



The Current Situation and Effect of Body Language in Junior Middle School English Teaching

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Abstract: *In addition to vocal language behavior, teachers also need body language to assist teaching and communicate emotions. In order to understand the current situation and effect of body language used by junior middle school English teachers in the classroom, this study conducted a questionnaire survey of junior middle school English teachers in a district of Hebei Province, and conducted an interview with an English teacher in a school. It was found that junior middle school English teachers would consciously use body language in classroom teaching, but most of them had insufficient theoretical understanding of body language; Teachers of different teaching ages use body language with different frequencies, with more experienced teachers and less young teachers; Teachers' body language can affect students' classroom participation.*

Keywords: *body language English teaching strategies*

1. INTRODUCTION

Body language refers to the use of body changes in communication, such as expression, movement, posture, body space distance, and other nonverbal symbols as an auxiliary tool for transmitting information and exchanging thoughts and feelings. With the continuous progress and development of body language research, there are many concepts about body language. Luo Qiuming emphasized that body language is a kind of silent language that transmits information through the changes of human facial expressions and body movements (Luo Qiuming, 2000). Zhang Zhiguang believes that if people use eyes, facial expressions, gestures, body movements and the distance between people to exchange ideas, express feelings, transmit information and conduct social communication, then this method and means are collectively called body language (Zhang Zhiguang, 1996:260). Zhou Guoguang believes that body language is a complete set of pictorial symbols issued by human beings and also capable of expressing their feelings, which covers the changes of human facial expressions, posture, body movements and body positions, and is one of the most effective means of human communication (Zhou Guoguang, 1997:82). According to Zhang Ke, body language is a set of symbols that can convey feelings and ideas composed of people turning around and their appendages (Zhang Ke, 2010:3). Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing also pointed out that when using a language for communication, we usually use the body language corresponding to that language (Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing, 1999:198-201). At the beginning of the 1990s, some scholars published articles on teachers' body language in authoritative journals such as Education Review and Education Science, which represented the trend of people's research since then. Since then, scholars have either devoted a special chapter to the teacher's body language in their works, such as The Art of Teaching (Li Rumi, 1995), or systematically discussed the teacher's body language in the form of a monograph, such as The Art of Teacher's Body Language (Li Zhencun et al., 1993).

Through the investigation of literature, we found that 504 core journals were included in the search topic "body language". In recent years, the total number of literature publications showed a downward trend, and the observation of literature found that most of the included articles were related to music and dance; Search for the topic "body language in English teaching", and the core journals are rarely

included, which proves that this field has not received enough attention and needs further research. The study of body language as an independent discipline began after the 19th century. In the 1950s, American scholars began to conduct scattered research on teacher body language. In the 1960s, there was a series of discussions on the status and role of teachers' body language (Rivers,1961). In the 1970s and 1980s, not only theoretical discussions were carried out, but also certain empirical studies were carried out (such as Keith,1970; Weinstein&Smith,1972; D. Child; Woolfolk et al.,1976). Similarly, in the 1980s, domestic scholars began to combine their subject areas with body language, striving to study body language from a new perspective, and gradually began to enrich the research and development of body language, such as Wang Xiangfu's "Magic Silent Language". Geng Erling (1988:23-65) introduced in detail the role of body language, the skills that should be paid attention to when using it, and the relationship between body language and culture in his Introduction to Body Language. In this book, he introduced a large number of Han body language with examples. Zhou Guoguang and Li Xiangnong (2017) introduced body language and an introduction to body dynamics in detail in their book Body Language of the Chinese People, and studied the common body language of the Han nationality in China from the perspective of linguistics. There is a consensus on the effect of body language in teaching, but the research on body language in junior middle school English teaching is still relatively limited and shows a downward trend year by year. In order to understand the latest situation and effect of body language used by junior high school English teachers in the classroom, this study analyzes and summarizes the current situation, existing problems and reasons of body language used by junior high school English teachers through questionnaires and interviews with teachers, and puts forward targeted improvement strategies, so that junior high school English teachers can further improve their level of nonverbal communication in the teaching process.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: (1) What is the current situation of body language teaching used by junior middle school English teachers? (2) How effective is the use of body language teaching by junior high school English teachers?

2.1. Research Object

The subjects of the experiment were 110 English teachers of different teaching ages in a junior middle school in a district of Hebei Province. (The following figure shows the cross table of gender and teaching age)

			Teaching age				
			0-3years	3-8years	8-12years	more than 12 years	Total
Gender	Male	Number	50	7	4	8	69
		Percentage of Gender	72.5%	10.1%	5.8%	11.6%	100.0%
	Female	Number	35	3	1	2	41
		Percentage of Gender	85.4%	7.3%	2.4%	4.9%	100.0%
Total	Number		85	10	10	5	110
	Percentage of Gender		77.3%	9.1%	4.5%	9.1%	100.0%

2.2. Research Methods

In order to make the obtained information about the current situation of body language use and its existing problems as well as the relevant information and materials in the process of junior middle school English teachers' classroom teaching more objective, authentic and reliable, this paper uses a variety of research methods to investigate the current situation of body language use by school teachers in the process of junior middle school English teaching, such as interviews, questionnaires, and so on.

