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Research on Multi-Modal Course Teaching Based on U-MOOC Cloud Platform

Taking the Course "Business English: Viewing, Listening & Speaking" as an Example*

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Abstract—**With the rapid development of Internet technology, various Internet-based courses such as Flipped Classroom, MOOC, and SPOC have flourished in China and become an integral part of classroom teaching. In recent years, the "Internet plus blended teaching" model has become a hot topic in education circle. Due to the lack of comprehensive research on the teaching model combining MOOC and multi-modality, this article takes the course "Business English: Viewing, Listening & Speaking" as an example, explores the multi-modal course teaching model based on U-MOOC cloud platform. The purpose is to expand the cloud platform and the scope of application of multi-modal theory and conforms to the background of big data, networking, and digitization, so as to provide a reference for the teaching mode of college English, English majors and various disciplines of the university, and provide somewhat constructive opinion for the MOOC gold course construction and college teaching reform.**

Keywords: U-MOOC, cloud platform, multi-modality

I. INTRODUCTION

As Internet technology develops rapidly, various Internet-based courses such as Flipped Classroom, MOOC, and SPOC flourish in China and become an integral part of classroom teaching in colleges and universities. In 2017, the Ministry of Education of China put forward the slogan of "to actively develop 'Internet + education'" in the "13th Five-Year Plan" for Education Development in China"; and the "Internet plus blended teaching" classroom model has even become a hot topic in the education circle quickly.

Because MOOC is originated in the United States, the American education circle has early carried out related researches on the teaching and learning in MOOC, such as

the role of teacher, learner's experience, learning method and learning evaluation and the like aspects in the MOOC teaching model. Kop et al. (2012) proposed that MOOC cloud platform teaching should focus on learners and establish mutual relationships between learners to better promote mutual learning interactions and achieve better learning effect. Since the beginning of 2012, Chinese scholars have also begun to pay attention to researches on the application of MOOC in teaching. For example, Li Minghua (2013) compared the characteristics of three different MOOC teaching models and thought that there would be more MOOC-based teaching models in the future.

In 1996, the New London Group pioneered multimodal application in language teaching. Since then, multiple studies have confirmed the positive significance of applying multimodal teaching model in classroom. For example, Kress et al. (2001) explored how the significance of science curriculum can be realized in classroom teaching through multi-modal methods such as speaking, writing, images, body, and actions, and interaction with other objects, and confirmed that non-verbal symbols, actions, gestures, images, etc. are also an organic integral part of the teaching process. In China, practical research on the application of multi-modal teaching methods in classroom teaching has also achieved certain results. Long Yufei and Zhao Pu (2009) believed that conversion between modalities is available, so multimodal teaching is effective for language learning. Zhang Delu (2010) maintained that multimodal communication can enable the listener to obtain information through multiple channels, and it is easier for the receiver to understand and remember the content than single-modal communication. Xu Wei (2012) applied the multi-modal teaching method to practical teaching of business English and gave students multi-modal cognitive stimulation by simulating real business scenarios to improve the practical teaching quality.

By searching relevant literatures, it is found that there is relatively lack of researches on the teaching mode combining MOOC and multimodal teaching. Therefore, this article takes the MOOC cloud platform and multi-modal theory as the support and conducts a preliminary exploration on the multi-modal teaching model of the course "Business English:

Viewing, Listening & Speaking" based on U-MOOC platform. It is hoped to expand the application scope of cloud platform and multi-modal theory, conform to the trend of big data, and respond to the slogan of "Internet + Education" proposed by the Ministry of Education, to provide a reference for English education and the teaching mode of various disciplines in universities, and provide a constructive opinion for college teaching reform.

II. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE COURSE "BUSINESS ENGLISH: VIEWING, LISTENING & SPEAKING" AND MULTI-MODAL TEACHING

The course "Business English: Viewing, Listening & Speaking" takes business as the background, training students' language skills such as listening and speaking as the main teaching goal, and aims to cultivate students' ability to correctly understand and speak English in business environment. By studying practical materials related to business activities, listening to relevant audios, and watching relevant videos, students can acquire vivid, rich, and efficient language knowledge, cultural customs, familiarize themselves with the main business languages and usages,

and improve their sensitivity to cultural differences. The course takes business activities as the subject and focuses on the development of language skills, including interpersonal communication, telephone conversations, information exchanges, meetings, customer reception, presentations and other activities. As the teaching content of this course is so rich, it is overloaded for traditional teaching model or single-modal teaching model and hard to achieve the teaching goal of the course; and it is even more difficult to complete the teaching tasks of this course. However, the characteristics of multi-modal teaching model are highly consistent with the training objectives and teaching requirements of the course. In other words, the classroom in multi-modal teaching model can help teacher and students more easily complete the teaching goals and tasks of the course.

