

# Exploration of High School English Audio-Visual-Speaking Course Design from a Multimodal Perspective

Xinqi Liu<sup>1</sup>, Hongyuan Wang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, Zigong, China

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence: School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China

**Abstract:** The audio-visual-speaking teaching approach leverages information technology to provide innovative ideas for the reform of English classroom instruction. This article, in conjunction with specific teaching cases, explores the instructional design of high school English audio-visual-speaking courses from a multimodal perspective, focusing on the four key segments: “Watch and think”, “Watch and find”, “Watch and explore”, and “Think and share”.

**Keywords:** Multimodality; High School English; Audio-Visual-Speaking

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, visual culture is omnipresent, placing higher demands on students' visual literacy. General Senior High School Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision) (Ministry of Education, 2020; hereinafter referred to as the “Curriculum Standards”) has expanded beyond the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to include the skill of “viewing” defined as the ability to comprehend meaning through graphics, charts, animations, symbols, and videos in multimodal texts [1]. Teachers are required to cultivate this viewing skill in students. However, in practice, some teachers merely have students watch materials without delving into the underlying information, thus failing to achieve the educational potential of video materials [2]. Multimodal discourse teaching, on the other hand, advocates the simultaneous use of multiple senses, exposing students to stimuli from various modal symbols such as text, color, images, audio, and video, thereby enhancing student engagement [3]. Therefore, this study explores high school English listening and speaking instruction from a multimodal perspective, aiming to provide some reference for high school English teachers in conducting audio-visual-speaking teaching.

## 2. Multimodality and High School English Audio-Visual-Speaking Instruction

### 2.1. Multimodality

The term “multimodality” can be broken down into its prefix and root from a morphological perspective, referring to the combination of multiple modalities. Kress & van Leeuwen [4] posit that a modality is the direct experience humans acquire through their senses (such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) and represents an interactive relationship with the external environment (including humans, plants, animals, machines, nature, and man-made objects). Zhu Yongsheng [5] defines modality as the mediums and channels of communication utilized by people, such as language, images, fonts, colors, audio, and various other symbolic systems; interaction using a single sense is called unimodal, using two senses is bimodal, and using three or more is multimodal. The “New Curriculum Standards” have contemporaneously introduced the concept of “multimodal” texts, encompassing spoken, written, and new media text types, as well as various literary forms. Multimodal teaching has evolved from the concept of multiple literacies, employing a variety of instructional methods such as pictures, audiovisual materials, virtual scenarios, and role-playing to engage learners' senses in the learning process, thereby enhancing students' enthusiasm for learning and effectively helping them adapt to and meet the challenges of linguistic and cultural diversity as well as diverse communication technologies [6].

### 2.2. The Audio-Visual-Speaking Teaching Method

The Audio-Visual-Speaking Teaching Method emerged in the 1950s, grounded in modern linguistics, psychology, and pedagogy. It fully utilizes contemporary teaching equipment such as the internet, video materials, audio facilities, and multimedia devices to simulate real-life scenarios. Presenting authentic life

situations to students enhances their language skills and proficiency [7]. This method is characterized by its strong intuitiveness, situational authenticity, comprehensiveness, and high level of engagement. As is widely known, the English language must be practiced in real contexts to achieve continuous improvement. However, students currently face difficulties in engaging in practical English training due to the lack of authentic English environments, making it hard for them to experience genuine English knowledge. The application of the Audio-Visual-Speaking Teaching Method, through the direct and realistic presentation of language communication scenarios, allows students to confidently use English in context and self-correct while listening to others. Precisely speaking, audio-visual-speaking instruction can accomplish contextual training that traditional language teaching methods cannot, bringing students back to the essence of language learning.

### *2.3. Multimodality and High School English Audio-Visual-Speaking Instruction*

There exists a close relationship between multimodality and high school English audio-visual-speaking instruction. Firstly, multimodality provides abundant teaching resources for high school English audio-visual-speaking instruction, such as expanding the sources of teaching materials and enriching the forms of language presentation. Secondly, multimodality optimizes high school English audio-visual-speaking instruction by creating authentic contexts and facilitating interactive teaching. Additionally, multimodality meets students' diverse cognitive needs and stimulates their interest in learning, aligning with the characteristics of high school students English audio-visual-speaking learning [6].

