

# Observation and Reflection of English Intensive Reading Classroom from the Perspective of Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract-** *The application of Multimodal Discourse Analysis to language teaching classroom adapts to the requirements put forward by the multimodality environment in modern social life, since various multimodal teaching strategies are employed to enhance students' language skills. However, problems exist in the efficient collocation between various modes. Classroom observation is employed to collect the data, and the framework proposed by Zhang Delu (2016) is followed to conduct the Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Intensive Reading class of the juniors of English majors in North China Electric Power University. Finally, the problems from the aspects of cultural context, contextual context, interactive context, modal and media are identified, and the suggestions to improve language teaching practice are raised accordingly in terms of teachers' employment of modality and the teaching design.*

**General Terms-** *Multimodal Discourse Analysis, College English Teaching, Intensive Reading course*

**Keywords-** *Multimodal Discourse Analysis; College English Teaching; Intensive Reading course*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The traditional English classes, where the teacher instills the knowledge by orally talking to students, can no longer provide the most efficient learning experience for students. Thus, the change towards Multimodal Teaching (shortened as MT) is expected, which focuses on the extensive use of various medium to help the students to overcome the disadvantages that have existed for a long time in the traditional mode.

Since 1990s, more scholars and foreign language teachers have been paying attention to the value of MT, and the introduction of it into intensive reading class is a new trend in the development of foreign language teaching. MT strategies, a set of advanced and effective teaching methods, have been rapidly accepted by educators in colleges. Besides, the new course standard set by the Ministry of Education has pointed out that education should be kept up with times by making full use of the resources. Except for the official teaching materials, the teachers could employ multimedia like videos, audios, books and magazines to the teaching activities. The implementation and optimization of MT are worthy of discussion, thus Intensive Reading Course (shortened as IRC) for English majors in the North China Electric Power University is selected as a case in this research to explore the solutions.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis is conducted in this case study to identify the MT strategies employed in the IRC, which is expected to facilitate the development of MDA

theory in China. The progress and perfection of theory requires more attention and practical researches. Though the value of MDA has been widely acknowledged, the scope of relevant research is not large enough due to the late introduction to China. Meanwhile, the majority research in this field focuses on the theoretical introduction and summary. Therefore, this empirical research is supposed to implement and testify MDA theory in Chinese classroom context.

The practical value of this case study lies in the fact that it can enhance the teaching effect and efficiency. In reality, increasing numbers of Chinese teachers are employing MT strategies in the IRC to respond the call from colleges or universities, but they usually fail to find the problems without systematic observation and frequent reflection in this process, which will be a great waste. Therefore, figuring out the problems in the application and providing valuable suggestions are of great significance for English teaching.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The birth of MDA is the inevitable result of the developing times. In the past, people communicated with others by speaking, but nowadays the single medium of orally speaking to others is no longer the only choice, and the appearance of a complex medium, which is the combination of words, images, sound and other modes drew people's attention. Since the 1990s, MDA have been

attracting researchers' interest, and it has achieved a lot of progress these years.

MDA is marked by the appearance of two books, which are *The Language of Displayed Art and Reading Images* written by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). The element and structure of visual design are discussed to explore how images convey meanings, which has made a great difference to relevant research at that time and pushed the progress of MDA.

In China, MDA, the emerging theory, has gained the attention of many researchers. With the efforts of domestic researchers, the theoretical and applied research of MDA have made a great progress with more data-oriented and diversified research methods. The focus of the research has gradually ranged from theoretical introduction and interpretation to the application to classroom discourse.

The framework put forward by Zhang Delu (2016), as shown in Fig.1, is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics and Multimodal Interaction Theory, attempting to explore how the linguistic and non-linguistic modes are interacting with one another to achieve human communication. In terms of its definition, Zhang Delu (2009) views multimodality as the phenomenon of employing auditory, visual and tactile sensations to communicate through language, images, sounds, gestures.

The teaching activity is reckoned as a multimodal discourse and then analyzed from five aspects, which are cultural context, situational context, interactive context, modes, and medium.

the environment in which the language is employed, including all relevant subjective and objective factors. Cultural context is the key to enable the communicative activities to continue. The tradition, form and the technology of communication is determined by this aspect. Zhang Delu (2016) points out that this aspect also includes the ideology composed of human thinking patterns, philosophy of life, living habits, and the unspoken rules of all societies, and the communicative procedures that can be concretely realized. Social interactions have different structures under different ideologies. For example, in China if people receive the praise from their friends, the answer to it may be modest, but in the west it is a "thank you".

