

## On Cooperative Learning in College Oral English Teaching

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**Abstract:** Under the new situation of social and economic development, the communication within the world is deepening, and the English level of graduates is required to be higher among different industries and posts. However, contrary to the social situation, college students' Oral English level is not ideal, which is the result of long-term influence of traditional teaching mode. Cooperative learning is a new teaching method, which has been applied in various disciplines to varying degrees. From the implementation effect, it not only promotes the communication between teachers and students, but also develops students' knowledge utilization ability and effect, and cultivate all-round development of talents, which is the inevitable product of the current environmental change. Therefore, this paper focuses on the application of cooperative learning in College Oral English teaching methods and effects.

### 1. Current Situation of Oral English Teaching in Colleges and Universities

#### 1.1 Attention to Oral English Teaching is Insufficient

At present, most colleges and universities in China do not attach enough importance to Oral English teaching in practice. The importance of Oral English has not been highly valued, which leads to a serious shortage of courses and teachers in most colleges and universities. At present, our English teaching still adopts the traditional teaching mode and teaching concept. In terms of the curriculum, Oral English courses are not involved. At the same time, colleges and universities have not set relevant standards for Oral English assessment, which leads to the phenomenon of dumb English among students. In addition, due to CET-4 and CET-6, most English teachers only pursue one-sided explanations of vocabulary, grammar and written language in the actual classroom teaching, but not aware of the cultivation of students' oral expression ability, leading to the lack of students' Oral English ability.

#### 1.2 Foundation of Oral English is Relatively Weak

There are many differences in the level of economic development and education in different regions of China. For example, the level of oral English in the southeastern coastal areas of China is generally higher, while that in the western areas is generally lower. This has resulted in a serious difference in Oral English expression ability between the East and the West. Moreover, most colleges and universities are bound by the traditional English teaching mode. In the actual English teaching, teachers only pay attention to the theoretical knowledge, but ignore the training of students' oral expression ability, leading to students' inadequate oral English communicative competence.

#### 1.3 Students' Oral Expression Ability Has Defects

In Oral English teaching, students have obvious defects. It is mainly manifested in the lack of relevant knowledge of Chinese communicative rules and inadequate understanding of the communicative habits of foreign friends. The time spent by students in training oral English communication is far from enough to achieve the purpose of training, which leads to serious defects in oral expression ability.

## **2. Improvement of College Oral English**

### **2.1 Optimize Teaching Environment to Stimulate Students' Enthusiasm for Learning Oral English**

In the actual teaching of Oral English, colleges and universities are required to strengthen and improve the input of oral English teaching resources. It is essential to set up oral training courses according to the actual teaching situation, employ foreign teachers for oral training teaching guidance, and encourage students to express their opinions in English, so as to effectively eliminate students' fear of oral expression. In addition, colleges and universities should organize relevant oral English expression contests and actively encourage students to participate in the actual contest. Students' oral expression ability will be improved through oral expression contest.

### **2.2 Optimize English Materials and Pay Attention to the Cultivation of Students' English Skills**

In Oral English learning, we should not simply rely on oral materials to improve students' oral ability. Teachers are expected to mobilize students' enthusiasm for oral English learning, adopt a combination of listening and speaking and actively guide students to practice oral dialogue. Before English class, teachers can arrange students to make a self-statement in English for three minutes in advance. The content of the statement is determined by teaching content. This teaching method not only improves students' oral expression ability, but also help to eliminate their psychological fear of speaking English.

### **2.3 Change Teaching Concepts and Base Themselves on Teaching Practice**

Firstly, teachers should choose English materials reasonably and strive to not rely on them too much. They are also expected to be good at digging out materials, making innovations in teaching methods and contents through extracting relevant teaching contents, and sticking to the principle of integrating theory with practice to ensure the smooth development of oral English teaching. Secondly, oral English teaching needs to stress the cultivation of students' comprehensive abilities such as grammatical competence and communicative competence. Finally, teachers must actively encourage students to speak English. When dealing with the correctness and fluency of oral English expression, students must distinguish the primary and secondary. According to the current situation of oral English teaching in colleges and universities in China, it is urgent to improve students' oral fluency.

### **2.4 Strengthen the Importance of Oral English in Colleges and Universities**

English teachers are required to fundamentally recognize the importance of Oral English teaching. In the actual teaching, it is essential to constantly improve the understanding of Oral English teaching, gradually adjust teaching mode and teaching concept according to the development needs of Oral English teaching, make a reasonable allocation of teaching time and optimize teaching content. Especially in the process of students' oral expression, teachers are expected to make timely evaluation and corrections according to the problems of students, so that students' oral English expression ability will be improved in an all-round way.

