

媒体技术与英语教学研究

杨清波 ◎ 著

 清华大学出版社

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电子科技大学出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

媒体技术与英语教学研究 / 杨清波著. —成都:

电子科技大学出版社, 2015.9

ISBN 978-7-5647-3265-3

I. ①媒… II. ①杨… III. ①英语—多媒体教学—教学研究 IV. ①H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2015) 第 214598 号

媒体技术与英语教学研究

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出 版: 电子科技大学出版社(成都市一环路东一段 159 号电子信息产业大厦 邮编: 610051)

策划编辑: 谭炜麟

责任编辑: 谭炜麟

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发 行: 新华书店经销

印 刷: 北京市彩虹印刷有限责任公司

成品尺寸: 145mm×210mm 印张 7.75 字数 157 千字

版 次: 2015 年 9 月第一版

印 次: 2015 年 9 月第一次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5647-3265-3

定 价: 48.00 元

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◆ 本社发行部电话: 028-83202463; 本社邮购电话: 028-83201495。

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

With the development of technology and the booming of digital revolution, Multimedia is increasingly accepted as a means of language instruction. It is a commonly held belief among English teachers who have tried Multimedia teaching that English teaching under the circumstance of Multimedia makes the English classroom a fascinating place.

Compared with the traditional classroom, most of which are still four walls, desks, chairs and a chalkboard, the Multimedia classroom, though still in its infancy, shows great superiority to its counterpart, and its instruction potential is enormous. In the Multimedia classroom, with the aid of computer technology, students can be easily exposed to sound, video, graphic data of the target language and can get access to authentic language and the target to be achieved by means of CD-ROMs, video films, video clips, the Internet and coursewares designed by the teacher beforehand. In this case, not only could Multimedia get the teacher and students actively involved in language instruction, but also better instruction effect can be achieved than in the traditional classroom.

However, currently, the global use of Multimedia is still at the experimental stage and although there is much excitement generated by the use of sound, video, animation in VCD, CD, CD-ROM and over

the Internet, the chief failure of Multimedia English teaching so far has been the lack of appropriate pedagogy. In the present state of the art, the media aspect drives the instruction content, rather than the other way around. Thus Multimedia is used to attract students' attention or keep them interested and to entertain -- rather than to support cognition and essentially enhance English language teaching.

“ Put-the-right-button-to-answer format prevalent in most Multimedia instructional software is really no more pedagogy sound than its plain vanilla paper text counterpart.” ^①

Media is always media. The fundamental role played by teachers for thousands of years cannot be diminished overnight with the appearance of a new instructional instrument. On the contrary, the teaching methodology accumulated through many years of experience by language teachers and experts, if adopted appropriately, can be of constructive help to English teaching in the Multimedia classroom.

Thus the intersection of Multimedia and methodology of English teaching has to be found to deal with the problems arising from English teaching under the circumstance of Multimedia.

The objective of this book is to

1) study the promises as well as the pitfalls of Multimedia English teaching;

2) investigate whether there is an intersection point between Multimedia and English teaching;

3) propose some feasible approaches, with the hope of realizing a mutual understanding between English teachers and the methodology of Multimedia English teaching.

Theoretical Backup

The theoretical research of this book is based on the study of linguistics, psychology, physiology and technology and the main instruments of this book involve a questionnaire and an open interview.

The study on language instruction cannot be completed without the study on linguistics. As for this book, the linguistic study mainly focuses on

communicative competence, which stresses the importance of the context in which an utterance occurs. The fact that Multimedia can make the most of communicative syllabus and eliminate the doubt of its practicality fits Multimedia into English teaching.

As for psychology, the study concentrates on educational psychology and cognitive psychology. In educational psychology, object teaching and factors affecting teaching and learning are applied to the present study. In terms of cognitive psychology, detailed study is made on several aspects. Cognitive psychology outlook has widespread influence on other areas of psychology. For instance, social psychology and educational psychology have been deeply affected by cognitive psychology. What this book draws back on is 1) the important influence of cognitive psychology on educational psychology and 2) the most important aspects concerned with information inputting and memorizing.

Physiology is “a science concerned with the study

of how the bodies of living things, and their various parts work” (Longman Dictionary, 1988 : 272). It sounds like a broad term and a comprehensive subject to study. As to this book, it is concerned with the study of human brain, attempting to find the best way to study language.

Technology is another aspect of the present study. Undoubtedly, the Multimedia technology and the IT (information technology) have greatly enhanced the instruction environment and the study intends to illustrate the amusing technological convenience which is no match in the traditional classroom.

This book goes all its way to avoid subjectivity and purpose-based project. “Subjectivity factors (bias) can be kept in check by triangulation” (刘润清 , 1999 : 73). Further study and investigation have been conducted with the aid of a questionnaire, which is designed for non-English majors of freshmen and sophomores, and followed with an open interview, from which we can obtain a direct impression about

Multimedia English teaching.

It is hoped, by such a theoretical study on linguistics, psychology, physiology, technology and what else mentioned above, the feasibility and justification of Multimedia in English teaching might be approached.

Application

Multimedia is usually defined as the combination of computer data, sound, animation and video, and the study on Multimedia English teaching has been undertaken for years in China. These pioneer works, however, mostly confined its domain to the interactive Multimedia or computer-assisted language instruction, both of which are still far beyond the reach of most colleges and universities of China. Hence, Multimedia