In this aspect, there are two elements that are worthy of attention, which are ideology and the type of action (shown in Fig.1). Ideology can be understood as the understanding and cognition of things, which means it is a kind of thoughts of things. It is the sum of ideas, concepts, values and other elements. Ideology is not inherent in the human brain, but is derived from social existence. The type of activity is determined by ideology, people under different ideology are likely to perform different types of activity.

### 2.1.2. Situational Context

The situational context is interpreted as an abstraction of the actual situation and some factors that can influence the speech, which include the participants, the occasion, the formality of the speech, the medium, the topic and so on. A speech always occurs in certain situations, and the situation, for example, the related characters, events, time and place, can also help to determine the meaning of the linguistic form in the speech. In concrete social communication, cultural context is expressed in contextual context. In other words, the situational context is the concretized cultural context.

Situational context includes the field of discourse, the tone of discourse, and the mode of discourse. The field of discourse refers to what actually happens, that is, the environment in which the language occurs, including the topic of the discourse, the whole activity of the speakers and other participants, so it determines the type and scope of activity. The tone of the discourse refers to the relationship between the participants. It includes the social status of the participants, their intention in the interaction, the role they play in the interaction. In general, people who are closely related to each other are likely to employ a more casual style when they are speaking. People who are alienated often adopt a more formal style. People with an ordinary relationship will adopt a style between casual and formal. According to Zhu Yongsheng (1997), it can influence the attention and awareness of the communicators from the aspects of communication purposes and interests. The mode of discourse refers to the channel or medium of language communication, such as speaking or writing, or even rhetorical devices. It influences and governs the organization of discourse. The main content of it contains intervention points and means.

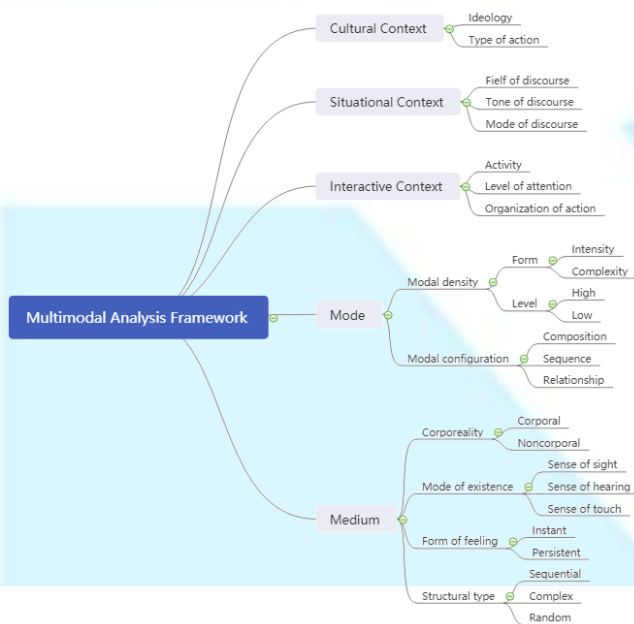


Fig 1: MDA Framework Proposed by Zhang Delu (2016)

#### 2.1.1. Cultural Context

Cultural context refers to the cultural background of speakers, the distance of the social association. It refers to

These three variables, that is, the field of discourse, the tone of discourse, and the mode of discourse together determine the discourse.

### **2.1.3. Interactive Context**

Interactive context is related to the concrete activity, its inner structure and operating mode. It includes the specific activity, the organization of the activity, and the level of attention. A high-level activity can itself be regarded as a multimodal discourse which includes different activity steps. First, under the influence of situational context, intervention points enable activities at all levels to be carried out or become the focus. Each activity step may include different high-level activities, which are secondary high-level activities, and so on. Next, simultaneous and embedded relationships can be formed between high-level activities. At the lowest level, activities are a series of low-level activities. Attention or awareness can make the activities become the foreground, medium ground, and background. Means can make certain activities enter into the foreground through rhythms and instructions and it organizes the foreground and high-level activities.

