

SE Intermediate

by Andy Smart



睿智英语

Second Edition

3

· 学生用书 ·

TEFL Discussion Questions & Activities-China

Contains 23 lesson plans covering

- Media and Communication
- The Natural World
- Society



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First Edition

Smart English:

Discussion Questions & Activities – China

Student eBook: Part3

Intermediate

Andy Smart

**Smart English: TEFL Discussion Questions and Activities – China
Student eBook Part 3**

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About the Author

England

Born in the UK, Andy Smart has been a qualified teacher since obtaining his PGCE at the University of Brighton in 1990 and has been involved in education ever since. In England he taught at secondary school level for many years and was also strongly connected to work with SEN students including those with severe learning difficulties. This focused on integrating them into mainstream classroom activities in order to achieve their GCSE's and 'A' levels. Later, this commitment led to the establishment of a new day centre and an accompanying curriculum for people with autism. Moving to management in further education, his primary role was in finding placements to meet SEN students' individual requirements as well as setting up and running various outreach projects.

From there Andy's involvement shifted to supporting EBD students who had been excluded from school. His work aimed at guiding young people back onto a pathway, safe from the negative influences of modern society. During this period, his team successfully created a specialised centre for their students' education, fostering the skills needed to survive in the outside world.

Asia

In 2005 Andy relocated to China where he began teaching English to adults in the city of Guilin, Guangxi Autonomous Region. From there he moved to South Korea working in Seoul, teaching young people at academies and also giving private tuition to teenagers in their homes. Returning to China in 2007 he started work in Beijing creating a strong network throughout the city. Since then he has been primarily involved in teaching his spoken English lessons, delivering lectures and training.

In many ways this book is a culmination of years of practice in the classroom. Drawing from a diverse background in education and extensive practice during his time in Asia, Andy has been able to develop a successful learning package aimed at people who want to improve their oral English skills. This is a strong and effective system that promotes fluency, confidence and accuracy, building a platform where the learner comes away with a high level of self-achievement. Students therefore start to perceive English in a different manner, instead regarding it as a natural part of their daily life rather than a separate entity that is an ongoing struggle

Preface

Five Types of Student

As a teacher of spoken English, I never quite know who will come into my classroom. It could be someone who has a low English speaking level and is as quiet as a mouse or someone who is both fluent and confident but realises that they are speaking too formally.

One time I was shocked to see one of our most well known IELTS teachers come into the classroom, then sit down with the other students. He had been with our company for many years and his classes were very popular as were his speeches and lectures.

“Why on earth have you come to my class?” I asked feeling puzzled.

“I need to improve my spoken English” he exclaimed.

“You are joking” I laughed. “Really? Your English is great!”

“Yes, but I need to retake my IELTS. My score was too low, so I have to work harder.”

“But you’re an IELTS teacher. Surely your score was good enough the first time?”

“No, I only got a 7.5 last time” he replied with an unhappy look.

The other students were all astonished at this remark.

“So what score do you need?” I quizzed with great curiosity.

“I need an 8.....I have to get into Cambridge!”

It just proves that no matter how good you are, you still need to learn to speak more like a native English speaker to really improve. It’s a huge advantage in any IELTS or TOEFL exam and is why more and more people are realising that you can’t speak proper English if you only learn from a text book. It’s one of the big reasons why so many people come to my classes and why these days, learning spoken English is now so popular in China.

Five Types of Student

There are five types of student who can use the Smart English package:

- Students who are doing an IELTS, TOEFL or other English exams. If you are about to do one of these tests then it is essential that you practice your speaking in order to get the score you need. In these lessons you will focus on fluency, pronunciation, grammar and increasing your vocabulary. You will also learn to speak with a higher degree of confidence and freedom from any set models or ideal answers that many text books provide. Remember an examiner can easily spot a candidate reciting. If they do they may choose to ask a follow-up question which will be much harder. It's much better to learn how to answer questions naturally than trying to remember set questions.
- Professionals who need to improve their speaking skills for work. To many professional people, speaking is not just a matter of learning business English. Of course this is an important aspect of communication but in my experience, most just really want to speak to their foreign clients with confidence and accuracy. Many professionals can feel very self-confident and embarrassed when talking to native English speakers, especially in meetings and on conference calls.
- People who like learning English out of interest. I often get people who come to class purely for their love of the English language. Their main aim is to make English a part of their life becoming 'second nature'. These people have no pressure and no stress and for all, the Smart English package is an extremely agreeable, interesting and fun way to improve.
- People who are going abroad. For anyone who is leaving China to foreign lands, the use of text book English will not be enough to understand what the real native English speakers are saying. Smart English helps the traveller understand informal language and also cultural aspects of where they are going, especially in real life situations such as eating in restaurants or shopping.
- Chinese English teachers who want to move away from a text book model. I have had many IELTS, TOEFL and other traditional English teachers come to class who realise that the formal way Chinese people are taught English in school is only 50% of how to really speak English properly. To these professionals this offers a new dimension and freedom to how their speaking and how they are perceived by both students and colleagues.

