Research on Construction and Practice of Oral English Test System

Han Zhu

School of Foreign Languages, China University of Geosciences, Beijing, 100083, China

Abstract: With the rapid development of China's economy, more and more oral English talents are needed. In view of current English teaching in China, oral English has not received due attention. Domestic English teaching attaches greater importance to theory while neglects practice, resulting in slow improvement of oral English when many people learn English. However, with the continuous reform of College English teaching in China, oral English test system has gradually gained widespread attention. Through the construction and practice of oral English test system, students' practical application ability has been well trained in learning English. Thus, their oral English levels have also been greatly improved. This paper analyses the practice and construction of oral English testing system, and puts forward personalized views, hoping to provide some reference for the effectiveness and scientificity of oral English testing.

1. Introduction

According to the characteristics of current College English teaching in China, students'oral English is mainly trained at English classroom teaching, in the hope of better using both written and oral English to communicate as well as better adapting to the needs of international communication and economic development when they step into society in the future. As for the traditional written English test, the communicative competence and usability of the language are in serious neglect, the information exchange of spoken English is in great absence, so that the training objectives of English teaching cannot be better realized. Therefore, the practice and construction of oral test system is very conducive to the reform of oral English teaching.

2. The Necessity of Strengthening Oral English Ability

China has become an essential part of economic globalization. With the frequent exchanges between China and the rest of the world, the demand for English talents in China is also increasing, gradually developing from previous writing and translation to communication and negotiation by fluent oral English.

At the same time, in recent years, the employment situation in China is still grim, so oral English output capacity has gradually become a vital criterion for employers to measure the English level of job hunters. The ultimate goal of learning spoken English is for future communication. And the ultimate effect depends entirely on the actual acquisition of students' communicative competence.

However, the past few years has seen written Enlish tests as the main content for most grade examinations or graduation examinations in China. Therefore, English teachers have to focus on grammar, vocabulary and sentence patterns in order to help students pass the exams and obtain certificates. The training of students' oral English output capacity has been severely ignored. Many students have studied English for a long time, but they still can't apply all the knowledge they have learned to real life. What's more, they can't communicate in English, either,as they seriously lack the ability to use English.

3. Principles for the Construction of Oral English Test System

In the construction of oral English test system, we must follow the principles of content richness, form diversity and comprehensive evaluation.

In terms of form diversity principle, the main thing is to ensure the diversity of oral English test system. The test forms are mainly topic summary, personal narration, retelling the dialogues, and answering questions. It is also necessary to include English sentence patterns, English vocabulary and English topics in the above-mentioned test forms. When training English expression ability, it must be combined with the specific learning needs of students.

The principle of content richness mainly refers to that the topic of oral test content must be closely linked to students'life, study, thoughts and future work. In addition, various types of topics when students entering into the society must be put into consideration so as to meet students'vocational adaptability. Of course, students' English application ability must be more fully considered, so that they can better meet the needs of the society for English talents.

As far as the principle of comprehensive evaluation is concerned, as a matter of fact, the oral test can effectively guarantee the teacher's subject status in the evaluation, and at the same time, to some extent, ensure the students'dominant position in the classroom, too. It is necessary for teachers to encourage students to use evaluation methods more appropriately in order to develop English expression ability.

4. The Deficiencies in the Current Construction of the Oral English Test System

4.1 The purpose of oral English test remains to be clarified

The oral English test has not received enough attention in all stages of school education in China until the past two years. Appropriate adjusting the teaching dynamics of spoken English is the main purpose of the current oral English test in schools, which emphasizes the process of a student's forming oral English ability. However, many schools now regard the purpose of oral English test as a criterion to distiguish the students' performance, causing no real effect of oral English test.

4.2 The caliber of oral English examiners needs to be improved

Oral English test is a very subjective one, so the final scores are easily affected by the examiner's subjective thinking. Oral English test determines how students use and express English, thus, the examiner is generally influenced by scoring criteria, his/her own opinions and emotions at the moment when marking the score. Since the credibility of the oral English test is directly determined by the examiner to a certain extent, if the examiner fails to score correctly, the test will lose its credibility.

In addition, when many schools conduct oral English tests, they usually appoint the school's English teachers as the grand examiners. Regrettably, many grand examiners have not received relevant training for various reasons, so the scoring system and standards cannot be understood in depth. When marking the score, the examiners generally rely on their subjective impressions, which certainly has a very serious impact on the validity and credibility of oral English tests.

4.3 The validity of the test item design needs to be improved

Whatever the stage of teaching, the main purpose of oral English test is to accurately evaluate students'social-linguistic competence, discourse competence and conversational strategy competence. Therefore, when designing oral English test items, the first thing to consider is the degree of difficulty, and whether the topic is familiar to students. In addition, it is necessary to make the test form more diverse, such as answering questions, reading aloud, retelling, describing or commenting on Tables or pictures, and examine students'comprehensive ability in using English as much as possible.

But at this stage, many teachers are very casual when designing test items, and the test items are designed too simple. Some teachers even just casually take out a picture and ask the students to

describe it. In fact, the difficulty of the picture itself is not considered by the teacher. Plus, a single test topic can not fully play the students' oral communication ability, thus, the validity and credibility of the oral English test cannot be fully guaranteed.