First, Questionnaire. Before the survey, a detailed, objective, scientific and complete questionnaire was prepared. On this basis, the questionnaire was finally determined as 15 multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire is divided into the following dimensions: questions 1-3 mainly investigate the understanding of body language teaching by junior middle school English teachers; Questions 4-8 and 10 mainly investigate the use of body language by junior high school English teachers in classroom teaching; Questions 9 and 11-12 mainly investigate whether teachers will consciously pay attention to the impact of body language on classroom teaching; The 14-15 questions mainly investigate the basic information of different teachers.

Second, Interview. During the survey, an English teacher was interviewed. The interview mainly covered the use of body language by the English teacher in junior middle school English classroom teaching and their views on body language teaching.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Current Situation of Body Language Teaching Used by Junior High School English Teachers

The current situation of body language teaching by junior high school English teachers is mainly explored from three dimensions: teachers' understanding, use and effect of body language teaching. First of all, the survey results of junior high school English teachers' understanding of body language teaching are shown in Tables 1 and 2:

Table1. Frequency of understanding of body language Questionnaire

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effectiveness	Know a lot	19	17.3	17.3	17.3
	General understanding	71	64.5	64.5	81.8
	Unclear	20	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table2. Frequency of reading body language related literature

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effectiveness	Never	50	45.5	45.5	45.5
	Seldom	40	36.4	36.4	81.8
	Occasionally	19	17.3	17.3	99.1
	Always	1	.9	.9	100.0
	总计	110	100.0	100.0	

According to the above table, only 17.3% of junior high school English teachers know body language teaching well in terms of their understanding of body language; In terms of reading relevant body language teaching books, only 18.2% of junior high school English teachers occasionally or often read relevant books or materials; This shows that, on the whole, junior high school English teachers have a weak awareness of the application of body language in classroom teaching, and their understanding is far from enough; Teachers lack theoretical guidance on body language teaching and seldom guide their own body language teaching by reading literature and materials.

Secondly, the survey results of the degree of body language used by junior middle school English teachers in classroom teaching are shown in Tables 3 and 4,

Table3. Frequency of teachers using body language for teaching questionnaire

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effectiveness	Never	11	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Seldom	38	34.5	34.5	44.5
	Occasionally	47	42.7	42.7	87.3
	Always	14	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table4. *Frequency of teachers using body language for teaching design*

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effectiveness	Never	24	21.8	21.8	21.8
	Seldom	30	27.3	27.3	49.1
	Occasionally	50	45.5	45.5	94.5
	Always	6	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from Table 3 that only 12.7% of the 110 junior middle school English teachers surveyed in the area often use body language for classroom teaching. From Table 4, we can see that nearly half of the junior middle school English teachers do not or rarely plan some actions in advance when preparing lessons, and only 5.5% of junior middle school English teachers often design some action expressions in advance to carry out classroom English teaching, Only a small number of teachers consciously prepare lessons in advance for body language teaching. It can be seen that in English classroom teaching, teachers use body language to organize and control classroom teaching less frequently.

The survey results of whether teachers pay attention to the use and effect of body language teaching are shown in Tables 5:

Table5. *Can body language better help students understand classroom frequency questionnaire*

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effectiveness	Ys	95	86.4	86.4	86.4
	No	11	10.0	10.0	96.4
	Without Attention	4	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

From Table 5, we can see that 86.4% of the teachers think that in junior high school English classroom teaching, teacher body language can help students understand the classroom teaching content more. Another question shows that more than 70% of junior high school English teachers believe that using body language teaching has the following four major effects: first, using body language teaching can maintain classroom order, second, can understand whether students master knowledge, third, using body language teaching can remind students to listen carefully to class, and finally, using body language correctly can encourage students to speak.

3.2. About the Effect of Body Language Teaching by Junior Middle School English Teachers

In order to obtain more information about the effect of body language teaching by junior high school English teachers, this paper interviewed an English teacher with a long teaching experience during the survey. Before the interview, the teacher was introduced to the relevant theories of body language. The following is the relevant content of the interview.

Q: Do you think it is necessary to use body language in junior high school English classroom teaching? Why?

