



Oral English Course for Colleges

大学英语口语

[喀] Standly Munoh 编著

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for
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INTRODUCTION

The world is “fast” becoming a “Global Village”, and English has turned out to be a very popular (if not a very necessary) language for people in all countries to learn, for communication in the international community. It is estimated that there are more English learners in China alone than there are native English speakers in the world.

Even after learning **English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL)** for “a long time” and with “a lot of seriousness”, many people still often feel shy, nervous, and/or lack of enough self-confidence when speaking in English, especially when orally communicating with foreigners. Many of such learners are already quite good at English reading, writing, and listening, and have even passed many official English exams. Yet, they still feel not very able to **think/reflect and orally express themselves** freely, fluently, and confidently during real-life English discussions. Some others have learned to think and speak fluently in English, but have not yet learned enough of the right attitudes and perceptions when communicating and dealing with people from other cultures.

The root cause of such failure(s) in foreign language learning is that, in many schools, people focus too much on grammar, pronunciation, and exams, while paying too little attention to the need for students to increase their cross-cultural awareness, their actual communication skills, and their self-confidence. This unique book would help to create opportunities for solving such linguistic, cultural, and psychological barriers to successful Oral English learning.

To learn a language successfully or effectively, the learner should also: learn and be aware of the culture(s) in which the language is used; learn to “**think in the given language**” when using it; try and overcome whatever psychological barriers to effective communication that he/she may have, such as shyness, nervousness, and excessive fear for making mistakes — and so, the most effective approach for learning Spoken English is to always **prepare in advance** (if possible) by reading, listening, watching, reflecting, and noting down related/relevant English information, and then doing a lot of “free thought and free talk” practice, with a cross-cultural perspective and for self-confidence building. This argument is correct because a language can never be separated from its mother culture(s); different languages use different sentence patterns or structures; effectively learning and using a language in communication may well depend on the learner’s personality and attitude (s); and finally, “practice makes perfect”.

Actually, this is not just a book for English learning — it is also a very entertaining, thought-provoking and enlightening one for easy reading, cross-cultural learning, and self-en-

couragement.

Please read through this book with open minds and feel free to reflect, disagree, comment, and debate about any of the sample opinions expressed in it. Indeed, many of such opinions and ideas are just “samples” or “food for thought”, to help you think more and find your own ideas and voices. Use the special and relevant discussion topics in this book; their introductions and discussion plans; the sample experiences, stories, questions, thoughts, opinions, and jokes shared under them; and the **suggested** follow-up activities — to always *prepare in advance* for enjoyable and effective “*Free Thought and Free Talk*” *English Lessons, Corners, Salons, and Group or Pair Discussions and Practice*.

Even where there are no Oral English teachers, here is a Top-20 List of opportunities that this book will create for you (readers and learners):

(1) Rediscover how learning the English language can be not just necessary, but also interesting and easy; and how to increase your enthusiasm and passion for learning and speaking in it. See how to learn Spoken English very seriously while (at the same time) taking it easy, relaxing, and having great fun in the process. See how to make “difficult topics” easier, and to do deeper, comprehensive, and somewhat philosophical reflections and dialogues about “simple topics”.

(2) Become such really good English learners who do not focus too much on getting high scores or passing exams. Begin to look beyond such formal exams and try to improve your real ability to think/reflect and communicate freely, flexibly, fluently, creatively, naturally, effectively, and confidently during real-life English discussions and situations and about relevant topics and issues.

(3) See English as a good tool, not just for international business communications, but also for cross-cultural learning, understanding, dialogue, and friendship.

(4) Improve your spoken English power and build more confidence in yourselves by improving your sense of humor and becoming more and more hopeful, optimistic or positive-minded, creative and thoughtful.

(5) **Create your own English Environments** by joining some “Free Thought and Free Talk” English lessons, corners, salons, groups, and/or partnerships; and/or, forming some in your neighborhoods. Your English Corner members and/or partners can include not only your classmates, but also your family members, neighbors, friends and others who are interested. Get together once or twice a week to think freely, discuss naturally, play happily, and practice enthusiastically in English. Always read, listen, and *prepare in advance* for the topic or issue you’ve agreed to talk about. See how “Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance” (P. P. P. P.). Learn to make your own top-20, or top-10, or even top-5 list about any topic or issue.

