

Research on the Construction of Classroom Teaching Model for Primary School English Situational Conversation Based on *Embodied Cognition Theory*

Meng Zhang

School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu 610000, China

Abstract: Against the background of primary English curriculum reform, disembodied teaching defects widely exist in current situational conversation classes. Guided by *Embodied Cognition Theory*, this paper analyzes the logical fit between the theory and primary situational conversation teaching, summarizes four typical classroom teaching dilemmas, and builds a four-link closed-loop teaching model integrating virtual-real scene construction, multi-sensory hierarchical tasks, role-play communicative practice and process performance evaluation. Combined with a shopping dialogue teaching case, this study illustrates the model's implementation process. The results indicate that the model can activate students' multi-sensory experience, ease oral anxiety and cultivate students' practical communicative ability. It also supplements the research gap of embodied teaching targeting situational conversation and provides practical reference for frontline English teachers.

Keywords: *Embodied Cognition Theory*; Primary School English; Situational Conversation; Teaching Model.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards* (2022 Edition) clearly clarifies that primary English teaching should take cultivating students' comprehensive language application ability as the core goal, and all listening and speaking teaching activities must be carried out around authentic communicative contexts [6]. Situational conversation, as the main carrier to realize oral output training, runs through each unit of primary English textbooks. The core teaching goal of situational conversation is not to make students mechanically memorize fixed dialogue scripts, but to guide students to master functional sentence patterns and use them flexibly according to different communication objects and scene atmospheres in real life. However, long-term frontline classroom observation and relevant research surveys reflect that the actual teaching effect of primary school situational conversation is far from reaching the curriculum standard requirements, and the disembodied teaching phenomenon is widespread in daily classes.

Against the background of curriculum reform advocating experiential teaching, *Embodied Cognition Theory* provides a brand-new theoretical solution to solve the above disembodied teaching defects [3]. Different from the traditional cognitive view that regards learning as independent brain symbol operation, embodied cognition holds that all cognitive activities are based on the body's sensory experience and environmental interaction. Language acquisition is not a simple memory of text symbols, but a comprehensive experience process integrating seeing, listening, moving and speaking. In recent years, domestic educators have continuously applied embodied ideas to primary English teaching practice: Chen Ting (2021) explored the path of stimulating pupils' oral willingness by creating embodied language environment with children's songs and physical imitation [1]; Li Yinping (2026) applied TPR and scene theater to transform abstract grammar knowledge into physical experience [3]; Xia Shiyan (2026)

constructed immersive classroom framework based on virtual-real integrated resources [7]. Although the existing studies have confirmed the positive value of embodied teaching, most of the research achievements focus on vocabulary, grammar and after-class links, and there is a lack of systematic research specially targeting situational conversation, the core oral lesson type. In view of this research blank and the prominent practical problems in frontline teaching, this paper takes primary school English situational conversation as the research object, constructs a complete embodied teaching model under the guidance of embodied cognition theory, and puts forward operable implementation paths combined with specific teaching cases.

1.2. Research Significance

This paper systematically combs the internal logical matching relationship between *Embodied Cognition Theory* and primary school situational conversation teaching, clarifies why embodied experience is indispensable for primary pupils' dialogue learning from the perspective of children's cognitive development rules, and enriches the application research system of embodied cognition in the field of primary English listening and speaking teaching. Secondly, different from previous researches that only discuss fragmented teaching strategies, this paper builds a complete closed-loop teaching model covering scene construction, task design, communicative practice and evaluation mechanism, makes up for the deficiency of existing literature that lacks systematic model construction for situational conversation, and provides theoretical basis for subsequent related experiential oral teaching research. Finally, this paper combines the research results of immersive classroom and embodied subject education, expands the application boundary of embodied teaching theory in primary English dialogue teaching, and perfects the theoretical research framework of primary school situational communicative teaching.