A: I personally think it is very necessary. In our English classroom teaching, especially under the new curriculum reform, we pay more attention to the cultivation and development of language learners' applicability and communicative ability, and body language has an unshakable position as a means of auxiliary language. For many years, I have often used the method of first demonstrating and then guessing words in teaching to let students understand the meaning of words in their actions. For example, when I teach fly, cry, jump, sad, loud and other words, I first demonstrate these actions, and then let students do these actions while talking. Students will soon grasp and understand these words. In this way, the classroom atmosphere is easy to reach a climax, students will accept faster in the classroom, and memory will also be stronger.

Q: Do you think the use of body language can improve students' enthusiasm for English learning?

A: Of course. I remember one time when I was teaching students to distinguish the words "hear" and "listen", I held my hand in the shape of a earpiece and asked a classmate to speak to me. Then I put my hand in my ear and said, "I listen.". I pretended not to hear what the students said, then frowned and shook my head and said: I hear nothing. This not only avoids boring and lengthy explanations that make students feel dull and boring, but also saves time and is easy to understand.

Q: Do you think there are any other effects of body language teaching in the classroom?

A: In addition to improving students' enthusiasm, it can also increase the emotional exchange between teachers and students. If we have no expression in class, it will make students feel boring; On the contrary, if the teacher smiles and speaks with rich expression, the students will also be affected by the teacher's emotion. Of course, I think body language can also cultivate students' psychology. Junior high school is an important period for students' psychological maturity. So when teaching, a smile and a look of praise can make students feel confident.

Through the interview with the teacher, we can see that the teacher is very sure of the effect of using body language in teaching. Through various and flexible body language, the teacher can optimize the teaching effect of the same classroom in junior high school, create a relaxed teaching atmosphere, mobilize the enthusiasm of students to participate in the classroom, and improve the learning happiness of junior high school students.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS TO USE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM TEACHING

4.1. Improve the Understanding of Body Language Teaching and Strengthen the Mastery of Body Language Related Theoretical Literature

Body language is a compulsory course for every teacher, which is particularly important for junior high school English teachers. A comprehensive and profound understanding of body language is the prerequisite for teachers to better use body language. In view of the current situation of teachers' one-sided understanding of body language, first of all, schools can carry out relevant body language teacher training. In the questionnaire of 110 junior high school English teachers, more than 60% of teachers said that they would actively participate in the relevant body language teacher training organized by the school; Secondly, teachers can observe the body language teaching of other excellent teachers and exchange their experience in using body language. In the author's questionnaire, the question designed by the author: Did you pay attention to the teacher's body language when watching other classrooms or watching teaching videos? In response to this question, more than 50% of junior high school English teachers rarely pay attention to their body language. Only 19 of the 110 junior high school English teachers surveyed often pay attention to their body language. Finally, teachers should also take the initiative to consult the relevant body language literature, strengthen the mastery and understanding of relevant theories, and make teachers fully understand and familiar with body language through various forms, so as to lay a foundation for better use of body language in micro-class to improve teaching effect.

4.2. Carefully Design Body Language in Combination with Teaching Content

Junior high school English is a subject with its own characteristics. It mainly takes words, phrases, sentence patterns, stories and some interesting materials as its content. It is the content that is vivid and concrete and close to life. Most of it can be used for vivid and intuitive teaching through body language. When preparing lessons, teachers should carefully design the corresponding body language, combine facial expressions, eyes and body posture to demonstrate to students, so that students can better understand the teaching content. Short dialogues and stories can also be taught through acting. Teachers and students can act with love, truly implement the new curriculum concept of "learning by doing, learning by playing", and let students actively participate in the classroom.

4.3. Avoid the Use of Negative Body Language

The appearance of negative body language will inevitably divert students' attention and affect the classroom teaching effect. Some negative body language is due to the randomness and habit of teachers' use of body language. Teachers should strengthen reflection, remind themselves at all times, and avoid the negative impact of using negative body language on students. The author also investigated the use of negative body language by junior high school English teachers in the questionnaire. 49.2% of teachers said they would not criticize students with their fingers, which means that most teachers pay more attention to the impact of their body language on students and try to avoid the use of negative body language.

5. CONCLUSION

By investigating the current situation of body language used by junior high school English teachers in classroom teaching, this paper finds that junior high school English teachers lack the knowledge of body language and do not have a comprehensive grasp of relevant theories; In junior high school English classroom teaching, body language is used less frequently; However, it is generally agreed that using body language in class will also have a positive effect on classroom teaching. Based on the above survey, this study proposes that junior high school English teachers can effectively use body language from the following aspects. First, teachers should improve their understanding of body language teaching, master relevant theories, and actively participate in teacher training; Second, teachers should carefully design the teaching according to the teaching content and design the body language in advance; Third, we should avoid the use of negative body language.

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