Vol.6 Iss.6 2025 Communication & Education Review
https://doi.org/10.37420/j.cer.2025.107

English Teaching under Washback of the College English Test Spoken English Test

Huanhua Liu*
School of Foreign Studies, Zhaoqing University, Guangdong 526061, China
***Corresponding author, E-mail: huanhliu0109@163.com**

Abstract:
To further advance college English teaching and meet the demands of national reform and opening-up, oral assessments of College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 (College English Test Spoken English Test) have been implemented. College English courses bear the responsibility of cultivating students' English oral communication skills. This paper explores how to make full use of the positive washback of the spoken English test on English teaching from four perspectives: teaching objectives, teaching processes, teaching forms, and foreign language approaches and methods. The aim is to enhance the listening and speaking abilities of college students.

Keywords:
College English Test; Spoken English Test; washback

1 Introduction

It is of great significance to comprehensively enhance college students' abilities in English listening, speaking, reading and writing, which is conducive to the development of the country, society and even individuals. For a long time, English teaching has focused on reading and writing while neglecting listening and speaking, which has a certain impact on improving students' comprehensive language application ability. The College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 are an important means to improve undergraduate students' English application ability. College students have paid more attention to the study of spoken English since the implementation of the College English Test Spoken English Test (CET-SET).

All examinations related to teaching have a washback effect on teaching, and the College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 spoken tests are no exception. In the field of education and teaching, the washback refers to the influence and guiding role of a certain language test on all aspects of the language education and teaching, including both positive and negative washback effects. It is demonstrated that the positive washback of CET-SET on English teaching and learning are greater than its negative washback effects [1]. College English teachers should make full use of this positive effect to enhance students' English listening and speaking abilities. In the paper, the washback mainly refers to the influence and guiding role of the college English spoken test on teachers' instruction in college English. The CET-SET assesses the ability of impromptu oral communication. Therefore, it is far from enough to merely provide students with some sentences and phrases that are available, ready-made and recitable in the corresponding situations. Students' ability of utilizing the still lim-

© 2025 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

ited language resources they possess to deal with some communication situations that may only be partially predictable or completely unpredictable should be cultivated.

2 English teaching under the washback

Before the implementation of spoken English test in college English test, the oral teaching of college English courses was carried out consciously or unconsciously. This teaching method is not systematic, which also greatly affects the effectiveness of cultivating students' oral English ability. Based on the washback effect of oral tests in the college English examination, the oral communication ability of college students in our country can be effectively improved under the condition that teachers consciously cultivate students' English communication ability in a systematic, reasonable and scientific way while teaching language knowledge in the classroom. In the way, spoken English ability can be trained and developed to some extent. At the same time, it is necessary to comprehensively take into account listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, so that these language skills can be promoted and complemented each other [2].

2.1 Teaching objectives

For a long time, most English classes in our country have focused on English reading and writing, while listening and speaking skills have not received the attention they deserve. In fact, from the instrumental nature of language, the output of English (the ability to speak and write) is of vital importance to English learners. Language, from the essential aspect, is used for communication, and the language classroom is designed to cultivate and develop learners' language communication and interpersonal skills [3]. If the actual oral expression ability is not effectively enhanced, then to a certain extent, the teaching objectives of the language course are not met.

The teaching objectives of a course generally include three aspects: knowledge objectives, ability objectives, and emotional objectives. Among them, the knowledge objective mainly enables students to learn and master new vocabulary, sentence patterns, grammar, syntax, language expression and other language knowledge. Thus, the pronunciation of new words should be included in the knowledge ability. The ability objective aims to train students' comprehensive abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. For this objective, teachers should attach great importance to listening and speaking abilities, and guarantee enough classroom time for training and cultivate the two abilities. For instance, it is necessary to cultivate and enhance students' English reading ability, and to train their capacity to summarize the main idea of the text, capture key information and understand details. However, attention should be paid to students' oral English expression ability and their ability to understand what others say. Cultivate students' ability to express their viewpoints and opinions clearly and comprehensively in English. In terms of English writing, one should ensure that the text is well-organized, the structure is clear. Moreover, the words used for language expressions are accurate. But that is not enough, after students finish their writing, they should know how to present it to others in oral English. Emotional objectives enable students to deeply understand the humanistic spirit reflected in the text and incorporate the requirements and essence of ideological and political education into the classroom teaching. For the objective, students can not only understand the humanistic spirit of the text, but also speak and express their perceptions about the text in English.