High school English listening and speaking instruction from a multimodal perspective can provide students with diverse learning experiences in the era of new media. This not only extends the traditional skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing but also enriches classroom interaction modes through multiple symbolic systems such as language, images, colors, and music, thereby enhancing classroom vitality. Various interactive activities also serve as important pathways for developing language proficiency, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning abilities. To achieve the improvement of students' core competencies in English, teachers must keep pace with the times, learn to develop diverse teaching resources, and utilize various auditory and visual means to enrich the content and forms of classroom instruction [4].

## **3. The Design and Implementation of Audio-Visual-Speaking Teaching Activities from a Multimodal Perspective**

This article takes the "Save Life on Earth" section from the Starting out part of Unit 6 Earth First in the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press Edition High School English Compulsory Book 2 as an example. The teacher primarily focuses on the teaching segments of Watch and Think, Watch and Find, Watch and Explore, and Think and Share to conduct audio-visual-speaking instruction from a multimodal perspective.

### *3.1. Analysis of Teaching Materials*

According to the "General Senior High School Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)", teachers interpret texts and design teaching activities from three dimensions: "what", "why", and "how".

**What:** The video content narrates a series of environmental issues currently faced by the Earth, presents data related to the environment, and visually demonstrates the severe situation humanity is confronting. The video abruptly ends with the message that the Earth needs our help and it is up to us to decide what happens next, prompting viewers to reflect on the relationship between humans and nature and how to protect the environment.

**Why:** The thematic context of this video is human and nature, involving the thematic content of caring for the Earth and environmental protection. By describing a series of environmental issues existing on Earth and concluding with the relationship between the Earth and humans and the need for our protection, the video enables students to understand the importance of environmental conservation, helping them to develop emotions, attitudes, and values that promote harmonious coexistence between human and nature.

**How:** The video uses a large number of statistics to illustrate environmental issues, highlighting the severity of these problems. Additionally, color changes, shifting from bright to grey, provide students with a strong visual impact, allowing them to more intuitively perceive the environmental issues.

### *3.2. Student Analysis*

The teaching subjects are students from a certain class in the first year of high school, whose English proficiency is at an intermediate level. The students in this class are generally cheerful and active in thinking, with a strong interest in English learning, and are eager to express their own opinions. They are relatively familiar with the topic of environmental protection and have initially mastered the ability to obtain key information from listening materials, but their listening skills need improvement, especially their ability to recognize numbers in English, which is very weak. Additionally, most students have a weak grasp of the “viewing” skill and are not proficient in using audio-visual methods to help them acquire information.

### *3.3. Teaching Objectives*

Based on the analysis of the teaching materials and students, the teaching objectives for this lesson have been determined. By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify significant environmental issues and their causes in videos and comics. They will enhance their ability to recognize numbers in English. Students will effectively apply viewing strategies, such as paying attention to scene transitions and color changes, to integrate visual and textual information. By understanding various environmental issues and through research and study, they will attempt to propose solutions, such as creating a poster to reflect on environmental issues and inspire their classmates to take action.

### *3.4. Teaching Procedures*

#### *Activity 1: Lead in*

Present a set of contrasting images showing the Earth before and after its destruction, and ask the students: “How do you feel?” “Can you use one adjective to describe the image?”. Require the students to observe the images and describe them. After the students respond, follow up with questions such as “So what caused this? And what should we do to improve the environment? To save our earth?” This will quickly lead to the theme of “protecting the Earth”.

**Design Intent:** By using a set of contrasting images, the students are given a strong visual impact, which also stimulates their interest in learning and taps into their existing knowledge. Through follow-up questions, the class can swiftly transition into the day's theme: “Save Life on Earth”.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** The students showed a strong interest in the topic and actively used adjectives to describe the two images, such as “dirty”, “terrible” and “polluted”, for the first image and “peaceful” and “beautiful” for the second image. They also engaged in enthusiastic discussions and shared their thoughts on the teacher's follow-up questions.