(6) Increase your curiosity and try to know and understand a lot more about life, society, culture(s), and nature in your country and around world. Always ask many questions about the topic or issue(s) under discussion and try to provide comprehensive answers.

(7) Learn to make your own voices heard in English. Take the opportunities and practice expressing and exchanging your own ideas, opinions, thoughts, experiences, stories, and jokes. Avoid just memorizing and then reciting from the textbook or other sources. Learn to rather **understand, remember, and then paraphrase, retell or report** in your own words and together with your own and opinions or analyses.

(8) Instead of learning by way of simply (and yet painfully) memorizing new English words one-by-one, you would rather learn how to use your new words, expressions, and/or phrases to make complete sentences or express ideas from your own minds even just for fun and practice. /So, it would be easier for you to remember not just your new words, but also your new sentences and ideas. Trying to learn many English words one-by-one can be compared to trying to use one stone to shoot just one bird at a time, or using a hook to try and catch just one fish at a time. On the contrary, trying to remember new vocabulary by making sentences with them would be like using one stone to shoot many birds or using a net to catch many fishes at a time.

(9) Instead of concentrating too much on learning grammar and pronunciation, you would rather work more on improving your ability to communicate effectively in English. Effective communication is the essence of a language. The essence is not “perfect” pronunciation, grammar, and/or accent.

(10) Improve your ability to “think in English and speak out in English simultaneously”. Avoid having to think first in your first language before translating and then speaking out in English. For example, you would reduce your “ChinEnglish”. Except when joking, you would not make such sentences as: “*Good-good study day-day up*” when you want to advise somebody to work hard and make daily progress in his/her studies; “*Let me see-see or think-think*” when you want somebody to let you take a look at (or think about) something. Also familiarize yourselves with the fact that virtually every idea can be expressed in many different ways or sentence structures or patterns, and **avoid “automatic speaking”**. For example, you would not be lying sick in a hospital bed but automatically saying “**Fine, thank you! And you?**” when a friend telephones and asks “How are you?” Become more flexible and avoid automatic questions or responses, which can be irrelevant or nonsensical in some topics or situations.

(11) Relearn and accept the fact that mistakes are a natural and normal aspect of any learning process, including the learning of languages. So, you would no longer be too afraid of making either grammatical or pronunciation errors when learning and practicing to speak in English. You would no longer “**lose face**” when you make language mistakes. You would just laugh, have fun, and be happy that you took the chance to try.

(12) Become no longer so shy and/or nervous when speaking in English, or when speaking to foreigners or strangers, or to an audience. Feel no more like you don't know (or have) anything to say during English conversations. Get your minds and brains stimulated, and see how to do it yourself.

(13) Significantly reduce the number of topics and/or issues that you consider to be taboo. Feel free to imagine and inquire as extensively as possible and to orally express your point of view about all topics and issues. Avoid being **excessively sensitive** about certain topics and issues. Well, also relearn and remember that *freedom* does not mean boisterousness, unruliness, disorderliness, selfishness, inconsiderateness, and/or total insensitivity.

(14) Increase your ability to be tolerant, cheerful, compassionate, positive-minded, loving and “truly friendly”. Make sure you are not often “just acting friendly”. Improve your ability to “**smile real smiles**” — smiles that come from the heart — not just fake, artificial, unnatural, mechanical, practiced, and/or rehearsed smiles. Maintain your niceness and yet reduce your naivety. Improve your ability to think more critically and objectively, and to act like-wise. Avoid cynicism as much as possible; and yet avoid excessive fear of being labeled a cynic.

(15) Become more and more enlightened about international cultures and, increase your understanding, friendliness, fairness, and hospitality to all kinds of people from different parts or cultures of your country and the world as a whole. Become less and less ignorant, prejudiced, and discriminatory. Become more sensitive to cultural differences and yet not excessively afraid of “cultural shocks”. Understand the cultural similarities and celebrate the beauty in/of the differences. And, yet again, see how the similarities really outweigh (and should matter more than) the differences. Improve your readiness and ability to look and see beyond your pre-notions, prejudices, presumptions, and first impressions.

