

## Giving Reluctant Students a Chance to Speak in Oral Classes

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**Abstract:** Speaking plays a significant role in communicative language teaching, and is of vital importance to oral communicative ability for students studying English language. This paper aims at helping oral English teachers solve the problems in TEFL class.

### 1. Introduction

Speaking is the competence of expressing one's mind orally, communicating with language. It aims at emphasizing on how to improve students' transitional ability in language usage by practices, not at learning special part of speech. 'Oral Teaching aims at Activate but not Study of certain part of language'(J. Harmer: How to Teach English ). It requires students to perform the tasks or activities through acquiring knowledge so as to experiencing how to communicate in foreign language. This process has realized the smooth feedback of the interactive knowledge between teachers and students, and promoted the acquisition of language. At the same time, it is also an early test for the needs of the social language usage after graduation. So in summary, oral English is a communicative skill training course to meet the needs of social language. But in the author 's view, some learners always tend to keep silent there, and even more there are some sleeping or talking in mother tongue at the back or corner of the classroom. This kind of phenomenon really leads to the result that the teacher cannot perform his/her teaching task and does no good to the learners.

### 2. Changing T-centered class to S-centered class

In oral English class, the teacher's role does not mean the authority like 'a tiger in the wood'. The teacher's role is very important in communicative activities. A latest study has proved that a good teacher should be a director and manager who could create a warm, harmonious and stimulating atmosphere in which the students would feel secure and confident. He/she also acts as a counselor and a 'language resource' for Standard English. In other words, his/her responsibility lies in providing the students with 'supplies'. The teacher is also a fine model of language imitation and an independent language application. Besides, in order to be a successful communicator and model, the teacher should strengthen the abilities of behavior, psychology and communication, such as solidarity and mutual help, courtesy etc.

### 3. Changing too much TTT to Enough STT

It is common knowledge that oral English teaching is to promote students to speak language, which is also an important part of the teacher's work. It is students who need more practice rather than teachers. Therefore, a good teacher should increase the students' conversation time and shorten his/her lecture time to the minimum limit. A good teacher maximizes STT(Student Talking Time) and minimizes TTT (Teacher Talking Time). Therefore, a qualified teacher's talk must be efficient. He/She knows how to talk with the students, and adjust his/her language properly according to the student's language level so that the student can have a chance to perceive the standard speech above his/her own level which is profitable. That kind of 'Comprehension- Input' can be achieved only when the teacher's talk is reasonable and efficient. From a communicative point of view, the language is the most tedious when the teacher is reluctant to choose words, while the students want

to abandon with pity like a ‘chicken-rib’. It is no wonder that many students feel sleepy in the classroom. For those who are always absent-minded and feel class activities very dull and boring, teachers may have some new tries of methods or their physical presence in class. The best lessons are those in which STT is maximized and at appropriate moments during the lesson the teacher is not afraid to summarize what is happening, tell a story, guide the students into discussion etc. Good teachers use their common sense and experience to get the balance right.

#### **4. Several Teaching Methods Used Efficiently in Class**

For students who are often absent-minded or not interested in organizational activities, the teachers can test some new teaching methods as follows:

① ‘Approach Method’: That is, how to communicate with the students psychologically, such as whether the eyes are mild or not, whether the facial expressions are intimate/amiable/agreeable, whether they are close to students, so as to dispel the students’ concerns or worries.

② ‘Method of Shortening the Distance Between Teachers and Students’, meaning the space distance between teachers and students is shortened. Can the teacher sit or stand properly in the classroom for the students to listen to, and whether the distance between the sitting/standing and the students is scientific.

③ ‘Dynamic Teaching Method’: That is, teachers are active in many parts of the classroom, rather than merely standing on the platform, for example, teachers occasionally walk to the rear of the classroom and all corners, which can attract students’ attention and inspire their interest.

④ ‘Communication Method’: To view and to listen are the same teaching activities in the class, which can not only keep the teacher’s effective distance around, contact with the students, but also instruct with eyes and inform through ears, communicating with mind. Meanwhile, he/she can use the phonetic pronunciation, volume, to prompt the course schedule and content.