2. Connotation of Embodied Cognition and Review of Domestic Relevant Studies

2.1. Core Connotation of Embodied Cognition

Embodied Cognition Theory subverts the mind-body separation view of traditional rationalist cognitive science, and was formally put forward by Lakoff and Johnson at the end of the 20th century [2]. The theory breaks the view that the brain is an independent symbol processing machine, and proposes three inseparable core attributes of cognitive activities: embodiment, situationality and dynamic interactivity.

First, embodiment is the fundamental attribute of cognition. All human understanding of things originates from the body's sensory experience and physical movement. The body is not a passive carrier of learning, but the core medium of cognitive generation. Tactile perception, limb movements, facial expressions and even physical emotional changes will directly affect the formation of memory and semantic understanding. For primary students who rely on intuitive thinking, abstract dialogue sentence patterns cannot form long-term memory only by reading; only by matching corresponding body movements and sensory experience can they establish stable connection between language and meaning [5]. For example, when learning the sentence "I want to buy apples", students' memory will be more profound if they cooperate with the actions of pointing at fruits and taking shopping bags.

Second, cognition has strong situationality. No cognitive activity can exist independently from the specific environment where it occurs. The generation and understanding of language are always bound to corresponding communication scenes. Isolated sentence recitation separated from life scenes can only form mechanical memory, and students cannot master the pragmatic function of dialogue [7]. Only when students are placed in a real or simulated shopping, dining and campus communication environment, can they truly understand under what scene and to whom each sentence should be used.

To sum up, the core enlightenment of *Embodied Cognition Theory* to primary English situational conversation teaching is: dialogue learning must get rid of static text recitation, take students' multi-sensory body participation as the core carrier, rely on real life scenes to carry out interactive communication activities, and realize the integration of seeing, listening, moving and speaking in the whole class.

2.2. Review of Domestic Relevant Researches

In recent years, with the deepening of primary English curriculum reform, more and more domestic frontline teachers and educational researchers have turned their research perspective to the application of embodied cognition in English classroom teaching, and formed a series of valuable research results, which can be divided into these major research directions.

The first direction focuses on the application of embodied ideas in primary oral English teaching. Chen Ting (2021) pointed out that the biggest obstacle restricting pupils' oral output is speaking anxiety, and teachers can build relaxed embodied language atmosphere by designing English children's songs, animal imitation games and daily free talk links [1]. By introducing fruit, animal and other life real

objects into class to enrich sensory stimulation, students' initiative of oral expression can be effectively stimulated. She also proposed that teachers should adopt encouraging evaluation language to reduce students' psychological pressure in embodied activities, which provides reference for the scene and activity design of this paper's model.

The second direction takes grammar, vocabulary knowledge teaching as the research carrier to explore embodied implementation strategies. Li Yinping (2026) believed that grammar rules are too abstract for primary students, and TPR body response method and scene theater can be used to transform grammar differences into differentiated limb rhythms [3]. She developed spatial teaching aids such as tense turntables and grammar coordinate blankets to realize the visualization of abstract language rules, which provides reference for the hierarchical task design and teaching resource development of this paper's model.

After sorting out the above literature, the research limitations are obvious: Most studies take vocabulary, grammar or after-class homework as the research object, few special systematic researches target situational conversation, the core oral lesson type; most papers only put forward scattered single activity strategies, without integrating scene, task, practice and evaluation into a complete, operable closed-loop classroom model; existing researches lack targeted teaching cases for daily dialogue themes such as shopping and greeting, and the operability of research conclusions is limited. This paper makes up for the above deficiencies and carries out targeted model construction research.

3. The Compatibility Between Embodied Cognition and Primary School English Situational Conversation Teaching

3.1. Compatible with the Core Objectives of Situational Conversation Teaching

The fundamental teaching objective of primary school situational conversation is to cultivate students' real-life communicative competence, rather than requiring pupils to memorize dialogue texts word for word [7]. The core of teaching evaluation should be whether students can select appropriate sentence patterns according to different scenes and communication objects to complete effective information exchange, rather than the integrity of recitation. *Embodied Cognition Theory* takes real scene experience and interactive task participation as the main learning way, which is highly consistent with this teaching goal. Under the guidance of embodied ideas, teachers build simulated life communication scenes, design role-play interactive tasks, and let students complete information inquiry, opinion expression and polite communication through physical cooperation. Students will naturally master the pragmatic scope of various dialogue sentence patterns in the process of immersive experience, and realize the organic integration of language knowledge and communicative application, so as to achieve the curriculum goal of cultivating students' comprehensive language competence proposed by the 2022 edition curriculum standard.

