

Design, Development and Evaluation of Academic Oral English Curriculum Reform

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Abstract—The postgraduate students' oral English proficiency has long been considered to be unsatisfactory in tailoring ever-increasing global engagement and international academic cooperation. Numerous Chinese universities are currently undergoing English curriculum reform for enhancing postgraduate students' pragmatic communicative capacity especially in involving in global professional interaction and articulating at international academic settings. To assess the effect of the curriculum innovation, a 670-postgraduate-student questionnaire was surveyed at Southeast University to evaluate its pilot reform encompassing teaching, learning and assessment, namely, "Collaborative Teaching Mode and Interactive Learning Model", "Major-related Teaching Content" and "Formative Assessment System Integrated in Summative Assessment System". The data showcases that the teaching content merged by Simulated International Conference on major-relevant themes has been popularly acknowledged by students. The Sino-foreign collaborative teaching mode and multiple interactive learning model have proven to boost students' enthusiasm and confidence in improving oral English proficiency. The formative assessment system can significantly propel teamwork spirit and arouse students' earnest to practice oral English. The research provides viable modes for oral English curriculum reform in Chinese tertiary educational institutions.

Index Terms—co-teaching, reform, oral English, interaction, formative assessment

I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese Ministry of Education, National Development & Reform Commission and Ministry of Finance have successively issued documents to urge universities in China to conduct comprehensive reform in postgraduate education. To echo the reform appeal, English teaching objective is to "exert every effort and avail every channel to enhance pragmatic competence especially cultivating postgraduate students' verbal and literal communicative capacity in their major-related fields" (He, Zhang & Wang, 2005). It is also mentioned in the new requirement that in the teaching goal, "listening and speaking are to be particularly stressed. This requires that learners should not only understand what people are speaking, but also acquire the ability to talk to people (Hu, 2004). Conversely, during the past decade, the oral English teaching at Southeast University encountered three thresholds before the reform: Firstly, teaching objective and content could not satisfy the current social requirement of developing students' pragmatic ability. Secondly, the teaching mode hinders students' interests in articulating their views in academic contexts. Students are in extreme shortage of interactive oral English practice due to confined oral English learning interaction in class (Liu, 2012). Thirdly, teaching assessment was unscientific for its sparse surveillance of students' investment throughout the learning process. To address the existing drawbacks, Southeast University has been conducting a 3500-student oral English course reform among all registered full-time postgraduate students since 2013. This reformative curriculum schema constitutes three perspectives. Firstly, merge the major-related teaching content of simulated international conference (SIC) into oral English curriculum to elevate pragmatic language skills. Secondly, construct Collaborative Teaching Mode by employing foreign teachers to implement Sino-Foreign collaborative teaching and recruiting Chinese and foreign postgraduate students as teaching assistants to create after-class oral practice chances. And thirdly, complement summative evaluation by adding formative assessment to assess students' learning progress.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Constructivist Perspective of Developing Linguistic Competence and Performance

The language competence for postgraduate students has been deemed to witness a great improvement in the past decades. However, their language performance has not been enhanced simultaneously, not to mention to serve their professional fields. One pivotal reformation at Southeast University was to supplement major-related teaching content into oral English curriculum by means of simulating international conferences (SIC). Comparing with previous course syllabus which focuses on English for General Purpose (EGP), the SIC enables students to learn English for Academic Purpose (EAP). In preparing for the simulated international conferences (SIC), they learn by doing not only to familiarize themselves with major-related vocabulary and discourse, but also learn to use a language correctly at situational and social context to express social and functional purpose (Hymes, 1972). In other words, it is not only the process of learning linguistic knowledge but also the culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in an academic context with different situation and relationships by applying their knowledge of the language in actual