(16) Become even prouder of your own countries, heritages, and cultural backgrounds while, at the same time, better appreciating and respecting the cultures of other peoples and countries. Make sure your world outlook or cross-cultural attitude is free from **inferiority and/or superiority complexes**. Love your own countries and hometowns with all your hearts, but avoid excessively displaying your nationalist, patriotic, and/or parochial feelings when dealing with your foreign friends. Always allow the spirit of “One World One Dream” to inspire you, and help you keep in mind that **all** the countries, peoples, and cultures of the world are good and beautiful, even though they can all be improved. Begin to contribute (at least at a personal level) to eliminating the seven biggest and associated “enemies” of One World One Dream and the Olympic Spirit — they are **cross-cultural** ignorance, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, pride, arrogance, and excessive patriotism and nationalism.

(17) Become more outspoken and yet, avoid being one of those who are **still** wondering aloud and asking foreigners why they are “so black”, “so white”, “so yellow”, and/or so whatever. Also make sure you are not any of the following kinds of people: (a) The

students who would tell your teacher that he/she is the best English teacher they have ever had — the only “problem” is that he/she is not a white person, or not from America or Europe; (b) the ones who would say Mr. or Mrs. XY would be such a great teacher if he/she were a little taller or slimmer; (c) the employer who would say to a job applicant that “Your resume is very good, but we want a white person”; and (d) those who would *still* exclaim “I am frightened or scared to death (吓死我 or 吓我一跳)” when they suddenly find a foreigner around them.

(18) Make sure that you are *not* one of those who *still* assume that: *everybody from America* has a great sense of humor and is “open-minded” (whatever connotation this term may have); *everybody from the UK* is “a gentleman” or “lady”; and *people from Africa* don’t wear clothes, always eat with their bare hands, and dare not eat chocolate for fear of biting their fingers that look like chocolate.

(19) Improve your ability to look at people in the eyes and directly express your sincere opinions, wishes, and/or feelings — politely and yet clearly. Continue to always care about other people’s feelings. But make sure that honesty and/or reality are not undermined, and effective communication is not damaged by excessive politeness or courteousness. Avoid being one of those who are often smiling and pretending to agree even when they are sure that they disagree. Avoid always talking indirectly, flattering other people, and telling lots of “white lies” even when you don’t need to. Improve your audacity to tell people not just what you think they want to hear, but also what you think they need to, or should hear. **Help promote the kind of simple, straightforward, and effective communication in which:** (a) people are smart, but not “too smart” or cunning, like foxes; (b) speakers and other message senders are direct and clear — not usually using ambiguity, insinuations, and coded language — and so, the listeners or message receivers easily understand, without having to go through a tiring and unreliable process of guessing, conjecturing, interpreting, decoding, deducing, inferring, or figuring out the real meanings and intentions of the speaker or message sender; (c) instances of miscommunication are not common; (d) people do not often say something in front of others and say something else behind them; (e) people do not feel nervous and suspicious (ironically) when others smile to them; (f) people do not over-use praises and flattery, and they do not always expect or require others to praise them or their points of view; and (g) it is easy to know what is a “real ‘yes’” or a “real ‘no’”, and “a promise is a debt”.

(20) Contribute in promoting **true love, friendliness, kindness and a more humane culture** in which: (a) human relationships do not have to be based (so often) on some strategic interests or calculations — friendship, for example, does not have to be some sort of a strategic alliance, partnership, or game for “mutual assistance” or “win-win cooperation”, and people do not see friends as just tools for achieving some goals; (b) offering help to others does not have to be some kind of a strategic investment; (c) there is a high level of

goodwill and trust amongst people (even amongst strangers); (d) “the privileged” and/or “the smart” can happily and harmoniously co-exist with “the less privileged” and/or “the less shrewd”; (e) “the realists” are not so Machiavellian and “the idealists” are not so naive; (f) honesty is not a weakness, and “kind, sincere, and simple-minded people are not so vulnerable; (g) people are not so eager to take advantage of others’ weaknesses, insecurities, and vulnerabilities; (h) people do not feel pressured or required to learn and practice the art of often wearing masks and acting like chameleons; (i) appearances do not often matter more than real quality; and (j) creativity, imagination, and realness are not often lost because classroom presentations do not rely on the PowerPoint software, and speeches and answers to questions do not have to be choreographed in advance.