3.2. Compatible with Primary Students' Cognitive Development Characteristics

Primary students aged 8 to 12 are in the stage dominated

by intuitive concrete thinking, their logical reasoning ability is not fully developed, and they are difficult to understand abstract language rules separated from specific things [3]. They have obvious psychological preferences for games, performances and physical interactive activities; long-term static sitting reading will easily lead to learning weariness and concentration decline. Embodied situational conversation classes break the static classroom mode, integrate watching, listening, touching, acting and other multi-sensory activities into teaching links, and transform rigid text dialogues into interesting experiential games. Body movements can promote the secretion of dopamine and other positive emotional substances, relieve students' tension of speaking English in public, and stimulate their internal learning motivation. In the embodied class, shy and introverted students can express their ideas through body movements and group cooperation, gradually build oral self-confidence, which fully conforms to the psychological and cognitive development rules of primary pupils.

3.3. Compatible with the Transformation Trend of Primary English Classroom Teaching

The current primary English teaching reform advocates abandoning single flat electronic courseware teaching, and advocates building three-dimensional, life-oriented, digital integrated classroom communication space. Traditional situational teaching only relies on picture materials, which are flat and lack sense of reality, while embodied cognition guides teachers to integrate physical objects, life photos, thematic audio, short videos and lightweight VR/AR scene resources to build virtual-real mixed dialogue environment. Teachers can divide functional areas in the classroom according to dialogue themes, such as mini supermarket, restaurant and campus service desk, so that the whole classroom becomes a communicative scene instead of only relying on the electronic screen to present pictures.

4. Predicaments of Current Primary School English Situational Conversation Classroom Teaching

Combined with multiple rounds of classroom observation and the summary of domestic research literature, the widespread disembodied teaching problems in current primary school situational conversation classrooms are summarized into four aspects, and the internal root causes are analyzed respectively.

Superficial Scene Construction, Separated from Real Life Experience. Most teachers' situational creation work stays at the level of displaying pictures on electronic whiteboards before class, without combining physical props, life materials and audio resources to build immersive multi-sensory scenes. The scene content is divorced from pupils' daily life, mostly abstract textbook illustrations without real touch and auditory experience.

Disembodied Learning Process, Insufficient Multi-sensory Participation. The mainstream classroom procedure is teacher demonstration followed by collective reading and group recitation. Students keep sitting statically for a long time, lacking body imitation, gesture matching and role performance links. Language and body movement are separated, students can only memorize sentences by sound, and the memory effect is poor [3]. Root cause: Teachers lack

systematic understanding of embodied cognition theory, ignore the supporting role of physical experience on primary students' language memory; they worry that a large number of student activities will affect classroom discipline and teaching progress, so they reduce interactive performance links and adopt the simplest recitation teaching mode.

Mechanized Dialogue Tasks, Lack of Authentic Communicative Interaction. Class tasks are mostly fixed sentence pattern replacement exercises, with few open-ended creative dialogue, independent script writing and mini-drama performance activities. Students only repeat preset dialogue content, without the opportunity to respond flexibly to uncertain communication information, and cannot exercise real pragmatic ability.

Single Result-oriented Evaluation, Ignore Students' In-class Experience. Class evaluation only takes recitation accuracy and fluency as scoring standards, does not set evaluation dimensions such as classroom participation, body expression and group cooperation. Teachers rarely carry out real-time targeted descriptive feedback in class, and cannot track students' learning process.

