

Oral English

TEACHER'S MANUAL

for Chinese scientists

oe

BY

(美) STEPHEN B. YOUNG

(中) CHEN PEIDONG

上海外语教育出版社

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INTRODUCTION

Oral English for Chinese Scientists is designed for Chinese scholars of science and technology who are going abroad or who will receive English-speaking scientists visiting China. The lessons emphasize oral English, and include explanations of Western professional culture.

The textbook is based on a communicative approach to the study of English. It is necessary to teach both language forms and patterns and the situations in which the forms and patterns can be used. The book is not intended as a guide to grammar or translation.

The textbook uses an integrated approach to language learning. The main purpose of the lessons is the improvement of speaking skills. Additionally, the tapes accompanying the textbook contain materials for the improvement of listening skills. In the lessons, instructions are given for the writing of resumes and abstracts of technical articles. These writing activities are important in themselves and as a basis for speaking.

The language patterns and background information stress professional English and Western professional culture, and are suitable for scholars and graduate students. The materials were not written with university undergraduates in mind. Nor has any attempt been made to teach ephemeral colloquialisms or slang.

The book has 12 units which are the basis of a course

in spoken English. Additionally, 8 appendices are included. These appendices provide further information regarding Western culture. They can be used for student reference or as the foundation of lectures given by foreign teachers or Chinese teachers who have lived abroad.

All units have at least 3 sections:

Background Information

Patterns

Situations and Topics for Discussion

Larger units may have up to 5 sections:

Background Information

Patterns

Vocabulary

Notes

Situations and Topics for Discussion

Units IV, VI, VIII, IX, and XII have several parts, each one of which is organized like a shorter unit.

The units can be divided into 3 groups according to their subject matter. Units I—IV develop language patterns that can all be used in interviews. Units V—XI deal with topics pertaining to social convention and everyday life. Unit XII discusses scientific and technical conferences.

Some materials are repeated in different units. This reinforcement is an important part of the learning program. The repetition is deliberate.

All teachers will, to a greater or lesser degree, adapt teaching materials to suit their own needs and teaching styles. The following comments are intended to be of a general nature. It is hoped they may facilitate use of the

textbook.

The units are designed to help the students progress from passive recognition and understanding to active communication. Each unit should be introduced by a lecture containing background information. These lectures can be from one to two hours long. After the lecture, students should listen to the tape for the unit. After listening to the tape, students should practice patterns in small groups (6—10 students and a teacher). When the patterns have been learned, students should role play situations. Typically, small groups meet 4 times a week for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours each meeting.

1. LECTURES

The introductory lectures should, if possible, be given by native speakers or by Chinese teachers who have studied abroad. Background information is given in the student's book; further details are given in each chapter of the teacher's manual.

It is important that the students not read while the introductory lecture is being given. The students should take notes on the lecture. After the lecture, the students should compare their notes with the background information given in the textbook.

In giving the introductory lectures, teachers should repeat all the points in the background information section of the student's book. Lecturing teachers should also strive to use as many patterns found in the unit as possible during their introduction to the unit.

The introductory lectures are important and useful, but speaking skills cannot be taught solely by a teacher lecturing. To learn how to speak, students must talk extensively in small groups. Before students meet in small groups, they should listen to the tape for the unit.

2. TAPES

The tapes provided for each unit consist of native speakers reading the patterns and vocabulary, and a series of dialogs.

Transcripts of the dialogs are provided in the teacher's manual. Students are not expected to transcribe or memorize the dialogs.

The students should listen to the dialogs in order to hear the patterns in use, and in order to catch the main idea of the dialogs. If the students are given transcripts of the dialogs, it will slow the improvement of their listening skills.

Students should, however, memorize and practice the patterns and vocabulary on the tapes. The patterns and vocabulary should be memorized before the students come to small group classes.

3. SMALL GROUPS

Patterns can be drilled and students can role play in small groups. It is best to have approximately 6 students in each small group. If more than 10 students are put into a small group, spoken language skills will not develop quickly. There will not be enough time for each student

to speak individually and be corrected. Classes become unwieldy with more than 10 students.

In the past, it has been found sufficient to have the small groups meet four times a week for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours a meeting.

The first three meetings are used to drill patterns and practice vocabulary and pronunciation. The fourth small group meeting is used for role plays.

In the small groups, the students should progress from drill to practice to performance.

4. DRILLING

When drilling, it is important that the students do not read the patterns as they speak. If the students read the patterns as they speak, their listening and speaking skills will improve slowly if at all.