5. Construction and Practice of Oral English Test System

5.1 Establishment of oral English test organization

In the reform and test of English teaching in China, every semester can be positioned as one level of English test.Meanwhile,each level of English test can also be divided into periodical exam and final exam. The periodical exam is the quiz in class, as it has the time-flexible in terms of oral English test. According to the actual teaching progress and teaching content, we can arrange around two tests in one semester. At the same time, the scores of such tests can be used as an important part of formative assessment to comprehensively evaluate students'English level.

The final examination can be scheduled in the final week of the semester so that all the students can take a unified exam. The score of the oral English test is a very important part of the English listening and speaking course,.which evaluates the students' actual oral English ability. At the same time, the score should be also recorded in the students' total English scores. Only in this way can we better achieve comprehensive ability test and comprehensive evaluation of English.

5.2 Establishment of oral English grading criteria

When practicing oral English test, it is necessary to distinguish the key content and form of the test at different stages on the basis of comprehensive test. For example, some students'oral English levels are quite poor, so pronunciation and the mastery of vocabulary are the main test items for these students. While for those students who have a relatively high level, the test should mainly examine the extent to which they actually engage in dialogue. Of courese, the students' logical thinking and communicative competence are also the test coverage.

The degree and the content of grading should be adjusted according to different levels of the students. The stronger a student's language ability is, the higher the requirement for him/her will be during test. For example, if those students's oral English levels are relatively low,their pronunciation, intonation and understanding of the vocabulary and sentences will be mainly tested. When testing the students with high-level language ability, then the main focus will be whether they are coherent in expressing English, and whether they have the language organization ability.

Effective grading criteria should be applied in the actual operation process, and the management between students' 'listening' and 'speaking' should be well handled. When the interaction is optimized, it should be carried out according to the actual judgment criteria. Observe whether the student can answer the questions of the other side in a timely manner, and whether he/she can really understand what the other side is saying. And the examiners should judge students'language ability according to the actual situation.

5.3 Innovation in the form of oral English test

In the process of establishing an oral English test system, both the final oral test and the periodic oral English test should be carried out under the guarantee of authenticity and communicativeness. If the key points and contents of the test want to be better realized, it is necessary to take a variety of targeted tests and to effectively implement them.

Students need to use the form of examinations, for example, classroom presentations, role-playing activities and retelling dialogue activities, to make effective comparisons in the phased oral English test. These activities take the form of quiz in class, while allowing relevant teachers to optimize according to the content and form of the quiz, so as to mark the score of students'performance, readiness and language proficiency more comprehensively.

The form of the final oral English exam is usually fixed, and generally it will vary with the level change. For the practical oral English test, the stronger the ability a student has, the longer time he

will spend in the test. So students need more time to showcase their language level. In view of this situation, it is necessary to rationally arrange the number of students and examiners to ensure the fairness and objectivity of the test.

With the rapid development of computer technology, the application advantages of spoken English have gradually emerged. Some schools with better conditions combine advanced computer technology with oral English test, and even actively introduce advanced oral English test systems into teaching in an attempt to better achieve online oral English test.

To test students'oral English by computer can effectively improve the objectivity and fairness of the test. The establishment of such oral English test system allows every student, according to his own actual situation, to take oral English test at any time, breaking the limitations of space and time, and carrying out independent tests conveniently and efficiently. In this way, students can have a clearer understanding of their own advantages and disadvantages. In the following oral training sessions, they can practice more on the weak points so as to improve their oral English ability in an all-round way.

6. Summary

In today's society, more and more emphasis is placed on English proficiency. Spoken English is not only attracting people's attention, but also is an intuitive reflection of English level. Therefore, relevant teachers and students should attach importance to oral English, so that students'oral English level can be improved to a certain extent. In addition, when designing an oral English test, the operability, progressiveness, and scientificity of the topics must be taken into account.

Acknowledgement

References

[1] Yang Shifen. Construction and Practice of Oral English Test System, Journal of Huainan Vocational & Technical College, 2018, 18(04):80-81.

[2] Jin Jie. Design and Practice of Oral English Test System, Value Engineering, 2012, 31(04):211-212.

[3] Wang Liqin. Construction and Practice of College Oral English Test System, Journal of Taiyuan Normal University (Social Science Edition), 2011, 10(02):167-168.

[4] Zhang Xinyuan. The Backwash Effect of College Oral English Test System on Students-An Empirical Study Based on Students from Third Tier Universities, Foreign Language Testing and Teaching, 2015(01):41-49.

[5] Zhou Li. Research on the Current Situation of Oral English Test in China, Forum on Contemporary Education, 2010(05):82-83.

[6] Cao Guihua.Oral English Test and Teaching Implications under the Communicative Competence Test System, Journal of Hubei Engineering University, 2014, 34(04):73-75.

[7] Li Zhidan. Constructing Oral English Test System in Higher Vocational Colleges-A Theoretical Analysis Based on TBLA, Journal of Suzhou Education Institute, 2012, 15(05):122-124.

[8] Wu Xiuwen. The Development of Oral English Test System and Its Enlightenment to Oral English Teaching, Journal of Guangdong Industry Polytechnic, 2005(02):32-34.