

# Applying Multimodal Discursive Resources to Enhance International Image Perception in Tertiary EFL Classrooms

Ying Ma

Changchun University of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Changchun, Jilin Province, China 130607

**Abstract:** Multimodal discursive resources, grounded in linguistic systems while integrating visual, auditory, video, kinesthetic, and environmental semiotic resources, transcend the constraints of monomodal discourse to significantly facilitate cultural dissemination and global mindset construction in tertiary EFL classrooms. This study, from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis, explores current status of tertiary EFL classroom teaching, elaborates on the intrinsic interconnections between multimodal discourse resources and international image perception, points out primary challenges in current deployment, and proposes actionable concrete strategies, aiming at facilitating tertiary EFL classrooms to leverage effectively multimodal discourse resources to guide students to cultivate sound international image perspectives while dynamically representing positive national narratives, thereby integrating linguistic education with liberal-humanistic literacy development.

**Keywords:** Multimodal Discursive Resources; Tertiary EFL Classrooms; International Image Perception; Implementation Strategies

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## 1. Introduction

As globalization continuously advances and cross-cultural exchanges progressively increase, international image perception has become a foundational competency for contemporary university students. Tertiary EFL classrooms serve as important platforms for cross-cultural communication and linguistic learning, imparting linguistic knowledge while emphasizing cultivating students' language application capabilities, and guiding them to critically view the world and cultivate evidence-based international image perspectives. Multimodal discourse resources are an important information transmission methodology in today's society, encompassing diverse forms (visual, auditory, tactile), enabling to convert abstract international image concepts into concrete and perceptible teaching content, empowering students to better comprehend the cultural characteristics, values, and development status of different countries <sup>[1]</sup>. However, current application of multimodal discourse resources in most tertiary EFL classrooms remains still superficial, and lack integrality and purposiveness, failing to effectively integrate linguistic teaching with international image perception cultivation, thereby resulting in relatively narrow and one-sided international image perception among students. Therefore, it is a critical exigency currently to study how to effectively leverage multimodal discourse resources to enhance students' international image perception in tertiary EFL classrooms and address existing challenges, enabling multimodal discourse resources to truly facilitate students' global mindset development.

## 2. The Intrinsic Interconnections Between the Core Connotations of Multimodal Discourse Resources and International Image Perception

International image perception refers to the capabilities to recognize, understand and evaluate the cultures, values, development status and national spirit across different countries and ethnic groups. Grounded in principles of cultural difference respect, rational cognition, and proactive dissemination, this process concurrently encompasses both the critical identification with one's motherland's international image and the nuanced interpretation of other nations' international image. A reciprocal embeddedness exists between multimodal discourse resources and international image perception cultivation in tertiary EFL classrooms—an interconnection that permeates and

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Author Profile: Ying Ma (b. 1997-), Female, Han Ethnicity, Native of Changchun, Jilin; Master's Candidate, Teaching Assistant; Research Focus: Discourse Analysis.

continuously reshapes the entire teaching trajectory. From a cognitive perspective, multimodal discourse resources can convert abstract international image concepts into concrete and visible representation forms for students, enabling them to overcome linguistic and cognitive barriers and gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a true international image. Emotionally speaking, rich and diverse multimedia materials can arouse students' interest and evoke resonance, propelling them to learn to appreciate different cultures and customs, put away all prejudices, and cultivate objective and just worldview. From an action perspective, multimodal discourse resources provide students with an opportunity for self-directed learning and a platform for self-expression. When using these materials for cross-cultural exchanges, they can enhance their international image perception and intercultural communication skills, thereby achieving the transition from "knowledge" to "action" [2]. Multimodal discourse resources are an effective channel to enhance students' international image perception. International image perception enhancement, in turn, propels students' better utilization of multimodal discourse resources to carry out cross-cultural exchange activities. The two dimensions complement each other and develop synchronously.

### **3.Current Deployment and Persistent Challenges of Multimodal Discursive Resources in Tertiary EFL Classrooms**

#### ***3.1 Epiphenomenal Resource Application with Inadequate Semiotic Depth Excavation***

Currently, epiphenomenal resource application persists in the majority of tertiary EFL classrooms, neglecting the exploration of the content therein and failing to integrate multimodal resources with international image perception. For instance, some educators only play English movies or display English pictures in class, without enabling students to experience the culture, values and national image characteristics embodied in them. Even though some educators show English news through audio data, they do not ask students to reflect on the attitude and viewpoints held in the news reports, thereby impeding the cultivation of students' just and rational global perspectives. Such practices have turned multimodal discourse resources into mere "decorations", losing their significance in conveying the international image to students and their efficacy in guiding them to view the world rationally, resulting in relatively narrow and superficial comprehension of international image among students [3].

