

Teaching Reform and Research of College English for Art Majors from a Multimodal Perspective

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Abstract: Under the background of the construction of the New Liberal Arts and the continuous advancement of higher education internationalization, the requirements for College English teaching for art majors are increasingly rising. The application of multimodal theory has provided new theoretical support and practical approaches for College English teaching for art majors. On this basis, this paper briefly analyzes the guiding significance of multimodal theory to College English teaching for art majors and the current situation of College English teaching for art majors, and discusses the teaching reform strategies of College English for art majors from a multimodal perspective, to promote the innovation and development of College English teaching for art majors.

Keywords: Multimodality; Art majors; English teaching

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1. Introduction

With the increasing global art exchanges, international art exhibitions, cross-border creative cooperation, and transnational flow of art talents and other phenomena have become the norm. Having solid English language skills and being able to skilfully use English for art exchanges and academic discussions have become important qualities for art professionals in the new era. At the same time, the rapid development of multimodal technology has endowed new vitality to the promotion of the educational digitalization strategy. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to study the teaching reform of College English for art majors from a multimodal perspective.

2. Guiding significance of multimodal theory to college English teaching for art majors

2.1. Fully stimulate students' interest in English learning

Art students have prominent visual thinking and a natural affinity for visual and concrete learning resources.

From a multimodal perspective, teachers integrate multimodal resources such as images, videos and artworks into College English teaching, transforming abstract language knowledge into concrete and perceptible content. This not only breaks the dullness of traditional text teaching, but also stimulates students' interest in English learning and mobilizes their initiative and enthusiasm^[1]. For example, when explaining English vocabulary related to art, teachers make videos combined with images of relevant artworks, allowing students to memorize and understand words while observing and appreciating, which is often more effective than reciting words alone.

2.2. Deepen the integration of English teaching and professional education

Multimodal theory emphasizes the synergy of multiple symbols, providing theoretical support for the integration of English language knowledge and art professional knowledge. When carrying out English teaching with multimodal theory, teachers can combine English teaching with professional scenarios such as artwork interpretation, art creation and art exchanges, guiding students to learn English in professional practice and improve professional literacy in English learning, to achieve the coordinated development of language learning and professional improvement^[2]. English learning is no longer isolated language training, but an effective tool to help students deepen professional cognition and improve cross-cultural art communication ability.

2.3. Enrich college English teaching resources for art majors

From a multimodal perspective, College English teaching resources are no longer only textbook texts, but extended to images, audios, videos, artworks, online courses and other contents, which greatly enriches the types and contents of College English teaching resources. The use of multimodal teaching methods such as multimedia display, online-offline blended teaching and group cooperative inquiry can break the time and space limitations of traditional College English teaching, innovate and reform the teaching process, improve the interest and effectiveness of teaching, flexibly build a diversified teaching content system, and make College English teaching resources more targeted.

3. Current situation of college English teaching for art majors

3.1. Unclear teaching objectives

At present, some College English teachers for art majors fail to integrate English teaching well with the cultivation of art professional literacy and the improvement of art practical ability when setting teaching objectives, resulting in students having good English language knowledge but difficulty in communicating and expressing in English in art scenarios^[3]. In addition, the current College English teaching objectives for art majors lack hierarchy and differentiation. Students have different English foundations, but teachers usually adopt a “one-size-fits-all” teaching objective, which makes students with good English foundations unable to improve and students with poor English foundations unable to keep up with the teaching progress, dampening their learning enthusiasm. Meanwhile, some College English teaching objectives for art majors are too utilitarian, that is, only focusing on students' passing rate of CET-4 and CET-6, ignoring the cultivation of students' English application ability and cross-cultural communication ability.

3.2. Homogenized teaching content

Many colleges and universities use the same College English textbooks for art majors as for ordinary majors. The content of these textbooks mainly focuses on daily life, social hotspots and academic general topics,

lacking topics and corpora related to art majors. Most multimodal resources in College English textbooks are daily pictures, audios and videos, lacking multimodal resources related to art majors, such as artwork pictures, art lectures and exhibition videos, which makes it difficult to meet the cognitive characteristics and learning interests of art majors^[4]. In addition, College English classroom teaching mainly relies on textbook texts, focusing on the explanation of vocabulary and grammar and text analysis, without expanding English corpora and application scenarios related to art majors according to their needs. This separates teaching content from students' professional practice, and students cannot apply the English knowledge they have learned to professional learning and career development.

