Study on Discourse Markers Used by Teachers in Online TCSOL Classroom

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Abstract: The article selects the online Chinese teachers volunteers' comprehensive class video as the research object, through literature research, classroom observation, recording writing, corpus analysis and comparison of different teachers in class to discuss the category of class discourse markers, and found the problems when teachers use discourse markers in the online classroom, put forward the corresponding teaching advice and specification requirements. This paper takes the discourse markers of Chinese teachers in online teaching classrooms as the research object, and comprehensively analyzes the use of Chinese and English discourse markers by teachers in the classroom. The full text has four chapters: chapter 1 explains the reasons, research significance and literature review; chapter 2 defines and classifies the discourse markers in classroom language; chapter 3 addresses the problems of Chinese teachers in classroom discourse markers, and finally, chapter 4 summarizes the full text. The main conclusions of the whole article are: (1) the two Chinese teacher volunteers have the problems of single discourse marker style and redundant discourse marker in the use of discourse markers in the classroom. (2) Teachers should give due attention to discourse markers in the preparation before class and in the process of classroom teaching, and strengthen the self-monitoring awareness of the use of discourse markers in teaching.

Keywords: Online Teaching, TCSOL, Teacher Classroom Language, Discourse Marker

1. Introduction

1.1. Reasons for the Selection of the Topic

In natural language discourse, especially in conversation, we will use some words such as "um, good, this, ah" and so on, these words are in a flexible position, there is no fixed requirement, do not form a grammatical relationship with other components, and do not affect the semantics of the sentence in expression, and expressions like this are called "discourse markers". However, there are not many research results on teacher discourse markers in the academic community, and there are even fewer studies on Chinese teacher discourse markers. This paper selects Chinese teachers' discourse markers as research objects, hoping to make up for the lack of research in this field.

1.2. Significance of This Study

The first step of this study is to help Chinese teachers understand the concepts and characteristics and role of discourse markers, so as to consciously use discourse markers correctly. Secondly, this study helps students to better understand the teacher's discourse and form a rational understanding of the discourse markers, which can alleviate the fear of Chinese learners and improve the effect of learning to a certain extent. Third, this study helps standardize teachers' classroom language, thereby effectively improving the efficiency of classroom teaching.

1.3. Review of the Literature

The literature search showed that the scholar Qiuzhong Liao noticed the existence of discourse markers in the early 1980s in China, and described it as the "chapter connection component" [13]. The study of teachers' discourse markers in

the domestic academic circle first appeared in the English teaching field.

In recent years, the number of teaching research results for specific discourse markers is large. For example, Wenli He analyzed the language function and cognitive effect of "then"[9]. There are few academic achievements on teachers' language discourse markers in the Chinese language classroom. Shibin Huang analyzed the role of discourse markers in different class types of Chinese as a foreign language. [8]

To sum up, although there are many research achievements on Chinese discourse markers, most of them are studied as the teaching content of TCSOL, however, the specific research on teachers' discourse markers in Chinese classroom is not deep enough.

2. Definition and Category of Discourse Markers in Classroom Language

2.1. Definition and Characteristics of Discourse Markers

In the domestic linguistic community, the name of the concept of "discourse mark" is not uniform. As far as we can see, there are at least the following kinds of statements: discourse markers, discourse marks, pragmatic markers, discourse small words, yuan discourse, meta discourse markers, etc [1-4, 6-7, 10-11, 14-15]. However, we also see that the academic community is increasingly using the term "discourse marker".

For the convenience of discussion, on the basis of synthesizing the research results of various companies, this paper intends to define the discourse markers as:

Discourse markers are language expressions that do not express concepts or propositions in the process of human language communication, but can play a role in discourse organization.