III. MULTI-MODAL TEACHING MODEL

The multi-modal discourse analysis theory proposed on the basis of on Halliday's systematic functional linguistics ("Fig. 1") provides a solid theoretical basis for multi-modal teaching model ("Fig. 2").
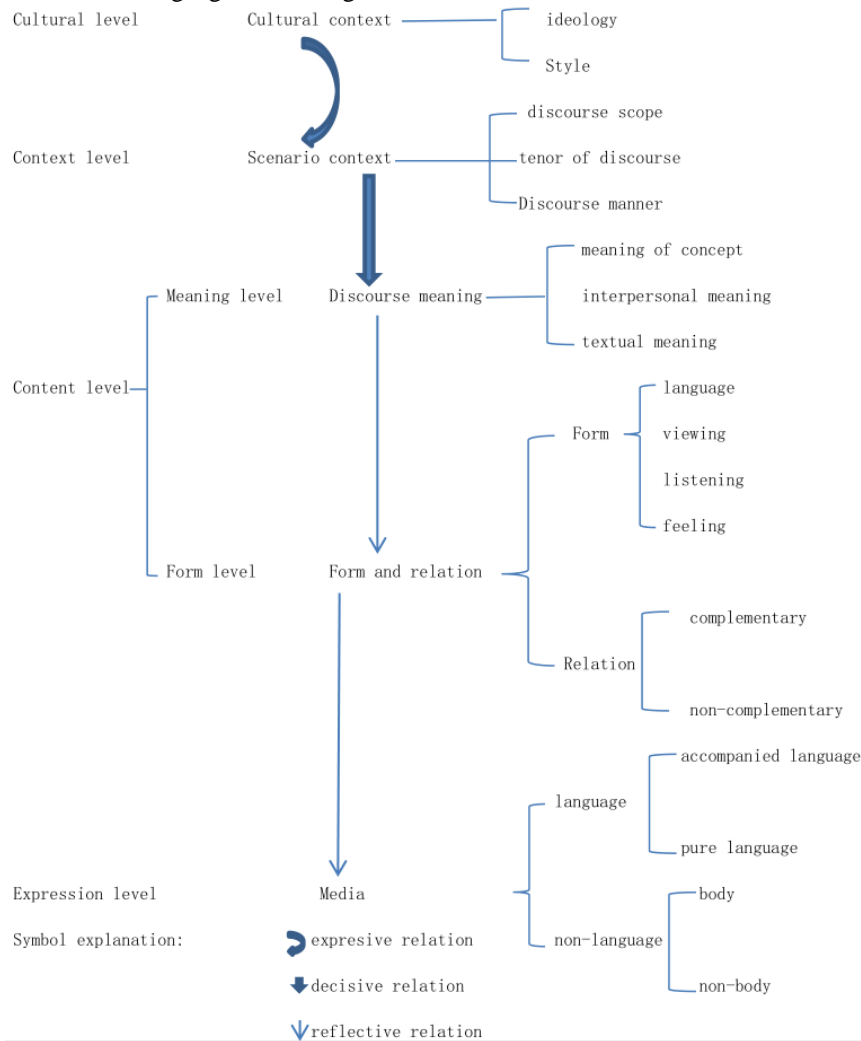

Fig. 1. Comprehensive framework of multi-modal discourse analysis theory (Zhang Delu, 2015).
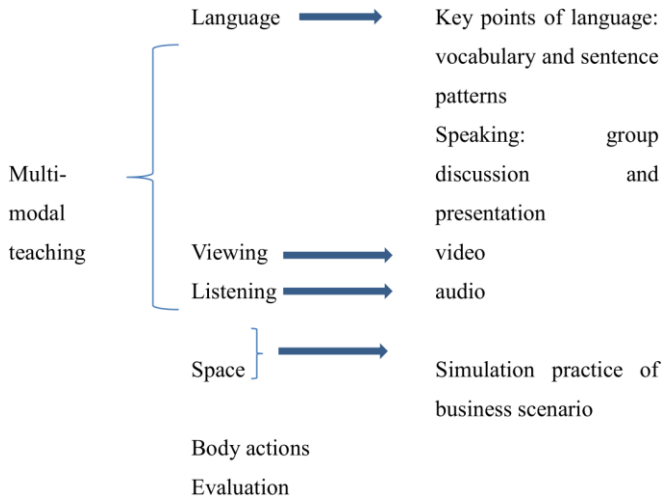
Fig. 2. Multi-model teaching.