3.3. Traditional and single teaching methods

On the one hand, most teachers still adopt the traditional teaching method of “teachers teach and students listen”. Teachers mainly explain vocabulary, grammar and text content, while students listen passively and take notes, lacking opportunities for active participation and interactive communication. This teaching method ignores the cognitive characteristics of art majors with prominent visual thinking, and pays too much attention to the teaching of abstract language knowledge, resulting in boring classroom teaching activities and low initiative and enthusiasm of students^[5]. On the other hand, although some teachers try to add multimodal resources in the teaching process, most of them only stay at the surface level, that is, simply playing pictures, audios, videos and other resources, without organically integrating multimodal resources with teaching content and professional needs, nor guiding students to conduct in-depth analysis and interpretation of multimodal resources, failing to give full play to the teaching value of multimodal resources.

4. Reform strategies of college English for art majors from a multimodal perspective

4.1. Clarify multimodal teaching objectives

Teachers should clarify the “language + professional” teaching objective system, that is, cultivate students' English language application ability and cross-cultural communication ability, and at the same time, combined with the characteristics of art majors, strengthen the cultivation of students' English skills such as art communication, artwork interpretation and art-related copywriting in English^[6]. For example, the teaching objectives for fine arts majors can be set as: requiring students to master certain English vocabulary, phrases and sentence patterns related to fine arts; being able to interpret fine art works in English, write introductions to fine art exhibitions and participate in international fine art exchange dialogues.

Teachers should also set hierarchical teaching objectives according to the learning needs of students with different English foundations. Teachers divide teaching objectives into three levels: basic level, improvement level and expansion level. The basic level objective is to master basic language knowledge, requiring students to master core vocabulary and grammar in textbooks, complete basic listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating tasks, and improve basic language application ability combined with multimodal resources in textbooks. The improvement level objective is to improve language application ability, requiring students to communicate and express in English in art professional scenarios, and interpret simple English texts and multimodal resources related to art. The expansion level objective is to improve professional English skills and cross-cultural communication ability, requiring students to skilfully use English for art exchanges, write art-related copywriting, participate in international art activities, and finally improve their cross-

cultural art communication literacy^[7]. Finally, teachers should run teaching objectives through the whole teaching process, organically integrate the overall teaching objectives with unit teaching objectives according to the topic characteristics of each unit in textbooks, clarify the language objectives and professional objectives of each unit, guide the optimization of teaching content and teaching methods, and ensure the realization of teaching objectives.

4.2. Integrate multimodal teaching resources

Firstly, teachers should supplement multimodal resources such as images, audio, and videos related to art majors around the topics of each unit in textbooks. Image resources can be Chinese and foreign classic artworks, design works, and on-site photos of art exhibitions; audio resources can be art lecture audios, artwork interpretation audios, international art exchange dialogue audios; video resources can be art exhibition documentaries, art creation process videos, and on-site videos of international art activities^[8]. For example, when explaining the topic of art and innovation, teachers supplement students with videos of famous artists' creation processes and documentaries of international art exhibitions, allowing students to learn English vocabulary and sentence patterns while watching videos, and understand the creative ideas and methods of different artists. At the same time, through innovative interpretation and application of existing multimodal resources such as pictures, audios and videos in textbooks, find the connection between them and art majors, and improve the teaching value of existing English teaching resources^[9].

Secondly, in actual teaching, teachers should also create English practical teaching activities related to art majors combined with textbook content, provide students with more language application opportunities, and exercise students' professional English skills^[10]. For example, organize students to carry out "English Commentary on Artworks" activities, let students choose their favorite classic artworks, make multimodal demonstration PPTs, including work details and creation background, write English speeches, and explain the artistic characteristics and cultural connotations of the works to classmates in English. Or based on the cross-cultural communication content in textbooks, organize students to carry out role-playing activities in groups, one group as international art critics and the other as Chinese artists, exchange and discuss around Chinese traditional artworks, introduce the artistic characteristics and cultural connotations of the works in English, and simulate real cross-cultural art exchange scenarios.