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Introduction

Learning to Speak Great Spoken English

It's always fantastic when you get positive feedback, so when one of my students came up to me and said

“Andy, why do we love your classes so much?”

I felt fantastic for the rest of the day. You can't beat praise to make you feel good at any time and it's one of the things that you never get tired of hearing. To me the answer to their question is an easy one though. Although these lessons are meant to be fun and interesting they also aim at intensive speaking practice. Actually, students enjoy them so much they don't realise how much speaking in English they are doing. There is less listening to the teacher, less repeating vocabulary and far more emphasis placed on the student doing the work. Infact the teacher should be giving at least 80% student talk time.

Inevitably in any class, the learner will always show some signs of improvement, but here the student will experience a very fast rate of progression. For me, seeing the quietest of students become the most able and outspoken in class always gives me a great feeling of satisfaction. People leave class knowing that they have just spent two hours speaking fluently with pride and confidence and is why they always return to class completing all 66 topics.

The Keys to Speaking Great English

I was speaking to one of our longest serving IELTS teachers the other day. As per usual we ended up comparing the different styles of lesson and how they related to student ability. Whereas my classes focus on the students talking, the IELTS classes are nearly all centered on the teacher doing the work. Indeed the students just listen, watch Power Point and take notes for two hours on exam preparation. I asked him if his hands were tied when it came to the class interacting and practicing speaking.

“Actually, for the Band 6 and 6.5 classes, if I ask my students to speak in English, most will be unable to talk for longer than a minute. After that they will go quiet just sitting there doing nothing. If we try any form of speaking practice, I have to quickly move on and get back to myself doing the talking. The simple problem lies in that they don’t learn how to speak English at school. It’s not that they don’t practice the basics. They drill lexis over and over and learn grammar in the same way. The trouble is that’s as far as it goes. They never learn how to develop an argument or conversation in any shape or form”.

It always strikes me as odd when a student’s note making ability which may be impeccable, in no way matches their ability to verbalise what they have just written. The education system in the PRC instead focuses on reading and writing facilitated by tests and more tests. A student may have a good command of grammar and an extensive vocabulary especially if they are doing IELTS or TOEFL which demand that what you learn is often well outside of what a native speaker uses in daily life. Most students will have already done extensive ground before coming to a spoken English class.

With all the ground work already done, these classes are very different from those you would normally expect to do in ‘traditional’ lessons. The teacher’s job here is merely to create a pathway to encourage putting what the learner already knows into practice.

For me, after a lifetime of acquiring so much unused knowledge, I can only imagine its like learning to drive for years and years but never buying a car. To most students, the key to speaking fluent English is something that is tantalisingly just out of reach.

Confidence

It can’t be restated enough that confidence is the single most important thing that you should be getting from any lesson, anytime, anywhere. Confidence confidence confidence is what it’s what it’s all about! The most confident and relaxed students will always do better in their IELTS or TOEFL exams. Professional people who are confident and relaxed will always be more successful when they are doing business with Western clients.

From confidence comes fluency and from fluency you will become even more confident. It’s a wonderful cycle of growth ending in success. When you are achieving fluency and confidence you will become happy in your studies. Going to class will be no longer a chore you have to do. Instead it will become something you want to do. With no stress and pressure, it will become far easier to identify problems and easier to correct them. You will become more accurate in the way you speak and the puzzle will come together as one whole picture.

There are many ways in which you can focus specifically on confidence building. Here is a checklist of what you could be doing.

