



# The Teaching Strategy of “Viewing” in Senior English Teaching under the Background of the New Curriculum Standards

Tianyun Yang

School of Foreign Languages, West China Normal University, Nanchong, Sichuan, China.

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**Corresponding author:** Tianyun Yang, School of Foreign Languages, West China Normal University, Nanchong, Sichuan, China.

## Abstract

With the rapid development of information technology, various image based multimodal texts are increasingly used in language teaching. The English Curriculum Standards for Normal High Schools (2017 Edition) first proposed the skill of "viewing", emphasizing the cultivation of students' "viewing" skill in the new era, so as to improve students' understanding of graphics, tables and symbols in multimodal discourse in the multimedia era. In the current high school English classroom, the teaching of "viewing" has not been implemented, and there are many problems to be solved. In order to effectively improve the students' comprehensive language ability and truly integrate the teaching of "viewing" into classroom teaching, this paper proposes the training strategies for language skills "viewing" from four aspects: holistic teaching, practical activity design, resource development and application, and teaching guidance and evaluation. Limited by conditions, these four strategies are mainly from a macro perspective, with the purpose of providing reference for effective teaching of "viewing".

## Keywords

Senior English, "viewing", Teaching Strategy, multimodal text

## 1. Introduction

Entering the 21st century, with the development and popularization of various graphic information technologies, a large number of images bearing rich information have become an important communication medium in human life. Under the new era background, how to quickly identify, screen and understand the nonverbal symbols such as images has gradually become an important educational topic. Conforming to the development trend of the digital media era, the English Curriculum Standards for Normal High Schools (2017 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as the New Curriculum Standards) timely established "viewing" as an independent English language skill, clearly stating that "English subject language ability refers to the ability to understand and express meaning in social situations by listening, speaking, reading, reading, writing and other ways." As "the fifth skill", "viewing" not only puts forward higher quality requirements for today's English learners, but also adds a sense of the times to the New Curriculum Standards. Although "viewing" has appeared in the New Curriculum Standards for several years, how to effectively develop students' "viewing" skills in senior high school English teaching is still a huge problem. Most teachers often take "viewing" as a natural skill, which is often ignored in actual teaching. In the face of the above problems and challenges, the author believes that it is necessary to further explore the training measures of "viewing" in senior high school English teaching, so that it can be more operable and perceptible in actual teaching, so as to effectively improve the comprehensive language ability of senior high school English learners.

## 2. The Theoretical Basis and Necessity of "Viewing"

The New Curriculum Standards (2017) points out that "Viewing in language skills usually refers to the skills of understanding meaning by using figures, tables, animation, symbols and videos in multimodal discourse. In addition to using traditional text reading skills, understanding multimodal discourse also requires observing the information in charts, understanding the meaning of symbols and animation." It can be seen that "viewing" is directly related to reading multimodal discourse. Multimodal discourse refers to a discourse formed by using hearing, vision, touch and other senses to communicate through language, images, sounds, actions and other means and symbol resources (Zhang, 2009). As early as 1969, Debes put forward the concept of "visual literacy" internationally. Visual literacy refers to a group of visual abilities cultivated by human beings through viewing and simultaneously possessing and integrating other sensory experiences (Debes, 1969). This integrates the creation and communication ability of visual image into the comprehensive quality of people, and requires learners to have the ability to read, draw and use pictures.

Since then, the New London Group, entitled "A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures", pointed out that literacy education must now take into account the rapid development of text forms related to information and multimedia technology, and emphasized that the multiliteracies including multiple symbol systems (such as text, images, audio, etc.) should replace the traditional language and text centered literacy. The cultivation of cross cultural and cross modal comprehensive abilities is the direction of today's education reform (New London Group, 1996). The core requirement of diversified literacy is to be able to read, interpret, appreciate and create multimodal texts based on the characteristics of different cultures and media.

The theory of multimodal discourse analysis is another theoretical fulcrum of "viewing". Barthes put forward the concept of "image rhetoric" in an article on advertising image analysis in 1964, and explored how images and language interact to convey meaning together (Barthes, 1964); Kress and Leeuwen (1996; 2001) specially analyzed the multimodal phenomenon of language communication, including visual grammar, color grammar, etc. They believed that the visual symbols in images could reflect the objective and subjective worlds and express different interpersonal relationships.

## 3. The Training Strategy of "Viewing" in English Teaching in Senior High School

According to the reality of English teaching in senior high schools in China and the existing problems in teaching, this paper will discuss the training strategy of "viewing" from the following four aspects.