4.3. Innovate multimodal teaching methods

In College English teaching, teachers use the multimodal situational teaching method, combining multimodal resources to create real teaching situations, allowing students to learn and use English in situations, so that students can feel language use scenarios^[11]. For example, teachers dig out the topic related to "art exhibition", create a real situation of international art exhibition, use multimedia equipment to display multimodal resources such as on-site videos of art exhibitions and artwork images, create a real exhibition atmosphere, let students play roles such as exhibition curators, staff, visitors and art critics, and carry out activities such as exhibition introduction, work interpretation and exchange discussion in English. Taking real scenes as the carrier, students learn English, improve language application ability, and get familiar with the relevant processes and professional knowledge of art exhibitions.

In the Internet era, teachers should keep pace with the times to adapt to the development trend of multimodal technology and educational digitalization, make full use of online teaching platforms and multimodal teaching tools, and innovate online-offline blended multimodal English teaching. Teachers use the big data analysis function of online learning platforms to collect and analyze students' learning data, generate learning

situation reports, and push personalized learning resources and exercises for students to help with accurate learning^[12]. At the same time, teachers can also use AI correction tools to give timely feedback on students' English writing and oral expression, point out grammatical errors and inappropriate expressions, provide revision suggestions, and help students adjust learning strategies in a timely manner. In offline teaching, teachers explain key and difficult English knowledge, conduct multimodal situational interaction and practical task guidance, and carry out classroom teaching activities using textbook content and various teaching resources related to art majors, so that students can take the initiative to participate and communicate with each other.

4.4. Improve multimodal teaching evaluation

Firstly, break the single evaluation method dominated by outcome evaluation, establish an evaluation method combining outcome evaluation and process evaluation, and conduct an all-round evaluation of students' academic achievements and comprehensive qualities. Outcome evaluation mainly adopts the form of a final examination to test students' basic language knowledge and comprehensive application ability. Teachers integrate the needs of art majors, multimodal resources and professional-related test contents into the examination, such as using multimodal resources such as artwork images and videos to test students' English interpretation ability, expression ability and translation ability^[13]. Process evaluation mainly tests students' learning process, participation, practical ability and progress, runs through the whole teaching process, and sets diversified process evaluation indicators combined with the characteristics of multimodal teaching: online learning such as multimodal resource learning and homework completion; classroom participation such as situational interaction, group discussion and display communication; completion of practical tasks such as work interpretation, copywriting and cross-cultural communication^[14].

Secondly, the design of evaluation content should also combine the needs of art majors and multimodal teaching objectives, break the traditional homogenized evaluation content, and highlight professionalism and practicality. While testing students' basic language knowledge, it should also test students' professional English skills, cross-cultural communication ability and art professional literacy. For example, oral evaluation not only tests students' oral fluency and accuracy, but also tests students' ability to communicate on art topics and interpret artworks in English.

Finally, establish and improve a diversified evaluation subject system of "teacher evaluation + student self-evaluation + student mutual evaluation", making teaching evaluation more comprehensive and objective^[15]. Teacher evaluation mainly conducts all-round comments and scoring on students' academic achievements, practical ability and overall performance, guiding students to find problems and improve deficiencies; student self-evaluation mainly allows students to reflect and evaluate their own learning situation based on their own learning process and practical achievements, summarize advantages and disadvantages, formulate improvement plans, and improve autonomous learning ability; student mutual evaluation mainly allows students to evaluate each other's practical achievements and classroom performance, combined with multimodal achievements, to cultivate students' evaluation ability and cooperative awareness.

5. Conclusion

In summary, multimodal theory has provided new ideas and approaches for the reform of College English teaching for art majors. Teachers actively explore teaching practices such as determining teaching objectives, integrating teaching resources, innovating teaching methods and improving teaching evaluation from a multimodal perspective, further promoting the in-depth integration of English teaching and art major training, to cultivate more high-quality compound art talents with an international vision and cross-cultural communication ability.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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