

# The Problems And Countermeasures Of Applying Multimedia Technology In College English Teaching

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**ABSTRACT**--- *Multimedia technology refers to the computer-mediated software that integrates text, color, graphical images, animation, audio sound, and full motion video in a single application. Multimedia learning systems offer a potential venue for improving students' interest, understanding and learning efficiency about the English language. Teachers try to make full use of multimedia to create an authentic language teaching and learning environment where students can easily acquire a language naturally and effectively. However, through teaching assessment system, a platform through which students can anonymously evaluate teachers' teaching on the web, some limitation and problems of multimedia technology in English teaching is explored. For example, PPT-oriented English class leading to knowledge overlapping and time-wasting; Teachers relying too much on multimedia; Improper design of courseware stimulating distraction; Lacking interaction between teachers and students. Only when the multimedia teaching in college English is reformed and improved, can the function of multimedia assisted teaching play its best role. Aiming to optimize the function of multimedia in college English teaching, both the problems and countermeasures of applying multimedia in college English teaching are studied elaborately in this paper, which provides a theoretical basis and new way of teaching practice for the situational teaching of foreign language.*

**Index Terms:** *Multimedia Technology, College English Teaching, Problems, Countermeasures.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Multimedia teaching is a worldwide popular teaching method which has improved the quality of college English teaching greatly. Utilizing multimedia can integrate audio, video, text, graphics, images with knowledge, technology, and information. On the screen, the various elements of media can be organically integrated by information processing technology. Compared with traditional teaching, multimedia can present a vivid demonstration of teaching content, crystallize abstract concept, and systematize the knowledge of textbooks. Combining multimedia with college English teaching can stimulate students' interest in English learning, demonstrate the vivid culture of English-speaking countries and build a situational language environment, which has an important influence on the teaching and learning efficiency of college English. Multimedia technology has decreased teachers' burden while increased students' enthusiasm. By providing favorable language environment of video and audio,

multimedia has innovated the traditional classroom language training which can't display the pragmatic communication context. However, in the process of applying the multimedia technology, college English teacher have discovered both the advantages and disadvantages of multimedia-aided teaching while the disadvantages always lead to the negative effect of multimedia teaching and should be resolved urgently. With the popularization of multimedia teaching, some problems in the process of college English teaching are gradually exposed, such as information overloading, relying too much on multimedia, distracting students' attention, etc. As college English teachers, we should pay attention to the rising problems and explore corresponding countermeasures in time.

Taking China's college English teaching as the research object, all students in China's universities must take the compulsory course of college English, but they can't speak, listen, read, and write properly, and they can't even pass the English examination for postgraduate entrance examination, which has aroused great attention among English educators. A lot of experts propose that there are some rising problems with multimedia teaching in college English class. Therefore, many research projects have been launched to explore the fundamental causes while lots of reformations have been implemented to resolve the problems. Our university, Shaanxi University of Technology where I work, also carried out an investigation of college English classes. Through the online assessment system and attending the lectures, we have found some serious problems existed in multimedia teaching in college English class.

## II. THE PROBLEMS OF APPLYING MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

Multimedia teaching in English has obvious advantages that traditional method has never reached. But when we see its "advantages", we should also pay attention to its "disadvantages". Through visiting the college English classes and surveying the anonymous teaching assessment system online, objective facts have shown that there are still many multimedia-teaching limitations needed to be solved urgently and the most serious problems of multimedia teaching in college English classes are discovered as follows:

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#### *A. PPT-Oriented English Class Leading to Knowledge Overlapping and Time-Wasting*

First, multimedia itself is just a useful auxiliary tool for teachers to teach better, but some teachers have not realized the function of PPT in teaching while taking PowerPoint as an equivalent alternative to substitute the traditional teaching. When using multimedia for teaching, they simply move the contents of the textbook directly into the courseware without any change and supplement. When attending some teachers' classes, we found some teachers even downloaded the electronic e-book version of the textbook and just copy the e-book to the PPT. In the courseware, the teacher neither points out the difficulty, priority and key point of the teaching contents nor explains or complements the relevant knowledge, which is not instructive to students' understanding and digestion of the knowledge. They only change the original book teaching to the screen teaching, the same knowledge is presented in both books and multimedia, which leads to the overlapping and repetition of knowledge and does not play the auxiliary role of multimedia. On the contrary, it causes students to feel boring and confused (Du Zhen, 2013).