### **2.1.4. Modes**

Different modes are related to one another and they can promote the development of the interaction. In this aspect, the modal density and the modal configuration are contained. Modal density refers to the weight of the modal in the interaction. The modal configuration is the composition of the modes, the order of importance, and the relationship between the modes. It is necessary for people to figure out the structure configuration in their communication to make a thorough inquiry about whether their communication is efficient and successful.

### **2.1.5. Medium**

Modality is realized by medium. When a medium is given a practical meaning, then it can be called a mode. The elements of this aspect are corporeality, mode of existence and structural type. Corporeality means whether the medium is directly related to people's body, or expressed on the basis of employing one's body parts. Sense mode, just as its name implies, refers to the human sense employed to accept the meaning conveyed by the medium. Mode of existence is roughly divided into two kinds, which are instant and lasting. It is determined by the duration of the modes. Structural type means the way of the combining the media, including plain sequence, multiple and random sequence.

## **2.2. MDA of Language Teaching Classroom**

The new London group (1996) first mentions that MDA can be applied in language classes. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) explore the way to express ideas through the interaction of speech, writing, images and movements with other objects. They prove that nonverbal symbols are not only the supporters but also the necessary parts of teaching activities. Royce (2002) discusses the principles of multimodal course design and multimodal application in language classes, focusing on the complementary

relationship between modes, the impact of modality on the second language learners, and the way of modal coexistence in language teaching as well.

There are also many scholars in China who contribute to the application of MDA to language teaching, since various multimodal teaching strategies are employed to enhance students' language skills. Firstly, the development of information technology has enabled people to practice their language abilities in a multimodal way. Researchers have suggested to develop students' multimodal skills, that is to say, to promote students' reading and writing abilities from a single language to a multiliteral development composed of different symbolic systems such as painting and sound. For instance, Song Qingwei (2013) verifies the hypothesis that multimodal reading and writing training are more conducive to improving students' English performance. Zhang Delu and Zhang Shujie (2010) explore more specific principles of foreign language textbook writing. Secondly, multimodality in teaching design is an area that cannot be ignored. In practice, teachers should make full use of their teaching experience, skills of cultivating the atmosphere in classes, facial expressions and body language. They are expected to pay attention to the mobilization of students' enthusiasm and initiative and cultivate students' interest. Feng Yufang and Shen Fengdan (2018) study the structure of the classroom discourse which involve oral modality, auditory modality and visual modality. However, less attention is paid to the language classroom of translation and literature. Besides, few research study the relationship between modes, and more extensive and in-depth research in this aspect are needed.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research Purpose**

This paper aims at describing and identifying the deficiencies in IRC in terms of MT and put forward suggestions accordingly. The case study of IRC for the English-major juniors in NCEPU is conducted, involving 39 students in total taught by the same teacher.

### **3.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

The research procedures involve two phases, namely data collection and data analysis. In terms of data collection, the method employed is classroom observation. Classroom observation means that the data are directly collected from classes by employing the researchers' senses and other auxiliary tools, which is a widely employed data-collection method in education. In detail, in order to figure out the problems in the IRC, the teaching activities and effect in each IRC were recorded since March in 2019. Altogether, 12 units were recorded, and notes of 10500 words were written down.

Considering the IRC as a multimodal discourse, the data analysis is conducted by following the framework proposed by Zhang Delu in 2016. To be specific, in the cultural context, the position and objectives of IRC, course contents and the relationship between the teacher

and students are explained. In the situational context, the participants of the course as well as the classroom decoration are introduced. In the interactive context, the author mainly analyzes the organization of teaching activities, the foreground and objectives of every action, and the distinction between different activities. Essentially, modes and media are the two sides of a coin, therefore the analysis of these aspects are made together. In terms of modes and media, four activities are analyzed in detail, which are checking the homework, organizing the activities, explaining the text and Background introduction and summarizing.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Cultural Context**

Cultural context of IRC consists of the position, content and teacher-student relationship. In terms of the position of IRC, it plays a dominant role in all the English classes designed for students, as manifested by its highest credits and longest class hour. IRC is a comprehensive class which targets at helping students to develop their language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Meanwhile, it is expected that the students can employ their language skills in a long-term, deep and comprehensive way not only in their school days but also in their later life, while developing their own thoughts about the humanistic concepts and the critical social problems.