Acknowledgements

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I have special thanks for Mr. Frank Tan, the principal of Gmaple English Training Center in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province, China. He was my first employer in this country, and he gave me the chance to teach so many students in different schools and rediscover my teaching passion and talents, and also to learn a lot from/about Chinese culture. Special thanks too to the students and staff of Taiyuan Foreign Languages School, where I taught most of my lessons in that city and got a lot of friendship and kindness.

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ested in learning it, but may not necessarily be highly enthusiastic or self-motivated learners of English as a foreign or second language.

After two years in Ningbo, I returned to Guangdong and Sun Yat-Sen University where, for two years, I have been teaching Spoken English and Academic English Writing and Research Methodology in the School of International Studies (S. I. S.), the former School of Translation and Interpretation (S. T. I.). I would like to express profound gratitude to the staff and students of this prestigious university for their friendship, support, and cooperation. I have also got great appreciation for these two schools where I have got great part-time teaching and learning experiences. They are American TPR English School in Zhuhai and Beijing Normal University (Zhuhai Campus).

I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the role that C. C. T. V. International (CCTV 9) has played as “a window on China”. In addition to my travels around this country, and my extensive interactions with Chinese people, I have really learned a lot about this place from the interesting and very informative programs of this TV station, and some of the illustrative photos in this book have been snapped from TV screen during programs on this Channel.

There are a lot of Chinese and other international friends who have helped me in many different ways and at many different times, and have contributed in making this book a success. I cannot name each and every one of them here, but I will always remember and appreciate their friendliness and kindness.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the idea and spirit of “**One World, One Dream**”. That is, although we may come from different family, social, economic, racial, national and/or cultural backgrounds; and though we may have different histories and local conditions; we all belonging to the same human family and the same world, and we have the same basic human and societal instincts, interests, hopes, and dreams; and so we need to know and understand more about each other, communicate more kindly, respectfully, and effectively with each other, and to cooperate more for our common well being.

I am very pleased and proud that, like in this book, I used my English Language teaching opportunities around China to promote cross-cultural awareness, understanding, and friendship; and to help reduce ignorance and prejudices. With my students, as well as with audiences and participants at English corners and salons, I always tried to use passion, compassion, humor and relevant information to promote the fact that all people (s) are equal, should be proud of themselves, and should be treated with kindness, respect, fairness, and friendliness — again, no matter the differences.

I hope that the spirit of “One World, One Dream”, will go far beyond the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and be reflected in our behavior in the international society, not only at inter-governmental levels, but also at the people-to-people level. I hope that cross-cultural ignorance, racism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination would soon become attitudes and practices of the past.

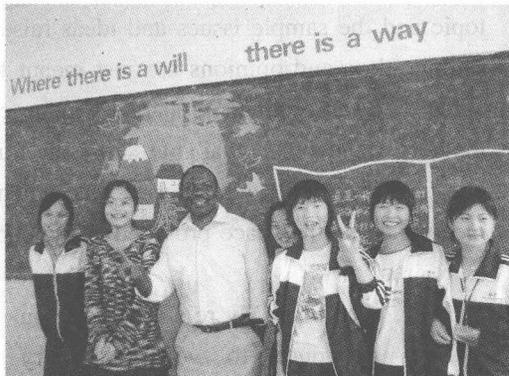
Standly Munoh
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How to Improve Our Spoken English



How effectively can you “think in English” and “orally communicate or express yourself in this language”? How much self-confidence do you usually have when talking in English? What do you think about the learning of Spoken English — how easy or difficult is it? What, from your point of view, are some of the difficulties that learners of “English as a Second or Foreign Language” (ESL/EFL) often face; and how do you think they could overcome such problems? What other ways and things do you think English learners could use to improve their Spoken English more quickly and

effectively? What do you know about the CCTV English Speaking Contest? How are the final contestants selected? What kinds of competitive activities are usually available for the contest? Would you like to be the winner of this cup someday? How would you advise somebody who is preparing for this kind of English speaking competition? Let's get together and learn to think freely and speak out with confidence and humor! Learn to tell your own experiences, stories, and jokes; and to express your own thoughts, ideas, opinions, and imaginations about the topics that we/you choose to talk about.