#### ***3.2 Homogenized Resource Selection Lacking Pedagogical Differentiation***

Tertiary EFL classrooms suffer from observably homogenized resource selection, lacking pedagogical differentiation and diversity. Most multimodal resources selected by educators mainly focuses on the film and television works, music, newspapers and magazines from Western developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, while ignoring the cultural content of other regions and countries, resulting in students' global image perception confined to a few developed regions, and them failing to comprehensively understand the development status and cultural characteristics of various countries. Furthermore, the selected resources equally fail to align with the major fields, learning objectives, and cognition capacity, of different students. For instance, for students majoring in Business English, multimodal resources related to international business contexts are not provided to them, resulting in failing to guide them to enhance their interpretation of international image based on their own needs. For EFL students, these resources are either too difficult or too abstract, making it challenging for them to grasp the content, there failing to effectively foster students' learning motivation and proactive engagement.

#### ***3.3 Monolithic Application Models Devoid of Dialogic Engagement***

Current application models of multimodal discourse resources are relatively monotonous in university-level English teaching, adhering to a traditional didactic transmission paradigm characterized by teacher-mediated content delivery and student spectator passivity, lacking interactivity and participatory engagement. For instance, after educators play an English video, they simply ask a few questions and then end the class, without asking students to discuss, analyze the video content and express their own opinions, failing to enable them to think about the national image significance embodied by these resources. Although some educators have employed multimodal resources,

they have not designed targeted activities for students to participate in, thereby preventing students from integrating the knowledge they have learned with their understanding of the national image, making it difficult for them to achieve the integration of knowledge and action. Such a monolithic application model fails not only to arouse students' interest, but also to effectively cultivate their international image awareness and intercultural communicative competence.

### ***3.4 Disjointed Resources and Instruction Lacking Systemic Coherence***

Serious divorce persists between the application of multimodal discourse resources and university-level English teaching objectives and content, lacking systemic coherence and planning. Some educators do not have clear teaching objectives when using multimodal resources. They randomly infuse some relevant resources into classroom teaching, failing to effectively integrate them to conduct linguistic teaching and cultivate international image perception. Some other educators only occasionally use multimodal resources in a lesson, lacking long-term planning, making it challenging to forge a set of complete curriculum architecture, thereby resulting in fragmented and incomplete comprehension of international image among students <sup>[4]</sup>. Furthermore, insufficient multimodal discourse resource selection and organization capabilities of certain educators lead to the resources they choose are of varying quality, and even contain one-sided and biased content, not only hindering the enhancement of students' international image perception, but also readily enabling students to develop unsound international perspectives.

## **4. Implementation Strategies for Applying Multimodal Discourse Resources to Enhance International Image Perception in Tertiary EFL Classrooms**

### ***4.1 Excavating Resource Connotations to Achieve Signifier-Signified Dialectical Unity***

The primary efficacy of multimodal discourse resources is to convey discourse meanings and cultural connotations. When using them, educators should avoid employing epiphenomenal resource application model and excavate underlying international image information, integrating resource forms with teaching objectives and international image perception cultivation. For instance, when playing English movies, educators should not only ask students to watch movie scenes and learn English, but also encourage them to think about the traditional customs, value orientations, social life, and other aspects embodied in the films, so that students can understand the national image characteristics in the movies. When representing English pictures or posters, educators can guide students to observe the image layout, the color combinations, and the information they presented to understand the cultural significance and national spirit embodied therein, thereby enabling them to gain a deeper understanding. Furthermore, educators must strategically curate representative and prosocial multimodal resources aligned with instructional content, systematically minimizing exposure to biased or reductive materials while cultivating students' critical and equitable cross-national image evaluation disposition.