Drills can begin with choral repetition, but having the class repeat patterns in unison is of limited use. Choral repetition gives a student the chance to speak without feeling selfconscious. It does not enable the teacher to hear and correct mistakes made by an individual, however. Choral repetition also prevents the individual student from hearing his/her own speech. If students cannot hear themselves speak, they cannot correct their own mistakes.

Drills should be kept lively. The pace should be varied. Long drills and short drills can be mixed together. When drilling, students should not be called on to speak in the same order each time. If they are, some students will stop listening or thinking until it is their turn to talk. If stu-

dents are called on to speak in a constantly changing order, all the students will stay alert.

Brief explanations of cultural differences can be used to vary the pace and activity of classes in which drilling is the main focus. But the small groups should never be used primarily for cultural explanations, as this is an ineffective use of time and teacher manpower.

The main purpose of spoken language is, of course, communication. If the students are afraid of making mistakes, or if the students feel they must speak perfectly, they will not learn quickly and their fluency will be impaired.

When a student is speaking, other students in the class should listen and take notes of what is done well and what mistakes are made. The students can comment before the teacher corrects and/or praises what was said. Students should be encouraged to learn from one another.

It is important not to overcorrect the students, especially at the beginning. The teacher should not interrupt the students. After the students have finished talking, the teacher can correct the main points. Rigorously correcting small points (e.g. articles) can be counterproductive.

5. ROLE PLAYS

A list of "Situations and Topics for Discussion" is at the end of each unit. These may be used by students to check their understanding of the materials, and as the basis for class discussions and simple role plays. Further role plays are given in each chapter of the teacher's man-

ual, where they are identified as 'pair work' or 'student teacher role plays.'

These role plays are intended to help students move from mechanical repetition to performance, to free communication. It is vital that the teacher introduce the situation to the students. Such introductions will teach the students when to use the patterns. It is often beneficial to give students a few minutes to rehearse after explaining the situation to them.

The role plays are structured by use of the patterns and the situation as defined by the teacher. They are not "free talk."

The role plays require the students to perform. Students role playing do not memorize and recite dialogs. They should interact with one another while they speak. The role playing students should be encouraged to act out the situations in a lively manner. It is usually best to have the role playing students stand in front of the class for the rest of the class to observe. In the long run, this helps the students to overcome their selfconsciousness in speaking a foreign language.

The classroom activities and role plays provided in the teacher's manual are intended to be a resource and guide for teachers using the book. It is assumed that teachers using the book will develop more activities to suit the needs of their classes.

6. TESTS

Exams can be structured upon the materials of the

textbook. A sample examination is given for Unit IV. "Interviews." Similar examinations can be prepared for Units VII ("Transportation"), IX ("Meals"), and XII ("Conferences").

7. APPENDICES

The appendices are not discussed in the teacher's manual. These materials can be used for reference by the students, or as the basis of lectures given by people who have lived in a foreign culture.

8. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The lessons in the textbook can be supplemented and reinforced by extracurricular activities including receptions, outings, and sports.

9. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Two follow-up activities have proven useful in the past.

- a) Computer programming courses.
- b) Tapes of articles in the students' fields of specialty. These tapes should be made by native speakers, if possible. The articles taped should be chosen by the students for their vocabulary rather than their intrinsic scientific or technical interest.

10. TEACHING SCHEDULE

The units are not of equal length. If a student spends 8 hours a week in the classroom, the following schedule

could be used:

Unit I Greetings and Partings	1 week
Unit II Family Relationships	1 week
Unit III Schedules and Appointments	1 week
Unit IV Interviews	3 weeks
Unit V Telephone Calls	1 week
Unit VI Housing; Banks; Post Offices	2 weeks
Unit VII Transportation	1 week
Unit VIII Conversational Gambits	1 week
Unit IX Meals	3 weeks
Unit X Seeing a Doctor	1 week
Unit XI Appearance and Personality	1 week
Unit XII Conferences	6 weeks

This schedule can of course be adapted to meet the specific needs of specific students. For example, a course designed for advanced students might be completed in 18 weeks using the following schedule: **Units I and II**, 1 week; **Unit III**, 1 week; **Unit IV**, 3 weeks; **Units V and VI**, 2 weeks; **Unit VII**, 1 week; **Unit VIII**, 1 week, **Unit IX**, 2 weeks; **Units X and XI**, 1 week; **Unit XII**, 6 weeks.

11. TEACHERS

The text is designed to be taught by a team consisting of Chinese and foreign teachers.

