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By Yali YIN
Gannan Normal University

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The Use of Body Language in Chinese Rural Secondary School English Teaching

Yali YIN

Abstract- With the popularization of nine-year Compulsory Education, English teaching is especially important in the secondary school teaching. In most rural areas of China, where are poor environment and shortage in teaching resources and teaching equipment, in the limited condition of this, how to improve the efficiency of students' listening becomes very important. In the rural secondary school English teaching, teachers can use not only verbal language but also body language to imply students, which is more efficient than the use of so-called multimedia sometimes. It can make up for the shortage of teaching resources so that it can improve the teaching quality by the analysis and research of body language in all aspects. Moreover, the use of body language in English teaching can change students' attitudes.

Keywords: body language; rural secondary school; english teaching; teachers.

I. Introduction

Body language, just as its name implies, the language of body, while with the development of nowadays society, is covered by a lot of meanings, used in many aspects. In the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary, body language is illustrated as *the process of communicating what you are feeling or thinking by the way you place and move your body rather than by words.* Consequently body language is a nonverbal language, including facial expression, gesture, posture and eye contact. Some scholars such as Xiao Ran define body language as a mean which can express one's characteristic, so we can know others' thoughts by body language.

Body language is a bridge for strangers to understand each other without the same language in the communication, for example, people can use the hand clap express agreement, admireness and encouragement. What's more, body language can be used as an auxiliary mean in the verbal communication and it can increase the relationship of acquaintance, and different body signals means different meanings, for example, hugging each other means showing friendly, shaking hands means saying goodbye or agreement, stamping oneself feet means anger.

However, body language used in the English class also signifies plentiful meanings. In the first time to touch English, the use of body language is just as a expression of emotion among strangers; in the middle study of English, body language may aims at increasing the inner communication between teachers and students.

Body language can be described as a training aid in the rural secondary school by which teachers can make the class interesting and fulfill with pleasure. Besides teachers can reduce the distance between students and themselves. Body language is a clue of great importance in the English class. Hence body language is an important method in the English teaching procedure, body language is also a product of human activities, used as a tool of communication. Only we know the definition of body language can we teach students well in the future.

With the value of the cultural construction of basic-level and the development of economy, English education is paid more attention in the most rural school, and the English teachers are more needed in the rural school who graduated from different high schools. What's more, an increasing number of students is interested in English whose parents pay more attention to their English study. However, English teaching in most rural school is becoming a difficulty which teachers are worried about whether they can teach their students well or not. And most parents don't know how to speak English and why students should study English, moreover, they are out of touch with the language and the culture of English country, as a result, they cannot teach by personal example as well as verbal instruction. And in the most of rural secondary school, there are lack of multimedia and computer, so the teachers can't do the ppt to teach students visually. So the appearance of the body language is regarded as a powerful method, so the English class with the use of body language is a common occurrence. As a result, the grade of the rural secondary school didn't behind of the urban secondary school largely, so in the hard situation, body language becomes indispensable in the rural secondary school. Even more, English subject is paid attention in the rural secondary school, so the beginning of learning English is late of urban city, the teachers in the rural secondary school should start all over from the beginning, while using the body language accords with the cognition for English for students.

The teachers in rural secondary school are out of information era, most of them told me that they don't know make power point, so they hardly have a multimedia teaching, may be only one class in multimedia classroom. And students told me that they

Author: School of Foreign Language, Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, Jiangxi, China. e-mail: yinyali1981@163.com

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are happy to have multimedia class because it is strange and interesting, so they hope will have more multimedia classes. While the teachers think more multimedia will decrease the quality of English class, in spite of whether they can use multimedia. So in the traditional class of rural secondary school, teachers must think out efficient ways to satisfy different learning need of students. Therefore the use of body language can satisfy the rural traditional class, body language can change the boring and traditional class into an atmosphere of interesting in the modern secondary school class.

II. The Application of Body Language on Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

a) The use of body language on listening

The basic requirement of English teaching is that understanding the information conveyed by others. Nowadays, the calling of education reform is becoming more enthusiasm, while English teaching as a portion of education faces a hard challenge, more and more teachers make interactive teaching as an important point, so-called interactive teaching is that teachers use English as a teaching language to guide students, and students should respond in English, whose aim is reducing the application of mother language, students to have good ears so that they can understand teachers easily. However, students can't convey their thoughts fluently in English and can't understand teacher' meaning clearly. This phenomenon prevents the widely use of interactive teaching. But if body language followed with the verbal language, students can overcome the hardship and get out of the difficulty, the real communication will become true. I make an investigation in two classes.