### 3.1 Combining language skills organically and implementing integrated teaching

The teaching of language skills is often not isolated, and the development of students' skills also has the role of mutual promotion and overall progress. As a new language skill, "viewing" has not only been used in the teaching of language knowledge for a long time, but also has a high degree of adaptability and mutual promotion with other traditional skills. In the teaching of language knowledge, images and graphics, as a visual means, have always been very effective auxiliary tools with direct and concise characteristics. The complex grammatical structure and lexical meaning of knowledge can be explained by simple strokes, concept maps or information maps to make students "view" and "understand", which can achieve the effect that can not be achieved by simply using language or text (Wu, Li, 2021). For example, when teaching unit vocabulary, compared with traditional text interpretation, the meaning of words can be presented in the form of images or videos. Visualizing the meaning of words is not only conducive to constructing the use scene of words, but also conducive to students' memory, reproduction and association of single words; When teaching grammar knowledge, we can use the mind map to connect the relevant structures and example sentences of the grammar, and show various usages in the form of lines at the same time, which is not only conducive to the overall memory of students, but also convenient for future review, leakage and filling. In the teaching of language skills, "viewing" is a bridge to combine various skills and an effective way to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. In the teaching of reading, the process from picture to text is helpful for students to generate the background of the article in their minds and understand the main scenes of the story. Compared with text reading, the combination of picture and text is more helpful to mobilize multiple senses, reduce cognitive load, and make students read more easily and thoroughly. A study by Weyers (1999) shows that learners receiving both visual and auditory stimuli can significantly improve their understanding of the target language. Based on this, in senior high school listening teaching, teachers should choose appropriate visual materials (such as pictures, symbols, videos, media, etc.) to help students coordinate vision and hearing to enhance information understanding and internalization. In the teaching of spoken and written expressive language skills, "viewing" can also be organically combined, for example. The input of information through images, charts, video screens, etc. can not only reduce students' expression anxiety, but also help activate their thinking and im-

prove their expressive skills in active participation.

### 3.2 Promoting the cultivation of "viewing" skills and designing comprehensive practical activities

The New Curriculum Standards (2017) emphasizes that "According to the actual situation of students, design various language practice activities from simple to deep, from easy to difficult; pay attention to the cultivation of micro skills in the process of listening, speaking, reading, writing and writing." In senior high school English teaching, teachers should not only realize that the application of "viewing" is everywhere, but also consciously use various visual means to activate students' knowledge schema and help students develop "viewing" micro skills. Among them, information conversion is an important method, which refers to the visual transformation of complex textual information into images, charts or videos that students can easily accept, so as to help them learn to decode, process and preserve new information better and promote the output of language. Concept maps and mind maps are common information conversion methods, which are characterized by visualization and cognitive tools. When designing practical activities, it should be clear that the relationship between modality and media is form and entity. Modal grammar determines what media to choose, such as visual grammar to determine the mutual cooperation between different visual media (Zhang, 2019). Furthermore, teachers can integrate "viewing" into listening, speaking, reading and writing activities to coordinate multiple modes and mobilize students' senses. Liu (2018) believes that the skills and strategies of "viewing" include looking at key points, looking at details, making inferences, selectively looking at, making predictions, etc. Based on this, this paper will take the compulsory unit 4 *Into the wild* of the 2019 senior high school English textbook of FLTRP as an example to discuss specific teaching activity design. This unit expresses the core theme of animal protection and harmonious coexistence between man and nature through the articles of *The Monarch's Journey* and *An Encounter with Nature* and various activities in the unit. In the Starting out module, the teacher can guide students to master some words and carry out the following reading training through playing unit videos and displaying textbook pictures to pave the way for the unit theme. In the understanding ideas and developing ideas modules, teachers can design a variety of activities, such as looking at the pictures to guess the general idea of the article and reading the article for comparison; playing the sound to guess the corresponding animal; watching videos on animal protection and talk about your opinions. These tasks involving listening, watching, reading and speaking can further exert the cooperative function of multiple modes and improve the participation in the classroom. In the Using language module, teachers can use concept maps to intuitively present and explain the usage and definition of adverbial clauses, and then combine the rich images, graphics and audio materials in the teaching materials with the skills training of "viewing", listening and speaking to help students master animal related idioms, complete listening comprehension and carry out oral debate activities about keeping pets. The present ideas module is mainly about written expression. Students are required to introduce films with the theme of human animal relationship. Students have been able to construct the thematic meaning of the unit through previous learning. At this time, teachers can intuitively display some film clips through multimedia equipment, organize group discussions to integrate information and independently complete the writing task.