Through the online assessment system, most of the students comment their teachers' teaching like this: the PowerPoint is the same with the textbook, so the teaching is just a waste of their time because they can learn by themselves. What they need is highlighting the emphasis, complementing the background information, polishing the knowledge and solving the difficulties they can't settle down themselves. What is worse, some teachers who teach the same courses used the same courseware shared among many teachers while some teachers just download others' PowerPoint from the web. The lack of well-organization on teaching content leads to the lack of understanding among students. A lot of information is exposed to students in class while the focus and key point of courseware are not highlighted. Therefore, the information of courseware is too large to be mastered by students. Besides, the lake of organization and design always make students become tired in a short time, and it's difficult for students to understand what they've learned, so they can't keep up with the progress of teaching, which will largely make students lose interest in English learning. There is no emphasis in the PPT so that students don't know what should be remembered and what should not be remembered, which not only diminishes students' learning enthusiasm and learning efficiency but also affects students' learning method. This is not the teaching method advocated by multimedia teaching, nor is it the purpose of multimedia application in teaching.

#### *B. Teachers Relying Too Much on Multimedia*

Nowadays, all kinds of English textbooks have complementary multimedia teaching CD courseware, and the contents of the courseware are varied, detailed and illustrated. Therefore, some teachers completely rely on courseware and neglect or even save the lesson preparation. The dependence on multimedia courseware is mainly manifested in the fact that in English class teachers have become the computer operators who just easily grasp the mouse and demonstrate the contents of the courseware, so English teachers' role has shifted from active knowledge

communicators to passive PPT readers. Some English teachers have insufficient understanding of multimedia teaching, so they just regard the projection screen as a blackboard, and the class is shown by page and page. Students just look at the screen passively while teachers mechanically demonstrate the PPT till the class is over. In this kind of PPT-centered English class, students become passive recipients of knowledge while traditional methods of filling and cramming still dominate the classroom, which seriously limits students' creative potential and critical thinking, so they frequently fall asleep in the class (Dlaska, A., 2002). Although this kind of English class is coated by the modern education "outerwear" of multimedia teaching, it not only hasn't realized the role of multimedia technology but also ruined the function of traditional teaching mode. When we listened to some English teachers' classes, they didn't write a word on the blackboard and did not even move one step on the platform because they had to stand nearby the computer to read the PPT for students. The most impressive class we visited occurred on a day when a teacher could not continue her class just because of the unexpected electronic power outage. She said all of her teaching material was written in the PPT and she could not teach without PPT which triggered the deep reflection of educators.

During class visiting, we also found that some teachers who relied too much on multimedia were not able to handle problems flexibly according to changing situation, could not answer students' questions randomly and could not communicate with students naturally. Some teachers who rely heavily on multimedia courseware forget that the students are the center of the class and teachers are the organizers of the class rather than the PPT displayers. The PPT is so dominant that teachers have lost their instructive instinct while teaching has lost its significance. Pre-prepared PPT has deprived teachers' initiative and ability to cope with the unexpected situation in the classroom and it has promoted teachers to become lazy and incapable day by day, which is leading to a serious educational problem because the students are saying that the computers are gradually substituting teachers and the PPT are substituting blackboard. Therefore, the PPT-centered teaching method should be reformed and the skill of applying multimedia technology should be improved, and we should take PPT as a servant rather than spokesman of teachers, reasonably utilize the advantage of multimedia technology and pay attention to the thinking communication and personal interaction between students and teachers. (Zhao Guozhong, 2011).