In the research, 40 students divided equally into two class never touch with English who are taught by the same teacher and with the same content which is listening task, Got For It 7a, Unit 1, Greeting. In class 2, teacher teaches 'hello' with raising hands, 'bye' with shaking hands, while in class1, teacher teach these two words in voice without any body language. When the students are required to recite the two words in the two class, students in the first class can speak out easily and confidently, while in the second class, only 75% students can speak out slowly and hesitatingly.

Table 1: The level of mastering two words in 2 classes

Class	Number	Number of mastering 'HELLO' and 'BYE'	Reaction
Class 1	20	15	Hesitate and slow
Class 2	20	20	Quick and correct

For example, when teachers make a signal like that;

'You two please come to the blackboard. 'If teachers can point at the blackboard at the same time, students can understand the meaning quickly even though they don't know the meaning of blackboard. While if teachers not point at the blackboard, time will be passed away, and students will be bored with the class and they will wait the teachers to explain the meaning of the sentence.

In the beginning of my class, I like to tell a story to arouse students' interest and attention. For example, when we talked about 'The room is big and beautiful', I can open up my hands with appreciative eye and facial expression, it can leave a deep impression to students, and students can understand the sentence easily. While, if we tell the sentence without body language, maybe 80% students will can't understand the meaning of the sentence, and can't remember what I have told. In a word, students can do a word-guessing through the body language showed by the teachers.

What's more, according to the investigation of mother tongue thinking of rural secondary school students, Wang Wenyu make a table, like;

Table 2: Level of mother tongue thinking

Grade	Level of Mother Tongue Thinking
Grade 7	46%
Grade 8	23%
Grade 9	10%

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In order to show the change well, I make a chart like:

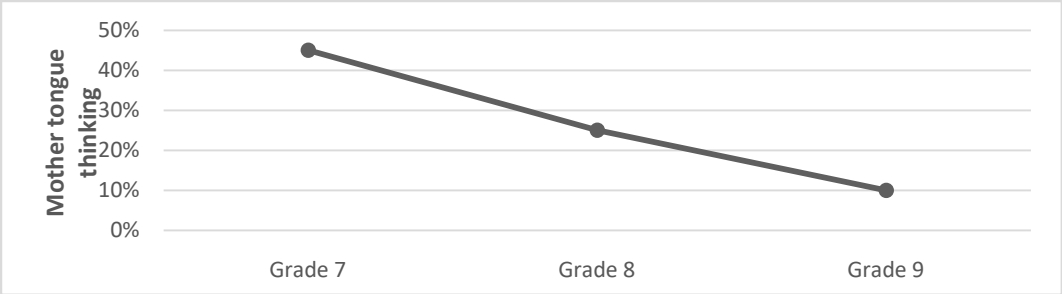

Figure 1

Grade 7 to 9 Mother Tongue Thinking in English listening

From this chart, we can see in the rural secondary school, the students output information in mother tongue thinking, so if teachers not use body language, students can't understand the meaning. So in the listening class, teachers should combine verbal language with body language. There is a special teacher in Jibu middle school. the teachers is welcome for her students, because all students say they are not having class but have a good time in her class. Why ? Because the teacher like setting more activities like guessing game and competition, so the students enjoy the class. For example, when the teacher let students listen what do she read, she will use the body to show the sentence--he is very happy and wants to be thin so he eats very healthy by which students can know the main idea. From it, we can see that using body language in the listening class is proper to the rural secondary school, it not only can fill up the vacancy of training aid, but also improve the interest of English listening.

b) The use of body language on speaking

Oral language is the most important and general communicative pattern, teachers should cultivate the skill of English speaking. In fact, the use of body language can help students to a large extent. In our English teaching material, most texts appeared in the form of conversations, teachers are required to organize students to speak so that they can master knowledge in the teaching programme. Conversational texts can increase students' interest, it can an interactive class with the proper teaching means.

