learning English, make students know the atmosphere of English, and understand English will have different meanings when we use different gestures and expressions. The body language can also help teachers to get students ready for class, make the emotion of students active, enliven the classroom atmosphere, and strengthen teaching effects.

In a word, in English teaching, Non-communication tools cannot be ignored. Teachers should pay attention to the using of body language in classroom teaching. We should stand out the importance of body language, use body language to help teach. As to increase the feeling of teaching points, improve the teaching effect, use body language to service English teaching.

We should advocate using body language in English teaching, but teachers should pay attention to the use rule and using skills. The usage of body language should be right, natural and clear.

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