

Exploring Multimodal Approaches in Translation Teaching in the New Era

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Abstract: *In the context of the new era of informationization, translation teaching faces new challenges and opportunities. Multimodality, as an innovative teaching tool, is garnering increasing attention. This paper aims to explore the application of multimodality in translation teaching by analyzing its theory, implementation strategies, and advantages. The theoretical basis of multimodality originates from the theory of multimodal discourse analysis. This theory emphasizes the synergistic effect of multimodal information—such as words, images, and sounds—in constructing meaning. In translation teaching, teachers utilize images, audio, video, and other media materials to help students understand the context and cultural background of the source text, thereby cultivating their cross-cultural communication skills. The implementation strategies of multimodality in translation teaching include the introduction of multimedia teaching resources, the execution of multimodal translation projects, and the use of digital tools. The wide application of multimodality offers a variety of vivid translation cases, allowing students to experience the diversity of translation in real-world scenarios. For instance, through translation exercises involving movie clips, news reports, and advertising materials, students can learn the methods for translating different types of texts. Project-based learning, such as subtitle translation and game localization, further enhances students' practical abilities and innovative thinking. By utilizing tools like translation software, online dictionaries, and corpora, students can engage in independent learning and collaboration, mastering modern translation techniques. Multimodal teaching stimulates students' interest and develops their ability to integrate linguistic and non-linguistic symbols. It also promotes personalized learning, enabling students to select suitable learning materials and methods according to their needs. This approach provides strong support for cultivating translation talents in the new era.*

Keywords: *Multimodality; Translation teaching; New era*

1. Introduction

With the in-depth development of globalization and informatization, the importance of translation in cross-cultural communication has become increasingly prominent. Translation teaching, as a vital means to cultivate high-quality translation talents, is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Traditional translation teaching methods are text-centered, often overlooking the importance of multimodal information in the actual translation process. Translation teaching in the new era needs to align with social development trends and introduce more diversified teaching methods to meet the demands of modern translation practice.

As an innovative teaching approach, multimodality has gradually garnered extensive attention from both academia and industry in recent years. The multimodal theory emphasizes the synergistic effect of multiple symbol systems—such as text, image, and sound—in the construction of meaning, offering a new perspective and methodology for translation teaching. By incorporating various media materials, teachers can help students thoroughly understand the context and cultural background of the source text, cultivating their cross-cultural communication skills and critical thinking abilities.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the application of the multimodal approach in translation teaching, analyze its theoretical basis and advantages, and propose specific implementation strategies. Under the guidance of the multimodal teaching model, teachers use images, audio, video, and other media materials to help students comprehend the multiple information of the source text, thereby enhancing their translation abilities.

Driven by digitalization and intellectualization, translation teaching must continually innovate to address increasingly complex translation needs. The multimodal approach not only offers new

perspectives for translation teaching but also provides strong support for cultivating translators who can meet the demands of the new era.

2. Multimodality Theory

Multimodality is a theory that emphasizes the synergistic role of different semiotic systems in the process of meaning construction. While traditional linguistic researches mainly focus on the linguistic symbol system, multimodality theory expands this perspective, arguing that human communication relies not only on language but also on a variety of symbolic modalities such as visual, auditory, and tactile senses. Multimodal theory posits that in communication, words, images, sounds, gestures, and other modalities work together to build a complete system of meaning.

Multimodal theory has been increasingly applied in the field of education. Traditional teaching methods rely heavily on text and verbal explanations, whereas multimodal teaching enhances students' learning experiences and comprehension through multiple media, such as images, video, and audio. Multimodal teaching methods can adapt to students' different learning styles and needs, thereby improving learning outcomes. For example, in language teaching, multimodal resources such as movie clips, music, and pictures help students understand the cultural background and context of the language more intuitively, enhancing their learning interest and effectiveness.

In translation teaching, the application of multimodal methods is particularly important. The metafunctions of language extend to visual images, which are seen as having representational, interactive, and compositional meanings.^[1] Visual images may have different translations in different cultures and contexts, so translation is not merely the process of converting text but also involves cross-cultural communication and understanding. The multimodal approach helps students comprehend the background information of the source text more comprehensively and develop their cross-cultural communication skills. For instance, by analyzing movie subtitle translations, students can understand the cultural differences and linguistic features in the original text, leading to more accurate translations.

Moreover, the multimodal approach provides rich resources for translation practice through various media materials such as images, audio, and video, thereby enhancing students' practical abilities. The integration of new media and translation has significantly expanded the scope of translation, extending it beyond traditional text to include images and audio-visual discourses. This convergence greatly broadens the content and forms of translation.^[2] Teachers can facilitate the application of learned concepts in real-life situations through practical cases and project-based learning, ultimately improving students' translation skills and competencies.

3. Applications of Multimodal Translation Teaching

Various modalities of translation provide a wide range of translation teaching resources, facilitating changes in teaching methods. Participating in real translation projects is a crucial way for students to quickly and comprehensively enhance their translation skills.^[3] Therefore, different translation cases help students grasp different translation skills.

3.1. Film and Television Translation

Film and television translation is one of the most widely used fields for multimodal application. Film and television works, including movies, TV dramas, and documentaries, involve the translation of not only text but also multimodal information such as audio and video. Visual symbols are more polysemous than textual symbols and are more susceptible to misinterpretation during encoding and decoding due to cultural differences.^[4] Subtitle translation and dubbing translation are the two main forms of film and television translation.

Subtitle translation is a process that transforms foreign language dialogue into target language text, typically displayed at the bottom of the screen. Multimodal analysis is particularly important in subtitle translation because viewers rely not only on textual information but also on images and sounds to understand the plot. Translators must consider multimodal factors such as the context of the dialogue, characters' facial expressions, and actions to provide an accurate and vivid translation.