English teaching aims to cultivate ability of real communication, while in China, students just learn English not speak English, so they can convey their opinions in written passage but not oral expression. So aiming to cultivate skills of speaking, teachers not only use body language themselves but also encourage their students to use body language in different situations, for example:

In the research of Littlewood, social interaction activities include imitate the situation. When students introduce themselves like that --Hello, Everyone. Nice to meet you. I'm Robin, I like running, playing basketball and reading...They say 'Nice to meet you' following with clasping hands and the action of running. If they do that, others may prefer to make friend with them. While others not do that, they will be make less friends. So when we are speaking, body language can make us close to others reducing the distance.

I chose 20 students as object of study which is about whether using body language is useful to listening or not. 20 students are divided into two groups in average, one is as matched group which is not admitted to use body language in their conversation, the other is experimental group which allows students to use body language in the same conversation. As a result, there are only 3 students can be understood by others in the matched group, on the contrary, all students in the other group can be understood by others who are the same audiences in the matched group. So if we communicate with others with using body language, we can be understood easily. Besides, teachers can also use body language to help convey their thought, for example:

When teaching 'we are happy to have a big apple.', Mrs. Ma will use the happy facial expression to convey the 'happy' in the sentence and the round and big gesture to express the 'big apple', who are the object of my observation in the Jibu middle school which is a rural secondary school, students paid more attention to her class, and not felt tired. While teaching the same sentence, Ms. Liu just spoke it without any body language, students felt bored and sleepy.

Moreover, I once noticed 75% students in Grade 7 will use body language in Jibu Secondary School, and they thought using body language reminds them what they will speak and make them more confident through the questionnaire survey. For example, one students in Class 2 Grade 7introduces what sports he likes in front of the blackboard, nervous and afraid, he do the action of playing basketball in the desk, after that, he talks quickly without any hesitation.

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Table 3: The usage of body language in English class in Grade 7, Ganxian Jibu middle school

Class	Number	Number of Use	Number In Frequency of Utilization				
			Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Class1	61	40	10	20	9	1	21
Class 2	62	50	11	26	8	5	12
Class 3	63	48	8	25	15	10	15
Class 4	63	39	9	18	6	6	24
Class5	60	47	5	23	10	9	13
Class6	62	55	13	22	14	6	7
Class 7	65	46	9	17	15	5	19
Class8	61	50	15	24	8	3	11
Class9	64	43	9	14	11	9	21

c) *The use of body language on reading*

If students want to enter into the college, they must attend college entrance examination which includes the examination of English. The English examination aims at cultivating the ability of English thought and expression, so raising the reading skills becomes an urgent affair. And junior school students may be told that they must practice their ability of autonomic learning. And reading is regarded as the autonomic learning in English, but most students may think reading is boring. Then how to make the boring reading become interesting and attractive? Body language can be the antidote.

In the reading class, teachers can make an active atmosphere by using body language. For example, teachers can let students look at the passage, and using the specific gesture or facial expression to represent the sentences, so that teachers can communicate with students in the silent reading. On the contrary, students can read the passage loudly following with body language, such as shaking hands in different strength which is as the theory of musical rhythm. For example:

In the process of post-reading, teachers requested students to recite the main meaning of the passage about Mickey Mouse and His Girl Friend, over 80% students put hands on head to represent the Mickey Mouse, and use the happy facial expression to show the feeling when Mickey Mouse met his girl friend, and they could remember the order of the passage quickly, while the rest students couldn't remember the story in the limited time. After 2 days, Teachers also demanded students to recite the passage. 50% students could remember the main meaning of passage in the 80% students using body language, while all the 20% students who didn't use the body language couldn't remember the passage at all.

In the demonstration lesson of reading teaching, Liu Fangqing, a senior teacher in No. 2 middle school, Ganxian. He taught the passage about transportation, in the process of while-reading, he read the passage with some usual gesture like using hands to represent taking plane to Beijing, and using quick gesture to show the speed of the plane, he did these actions exaggeratedly, which made students laugh, and students remembered the contents quickly. By comparison, I don't know how to make reading teaching combine with body language, I feel tired in the reading teaching.