Multi-modal teaching refers to making full use of multi-dimensional classroom teaching methods such as language, viewing, hearing, space, and body actions in classroom to realize multi-modal organic combination of teaching goals and teaching tasks in various teaching parts and assist the development of various teaching activities based on the textbook. This teaching model gets discrete teaching content such as business, language, and culture in the Course organically integrated together; in this way, learners can form their thinking ability on the basis of learning business knowledge, doing language practice, and knowledge and ability accumulation and form a multi-modal evaluation system in line with business processes and language characteristics. Taking the classroom activities and homework assignments demonstrated in classroom by slideshow (PPT) as examples, it is found that multi-modal teaching can achieve the transmission of rich content relevant to the course, and the presentation of teaching content and knowledge are also diversified. In this teaching model, teacher and learners can better teach or draw knowledge from multiple modalities and dimensions such as language, viewing, hearing, space, and body actions.

IV. "INTERNET INTERACTIVE CLOUD PLATFORM PLUS MULTI-MODAL TEACHING" MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TEACHING MODEL

The Course involves very rich business cultural background and corporate cultural background knowledge, and it is not possible to complete the transfer of the relevant knowledge in limited class hour. Hence, it requires a better platform to provide relevant learning materials and training opportunities so that learners can complete such learning tasks through independent learning before and after class (i.e., online learning), while the U-MOOC cloud platform precisely meets this requirement. U-MOOC is an "interactive" network cloud platform developed by China relying on MOOC. The platform setting includes six core application parts such as teaching, learning, management, examination, evaluation, and research ("Fig. 3") and can provide a comprehensive digital teaching cloud service for

online learners and teachers. This cloud platform has the characteristics of "interactivity", "ubiquity", and "openness". Learners and teachers can access to the terminal from various devices such as computers, mobile phones, and tablet PC. Learners have their own accounts. After accessing to the website through various devices, they can do independent learning such as completing the study, assignments and exams of a course at any time and place. Teachers can use this platform to set up the teaching schedule, make teaching plan, check assignments, implement examination, share resources and answer questions; meanwhile, the online interaction and mutual comments between teacher and students and between students can be realized via the discussion zone and message application software on the platform.

Fig. 3. Six parts of the U-MOOC cloud platform.

However, U-MOOC only provides learners with a single cloud platform for independent learning. The electronic teaching materials on the platform are rich in content, which is easily to make learners dazzled and difficult to distinguish the focus and difficulty of knowledge points and cause obstacles to effective learning. Meanwhile, teacher's face-to-face correct and effective guidance and supervision can make up for this deficiency of the U-MOOC cloud platform.

Therefore, in view of the characteristics of multi-modal teaching and the deficiency of U-MOOC cloud platform, the author proposes a multi-dimensional teaching model "based on Internet interactive cloud platform and multi-modal teaching" centered on learners and supported by teachers ("Fig. 4"), and applies this mixed teaching model to the teaching of the Course. And this multi-dimensional teaching model can improve the teaching effect more effectively than a single MOOC cloud platform based teaching model or a single multi-modal teaching model. Before class (online), learners can learn the networked textbook independently by teacher's guidance and co-learner's assistance on the cloud platform and achieve satisfactory learning effect. In class (offline), teachers can help learners absorb the key

knowledge points of each teaching unit and test and expand the learnt knowledge in combination with textbook and under the guidance of multi-modal teaching model. After class (online), learners can consolidate relevant knowledge.
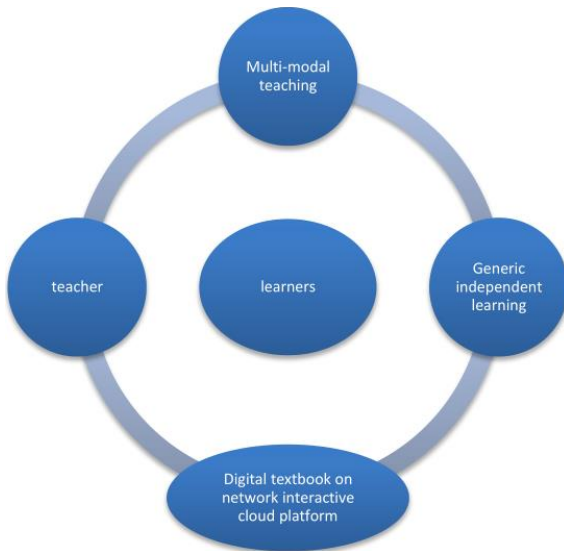

Fig. 4. Multi-modal teaching model based on U-MOOC (Internet Interactive) cloud platform.

V. CONCLUSION

In this article, the course "Business English: Viewing, Listening & Speaking" is taken as an example. The multi-modal course teaching model based on U-MOOC cloud platform is discussed, with the hope to extend the application range of the platform and multi-modal theory. In the context of the times such as big data, networking, and digitization, this model can make full use of the convenience of Internet technology and bring technology to classroom to serve teaching. In addition, it is corresponding to the slogan 'Internet + Education' proposed by the Ministry of Education, can provide reference for the teaching of college English, English majors and various college disciplines and give some constructive idea for the construction of gold course and college teaching reform based on MOOC.

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