#### *C. Improper Design of Courseware Stimulating Distraction and Disturbance*

Although multimedia teaching plays an important role in improving teaching quality and efficiency, every technology is a double-edged sword. Multimedia unexceptionally has its limitations and problems, which need to be improved urgently. Some English teachers always make some flaring

courseware because they want to attract students' attention and they could not distinguish the useful from the unuseful. When we entered the English classrooms, we found that in order to catch students' eyes, some teachers designed too many pictures, music, cartoon, and videos on the courseware, making the background screen so cluttered and flashy that students always became distracted from their study because their thinking just unconsciously flew to how beautiful of the pictures, how delicious of the food and how about the ending of the story. One of our teachers deliberately designed his class with some humorous pictures in order to prevent students from feeling monotonous. His PPT triggered students to burst into laughter from time to time. We surveyed the seemed successful teaching through the teaching assessment system, a platform through which students can anonymously comment teachers' teaching on the web, surprisingly discovering that students said the teacher was quite humorous, but they wanted to learn more instead of forgetting everything after laughing. The students hope the classes are enjoyable and rewarding which is really a challenge for teachers.

Another case in our survey, some teachers who teach the course of film subtitle translation always let students watch some films in the classroom. Again, through the teaching assessment system, the students evaluated their teaching like this: we want to grasp some translation skills while the video always distracts our attention, and we can watch films ourselves after class because watching fishing is better than giving fish (Yin Likun, 2012). Too many video and pictures distract students from their classes; the presence of sound in the courseware adds an additional appeal, but the excessive stimulation of the sound will make it easy to interrupt or interfere with students' deep thinking. Psychology tells us that human perception is selective, and the process of choosing is the process of distinguishing objects and backgrounds. The greater the difference between object and background, it is easier for students to choose (Nunan, D., 2011).

#### *D. Lacking Interaction Between Teachers and Students*

When attending the English teachers' class, it's not difficult to discover a popular phenomenon that teachers point the mouse while the students watch the screen from the beginning to the end of the class. However, English is a language tool for communication, which is different from the other descriptive and explanatory subjects. Just like learning swimming, learners must go into the pool to experience how to keep a balance between legs, hands and breathe. To learn English well, learners must put their language knowledge into practice to communicate with teachers and students. However, with the development of multimedia technology, the English classes are full of video and audio so that teachers gradually become multimedia robots, forgetting the interaction between teachers and students, let alone the interaction among students. Some teachers who are not good at English pronunciation and English speaking totally depend on video and audio because they realized that oral English of the foreign audio is more native and more fluent than theirs, so they give up their stage to the multimedia, which reduces the opportunities of practice and communication while their students said that

they could learn from audio themselves after class and what they want most was practice.

Compared with the traditional classroom that is full of emotional communication and interaction, the modern multimedia classroom with full of "artificial machine dialogue" gradually turn students into unemotional machines whose EQ will be low, which seriously affect their professional development in future (Ma Limei, 2012). The teacher who is busy operating the machine and playing the pre-made courseware always ignores the human emotional factor so that our students gradually lose their creativity because unemotional multimedia make them become weary of study. As a communication-aimed language course, the reduction of classroom interaction is very harmful to cultivating students' practical language ability (Ying Xiaoli, 2013). With the rapid development of information technology and the popularization of the internet, students expect high requirements towards teachers because students can learn everything from Google and YouTube themselves. Therefore, teachers should attach great importance to students' practical ability and emotional development, letting students actively participate in the teachers to students interaction and the students to students interaction, thus optimizing the teaching quality of college English class.

### **III. COUNTER MEASURES FOR THE PROBLEMS OF MULTIMEDIA-AIDED COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING**

Based on the above-discovered limitations and problems of multimedia teaching in college English, the study further explored the corresponding countermeasures to overcome these limitations and resolve the problems, and aiming to achieve the best teaching result, optimize teaching resources and integrate the multimedia technology with traditional college English teaching, our faculty had launched a college English teaching reform program. Through empirical experiment and teaching practice, the following countermeasures have been found the most effective methods to solve the abovementioned problems.