As for the content of IRC, it consists of the practice of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating at the same time, but none of them could completely occupy a whole class. It means that IRC is a comprehensive class in which these aspects are mingled with one another. However, there are some differences in the weight of them in a class. In general, the students are asked to understand the superficial meaning and deep meaning of the text they learn and absorb the linguistic knowledge taught by the teacher, so the content of the class focuses on reading. In terms of listening, writing, translating and other English related practice, they are usually contained in the process of teacher's leading the students to read or to do some exercises, and some of them are not necessary in each class. For most of the time, the students do some reading and finish the related tasks at the class. From time to time, the teacher gives some listening and writing tasks to students, or asks them to give a presentation.

The relationship between the teacher and the students is simple. In teaching activities, the teacher imparts the knowledge to the students, who listen to the teacher on their own seats. The teacher is the organizer and designer of the class activities, while the students are expected to follow the teacher's arrangements and cooperate positively with the teacher. The concrete activities the students are asked to do in each class are different, but they are highly similar in the comparatively long learning process of each complete unit. This teaching method is not reasonable nowadays. For one thing, in such a class,

the students are only the passive recipients of the information provided by the teacher, which may result in their distraction and lack of initiative in the learning process. For another, students have few chances to exchange their ideas with other students. The only thoughts they can hear are those from the teacher, and they have few opportunities to form and express their own ideas, which may cause the students' stubbornness and laziness in thoughts and lack of creativity and the ability to smoothly and clearly express their thoughts.

### **4.2. Situational Context**

The IRC teacher is an university English lecturer. In the process of performing the teaching activities, she employs more English than Chinese in most cases. However, when facing difficult problems or when some students have different opinions about the explanation of the text or the answers to the exercises, she is likely to employ Chinese. It is true the English materials can be understood more easily in Chinese, in which there is comparatively less obstruction in the process of expressing and understanding, but it also has some negative effects on students. Firstly, if the teacher frequently employs Chinese when he or she cannot explain the meaning, it will give the students an impression, that is, when they cannot clearly express their ideas, they can turn to Chinese. There is always a substitution when they encounter difficulties in using English, which makes it possible to form a reliance on their mother tongue. It is highly possible that they will not try their best to organize their words in English, which will cause the loss of vocabulary and the expression ways which they could have mastered if they were asked to speak in English. This leeway or hold back can do no benefits to the development of their language. If they are talking with a foreigner, there is no such substitution for them to select. Secondly, it is adverse to the creation of a great English learning environment. Maybe there are some students whose language accumulation is not as good as expected, and under such circumstances, the teacher is encouraged to speak in English. Because this is one way to increase the exposure of the students to English. Thirdly, IRC is a comprehensive course, which means that not only the reading ability but also their ability of listening should be improved. The process of listening to what the teacher is talking is a important chance for them, beneficial to nurture their auditory sensitivity for English. However, if the teacher employs so much Chinese to explain difficult and complex problems in the course, then it will be a waste of the chance for the students to better one of their core skills.

The students are the juniors of English majors in North China Electric Power University who have experienced the basic training for the first two years in the university and most of them have a good command of English.

The decoration of the classroom is quite traditional. In detail, the platform is in the forefront of the classroom, and it is equipped with a computer. Near the platform there is

a projector which is set to show the interface of the computer to the students. There is a blackboard behind the platform and in most of the cases, the teacher stands between the platform and the backboard to teach. In front of the platform, there are desks and seats for students. The desks are divided into three groups, two of which are close to the wall of the classroom, and they are formed by putting two desks together. The students' activity of learning knowledge is carried out in this classroom, and it is also the place for the teacher and the students to discuss and exchange their thoughts.

It is widely acknowledged that an elegant and suitable environment will do difference to the cultivation of students' individuality, the quality of their psychological activity, the development of their moral habits and the growth of their knowledge. People tend to be more serious and earnest when they keep eye-contact during a talk. Meanwhile, it is not suitable for a discussion which is participated by more than two students, which means that if the talkers are multiples, it would not be easy for them to communicate freely if they sit in a traditionally-decorated classroom, because they sit transversally and there may be one person obstructing the speakers who are willing to discuss a problem, which will hinder their enthusiasm to talk with each other.