5. Construction Path of Embodied Cognition-oriented Primary School English Situational Conversation Teaching Model

This paper constructs a four-link closed-loop complete teaching model, including virtual-real integrated embodied scene construction, hierarchical multi-sensory task design, role-based embodied communicative practice and process-oriented performance evaluation mechanism. Each link has clear operation steps and supporting resource suggestions, which are fully combined with the research conclusions of existing embodied teaching literature.

5.1. Build Embodied Conversation Scenarios Integrating Virtual and Real Elements

Centered on each unit's dialogue theme, teachers integrate multi-dimensional teaching resources including daily physical objects, life photos, scene posters, thematic audio clips, short videos and lightweight AR/VR materials to build immersive whole-class communicative space. Before formal teaching, teachers complete scene layout in advance, divide functional areas according to themes, and carry out multi-sensory warming-up activities assisted by short videos and physical props. Taking the shopping dialogue unit as an example, teachers can set up a mini supermarket area at the back of the classroom, place real fruits, stationery and other goods with price tags, and play soft shopping background audio before class to create a real market atmosphere. In the warming session, teachers combine core vocabulary and functional sentence patterns with corresponding body movements, such as stretching out fingers to point at goods when saying "How much is it?", taking shopping bags when saying "I'll take it", so that students can establish intuitive association between linguistic forms and real communicative behaviors [1]. For schools lacking digital equipment, panoramic printed posters and recorded audio can be used to replace VR materials to realize basic virtual-real integration. The scene construction link lays multi-sensory experience foundation for subsequent dialogue learning, fundamentally solves the problem of superficial and lifeless scenes in traditional classes.

5.2. Design Stepwise Conversation Tasks with Multi-sensory Integration

Teachers formulate three levels of hierarchical experiential tasks around the core communicative objectives of the unit, forming a complete progressive learning chain of sensory perception — physical imitation — pair dialogue — group creation [7]. The whole teaching process takes TPR total physical response method as the core support, matched with role cards and scene props to carry out interactive training, so as to realize synchronous integration of watching, listening, body movement and oral output. The three task levels are divided as follows: First, basic imitation task, students follow teachers to complete sentence reading and supporting body movements, realize the matching of language and physical expression; Second, intermediate cooperative task, two students form a group to carry out fixed dialogue practice according to role cards, focusing on the coordination of action and dialogue fluency; Third, innovative creation task, groups combine their own life experience to rewrite dialogue scripts and add independent interactive plots. Each level of task requires standardized classroom outputs such as dialogue drafts and group performance records to ensure step-by-step consolidation of students' dialogue ability. During task implementation, teachers patrol the whole class to give targeted guidance to introverted students and pupils with weak foundation, and timely affirm their small progress to enhance oral self-confidence.

5.3. Carry Out Role-based Embodied Communicative Practices

Teachers design diversified identity cards around life-related themes such as shopping, dining, daily greetings, campus guidance and family visiting, and organize group dialogue compilation and in-class mini situational drama performances. Equipped with matched scene props and pre-laid virtual-real scenes, students enter role identity to carry out authentic communicative behaviors including information inquiry, opinion sharing and polite communication, instead of mechanically reciting textbook scripts. After each group's performance, other students put forward optimization suggestions from the perspective of communication authenticity, body language coordination and dialogue rationality. In addition to in-class performance, embodied communicative practice can be extended to after-class homework: teachers assign life dialogue tasks, requiring students to combine family photos and daily supplies to complete English conversations with parents after class, so as to extend embodied experience from classroom to family life and realize knowledge transfer [2]. Taking the "visit relatives" unit as an example, students play children, parents and elders respectively, combine real family life experience to adjust greeting lines and bowing, hand-shaking and other body movements, making dialogue communication closer to real life.