### ***4.2 Optimizing Resource Selection for Precision-Targeted Application and Diversified Repertoire***

For students with different academic backgrounds, learning needs and cognition levels, it is necessary to optimize multimodal discourse resource selection, enhancing their diversity and targeted relevance. On the one hand, educators should expand resource scope, adding the content on cultures, news, film and television works from Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions while using multimodal resources from European and American countries, cultivating students' multidimensional engagement with global diversity and cultural signatures while remediating epistemic gaps in cross-cultural cognition. On the other hand, educators should select targeted resources based on students' major fields. For instance, for students majoring in Business English, educators can choose multimodal resources related to international business negotiations and advertising campaigns of multinational companies, enabling students to master a language while understanding how enterprises to shape their own brand image in the international market. For non-English majors, educators can select some rudimentary and readily understandable multimodal resources that align more closely with daily living contexts, such as English short videos or documentary clips, to ignite learner agency. In addition, educators can also integrate current social hot topics to select some latest

informative or multi-modal resources related to these topics for students to refer to, enabling them to promptly grasp the latest changes in the international situation and enhance their international image perception. Educators should keep pace with the times, update the course content, improve the organization and presentation forms of the course content, emphasize intra-disciplinary knowledge integration and interdisciplinary integration, establish academic quality standards based on the course content and according to core competency development to guide and assist educators in grasping the depth and breadth of instructional delivery, and amplify the guidance efficacy by increasing academic requirements, pedagogical cues, and exemplar assessment cases, etc.

### ***4.3 Innovating Application Modalities to Augment Interactivity and Participatory Engagement***

It is essential to transcend the monolithic application model of “teacher demonstration and student observation”, diversify the application models of multimodal discourse resources, enhance the playfulness of classroom teaching and the learning motivation of students, and fully leverage students’ agency in the learning process. For instance, educators can employ the “group collaboration + multi-modal representation” model, where, under the guidance of educators, each group collects relevant multi-modal materials, conducts research and exchanges on a certain country’s international image, and then presents their views and insights on this issue in the form of PPTs, short video clips or sitcoms, assign some interactive activities, such as having students assume different roles based on the various types of information they have obtained to hold a debate on “How to correctly view a country’s international image” and “How to show China’s good international image to the world”, to prompt students to think actively and speak up bravely, and leverage online-offline combined method to establish diversified multimedia teaching environment for students to freely browse various types of multimedia materials during their extracurricular time and to conduct online discussions, thereby expanding the teaching content and enhancing students’ international image perception.

### ***4.4 Constructing Systemic Architecture for Deep Integration of Resources and Instruction***

It is essential to, based on university-level English teaching objectives, make a systematic application plan for multimodal discourse resources, enabling the resources to be organically integrated with the course content and objectives. On the one hand, it is necessary to design the application models for multi-modal discourse resources from diverse dimensions of English teaching (reading, listening, speaking, writing), such as using English pictures, charts, etc. in reading classes to assist students in understanding the international image significance embodied in articles, and providing audio and video resources in spoken lessons for students to imitate received pronunciation and learn about the linguistic characteristics and etiquette customs of different countries. On the other hand, it is necessary to make long-term teaching plans, integrating the application of multimodal discourse resources throughout English teaching continuum, forging a coherent holistic teaching framework, thereby continuously deepening and improving students’ international image perspectives. Finally, efforts should be made to amplify faculty training, improving their capabilities to select, organize and utilize multimodal discourse resources, enabling educators to flexibly use various types of multimodal resources to guide students in enhancing their international image awareness.

## **5. Conclusion**

Multimodal discourse resources are an important vessel for university-level English teaching in the new era. They have opened up a new channel for enhancing students’ international image perception. The diverse forms and visual presentation modalities of these resources can effectively eliminate language barriers and conceptual biases, enabling students to understand international image more comprehensively and deeply. Current application of multimodal discourse resources in tertiary EFL classrooms suffers from superficiality, homogeneity, one-sidedness and fragmentation, seriously constraining their functional efficacy in enhancing students’ international image perception. By excavating the resource connotations, optimizing resource selection, innovating application models, and constructing systemic architecture, etc., these strategies can address current application challenges, thereby

promoting the effective integration of multimodal discourse resources with university-level English teaching and international image perception cultivation. Tertiary EFL classrooms should fully leverage the advantages and characteristics of multimodal discourse resources, grounded in student needs, and based on their cognition level, to integrate linguistic learning with international image perception cultivation, enabling students to learn to respect different cultural backgrounds, view international images rationally, actively disseminate good international images, and become talents with intercultural communication skills and global consciousness. However, this study still has some limitations. Moving forward, more studies can be conducted based on concrete pedagogical cases to further explore the application models of multimodal discourse resources, and continuously improve and perfect these application models, providing more replicable insights for the reform in university-level English teaching and the cultivation of students' global mindset.

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