### 4.3. Interactive Context

According to the observation, the typical teaching process of one unit includes several secondary teaching activities, which are checking the homework, setting the task of the class, background introduction, explaining the text, organizing activities, summarizing and assigning the homework.

In terms of the organization of activity, these activities are not performed one by one but are often included by one another. For example, the content of organizing activities is different and it appears for many times in the learning process of one unit. The first form of it is asking the students to read or translate a sentence in the text. The second form of it is encouraging the students to discuss the answer to the question raised by the teacher with others. The third form of it is giving the students several minutes to prepare for a speech and randomly selecting some students to give a speech. The fourth form of it is asking the students to make a PowerPoint and to give a presentation in the class. The first and second forms of organizing activities are inserted in the activity of explaining the text. The third form is included in the activity of summarizing and the fourth form is inserted in the activity of background introduction.

In different stages, there are different activities that serve as the foregrounds, because they have different goals to realize. In the stage of checking the homework, the goal is to ask the students to recall the information obtained in the last class and to form a status ready for the beginning of the class. The foreground, namely, the focus of the students' attention is the process of questioning and answering. In setting the task of the class, the aim is to

make it clear what goal this course is going to reach and to help the students to know the probable keynote, in which the teacher's word is the foreground. In the process of background introduction, enabling the students to be familiar with the text and helping them to better understand the content are the targets, in which the foreground is the teacher's or the presenter's word. When it comes to explaining the text, the aim is to help the students to understand the superficial and deep meaning of the text and to provoke their ideas about the important concepts and social problems mentioned in the material. The foreground, in general, is the teacher's word and the activities the teacher asks the students to perform. In organizing activities, the foreground is the students' interaction and activities, which is targeted at making them learn the content with initiative and practicing their language skills. In the activity of summary, the task is to help the students to recall and to have a deeper impression of the content they have learned in the class, and the task of assigning the homework is to enable the students to know the learning tasks after class and to consolidate the knowledge they have learned. The foreground of these two stages is the teacher's word.

In these activities, the distinction between them is quiet clear. When entering a new stage, the teacher would usually orally inform the students of the next step in order to make it clear for the students their learning procedures. If the teacher does not tell them orally, the students, in most cases, can infer what stage they are in from the orders and word of the teacher, which makes it easier for them to keep a clear learning goal.

### 4.4. Modes and Media

The structure and configuration of modality in different teaching activities are different, so the application of modality and media are analyzed in the activities of checking the homework, setting the task of the class, background introduction, explaining the text, organizing activities, summarizing and assigning the homework (see Fig 2). In this part, not all the activities are analyzed, few of them are selected because they are more valuable and their weight in IRC are higher than the others.

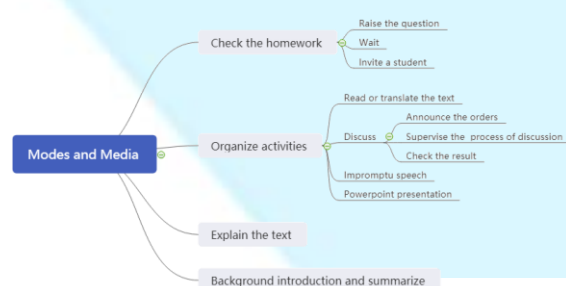


Fig 2: Elements in modes and media

In the activity of checking the homework, there are three secondary activities, which are raising the question, waiting for about a minute and inviting a student to give his or her answer. In the stage of raising the question and