#### *Activity 2: Watch and think*

During the students' first viewing of the video, play the complete video without subtitles and ask them to answer: “What can you see in the video?” Require the students to describe anything they see or hear. After the students respond, ask again: “How do you feel?”

**Design Intent:** The first question primarily aims to cultivate the students' ability to acquire information through the combination of audio and visual elements, as well as to develop their “viewing” skills: paying attention to scene transitions and color changes. The second question is mainly to make students further realize that the Earth is severely damaged and urgently needs our protection.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** After the first viewing of the video, the students' feedback was positive. Some students noticed certain scenes and objects in the video, such as “Trees are cut down”, “Animals are killed” and “The water is very dirty”. Some students paid attention to the color changes in the video, where most of the video had high color saturation, but there were three or four places where the colors suddenly changed from bright to dull, with low brightness. When answering the second question, most students mentioned the words “terrible” and “shocking”, indicating that they have further recognized the urgent need for our protection of the Earth.

#### *Activity 3: Watch and find*

The teacher plays a portion of the video without subtitles and asks the students to fill out a table related to numbers. After the students complete the task, the teacher asks: “Which figure impressed you the most?” “And why?” Following the students’ responses, the teacher instructs the classmates to summarize the main idea of the video based on the video content and the information in the table. After the students answer, the teacher further inquires: “What caused these situations?”

Lead—in	Watch and think	Watch and find	Watch and explore	Think and share	Homework
Which figure impressed you most? and why?					
Fill in the figures					
1. Each day, around <u>150</u> to <u>200</u> species of plants and animals become extinct.					
2. over <u>1 million</u> animals are killed by ocean pollution each year.					
3. <u>1 billion</u> people don't have clean drinking water.					
4. A plastic bottle can take <u>450</u> years to break down.					
5. The ice caps are more than <u>50%</u> thinner than they were <u>40</u> years ago.					

Figure 1: Teaching Segment

**Design Intent:** The first task primarily aims to develop students’ responsiveness to English numbers. The question about numbers is intended to help students further recognize the severity of Earth's destruction through numerical data. Asking students to summarize the main idea of the video is mainly to cultivate their ability to acquire key information through the combination of audio and visual elements. The teacher’s follow-up question encourages students to gradually realize that humans are both the destroyers and victims of the Earth.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** Only half of the students were able to complete all the content in the table after listening, indicating that students are still not very familiar with expressions involving numbers, percentages, “billion”, and “million”. When asked about the most impressive number, most students answered “one billion”. They all mentioned that “one billion people don’t have clean drinking water. That sounds scary”. This shows that they have deeply realized the harm caused by Earth’s destruction to humanity. During the summary phase, most students, after the previous activities, were able to conclude that “Life on Earth is in danger”, indicating that they had grasped the basic content of the video well. In response to the final question, all answers revolved around human activities, demonstrating that they have gradually come to recognize that humans are both the destroyers and victims of the Earth.

#### Activity 4: Watch and explore

The teacher plays the last twenty seconds of the video without subtitles, then displays the subtitles from the video and asks the students to read aloud in unison: “All of these things will be gone. And we will be gone, too. Time is running out. Our planet needs our help. It’s up to us to decide together what happens next.” Then, the teacher asks the students: “What actions can we take?” and presents four comics from the text depicting different environmental issues.

**Design Intent:** By playing the last twenty seconds of the video and having the students read aloud in unison, the aim is to make them feel the urgency of protecting the Earth and prompt them to start thinking about actions they can take to protect it, setting the stage for the next question.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** The students read the last twenty seconds of the video aloud in unison and reflect on the teacher's question. They have transitioned from recognizing themselves as destroyers of the Earth in the previous stage to becoming active protectors of the Earth.