#### *A. Designing Courseware According to Teaching Objective*

Multimedia courseware is an auxiliary means to strengthen teaching effect and improve classroom efficiency. In courseware making, instead of abusing multimedia technology, teachers must pay attention to its practicability, and focus on whether the courseware will serve the teacher's teaching objective. Instead of simply moving the content of the textbook to the courseware, teachers should highlight the focus and difficulties of the teaching content, making every page of PPT serve for the teaching objective. Before preparing the lesson, the teacher should first make clear that what is the most intensive emphasis in this lesson according to the teaching objective, how to highlight key points and breakthrough difficulties, and how to present the teaching content (Liu Guowen, 2016).

Students play a more important role in classroom teaching activities, they are the real information receivers and handlers, which requires teachers to be aware of the student-oriented pedagogy. When choosing courseware and designing classroom activities, teachers should attach great importance to the teaching objective and students' dominant role. The reasonable application of multimedia technology should fully follow the principle of "auxiliary" and "complementary". When making multimedia courseware, teachers should combine the students' psychological demand with the learning situation, considering if the video can facilitate students' understanding and whether the audio serves the purpose of improving students' English level (Xiao Lizhang, 2015). To highlight the students' mainstay status, teachers should give full play to students' initiative in learning, cultivate students' critical thinking and create more language practice opportunities for students. Thus, teachers will be emancipated from the burden of reading PPT and integrate the textbook with multimedia properly. In addition, instead of using the same unchanged PPT for many years, it is necessary for teachers to modify and update PPT from time to time so that the multimedia in English teaching activities can improve its quality gradually and keep steps with the times.

#### *B. Combining Multimedia Teaching with Traditional Teaching*

In the traditional classroom, the relationship between teachers and students is not only the teaching and learning of knowledge, emotional communication and personal interaction are also very important. Therefore, in multimedia teaching, teachers should not rely solely on multimedia because the communication of body language and eye contact are also indispensable. Once when we combine the multimedia teaching with traditional teaching, we can firstly train students' language ability through the audio and video devices; secondly teach strategies, methods, and skills of English language learning; thirdly cultivate students' creative ability. With the development of information technology and internet service, students themselves can use the internet system to select and absorb the language knowledge independently (XiongJie, 2012). Therefore, in multimedia teaching, college English teachers are no longer the language trainers of the traditional teaching model, but the organizers, designers, and instructors of modern electronic education.

Through the online platform, teachers even can use the e-learning system to implement the examination about the students' knowledge grasping, so it's very difficult for teachers to teach without PPT, so teachers should appropriately deal with the relationship between traditional teaching and multimedia teaching. To keep a balance between them, teachers should not simply adopt multimedia teaching method while abandoning traditional teaching methods. Traditional teaching and multimedia teaching can interplay with each other and complement with each other very well if teachers can skillfully utilize multimedia technology. When combining, teachers should use multimedia PPT to highlight the focus and difficulty of the lecture and illustrate the language skill with situational video while using traditional teaching to outline the teaching

content, introduce information and explain knowledge. On the condition of teachers' fully grasping multimedia teaching skill, the multimedia video, audio, and picture will interact with each other very well to maximize the advantages of traditional teaching and multimedia teaching while minimizing their disadvantages. The perfect combination of modern multimedia teaching and traditional teaching will greatly improve teachers' teaching quality and facilitate students' learning efficiency.

#### *C. Improving Teachers' Skills of Using Multimedia Technology*

Using multimedia technology to teach English not only requires teachers to have profound English language ability and skillful teaching competence, but it also requires teachers to be an expert in information technology. Besides, teachers should also be equipped with the ability to organize, design and select the essence from massive information. On the one hand, teachers must have a good command of multimedia technology. On the other hand, teachers must realize the importance of man-machine integration, which requires an in-depth understanding of teaching materials and reasonable organization of these materials. Therefore, teachers must look for some opportunities to learn the latest multimedia technology and the skills for making courseware.