- Always remember that you have been learning English for a very long time at school. Remember that you already have a large vocabulary in your memory after years and years of repeating vocabulary, doing homework and tests. I am often envious of my students as my Chinese speaking is nowhere near as good as their English. I have to remind myself that whereas I have only been learning for a few years, my students have been learning since they were young.
- Never worry that your English is not as good as your classmate's and that you may look stupid if you don't answer correctly. It's much better to speak than sit quietly, smiling and saying nothing. Remember that if you aren't speaking you aren't practicing.
- Talk talk talk! Try and speak in English as much as possible. Of course speak in Chinese if you really can't understand something and you want to ask a friend. Just remember that you already have a large English vocabulary so take a moment and try and think of an alternative way of saying what you want.
- Talk talk talk! Try and keep away from using your dictionary as much as possible. Just as before, if you can think of an alternative way of saying something then that's much better than stopping your conversation and spending minutes looking in your dictionary. Learn to talk without pausing as this will make you feel really confident.
- When it is breaktime, continue talking in English so it feels like it is a natural thing to do. Watch lower ability students talk in Chinese during breaktime. Remember you can talk in Chinese all you like when class is finished.
- Always ask questions if you don't know. If you are confused about something don't sit there quietly. There will be other students who are also unclear about the same thing. If you understand what you should be doing then you will feel very confident. If you don't understand what you should be doing this is very bad for your confidence. Make sure you know what you should be doing.
- Get into the habit of speaking in English with the class when the teacher is asking questions. When you answer correctly or contribute to the class in English then it will really boost your confidence.
- Try and answer the teacher's questions before your classmates. Don't sit there quietly and wait for someone else to answer. The more you talk, the more the higher ability students will notice you and want to sit with you to practice their English. Knowing this is great for your confidence.
- Make sure you listen to any advice your teacher gives you. Go home and work on it. These classes emphasise that you only need one or two things to work on at a time, so it shouldn't give you too much pressure and shouldn't be too difficult. If you find that suddenly you are improving because you are listening to your teacher, you will become more confident. If you start to make an improvement your teacher will notice and tell you. This is also a huge confidence builder.
- Help your classmates, especially those who are at a lower ability and may be quieter than you. Help them if they don't understand discussions or activities. Help them with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. It will make you feel more confident.
- Learn to communicate with your teacher as much as possible. Sit at the front of the class so that your teacher can listen to you as often as possible. This will make you more confident.

1

Common Student Errors

I frequently get worried looking students coming up to me asking me how they can improve their English before their exam. Many are taking it for the second or third time having not attained the score they need to go overseas. Actually most problems are very common, straightforward and identifiable almost immediately. The real issue is that their errors are habitual, having been ingrained since middle school and thus making them really difficult to iron out.

Recently one of my students was scratching her head wondering what she did wrong in her IELTS; after three attempts the highest she'd got was a 5.5 when she really needed at least a 6. She'd been working really hard and clearly things had gotten the better of her. Blowing her nose into a tissue I asked if she was ok

“I catch cold” was her painful reply!

Here is a list of some of the most common mistakes made in class.

- Basic pronunciation errors.
- Some can be referred to as ‘Chinglish’ which means the direct translation from Chinese into English.
- Some things are straight out of a textbook and may have little to do with the real world.
- General poor use of simple grammar. You don't have to be a grammar wiz when it comes to student correction. After a while you will notice that you are correcting the same errors again and again.

Before you start these classes have a look these different problems that many students have when they are speaking in English and see if you recognise any that you may have yourself. Be honest; you want to improve so really think about which ones belong to you. With a pencil, label those that you think you need to practice. Make sure you work on these when you are in class and at home. Show them to your classmates and ask them to let you know when you are making the mistake. During class your teacher may also refer to this list. When they do make a note at the side of the page and make sure you start to correct your errors. You only need to choose one or two from the list and it's very important that you do this work.

Pronunciation

Refer to Appendix B: Using Phonetics. Phonetics are in British English.

Love/Blood/Mud – Phonetics: /lʌv/blʌd/mʌd/

Error: /læv/blæd/mæd/

The /ə/ sound is replaced with a pronounced /æ/ saying 'LAV' or 'BLAD'.

Round/Brown/Frown – Phonetics: /raʊnd/ braʊn/ fraʊn

Error: /rʌnd/brʌn/frʌn/

The /aʊ/ is replaced by /ʌ/ sounding like 'RAAND' or 'BRAAN'.

Will/Mill/Skill – Phonetics: /wɪl/ mɪl/ skɪl/

Error: /wɪ:l/ mɪ:l/ skɪ:l/

The /ɪ/ is replaced by /i:/ changing the meaning of the word to 'WHEAL, MEAL'.

Usual/Casual/Genre – Phonetics: /ju : ʒəwəl/ kəʒwəl/ ʒɑnrə

Many students will be able to make the /ʒ/ sound when you ask them, but in normal conversation they will forget it instantly.

Error: /ju : ju : ɔr/ kə ju : ɔr/ ʃɑnrə/

The individual may say 'U YOU AL/, CA YOU AL or YANRE'

Many also have difficulty making the last 'L' sound, instead substituting it with an 'AW' sound, for example, 'U YOU AW' and 'CA YOU AW'.