Suggested Activity 1 (A) **Introduction plus Sample Ideas and Opinions —**

Presented by/with Mao Feilong (Reading and Listening Homework)

- First, **read silently** and try to understand and remember this introduction, discussion plan, and **SAMPLE** ideas and opinions. Then, **read aloud** and practice speaking them from your mind (without just reciting).
- Note that most of the sample ideas are really “just samples”. They could be borrowed or adopted and spoken out by you and other learners. So, you can sometimes imagine that the sample ideas were yours, and you were the one expressing them. But, again, don't just memorize and recite or repeat. You should rather **understand, remember, and be ready to think and retell them in your own words.**
- As you do this reading homework, think and note down some personal opinions about this topic and the sample issues and ideas raised or expressed. Keep in mind that some of the sample ideas and opinions are just meant to help/make you think more. So, feel free to agree or disagree, and prepare to make comments in English. Also search your mind/memory (and other available sources) for similar and/or additional information, ideas, questions, stories, and experiences, which you would like to express at the Oral English meeting. Use the space provided at the end of this unit to note down your prepared ideas.

(1) Hello, everyone. My role in this lesson is to introduce to you this very important and interesting discussion topic; propose a practical discussion plan; and give you some sample ideas, opinions, and/or sentences, which you can use, together with many more from your own mind, to practice and improve your ability to think in English

and speak confidently in English.

(2) **Question:** *Hello, Feilong, my name is Suzan, and I would like to talk with you and practice my Oral English. Hopefully, you can give me some ideas on how to improve my ability to think and express myself in English. Ok?*

(3) Sure! We can talk and share or

exchange some ideas and opinions about some useful and practical ways that people may use to improve their Spoken English and self-confidence.

- (4) **Question:** *By the way, Feilong, I think my oral English is very poor. Don't you think so?*
- (5) I don't think so at all! On the contrary, I think your Spoken English is quite good. Perhaps you're just trying to be modest. Please, don't be too modest. Your English sounds good. But, of course, you can (and should) learn more and make it even better. I think it's good to be modest, but not good to be too modest.
- (6) I don't know why many Chinese students often say their Oral English is "very poor" or "very bad". In fact, their spoken English ability is usually not as bad as they think. Many of them can speak quite well in English. They just don't know it. I think they want to speak so-called "perfect English". Yet, they need to keep in mind that learning is a process.
- (7) I think you, students, just need to have some more confidence in yourselves. You should speak out with the little English that you already know while, at the same time, trying to learn more.
- (8) **Question:** *So, what do you think are the main problems or difficulties faced by Chinese students and ordinary people who want to practice and/or improve their Spoken English?*
- (9) I think the first problem is that many of them are too worried about (afraid of) making mistakes. I mean, many Chinese students are too afraid of making pronunciation and grammar mistakes when they speak in English. And many of them don't seem to know that it's very ok and normal to make mistakes when learning and practicing to speak in English.
- (10) In fact, mistakes are a normal part of any learning process. If somebody doesn't want to make any mistakes at all, I think he/she would not be able to successfully learn or do anything.
- (11) You know, there is a wise saying that "to err is human". This means that all human beings do make errors, and we can only learn by way of first trying, making mistakes, and then trying again. I would advise students of English as a Foreign/Second Language to feel ok to make both pronunciation and grammar mistakes, and then learn from them as they think and speak more in English.
- (12) When you begin to practice your spoken English, you should just care more about what you want to say, and just try to speak it out. I mean, as beginners, students should just open their mouths and speak out their ideas, opinions, or anything they wish to say, without caring too much about the grammar and pronunciation. After all, the main use of English as a language is communication.
- (13) First, we just need to be able to communicate with other people, by expressing our ideas so that they can