Foreign teachers can give the introductory lectures. In small groups, teachers can discuss details and specific examples of foreign culture and cultural differences. The primary emphasis of the small groups, however, is pattern drilling and role playing.

Close cooperation on the part of the Chinese and foreign teachers greatly increases the effectiveness of the teaching.

12. BIBLIOGRAPHY

This book has been produced in China specifically to meet the needs of Chinese scholars, graduate students, and teachers. Certain techniques and materials, however, have been adapted from the following sources, which are hereby acknowledged:

Information Please Publishers, *Information Please Almanac 1982*, New York, 1981.

Graham, Carolyn, *Jazz Chants*, New York, 1978.

Rost, Michael A. and Robert K. Stratton. *Listening in the Real World: Clues to English Conversation*, Tempe, Arizona, 1978.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Unit I : Greetings and Partings	1
Unit II: Family Relationships	10
Unit III: Scheduling Appointments	19
Unit IV: Interviews	29
Unit V: Telephone Calls	46
Unit VI: Housing, Banks, Post Offices	53
Unit VII: Transportation	67
Unit VIII: Conversational Gambits	78
Unit IX: Meals	91
Unit X: Seeing a Doctor.....	110
Unit XI: Appearance and Personality	121
Unit XII: Conferences	127

UNIT I: GREETINGS AND PARTINGS

Section I: Background Information

When giving the introductory lecture, the teacher can provide examples of common Western topics of conversation, contrasting Chinese practices. For example, the use of university degrees as a short-hand for explanations of educational background might be discussed. The ways in which discussion of the weather or compliments on clothing are used to begin conversations might be explained. Popular personal interests, such as hobbies and leisure time activities, could be discussed: e.g. music, gardening, cooking, skiing, hiking.

It is not considered proper in the West to ask personal questions too early in a relationship. It would be considered inappropriate to ask somebody you have just met, "How old are you?" or "Are you married?" or "Do you believe in a religion?" Furthermore, such topics of conversation are usually reserved for private talks, and are not normally spoken of in public. To ask such questions in front of other people, even if you know the person well, is not considered suitable in the West.

It should be stressed that unless a person is a child or very old, it is not proper to ask about the person's age in the West. Western women are often especially sensitive

about their age, and will frequently remain "29 years old" for several years.

The euphemisms of American speech can be discussed, and British usage can be contrasted. In England a "bathroom" is a place to wash, a toilet being often called a "water closet" or a "w.c." In America a "bathroom," "men's room," "women's room," or "rest room" is a toilet. In rural America, wagons used to transport manure are called "honey carts."

The ways in which social conventions and situations define communication should be stressed. Grammar and translation will not suffice to make sense of language or permit communication. Literal translations of greetings may be meaningless, comic, or rude. Do not use literal translations of Chinese greetings (e.g. "Where are you going?"). Such statements can offend a person from the West. A native speaker of English who knew no Chinese would be perplexed if greeted with "Have you eaten or not?" Unless two people know one another well, questions like "Where are you going?" or "Where were you last night?" are improper by Western standards.

Furthermore, students should not try to interpret when they speak English. They should try to communicate, and not worry about grammar too much. If students are too concerned with grammar or try to literally translate from the Chinese, they will not have confidence, and confidence is essential to successful spoken communication.

Different degrees of formality and informality should be explained. It is better to teach a fairly formal set of

behavior patterns to scholars and graduate students going abroad, as casual informality in a professional situation is more likely to cause offense than somewhat reserved behavior. Social and geographical variations in definitions of formality might be discussed. In general, Europe and England are more formal than America and Canada; the eastern sections of America and Canada are more formal than the western sections; and sections of western North America and Australia are very casual.

Section II: Patterns

The importance of using the correct title (Dr., Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mrs.) should be stressed. People with Ph.D. degrees should be addressed as Dr. unless they state a preference for a different form of address. Most people who teach at universities in the West, and virtually all professors, will have Ph.D. degrees.

There is an important exception to this rule. Physicians should **never** address Ph.D. holders as “Doctor.” Such an act could cause confusion in a medical environment, and is contrary to Western hospital practice. A physician may address a Ph.D. by his or her job title (e.g. “Professor”), or by the form of address preferred by the Ph.D.

The greeting “How do you do?” is uncommon in the United States. It is sometimes used by speakers of British English when they first meet somebody.

The difference between “Nice to meet you” and “Nice to see you” should be explained. “Nice to meet you” is