In Chinese, "也就是说"、"由此可知"、"毋庸讳言" are typical discursive markers. Based on the existing research results and our analysis of the actual corpus, the characteristics of discourse markers can be summarized as follows:

1) Discourse markers have an advantage in oral communication;
2) The position of the discourse marker is not fixed;
3) There is no strict restriction on the nature of words, which can be conjunctions, exclamations, adverbs, pronouns, sketch words, etc.;
4) There are no clear requirements and norms for discourse marks in the form of units, which can be words, phrases or small sentences;
5) In terms of structure, discourse markers are separable and non-mandatory, and there are many isolated pauses before and after, and deleting the content will not affect the meaning of the core proposition;
6) Functionally, discourse markers are some words that play a pragmatic role in discourse, playing a role in starting discourse, connecting context, converting or ending discourse, etc.;
7) Discourse markers neither increase the propositional content of the discourse itself nor change the truth conditional meaning of the discourse, and do not play a morphological syntactic role in the sentence.

2.2. Definition and Categories of Discourse Markers in Classroom Language

2.2.1. Definition of Discourse Markers in Classroom Language

As a kind of discourse marker, classroom teacher discourse markers have the same structural, functional and formal characteristics as them. This paper defines the discourse markers of classroom teachers as follows:

The form of verbal expression used by teachers in the classroom to ensure the coherence of discourse and smooth teaching.

The frequent use of "比如说""然后""好的""是不是"and"我想说的是"in Chinese classrooms, as well as "so, and, well, you see and you know" in English, are commonly used in teachers' classrooms.

2.2.2. Categories of Discourse Markers for Classroom Language

On the issue of the classification of discourse markers, there are many research results of predecessors, such as Liyan Liu, Xiuming Li and so on [5, 12]. This paper attempts to divide the teacher's discourse markers in the classroom of teaching Chinese as a foreign language into three categories:

I. Grammar category class utterance markers;
II. Article category class discourse markers;
III. Interpersonal category class discourse markers.

Among them, the grammatical category discourse markers can be divided into three types according to the grammatical units: word class discourse markers, phrase discourse markers, and small sentence discourse markers. Word class discourse markers are subdivided into four types according to part of speech: exclamation, adjective, pronoun, and conjunction. According to the functions played in the discourse, the discourse markers in the article category are divided into four types: topic start discourse markers, topic continuation discourse markers, topic conversion discourse markers, and topic ending discourse markers. The discourse markers of the interpersonal category can also be divided into six kinds according to their functions in dialogue: common knowledge discourse markers, emotional attitude discourse markers, response discourse markers, encouragement of revelation discourse markers, hesitant thinking discourse markers, and continued interpretation discourse markers. The details are shown in the following figure:
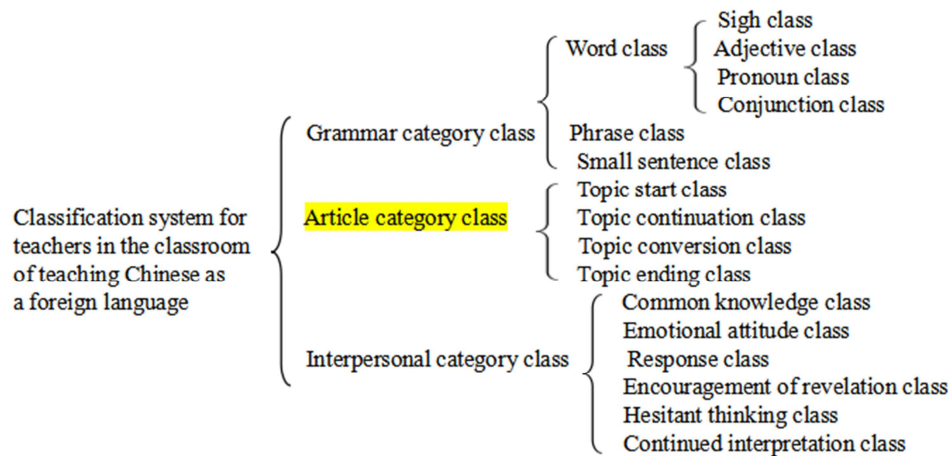
Figure 1. Classification system of discourse markers for teachers in the classroom of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Specific examples are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Grammatical category discourse markers.