Teachers need to develop and create new teaching methods to adapt to the new educational environment in which students have very high expectations towards teachers because of the information explosion on the internet. English teachers should constantly enhance their information technology ability and update their knowledge day by day. At the same time, relevant computer science training should also be given to teachers with the purpose to help them have a full understanding of the computer-assisted teaching model so that to develop their new teaching strategies, teach them how to make good use of the multimedia technology and the internet platform to teach more efficiently, and how to interact effectively with their students in and out of the classroom.

In addition, teachers should pay attention to theoretical study, combining pedagogical theory with multimedia English teaching practice. Last but not least, teachers have to break the shackles of traditional teaching thinking, constantly summarize teaching experience, reflect on teaching practice and reform the teaching method from time to time.

#### *D. Designing Interaction Between Teachers and Students*

Interaction with teachers can stimulate students to challenge authority while interaction with students can facilitate students to cooperate with others, which is quite beneficial to cultivate students' abstract thinking, communicative skill, and problem-solving ability. The interaction between teachers and students includes not only knowledge interaction but also emotional communication. In the process of making courseware, teachers should design two-way interaction between teachers and students and

between students and students.

Firstly, designing questions is an important and effective way to stimulate students to interact with teachers, but the questions proposed must be constructive and instructive with which we can trigger students thinking critically and deeply. In the interactive environment of questioning between teachers and students, the students' attention is highly concentrated, and class questioning can also stimulate students' initiative of learning, improve the ability of language communication and encourage students' confidence.

Secondly, organizing situational English dialogue is a necessary approach to increase the communication among students. Practice makes perfect. Multimedia with full of video and audio always make students receive input passively, but students also need the active output to practice their communication ability with English. In their dialogues, both language skill and communication competence are practiced.

Thirdly, brainstorming among students is quite efficient to drive students to discover problems and resolve problems. In their discussion, they can help each other to digest the teaching content deeply; they can cooperate with each other to analyze, to infer and to create, and they can also complement each other with a different perception, which is very beneficial to their future professional development.

Fourthly, because the time is limited in classroom teaching, establishing online interaction platform become a popular approach to increase communication among teachers and students. In online communication, students and teachers can share knowledge and thinking without the limitation of time and place. That's to say. Wherever the students are, they can interact with teachers and other students whenever they are free, which is a breakthrough for traditional classroom interaction.

Finally, in the classroom, the communication of body language and eye contact are also a kind of indispensable interaction in English teaching because it can enhance students' understanding and increase personal trust between teacher and students.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Multimedia-assisted teaching provides us with a new teaching method to overcome the shortcomings of traditional classroom teaching. It is an important approach to optimize English teaching resources to train students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation while developing their creativity and critical thinking. However, to perfectly integrating multimedia technology with traditional teaching is not an easy job because it requires teachers to be equipped with advanced teaching skill, sophisticated information technology, and excellent language ability. Through management and reform, the application of multimedia in English classroom teaching is improved day by day, but it still needs a long way to go to be perfected step by step.

When utilizing multimedia technology, college English teachers should attach importance to the following four principles:

1) Multimedia technology is a powerful complementary method for traditional classroom teaching,

but it serves English teaching as an auxiliary tool rather than an alternative of the traditional teaching, so instead of substitution, only when we combine the modern with the traditional and integrate them harmoniously, will the function of multimedia technology be optimized and maximized;

2) Students are always the center and main body of the class while teachers are the designer and organizer of the class, so teachers shouldn't let the PPT dominant college English class and the blackboard shouldn't be substituted;

3) In terms of language training, teachers should pay attention to practice and interaction, and in terms of talents cultivation, teachers should emphasize students' emotional communication, interpersonal cooperation, and future professional development;

4) Finally, as university teachers, we should learn, explore and study for the whole life because our students are changing day by day and the multimedia technology is advancing day by day, which is the biggest challenge and pressure facing by college English teachers in future.

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