Dubbed translation, on the other hand, involves transforming audio dialogues from the original language to the target language. This form of translation requires the translator to not only translate the

linguistic content but also match the character's emotional expression and sound effects. The translator needs to convey the intent of the original work through the intonation, rhythm, and emotion of the voice to ensure that the audience receives a viewing experience similar to the original. For instance, when translating the subtitles of the movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", the translator needs to fully consider the action scenes, characters' dialogues, and background music in the film. The martial arts scenes in the movie have a fast pace, and the subtitle translation must be concise and clear so that the audience can quickly grasp the dialogues in a short period. Additionally, the cultural background and metaphors in the characters' dialogues need to be conveyed to the target audience through appropriate annotation or rewriting in the translation. This allows the audience to appreciate the depth and richness of the film.

3.2. Game Localization

Game localization is the process of converting game content from one linguistic and cultural environment to another. Game localization not only includes text translation, but also involves multimodal information of images, sounds and interactive interfaces. Text in games usually appears in interface elements such as dialog boxes, menus, and task descriptions, while images include visual elements such as game characters, scenes, and props.

The application of multimodal translation in games is evident in several key areas: interface translation, plot translation, sound effects, and dubbing. Firstly, translating game interfaces involves ensuring that text adapts to varying word counts in different languages while maintaining aesthetic appeal and readability on screen. Secondly, translating game plots requires consideration of multimodal elements such as character dialogues, storyline progression, and setting details to accurately convey the emotions and narrative style of the original work. Thirdly, localizing sound effects and dubbing involves adjusting to the target language's characteristics to harmonize sound and visuals, enhancing player immersion. For instance, in localizing "The Witcher 3", the translation team not only translated extensive dialogues and descriptions but also adjusted game interface text and sound effects. Magical terms and place names retained their unique cultural contexts in translation, while voice actors reproduced characters' personalities and emotions through performances, ensuring the localized game offered an experience akin to the original.

3.3. Advertising and Marketing

Advertisements typically utilize multiple modalities such as images, text, sound, and video to convey information. Translating advertisements involves not only converting linguistic content but also considering cultural differences and market demands.

Multimodal strategies in advertising translation primarily focus on cultural adaptation, visual design, and video synchronization. Firstly, advertisements must be culturally adapted to resonate with the target market, ensuring content relevance and audience engagement. For instance, humor, symbols, and color meanings in specific cultures require careful adjustment in translation to prevent cultural misunderstandings or discomfort. Secondly, coordination between images and text is essential to maintain visual coherence in translated advertisements. When translating poster ads, adjustments in text placement and font size are necessary to preserve aesthetic appeal and effectively convey the message. Thirdly, translating video advertisements involves synchronizing sound effects and dubbing to maintain harmony between audio and visuals. For example, in TV commercials, dubbing and background music is re-produced to match the rhythm and tone of the target language.

3.4. Website and Software Localization

Website and software localization encompasses text, images, videos, and interactive interfaces. This process ensures user experience and cultural adaptation are well integrated. Firstly, harmonizing text and images in website and software interfaces is crucial to adapting content for different languages while maintaining interface aesthetics and usability. For instance, in localizing an e-commerce site, product descriptions and image captions are adjusted to facilitate user accessibility. Secondly, translating video and audio content ensures comprehensive understanding through multimodal information. For example, in localizing software tutorials, re-recording audio explanations and adding subtitles optimize their browsing experience. Multimodal translation ensures the website delivers high-quality services and information to global users effectively.

4. Strategies of Multimodal Translation Teaching

Implementing multimodal translation instruction requires a strategic combination of approaches to achieve optimal results. Various teaching elements in class should be taken into account when design teaching methods. (see Table 1)

Table 1: Multimodal elements in translation teaching

Teaching Element	Skill Enhancement
Text	Language translation
Image	Visual comprehension
Audio	Listening recognition
Video	Multisensory integration
Digital Tool	Technical application

Four key strategies can enhance translation teaching:

Firstly, integrating multimedia teaching resources in classrooms enriches learning experiences. Teachers utilize diverse materials like movie clips, news videos, and advertisements. For instance, translating scenes from “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” helps students grasp cultural nuances, enhancing translation accuracy.

Secondly, engaging students in multimodal translation projects fosters practical skills and innovation. The project-based learning model aids in developing and enhancing learners’ cognitive, comprehension, and receptive skills.^[5]Project-based learning, such as subtitle translation or game and software localization, immerses students in real-world translation challenges. For example, subtitle translation projects expose students to diverse languages and cultures, cultivating their cooperation abilities and cross-cultural communication.

Thirdly, leveraging digital tools is indispensable in modern translation education. Tools like translation software, online corpora, and virtual reality aid teaching and boost learning outcomes. Using Trados, for instance, improves translation consistency and efficiency through translation memory.

Fourthly, promoting interactive learning and collaboration enhances student engagement and critical thinking. Group projects and online forums like Moodle facilitate peer learning and evaluation, which allows students share ideas flexibly beyond the limits of time and space.

Multimodal approaches significantly enhance students’ interest, engagement, and translation abilities. Students can also develop critical thinking, imagination, and creativity through the integration of multimodal resources. Moreover, personalized learning empowers students to flexibly choose learning materials and methods aligned with their preferences, which is crucial for cultivating high-quality translation talent in the contemporary era.

5. Conclusions

Multimodal theory introduces fresh perspectives and methodologies into translation teaching, enhancing educational outcomes and nurturing proficient translators. As information technology continues to advance, the prospects for multimodal translation teaching are promising, offering crucial support for the reform and advancement of translation education in the modern era.

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