⑤ ‘Actively and Sprightly Teaching Content’: The key to changing the students’ sleepiness in class is to change the teaching method. Hereby, it is suggested that the teaching content should be compact. Most of them are absent-minded because there is nothing to do. In response to this phenomenon, the author has made a questionnaire survey for a class. It comes out that most of students believed that there was an oral teacher who only led the students to read the texts, and then set them on the exercises throughout the whole class. Drawing lessons from the above phenomena, the writer assigned the students homework to review new words, phrases and read texts before class. The text was to be discussed in the class with the new words and phrases applied. The teacher had to check the homework and praised those who had done well, and convinced those who did not well by some kind of punishment. At the same time in class, every student was busy with assignments, teaching steps by steps, leaving no one at ease. And it was not a mess to adopt teaching methods, in this way, students’ interests were inspired and they are benefited from those class activities.

Additionally, the other prescript for students’ ‘absent-mindedness’ is interest cultivation. In teaching activities, teachers should constantly cultivate students’ interest in learning, and further understand and find out what kind of subjects or activities are likely to arouse their interests in learning. From a psychological point of view, novelty is easy to arouse interest. Whether vivid teaching methods or innovative teaching contents, both can arouse students’ interests in learning, so as to stir their curiosity and motivation of study. Secondly, among those inexperienced things or activities, those full of hopes are likely to be inspired. That psychological research suggests that teachers should assign tasks in different levels to students, so that all of them can share same successful joys even coming from various activities and find confidence and interests for further study.

#### **5. Tactful Correction of Mistakes**

It is certainly important to correct mistakes made during speaking activities in a different way from the mistakes made during a Study exercise. When students are repeating sentences trying to get their pronunciation exactly right, the teacher will often correct them every time there’s a

problem. But if the same teacher did the same thing while students were involved in a passionate discussion, for instance, a teacher might weaken student's conversational flow. If, just at the moment, one student is making a very important point, the teacher says: 'Hi, wait, you said "is" should be "was" and repeat, the point will quickly be lost. Frequent 'come-ins' from the teacher's mouth will destroy the purpose of the speaking activity.

It's best for the teachers to quietly watch, patiently listen and tactfully make notes down of the things that seemingly go well at the moments when students couldn't make themselves be understood whether they had made mistakes or not. When the activity has finished, they may say that they really like the way Student A said, they may list all the mistakes noted by writing on the board. In most cases, students will correct themselves carelessly most of time.

It is important not to single students out for particular criticism. Good teachers deal with the mistakes they heard without saying who made them.

## **6. Arousing Students' Interest in Tasks**

The teachers shall find some methods to arouse students' interest in tasks, which surely can help teachers make their activities successful. They can take some measures into account such as making each teaching goal clear, varying topics & tasks, letting measures visual, start some games full of tension and challenge or entertainment.

Here is a game for reference. Let each one student have only one minute in talking on certain topics given by the teacher. Let's see who will produce more correct sentences. The teacher will give out the mark to the number of the correct and make notes of the false. After the game, he/she will summarize up on it. That game is very intensive, curious, exciting. The topics are very fresh and modern and are full of entertainment, so it's effective.

## **7. Motivation Investigation**

Certain related motivation can make teaching and learning immeasurably easier and more pleasant, as well as more productive. To foster the learners' motivation, power in class should be taken into consideration, which is the most effective and proactive, so to speak, power relationship create the basic motivational conditions such as setting the scene to motivate. Good teachers know how to encourage positive self-evaluation.

The strategies above can be carried out only with the teacher's flexibility. Take motivation for example, the teacher may let students know how to pass the course and obtain good result. Link the evaluation with daily activities, and the teacher must make good notes for all these. Certainly, the teacher works hard, and will be motivated by student's very careful work and gradual progresses.

In general, speaking is 'the neglected heart' in communicative language teaching. Language is part of one's identity and skill. As a result, learning has a significant impact on the social being of the learner, since it involves the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of thinking, and speaking is the bridge.

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