Category	Subclasses		Chinese Examples	English Examples
Word class	Sigh class		啊、哎、嗯、额、哈、呵、哦、唉、哎呀、嗯哼	oh, uh, yeah, please
	Adjective class		好（的）、对	right, good, ok, yes, well
	Pronoun class	Indicates pronoun class	这、那、这个、那个	this, there, the, another
		Personal pronoun class	我们	/
	Conjunction class		所以、然后、或、或者	and, but, or, next, still, so, because
Phrase class			比如说、接下来、就是	should say, let us
Small sentence class			跟我读、我们看、你们知道、大家看一下	you know, you can say, follow me, I think, I will

Table 2. Article category discourse markers.

Category	Chinese Examples	English Examples
Topic start class	好、好的、嗯、嗯哼	ok
Topic continuation class	好、那、然后	and, ok, yes, go on
Topic conversion class	那、下面、接下来	well, so
Topic ending class	好、好的	ok, yes

Table 3. Interpersonal category discourse markers.

Category	Chinese Examples	English Examples
Common knowledge class	对不对、对吧、是吧	you know, right
Emotional attitude class	哎、嗯哼、什么、行吧、好吗	well, actually, please, I think
Response class	哎、对、嗯、哦、呀、是的、可以、很好、非常好	yes, yeah, good, right
Encouragement of revelation class	试试、试一下、谁能来	try, volunteer, anyone, who can
Hesitant thinking class	嗯、那、额、呃、那个	uh, maybe
Continued interpretation class	比如说、下面、就是、可以说	and, so

3. Problems and Solution Strategies of Discourse Markers in Chinese Teachers' Classrooms

3.1. Problems with Classroom Discourse Markers for Chinese Teachers

3.1.1. Utterance Marker Style Single

When the author conducted data statistics and analysis of corpus texts, she found that the discourse markers of Chinese teachers lacked changes, the style was single, and the same discourse marker was repeatedly used in a dialogue, and the role of discourse markers was not fully played. For example:

Example 1: Chinese teacher teaches the new word "Peking Opera"

Teacher：嗯哼(Response class)？Beijing Opera, how to say Beijing Opera? How to say Beijing Opera?

Student：The second one I do not remember.

Teacher：啊 (Topic continuation class)，啊 (Topic continuation class)，前两，啊(Topic continuation class)，京剧，京剧。Beijing Opera, Beijing Opera, 京剧。啊(Topic continuation class)，you can turn on your mike, turn on your mike, we can read it together. 嗯哼(Topic continuation class)，一起来啊，don't worry, don't worry. 啊(Topic continuation class)，前两个，京剧，京剧。You can read after me.

Student：京剧。

Teacher：哎(Response class)，对(Response class)。Beijing Opera, and these two (Move the mouse to circle out the

words)? These two? Weekend, weekend, how to…

Student：周末，周末。

In the above example, the Chinese teacher used exclamation words such as "啊" and "嗯哼" many times in the classroom dialogue, of which "啊" appeared 5 times and "嗯哼" appeared twice. We believe that excessive use of the same discourse marker will cause students to have auditory fatigue and produce boredom, which will affect students' interest in learning, and it is not conducive to students maintaining enthusiasm for Chinese learning.

3.1.2. Redundancy of Discourse Markers

When comparing and analyzing the corpus texts of teachers, the author found that teachers sometimes have the problem of continuous use of discourse markers. For example:

Example 1: Chinese teacher lectures on the text

Student：我坐地铁来公司。

Teacher：哦(Response class)！坐地铁！

Student：嗯。

Teacher：Yeah (Emotional attitude class)！嗯 (Topic continuation class)，我坐地铁来公司，对(Response class)，我每天，加上，plus the time. 我每天坐地铁来公司。Ok (Topic continuation class)，好的(Topic continuation class)，嗯(Hesitant thinking class)，那(Hesitant thinking class)……大家跟我读一下，好吧(Emotional attitude class)。Let us read it follow me. Ok (Emotional attitude class)? 嗯 (Topic continuation class)。你每天怎么来上班？

In the above example, the Chinese teacher has the problem of redundant use of discourse markers, and in the above teacher-student dialogue, the teacher totally used 11 discourse markers. Using discourse markers too often can interrupt the teacher's language and affect the teacher's language expression. At the same time, this will also cause difficulties in students' understanding, affect students' understanding of knowledge points and teacher instructions, and is not conducive to students' learning of the target language.