Jie Baofeng said whatever kinds of reading can stop the rate of reading and can reduce the ability of reading comprehension. So pure reading may not have any effect on the skills, and students should know make full use of different reading method. Well, I once saw the facial expression of one student was changeable in one monthly exam, I was very curious about it, so after the exam, I asked him for the reason, he said this can bring him into the passage so that he can master it well, and the way is taught by a Chinese teacher in primary school. From then on, I taught this way to my students, and most of my students reflected well. When teaching the passage of Mickey Mouse, teachers and students can use the usual action of Mickey Mouse to understand the passage in the reading procedure. In a nut shell, reading is an important part of English learning, and reading comprehension plays a key role in the senior high school entrance examination, so teachers and students should make more effort on controlling reading skills in the rural secondary school.

d) *The use of body language on writing*

Writing is a procedure of recording and used in the formal mood. Cheng Ming said the writing activity is a procedure which can reflect the intelligence and work of livelihood and writing is an expression in written form without oral language. So in the writing class, teachers and students should be strict and formal. we should finish imparting knowledge ,the practice of sentences and words and enhancing the application, we also expect students have a better ability of receiving. But what should we do? The application of the body language can attract students and stimulate their interest of learning so that they can have a deep impression of knowledge. More importantly, body language can create a real environment of writing so that it is meaningful to the guide of writing. Students can think imaginatively in the environment.

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In rural secondary school, the imagination of the students may be narrow, but whether the body language can improve the level of writing or not? According to the question, I made an investigation in Jibu Secondary School, which is a countryside in Ganxian. I chose 30students in Class 4, Grade 7 who are divided into 2 groups on average, the first group is taught with the traditional writing teaching, like :

1. Arrange the requirement of composition. Write your opinion in about 100words given the title--My Room.
2. Give them an example in the form of simple sentences in verbal language without any words on the blackboard.
3. Limit the writing time in 10 minutes and let them go ahead.

The second group is also taught with these requirements, but teachers use body language to convey whether the room is big or not and what have in the room.

After 10 minutes, I found the most compositions of students in the first group defer to the order of the example given by teachers, while the rest of compositions add some adjectives to modify the things in the example. But over 10 compositions in the second group adds some complex sentences, like my room is very big and there are many things in it, like basketball under the bed. The comparison leads me perfectly to draw a conclusion that the application of body language in writing can increase students' imagination and give them a deep impression. It also can be seen easily that body language can improve the effect of the English teaching. What's more, if students are bored with the writing class, teachers can use performance to let students write down the story, so that students can be interested in the class and the way is out of their expectation, it can keep their feeling of freshness. The use of body language on writing can stimulate students' imagination and can keep their feeling of freshness. It is important to writing in the English class, especially in the rural school. Writing is the shortness of their teaching procedure, I believe the use of body language must have a key role in the writing teaching.

III. Conclusion

English is a language and should be used as much as possible if you want to master it. In the class, teachers should regard students as center and encourage them so that they can feel the achievement and pride that brought by English learning, and teachers should stimulate students and enhance the desire of English learning. Franklin once said tell me, I will forget; teach me, I will remember; involve me and I will learn, and language learning is a process of participant, only you take part in it can you make a great progress. So the application of body language in rural secondary school can help teachers and students know each others. In the future of English teaching, body language should be used widely. Based on my experiences, teachers should make full use of body language in rural secondary school. Body language can be also used on the pronunciation of English, for example, teaching/u;/, teachers can use gesture to show the way of pronunciating this voice, so that students can remember this point by action. Body language can be also used on vocabulary, for example, teaching 'apple', teachers can use the gesture so that students can remember the words actively. As we all known, the teaching of English is free, so in the process, teachers can improve the English level of students by different games, for example guessing game. Body language should be used in games so that students can be pleased with the class in the rural secondary school. In Mrs. Ma's English class, students can read passage and answer questions loudly in the whole class, because not only her class is well-organized, but also she can use body language to attract students' eyes in proper time, so that students are delighted in her class. This example happened in Jibu middle school, Ganxian. But there are still existed some teachers that use traditional teaching method, students in that class hardly insist on learning English, and the grade of the class is more awful than Mrs. Ma's class.

In a word, the traditional English class is out of modern era, only the use of verbal language can't satisfy modern learning system, so body language should be used in the English of rural secondary school. If we use body language to teach students the differences between Western country and our country, it will be more obvious. By using body language, students can learn English well in the rural school. What's more, our authority pay much attention to the development of countryside, the teachers should make more efforts on English teaching. They can use simply and obvious body language to improve the current situation without the help of training aid. The use of body language is essential on the rural secondary school.

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