#### Activity 5: Think and share

The teacher organizes students to discuss the environmental issues depicted in the comics and their potential causes, providing examples. Subsequently, two students are invited to share their thoughts. The students are then divided into three groups, with each group selecting a different comic and tasked with

creating a poster following the framework: Problem—Causes—Solutions. Meanwhile, the teacher offers two suggestions: Tip 1: When we describe an environmental problem, we can illustrate it with some figures. Tip 2: When we seek solutions, we should consider many aspects. After inviting one group to share their work, the teacher presents an image and states, “Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets”, then asks the students: “What is the relationship between humans and the Earth?”

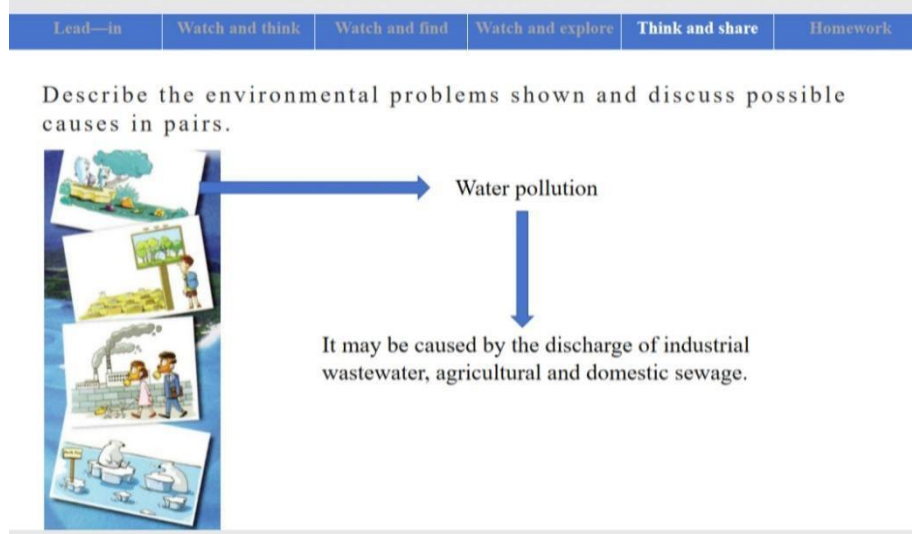


Figure 2: Teaching Segment

**Design Intent:** By providing examples and guiding students to discuss the environmental issues in the comics, the teacher builds a linguistic scaffold for the students. Through the poster design activity, students are helped to internalize the knowledge learned in this lesson and produce effective output. By posing the question about the relationship between humans and the environment, the teacher guides students to respond with “Human should respect and protect the Earth”, elevating the lesson’s significance and achieving the goal of educating through the curriculum.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** Students actively discussed and shared their thoughts on the environmental issues in the comics based on the teacher’s examples, especially during the poster activity, where they analyzed the issues from three perspectives: society, government, and individuals, following the teacher’s suggestions. During the sublimation stage, the students unanimously expressed the idea of “harmonious”. Under the teacher’s guidance, they also recognized that humans should respect and protect the Earth. This indicates that, through today’s lesson, the students have fully understood the concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, as well as the multiple roles humans play as both protectors and beneficiaries of the Earth.

#### Activity 6: Homework

The compulsory homework is to refine your poster and be ready to share in the next class. The optional homework is to collect new words and expressions related to environmental protection in our word bank.

**Design Intent:** The teacher assigns mandatory and optional homework based on the varying levels of the students, ensuring that each student’s abilities are utilized to their fullest potential. The mandatory homework helps students better consolidate the content learned in class, while the optional homework assists students in expanding their vocabulary related to environmental protection, facilitating better output.

## 4. Conclusion

The design of high school English listening and speaking instruction from a multimodal perspective is student-centered, utilizing multimodal teaching methods to create situational, content, and linguistic scaffolds for students. Through various forms of interaction—student-student, teacher-student, and student-learning media—students’ interest in learning is stimulated, guiding them to actively explore knowledge and skills, discover independently, and construct the meaning of what they have learned [4]. When applying the audio-visual-speaking teaching method, teachers can refine teaching objectives, ground them in authentic English

contexts, and provide students with related tasks, enabling them to complete these tasks through imitation, listening, and reading in an audio-visual environment.

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