© 2025 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Teachers clearly incorporate the cultivation of spoken English proficiency into the three specific teaching objectives, and flexibly utilize the intrinsic connections of the three objectives. It is expected that the knowledge, abilities and emotion can promote and drive each other. Thus, students' oral English skills can be better enhanced. For example, in English course, most teachers teach new words first and then make students read the text. However, this word-first and then-text order can be changed. Teachers can ask students to read the whole text first. In the process, students try to summarize the main idea of the article while marking the words they don't know. In this way, the storylines of the text can arouse students' curiosity and stimulate their interest in further reading to some degree. Then, students learn new words, sentence structures, sentence patterns, etc. with questions in mind. In the process of teaching new words, teachers should pay attention to enabling students to master the pronunciation of the words and require them to read the words aloud. Only by being able to read words can one further improve their oral English skills. In classroom teaching, by following the sequence of reading the text first and then teaching the words, students can clearly discover the words, grammar and sentences they don't understand. Thus, when teachers explain the text and words, students can pay more attention to the corresponding explanations, which is conducive to improving students' listening efficiency. During the intensive reading session, students are required to understand some details of the text. Moreover, teachers guide students to use the new words to express their understanding of the text. At the same time, teachers should require students to express their points of view in English. Similarly, in the process, teachers should pay attention to students' pronunciation, coherence, intonation and so on, so as to better improve their spoken English ability.

Teachers focus on integrating students' oral practice throughout the process of achieving knowledge, ability and emotional objectives. The three teaching objectives form an organic unity, enabling students to acquire language knowledge while also enhancing their language expression skills.

2.2 Teaching processes

While strengthening the cultivation of oral English ability in college English teaching, the teaching of language foundation should not be neglected. Only when students' oral ability is built on a solid language foundation can they master both accurate and fluent oral communication [2].

In the process of classroom teaching, teachers actively take full advantage of each teaching step to cultivate students' oral English ability. When preparing lessons, teachers repeatedly deliberate based on the teaching objectives, seizing the opportunities that are helpful for students to practice their oral English skills in the new lesson teaching process. During the lecture, after the new word is explained, students are required to make oral sentences using the word. In the explanation of the meaning of key sentences, teachers should focus on attracting students' attention and ask them to paraphrase the sentence, that is, students retell the meaning of the sentences by using their own words, which not only deepens the understanding of the key sentences, but also trains students' ability to use English to express their opinions. After class, teachers assign students some questions that they are interested in. They have to explore the question and communicate with each other, so as to improve their spoken English skill. In addition, students are required to make summaries in English, and present the conclusion to the class next time. Students communicate with each other and express their viewpoints and opinions through oral forms freely, enhancing the oral teaching effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers pay close attention to each teaching process, enabling students to master language knowledge while

© 2025 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

also enhancing their oral language skills.

2.3 Teaching forms

In the classroom, to enhance the efficiency of teaching, teachers usually impart knowledge to the entire class through vivid oral language. However, appropriately organizing other teaching forms can better train students' comprehensive language abilities, especially English spoken ability. Therefore, teachers need to arrange different teaching forms to increase students' initiative and enthusiasm in learning oral English.