### 3.3 Developing teaching resources and building a multimodal teaching situation

Multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of using hearing, vision, touch and other senses to communicate through language, images, sounds, actions and other means and symbol resources (Zhang, 2009). This theory holds that people's communicative behavior is the simultaneous use of two or more senses, for example, listening to a lesson is a simultaneous action of hearing and vision, which requires language teaching to fully develop multimodal resources and build a multimodal teaching situation. Multimodal teaching situation is based on multimedia technology, which helps stimulate students' multiple sensory systems, activate brain layers, and enable learners to experience the real target language environment, thus improving learning effect and learning ability. To build a multimodal teaching situation, we should first deeply develop the teaching material resources. Take FLTRP's 2019 high school English textbook as an example. A large number of visual elements such as images, graphics, videos are used in the textbook to reflect the concept of promoting reading by viewing. The starting out import module of each unit of the textbook has set up a background image, which visually displays the unit theme with visual stimulation, helping students form the first impression of the unit. These videos can expand the theme, show the customs of western countries, and cultivate students' cultural awareness. In the reading module, the pictures embedded in the textbook are also closely related to the theme of the article. They can be used to organize three activities: "before viewing", "while viewing", and "after viewing" to drive students' understanding of complex text information with visual information. In the Using Language module, teachers can present the lengthy grammar rules and their internal logical relations in the way of thought maps based on the existing images of the textbook, complete the mode conversion, so as to improve the accuracy of answers. In the Present ideas and Project modules, teachers can import activities from videos, illustrations and posters, guide students to

watch various visual materials, obtain information, so that students can expand their reading and cultivate their views, and then complete the expected project tasks through cooperative inquiry.

### 3.4 Strengthening teachers' instructions and innovating the evaluation system of "viewing"

The New London Group proposed four teaching procedures to promote the development of multiliteracies, among them, "overt instruction" includes the steps and requirements for guiding students' classroom activities, as well as the theory and knowledge about "viewing", which helps to solve the problem that teachers lack effective guidance in the process of "viewing". The goal of classroom teaching is not to instill knowledge, carry out mechanical training, and memorize mechanically, but to let students know the basic rules and procedures of communication, understand relevant knowledge, consciously control what they have learned, and understand where the focus is and where the focus information is (Zhang, 2012). The requirements for "viewing" in the New Curriculum Standards (2017) are as follows: "to grasp the general idea of daily life discourse and obtain the main information, views and cultural background through reading and watching; be able to understand the meaning of a text with the help of non literal resources in multimodal discourse." This points out the behavior and purpose that students use "viewing" skill to achieve, which helps us to build a better evaluation system based on this to systematically evaluate "viewing", develop a scientific and operable indicator system, and timely understand the gains and losses of teaching. However, the Course Standards does not specify the specific content requirements and objectives of "viewing", which requires teachers to exert their subjective initiative and further innovate the evaluation system. First of all, we need to design targeted teaching objectives. We can use the theory of visual perception as the basis to improve students' comprehensive abilities that are positively related to visual ability, including visual sensitivity, discrimination, memory, visual motor integration, visual spatial perception, concentration, visual breadth, audio-visual coordination, and observation. Liu (2021) proposed to evaluate "viewing" from two levels: comprehensively "viewing" and critically "viewing". Comprehensively "viewing" includes two aspects, namely, the attitude and behavior of "viewing" and the skills and strategies of "viewing". The former clarifies the mindset and attitude that learners should have in the process of "viewing", while the latter clarifies specific operational skills and practical activities. Critically "viewing" is related to the cultivation of students' thinking quality. Learners need to question and evaluate the content they view through questioning, brainstorming, hypothesis, reflection and other ways to form their own views and conclusions and be a critical observer.

## 4. Conclusion

The New Curriculum Standards lists "viewing" as a language skill as important as listening, speaking, reading and writing, which is not only in line with the trend of the times, but also the objective needs of training high-quality talents in the future. Today's classroom teaching is no longer dominated by language and text, but gradually turned to a multimodal, multimedia education mode in which images, words, sounds and other media play a role together. The advent of the image and digital era has brought more difficulties and challenges to senior high school English teaching. Facing the requirements of curriculum reform, our senior high school English classroom also needs to keep pace with the times and innovate with determination. "Viewing" is the most intuitive way for us to understand the world. Under the background of the New Curriculum Standards, the question of how to cultivate "viewing" deserves further study.

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