This/That/Other – Phonetics: /ðɪs/ ðæt/ əðər

Error: /zɪs/ zæt/ əzər/

The /ð/ is replaced by /z/ creating 'ZIS, ZAT' or 'OZZER'

Thanks/Author/Mouth – Phonetics: /θæŋks/ ɔ : θə/ maʊθ/

Error: /sæŋks/ ɔ : sə/ pa : s/

The /θ/ is replaced by /s/ forming 'SANKS', 'AUSOR' or 'MOUSE'

Violin/Very/Have – Phonetics: / vaɪəlɪn / veri : / hæv /

Error: /waɪəlɪn / weri : / hæw /

The /v/ is replaced by /w/ forming 'WIOLIN', 'WERY' or 'HOW'

Quality/Quantity/Qualify – Phonetics: /kwɒləti : / kwɒntəti : / kwɒləfaɪ

Error: /kɒləti : / kɒntəti : / kɒləfaɪ / Note the /w/ is omitted forming 'KAALITY'.

Also there is not normally any difficulty with 'qui' words such as 'quick' and 'quiet'.

Tragedy/Trick/Tree – Phonetics: / trædzədi / trɪk / tri : /

Error: / twædzədi / twɪk / twi : /

The /r/ is replaced by /w/ thus forming 'TWAGEDY' or 'TWICK'.

Towel/Vehicle/ Critical – Phonetics: / taʊəl / vi : ɪkəl / krɪtɪkəl /

Error: / taʊ ə : / vi : ɪkə : / krɪtɪk ə : / Here the learner is unable to make the /l/ sound ending the word, instead replacing it with / ə : / forming 'TOWAW' or 'VEHICAW'.

Little/Bottle/Title – Phonetics: / lɪtl / bɒtl / taɪtl /

This is an interesting pronunciation error. In the US, if there is a double or single 't' after a vowel it is often changed to a 'd' sound. In both British and American English the /θ/ is omitted with the 't/d' and 'l' being made at the same time, for example.

/ lɪtl / bɒtl / taɪtl /

This allows us to focus on making the 'l' clear and pronounced.

Error: / lɪtə : / bɒt ə : / taɪt ə : /

As above, the /l/ is replaced with / ə : / forming 'LITTAW' or 'BOTTAW'. The same applies to words with a 'd' after a vowel such as 'medal' or 'idle'.

The addition of an unnecessary schwa sound / ə /

Orange/Finish/ Few

Error: / ɒrɪndʒ ə / fɪnɪʃ ə / fju : ə /

This normally happens after the student has said something that sounds like it ends in a consonant forming 'ORANGE ER', 'FINISH ER' or 'FEW ER'.

In addition to this, a schwa may be placed in between two consonants, for example, Adverb/Football/Hardback

Error: / æd ə vɜ : b / fʊt ə bɔ : l / hɑ : d ə bæk /

Sounds like 'ADUVERB', 'FOOTUBALL' or 'HARDUBACK'.

Chinglish

How do you or can you say (something)?

Error: How to say? / How to spell? This comes from the direct translation of Chinese to English: 'zen me shuo?' / 'zen me pin xie'.

This is the most common mistake made by Chinese students. It is an ingrained habit that you will hear everywhere.

What does it/this mean?

Error: What is meaning? / What's meaning? This comes from the direct translation of 'shenme yisi?' or 'what meaning?'

It's been a while / It's been a long time used if we haven't seen someone for a while.

Error: Although everyone knows '**Long time no see**' we rarely use it. Chinese students may often use this as it is common to say 'Hao jiu bu jian' which is its direct translation.

I like to use the computer/ play computer games

Error: 'I like to play computer' is less of a problem from direct translation, rather than one of laziness that generalises both statements. Firstly it is missing the preposition 'with' and also the possessive pronoun 'my'. Normally we would say 'use my computer' and 'play (computer) games'.

I really like it

Error: 'I very like it'. This unfortunate sentence comes from the translation of 'feichang xihuan' (very like). Unfortunately the Chinese language has no way of modifying a verb as in English which places 'very much' after the verb. In colloquial English we can say 'really like' instead of 'very' before the verb. 'Very enjoy' is another example of this.

Another problem that can occur alongside the misuse of 'very' is the confusion between 'like' and 'enjoy'. Because of this you may hear '**I am very liking it**'. The word 'like' expresses a state or condition so it is not used as a continuous verb. If used to give approval of something it can be used in the continuous sense though this is rare.

I have a lot of money

Error: 'I have much money'. This common error originates from the use of 'hen duo' which covers, 'much, many' and 'a lot of'. Most students will be aware that 'a lot of' can be used with both countable and uncountable and that 'many' can be used with countable nouns. However though this is possible, it is not common to use either 'many' or 'much' in positive sentences. Normally we use them with 'do not', for example, 'I don't have much money' or 'There isn't much time to eat dinner'.