giving a comment on the answer, the configuration is that the teacher's colloquial language, head movements and gestures are in the first tier, and the other modes, including the PowerPoint, the classroom decoration become the backgrounds. In waiting for the students for several minutes, there is no mode which is in the first tier. If the answer should be found in the text, then the text is in the first tier. In the process of inviting a student to give his or her answer, the configuration is that the body language such as gesture or expression is in the first tier. In raising the question and giving a comment, colloquial language is the mode of high density. The intensity of it is also high and in this stage, it is not a complex combination of modes. The colloquial language is the focus of the students' attention, and the teacher employs spoken language to attract the attention of students and leads them to think about the important questions. However, in the activity of waiting for a few minutes, no mode becomes the focus. The teacher usually does not speak or move around frequently. This is a reasonable phenomenon, for the students are expected to recall their ideas about the question and try to form and organize words in their minds in this step, which means that the dominant activity for the students should be thinking. Therefore, the teacher should provide a great environment for them to perform this internal activity, and quietness is necessary for the students in order not to be interrupted during this process. After giving the students some time to think, the teacher would randomly pick up a student or ask whether there is someone willing to answer the question. At that time, the bodily language such as gesture and expression is in the first tier. The teacher looks at the students with a smile or other soft expressions, which is conducive to encouraging the students to raise their hands on his or her own initiative. During the process of the student's answering, the teacher would occasionally nod her head or give a smile to the students. This body language could strengthen the confidence of the students and help them to keep calm and to keep a clear mind if they are not well prepared to answer the question. However, sometimes there are multiple questions to ask and the activity of raising the question, waiting and picking up a student moves so fast from one to another that the students' attention may switch from one to another frequently and quickly, causing distraction to the focus of the students, which is not conducive to the students' fluent and deep understanding of the material. In terms of organizing activities, there are some different forms of it. The first form is ordering the students to translate or to read the text. The second form is asking the students to discuss with one another and selecting someone to answer. The third form is asking the students to prepare for a speech and performing it at class. The fourth form is asking the students to make a PowerPoint and give a presentation in the class. The configuration of choosing a student to read or translate the material is that after picking a student, the expression of the teacher would be in the first tier. Just the

same as what has been analyzed in the former part, a kind expression can help the students to overcome nervousness and keep their minds clear, especially for the students who are not confident. In the process of reading, the words in the textbook are in the first tier and overall the student's attention stays on the text, which means that they are concentrated and doing good to the student's preparation for the teacher's call.

The activity of asking the students to discuss with others includes three secondary activities which are announcing the orders, supervising the process of the student's discussion and checking the results of their discussion. The configurations of the first and the final secondary activities are similar. The colloquial language is in the first tier while gestures and expressions are in the second tier. The classroom decoration and PowerPoint are the backgrounds. The configuration of supervising the students' discussion is that the word spoken by other students is in the first tier, and the teacher's movement is in the second tier. Other modes are the backgrounds. In terms of the density of the modes, announcing the orders and checking the results are activities of high density, which would help the students to focus on the word of the teacher. During the process of supervising the students' discussion, though the mode of the teacher's movement continually exists, but its density is not high. The teacher often employs movement and sight to see whether the students are carrying on the activity they are asked to do. By doing this, the teacher could guarantee that the students would not be interrupted and distracted in their discussion, pondering over the question, organizing their language and learn with initiative.

In the third form of organizing activities, the teacher asks the students to prepare for a speech and perform it at class. After announcing the order, the configuration of this process is that there is no mode in the first tier, and the teacher's movement is the background. The density and intensity of the teacher's movements are low and that would not cause distraction for the students who are forming their ideas and organizing their language.

In the fourth form of organizing activities, the teacher asks the students to make a PowerPoint and to give a presentation at class. The configuration of it is that the colloquial language of the speaker is in the first tier and the words on PowerPoint are in the second tier. Other modes are the backgrounds. In the presentation, The content showed by PowerPoint is rich in color, and with a large amount of word information, it becomes the foreground. The students' attention is the most concentrated on the content of the PowerPoint. The speaker's spoken language is in the second tier. The students would also distract some attention to notice what the speaker is talking about when watching the PowerPoint. Other modes are the backgrounds which almost cause no impact on students' attention. The density of the words on PowerPoint and the colloquial language of the speaker are high. When the speaker is talking, the students are forced to watch the PowerPoint

and listen to the speaker at the same time, which could easily give rise to distraction and tiredness. Sometimes the students tend to ignore the speaker's word when the words showed by PowerPoint are too much or difficult to understand. In most cases, what the speaker says and the words in the PowerPoint are not all the same, and in this condition the listeners may lose some key information.