5.4. Establish Process-oriented Embodied Performance Evaluation Mechanism

Abandon the single result evaluation mode only judging recitation accuracy, and construct a diversified evaluation system integrating teacher on-site observation, student self-evaluation and peer mutual evaluation. Four core standardized evaluation dimensions are formulated: scene participation enthusiasm, body language coordination degree,

oral expression fluency and group cooperative awareness. Teachers design special situational conversation class evaluation forms, record students' whole-process embodied learning behaviors including warming-up participation, task performance and role-play state in real time during class. After each group's communicative performance, students fill in self-evaluation and peer evaluation scales according to unified standards, focusing on whether body movements match dialogue content and whether communication response is natural and smooth. Teachers give targeted descriptive feedback after all groups finish performances, point out students' advantages in oral expression and body performance as well as specific optimization directions, guide students to adjust dialogue logic and body language in subsequent practice, and form a closed learning loop of "experience — performance — feedback — optimization" [5]. This evaluation mechanism changes the traditional single scoring mode, pays attention to students' learning process and emotional experience, and effectively stimulates pupils' initiative to participate in embodied dialogue activities.

6. Teaching Case Demonstration and Targeted Implementation Suggestions

6.1. Typical Embodied Teaching Case (Primary Shopping Situational Conversation)

Knowledge Objective: Master fruit and stationery nouns, and core functional sentences "Can I help you? How much is it? I want to buy...";

Ability Objective: Cooperate with partners to complete shopping dialogue with the assistance of props and body movements, and flexibly adjust expression according to simulated shopping scenes;

Literacy Objective: Eliminate oral anxiety, form the awareness of polite communication in daily scenes, and cultivate the habit of active expression in English.

6.2. Pre-class Embodied Preparation

Mini supermarket scene layout, real fruit and stationery props, printed price cards, customer and shop assistant role cards, shopping theme background audio, multi-level task sheets, process evaluation scale.

6.3. Five-stage Whole-class Embodied Teaching Process (40 mins)

Embodied Warming-up (5 mins): Play fruit English children's song, guide students to imitate picking, weighing and other limb movements while singing, activate visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses, carry out simple free talk about favorite fruits to relax classroom atmosphere.

Virtual-real Scene Perception (10 mins): Lead students to visit the mini supermarket scene in class, combine real goods to explain core vocabulary and matching body movements; teachers demonstrate complete shopping dialogue with props, students imitate actions and sentences sentence by sentence to build semantic association.

Hierarchical Multi-sensory Task Training (15 mins): First finish basic individual imitation task; then carry out pair fixed dialogue practice according to role cards; finally divide groups to rewrite shopping dialogue scripts and add bargaining, selecting goods and other independent plots.

Teachers patrol to give guidance to students with weak oral foundation.

Role-based Communicative Performance (8 mins): Each group goes on stage to carry out mini supermarket drama performance, students use goods props to complete authentic shopping communication, other groups observe and record performance details for subsequent mutual evaluation.

Process Evaluation & Classroom Summary (2 mins): Students complete self and peer evaluation according to the unified scale; teachers summarize common excellent expressions and typical problems in dialogue, assign after-class task: complete shopping dialogue with parents using household objects.

6.4. Case Effect Analysis

After adopting the embodied model for teaching, students' initiative to raise hands and speak increased significantly, few pupils keep silent in group activities; most students can match natural body movements with dialogue content, and can independently adjust sentences according to simulated shopping conditions, breaking the mechanical recitation state, which fully verifies the operability and teaching value of the four-link closed-loop teaching model.

7. Conclusion

Integrating *Embodied Cognition Theory* into primary school English situational conversation teaching can fundamentally break the long-standing limitations of static recitation and disembodied learning in traditional classrooms. Through four interrelated and mutually supporting construction paths, carrying out role-based authentic communicative practices and establishing process-oriented performance evaluation mechanism — this paper forms a systematic, operable closed-loop classroom teaching model.

The model takes primary pupils' multi-sensory body experience as the core carrier, links textbook dialogue content with real daily scenes, transforms mechanical sentence memorization into immersive interactive communication activities, fully excavates the educational value of students' physical participation, enriches pupils' in-class oral learning experience, effectively relieves their anxiety of speaking English in public, and improves their pragmatic awareness and independent real-life communicative competence.

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