## **3. Application of Cooperative Learning in College Oral English Teaching**

### **3.1 Implement Group Teaching**

Group teaching not only increases the exchange and communication among students, but also further optimizes teaching results, reduces the burden of teachers, and helps timely discovery of students' problems. In cooperative learning, teachers can divide students into different groups according to their oral proficiency or seat distribution. For example, when learning the word "weather", teachers are suggested to start with the simplest oral communication and instruct students to use English to ask about the weather in groups, such as "It is going to snow tomorrow"

or “It will probably clear up this afternoon.” These simple dialogues create an atmosphere of English communication and guide students into the context of English learning. Through communication, teachers and students summarize common sentence patterns about weather, such as “What is the weather like today?” “What is the temperature today?” and so on. These sentence patterns are frequently used and will help students improve their oral English communication ability. Commonly used Oral English also includes sports, meals, shopping, medical treatment and so on. Teachers can also arrange the learning content reasonably according to the learning progress, so that students are able to master basic spoken English skills and facilitate in-depth learning.

### **3.2 Hold English Group Learning Activities**

Let’s take word learning as an example. In the past, teachers usually spoke Chinese meaning and then students spelled out the words. This method not only wastes classroom teaching time, but also increases the burden of teachers, which is not conducive to the improvement of teaching level. After group learning, students check and evaluate each other’s English vocabulary learning effect by dictating and asking questions, or by oral communication directly. For example, teachers can take “Good Luck Charlie” as an example, play some interesting clips to attract students to watch, make them feel the original American version of English, and then help them understand the expression habits and characteristics of English in a subtle way. Teachers also can have all members of a group play different roles and perform classical dialogues on stage. For example, Mother say: “I am going to work tonight at the hospital... So I want everyone to stay at home, and help dad with the baby.” Others, Teddy and sister, say why they don’t want to look after “Baby” one by one. Students are allowed to choose their roles freely according to their abilities or preferences, or they can add some characters according to their own ideas to increase the richness of the plot. Teachers are expected to hold some English song contests. The ending of Good Luck Charlie is a good choice. Through the contest, students’ English pronunciation can be understood and targeted guidance can be provided. There are many excellent English TV plays and movies. Teachers can arrange homework regularly for students, so that they can watch classic American TV plays confidently and feel the expressive habits and characteristics of English in entertainment.

### **3.3 Develop Oral Competition**

The level of Oral English in colleges and universities is relatively high, so teachers should not only confine themselves to some simple English dialogues, but also further increase the difficulty of spoken English dialogues, so as to develop students’ actual English level. For example, colleges and universities are suggested to organize some English debate competitions. According to the principle of voluntariness, students are divided into different groups, and they can debate with each other according to their own views. This kind of debate contest not only make teachers understand students’ Oral English level, but also develop students’ adaptability. For example, teachers can use “Euthanasia” as a topic of debate, and then divide students into the positive and the negative. Before the debate, multimedia can be applied to broadcast a story situation: A family went on a picnic by themselves. However, they encountered a car accident on the way back. The husband became a vegetable, while the wife was unable to bear the high medical expenses and demanded euthanasia for her husband. When debating, teachers are advised to play the role of “judge” and say “Now, I declare opening the court session. First let us hear the defendant explain why she asked the doctor to carry out euthanasia on her husband.” After introducing the topic of the debate, students are offered with enough time to debate, and then teachers mark students’ performance according to the results. When scoring, teachers must encourage students to find the key points of debate, and link “Euthanasia” and “Human-rights” to deepen the connotation and significance of the debate process.

### **3.4 Pay Attention to Students’ Feedback**

For many college students, especially students majoring in science and engineering, Oral English learning is difficult. Therefore, teachers should be good at guiding and encouraging them, developing their interest in learning, paying attention to their’ learning feedback, and collecting useful information. For example, teachers can assign a composition to students after an Oral English

class is finished. The title is “Your idea about our Oral English class.” By checking the homework, it can be found that many students think that cooperative learning links classroom teaching with pre-class preparation, and that the teaching form is more lively, which can give full play to students’ learning potential and achieve a better learning effect. In addition, many students put forward suggestions that those with different oral proficiency should be cross-arranged in cooperative learning, so as to help and facilitate the learning of students with poor oral proficiency. In order to improve the flexibility of classroom teaching, teachers are expected to pay attention to collecting students’ feedback, or establish an “English Corner” to guide students to write their opinions on convenience stickers, so as to facilitate teachers’ timely access. Students’ feedback is a very important link, and is also the fundamental way to maintain the flexibility and effectiveness of cooperative learning mode.

#### **4. Conclusion**

To sum up, with the rapid development of social economy, the process of internationalization is advancing. Improving college students’ Oral English expression ability and cultivating international talents for the country are the main teaching objectives of colleges and universities in China. Therefore, in view of the current situation of Oral English teaching in China, colleges and universities need to adopt pertinent methods to make an innovation and reform, so as to achieve the improvement of students’ Oral English level.

#### **References**

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