In the stage of explaining the text, from time to time, the teacher may organize some activities, for example, selecting a student to read or translate a certain paragraph. These activities are not frequently observed and it has been discussed in the former parts. The configuration of this part is that the colloquial language and the words in the book are both in the first tier and they are in a dominant place. Bodily movements and expression are in the second tier, and other modes are the backgrounds. In the period of explaining the text, the colloquial language is of high density and intensity, and the teacher helps the students to keep focus on the text by uninterrupted colloquial language. In the meanwhile, the teacher's word and the textbook are in a synergistic relationship. The students look at the texts that they have already learned roughly by themselves and listened to the teacher's explanations, finding out their omissions and mistakes in their understanding, trying to deepen the understanding. The teacher is supposed to give a great explanation of the text but in the meanwhile, to decrease her bodily movements as much as possible. However, the teacher sometimes employs too much physical modes such as gaze, gestures and so on, which may attract the students' attention. If the students' are concentrated on the interaction with the teacher, then they may miss the opportunity of deepening their comprehension of the text.

In the activities of background introduction and summarizing, the configurations are very similar, so they are analyzed together. In these activities, the colloquial language is in the first tier. Other modes are the backgrounds. The students are supposed to listen to the teacher. Sometimes these two processes would be inserted with the step of organizing the activities. In this part, the problem is that the teacher may speak for a long time, leading to the students' distraction and bore.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1. Major Findings**

With data analysis and discussion, it is shown that in the interactive context, the arrangement of the teaching activities is excellent. The progress of activities is in order

and consistent with the overall goal. However, several problems of the IRC in terms of MDA are discovered, involving four aspects as follows.

In the cultural context, the teacher is the leader and performer of the teaching activity and the only speaker in the most of the time during a class. Students may be short of the opportunity to exchange ideas and lack initiative. In the situational context, the problem lies in the teacher's spoken language and the classroom decoration. Firstly, the teacher tends to employ excessive Chinese, resulting in students' reliance on their mother tongue. Secondly, the arrangement of the seats causes obstructions to students' discussion. In modes and media, the problems are the continued application of one mode for a long time, the overly rapid switch between different modes and the unreasonable choice of modality. The continued application of one modality and overly rapid switch between modes are prone to cause bore and distraction. The unreasonable choice of modality may result in inefficiency in the learning process.

### **5.2. Suggestions for Improving Language Teaching**

To solve the problems of the surplus employment of Chinese, the overly fast switch between different steps in organizing activities, the continued employment of the same mode for a long time, and teacher's employment of superfluous bodily movements when explaining the text, the following suggests are provided.

Firstly, the teachers should apply as much English as possible, especially during the process of answering the difficult or complex problems, or discussing with the students.

Secondly, the teacher should protrude the employment of a certain mode to make it a high-density, high-intensity mode that can dominate a certain teaching process for a period of time. Do not frequently change the mode and the configuration of the activity, which may result in the rapid transfer of students' focus and eventually cause the decline in learning efficiency and the increase of tiredness. Thirdly, the teacher should apply multimedia fully. During the period of teaching, it is crucial to maintain the diversity of the modality to mobilize the enthusiasm of the students and to prevent students from being tired due to long-term exposure to the same mode. If the teacher cannot explain the text distinctly, other modes and media are needed. The spoken language is a high-intensity and high-density mode. Students who are exposed to the spoken language in the classroom for nearly two hours are prone to be tired and absent-minded. The teacher can add appropriate modes, such as PowerPoint, videos and audios to show the ideas. At the same time, the choice of matching different modes is also important. The two modes cannot conflict with each other, that is to say, one should maintain its prominent position, and the other mode serves as a support.

The traditional teaching design also needs to be changed by applying "student-centered" concept.

Firstly, the teacher can give some important teaching tasks to the students, for example, ask the students to explain the text. Meanwhile, cooperative learning need to be encouraged in the class, where the teacher acts as guide and supervisor by raising questions and encouraging other students to raise improvised questions about the content the speaker is showing. In order not to be troubled by unknown questions, the presenter is bound to carefully prepare for the part he or she is responsible for. When encountering controversial topics or themes, the teacher can ask the students to have a group discussion, and pick one student randomly from the group to give a speech.

Secondly, as for the classroom decoration, the display of desks and seats can be a circle. The seats should be divided into several circles and each circle is a group. This display of seats and desks can make it easier for students to have a discussion. If they sit in this way, the distance of two persons will be remote, which is beneficial to their privacy and their staying mentally independent and focused.

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