Based on the theme of the text, students are required to carry out group discussions. Teachers encourage students to communicate with others using newly learned words, grammar and sentence patterns. It is noted that a combination of Chinese and English can be used to alleviate students' nervousness when they start to communicate in English. For the students who are not familiar with the new words, grammar, or sentence structures, combining Chinese and English can be a smart way to better exercise students' oral language expression ability. In the classroom, students apply the language knowledge they have learned to write down their thoughts after the discussion, and then express their points orally. This not only helps teachers to promptly grasp students' acceptance of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, but also facilitates teachers' teaching reflection and timely adjusts the teaching forms. Teachers design different teaching tasks and choose appropriate teaching forms according to the needs of teaching. Enliven the learning atmosphere in college English classes, encourage students to speak up actively in class, and seize opportunities to improve students' oral English expression skills. Schools can also prepare multiple multimedia classrooms to provide students with better learning spaces and conditions, and enrich the teaching content and forms of the college English course. This can well achieve the goal of students' autonomous learning and cooperative learning, and effectively stimulate students' initiative and enthusiasm to improve their spoken English skills [4].

2.4 Foreign language approaches and methods

College English Test-Spoken English Test mainly assesses oral communication skills, and any teaching method, to be effective, should incorporate substantial oral communication practice [2]. The college English course is a course that teaches a foreign language. Teachers should select appropriate approaches and methods in language teaching based on students' training needs and teaching objectives, and utilize foreign language teaching methods to enhance students' oral proficiency.

When systematically teaching grammar knowledge, complex sentence structures, or abstract concepts in the class, traditional teaching methods and grammar-translation method should be employed. To some extent, traditional teaching methods can help teachers improve the efficiency of imparting knowledge in the classroom and save teaching time. At the same time, these types of teaching approaches and methods can facilitate students' understanding of language knowledge. However, it is difficult to improve students' English listening and speaking abilities solely through teachers' instruction in the classroom. Students need more listening and speaking practice in the English class, and they are encouraged to complete the speaking tasks by themselves.

In order to improve students' English spoken ability, teachers can utilize the Communicative Language Teaching approach to arrange role-playing activities for students, simulating real-life scenarios, allowing students to gain a more direct and authentic English communication experience. By participating in oral commu-

© 2025 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

nication activities, students will realize that these activities can truly help them achieve the improvement of the oral proficiency. As a result, they will more actively engage in such activities and fully cooperate, thereby gaining the greatest benefits. At the same time, it will greatly enhance their learning enthusiasm, boost their learning motivation, and thus form a virtuous cycle. Therefore, in college English classes, the Communicative Language Teaching can be employed to encourage students to communicate in English between different roles. Occasionally, a combination of Chinese and English can also be used to enhance students' English listening and speaking abilities because it can help students become more relaxed and less nervous in communication.

In college English teaching, teachers should choose appropriate teaching approaches and methods based on their own situations and the actual teaching needs to develop students' comprehensive language skills, especially the speaking and listening abilities. In addition, English teachers should update their teaching philosophies in a timely manner and actively improve their teaching methods, thereby effectively enhancing students' subjectivity [4].

3 Conclusions

With the further promotion of the College English Test Spoken English Test, college English teachers will face new and higher challenges. According to CET-SET washback, teachers can adjust and improve the college English class to better cultivate students' spoken English ability.

In the paper, four aspects are introduced to improve college students' English oral communication skills in English classes: the formulation of teaching objectives, the grasp of teaching processes, the arrangement of teaching forms, and the application of language teaching approaches and methods. This aims to better meet the requirements of English teaching reform and cultivate high-quality talents who are well-rounded and adaptable to social development.

References

[1] Tan, Y. C. & Peng, J. D. (2004). Backwash of the College English Test-Spoken English Test on English Learning. Foreign Language World, (1):27-32.
[2] Jin, Y. (2000). Backwash of the CET-4/ CET-6 Spoken English Test on College English Teaching. Foreign Language World, (4):56-61.
[3] Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2019.
[4] Sun, M. J. (2015). A Brief Discussion on Backwash of CET-4 on College English Teaching. Journal of the Chinese Society of Education, (S2):55-56.

© 2025 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)