3.2. Strategies for Solving the Problem of Using Discourse Markers for Chinese Teachers

3.2.1. Teachers Should Be Prepared Before Class

On the one hand, teachers should fully understand the background of students before teaching students, such as how to pronounce the student's name. If a teacher reads the student's name incorrectly, it will make the teacher's classroom teaching progress unable to continue, and it will also make students dissatisfied, affecting the overall teaching of teachers and students' enthusiasm for learning.

On the other hand, teachers should fully prepare lessons, do their homework on the teaching content before class, think in advance where students will have problems, and prepare some confusing knowledge points, including homophones, morphological words, homophones, synonyms, etc., and consider in advance how to make reasonable explanations. In the part of classroom activities, teachers should also be prepared in advance. For example, the form, duration, number of activities, etc.

3.2.2. Teachers Should Be Fully Aware of Discourse Markers

In order to optimize the efficiency of classroom teaching, teachers themselves should fully understand discourse markers and their functions. I found that most of the students majoring in teaching Chinese as a foreign language did not know much about discourse markers, and did not notice that they used discourse markers in the classroom of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. In view of this, I believe that teachers of Chinese as a foreign language should expand their learning of various aspects of professional knowledge, including discourse markers, so that discourse markers can play their greatest role in online classroom teaching. In addition, teachers of Chinese as a foreign language can also watch more standardized Chinese classroom teaching videos and learn experience, so as to use discourse markers reasonably and effectively in the classroom, which can not only improve the control of classroom teaching order, but also help to enhance their classroom teaching effect.

3.2.3. Teachers Should Enhance Their Self-monitoring Awareness of the Use of Discourse Markers

I found that most people, even if they know what classroom discourse markers are, only use discourse markers according to their own discourse habits, and it is difficult to change according to teaching needs. In this regard, teachers can record their own teaching courses, through watching their own videos, and combined with students' feedback, to determine which discourse markers are conducive to students' understanding of knowledge points to promote students' Chinese learning, which discourse markers cause confusion to students' understanding of content, and even hinder students' understanding of teaching content. In this way, teachers can find out the problems and correct them through self-observation, so as to maximize the function of discourse markers to assist teaching. For example, after the student speaks, the teacher can replace the "嗯" with "好"，"很好"，etc., so as to encourage the student, make the student have confidence in their own learning ability, and then stimulate their interest in learning Chinese.

3.2.4. Arrange Pre-job Training Related to Discourse Markers

Relevant institutions should arrange training on pre-job classroom discourse markers, and systematically explain what discourse markers are for volunteer teachers and what effects the use of discourse markers will bring, so that Chinese teachers can understand the discourse markers and consciously and rationally use the discourse markers in the classroom to exert their maximum teaching effect. On the other hand, when college teachers give lessons to students majoring in international Chinese education, they should reasonably arrange students' simulation practice, simulate the real class of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. For example, when a student simulates a teacher teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the rest of the students and teachers can appropriately ask some questions that may arise in the actual teaching, so as to observe the students'

on-the-spot reactions, to see whether the students will use hesitant thinking class discourse markers, or to observe whether they are appropriate in the use of the topic continuation class discourse markers.

4. Conclusion

Some preliminary conclusions are drawn in this paper. These preliminary conclusions are now summarized as follows:

First, this paper divides the teacher's discourse markers in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language into three categories: grammatical category discourse markers, article category discourse markers, and interpersonal discourse markers.

Second, there are some problems in the use of discourse markers in the classroom by Chinese teacher volunteers, which are mainly reflected in the following two aspects: the discourse marker style is single, and the discourse markers are redundant.

Third, the author put forward four suggestions in this regard: 1) teachers should do a good job of pre-class preparation, 2) teachers should fully understand discourse markers, 3) teachers should strengthen the self-monitoring awareness of the use of discourse markers, and 4) pre-job training related to discourse markers should be arranged.

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