performance. Regarding how to deliver a speech at an opening ceremony, panel discussion session, poster session, closing ceremony session, keynote spokesman session or to exchange ideas at coffee break etc., students firstly watch their sample video clips downloaded from the internet to obtain “tacit knowledge of language structure” which is “not conscious or available for spontaneous report” and which is appropriately availed at distinct academic settings (Hymes, 1972). Then they make “an explicit account of such knowledge, especially in relation to the innate structure on which it depends” by analyzing the distinct speeches’ discourse structures and logic, the intact content, transitional techniques, supportive evidence, scientific research methods and clear conclusions etc. In-class learning offers an access to help learners create and understand infinite set of sentences to facilitate their language competence development. After a mastery of the linguistic competence in the ideal set of innate language structure, students work in team to organize a simulated international conference associated with their disciplines in which they can have chances of “the actual use of language in concrete situation” (Hymes, 1972). Apart from the speech content itself, students learn to evaluate the efficiency of PPT regarding the logic layout, the highlight of gist, the organic integration of distinct visual aids, the concise, accuracy, norms of written language on PPT, the appropriateness of transitional words or sentences, the decent body language and gestures. Also students are required to make a critical thinking of language in use concerning pronunciation, tone, fluency, volume and pitch etc. This learning by doing process enables students smoothly transfer from its initial linguistic competence learning to what constructivist theory asserts as “linguistic performance” – “the most explicitly understood as concerned with the process often termed encoding and decoding”. Students are motivated by practical need (SIC) in alternative two processes to create an infinite set of sentences and then realize encoding and decoding process of language learning often termed by “linguistic competence and linguistic performance” (Hymes, 1972). Meanwhile, to cement linguistic performance, as Hymes (1972) puts it, is “revitalization” and “culmination”, “carries to its perfection the desire to deal in practice only with what is internal to language, yet to find in that internality that in the theory of the widest or deepest human significance”.

Constructivist Theory concerning the linguistic competence and linguistic performance contributes to the primary theoretical framework of teaching content reformation in Southeast University. And the primitive initiative is to alleviate “Dumb English” phenomenon which has been existing and perplexing tertiary education for decades. The teaching content of SIC can act as an agent to efficiently simulate the realistic scenarios by integrating the language competence into the language performance (Hu, 1998). It not only helps students drill four language competence in reading, speaking, listening, writing and interpretation but also evaluate students’ performance in using English in their academic fields. Students are negotiated to play one role either as a chairman to preside over the conference, or a distinguished guest to commence the opening ceremony, or a keynote spokesman to present their research paper, or a participant to ask questions from the floor, or a conference participant to exchange ideas over the tea break or a VIP to disclose the conference at the closing ceremony etc. Students, are driven by the tasks to be engaged in pair work or group work to apply their linguistic competence into actual performance and acquire not only the grammatical knowledge of sentences, but also the competence of appropriateness as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner etc. In Widdowson’s words (1978), “we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence; but also how to use sentences appropriately to achieve communicative purposes.” The simulated international conference (SIC) produces an optimal development zone to access students’ hierarchic English proficiency to a more competitive level. Besides, it, by and large, creates a scaffold to upscale students’ motivation to orally express their professional knowledge. The teacher is no longer an authority but a facilitator to scaffold the students’ transfer from the existing knowledge (EGP) to the next higher-level one (EAP).

B. Collaborative Teaching Mode and Multiple Interactive Learning Model in Accordance with Students-oriented Pedagogical Concept

Another reform is to implement the “collaborative model of teaching” which is termed by Maroney and prevailing in European and American teaching contexts, but it is under preliminary stage in China (Geng, 2012). Robinson and Schaible (1995) defined it as “any academic experience in which two professors work together in designing and teaching a course that itself uses group learning techniques”. They elaborate the necessities of collaborative teaching by stating that “partnerships between teachers of English as a second language and general educators can differentiate instruction for students whose first language is not English” (Ann, Jacqueline, & Richard, 2009). Southeast University is following a model in which “two or more people sharing responsibility for educating some or all of the students in a classroom” (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008) to accomplish the goal of implementing pedagogical interactions that would more likely match the diverse learning style of their students (Conderman, & McCarty, 2003). Sino-Foreign educators collaboratively do “parallel teaching, serial teaching, co-teaching, and co-facilitation” (Eisen, 2000) to teach students of diverse English-level and different cross-culture awareness. Before the class begins, foreign and Chinese English educators hold routine teaching and research meetings in which foreign educators with advantages of content knowledge, advanced pedagogical notion and teaching methods exchange their ideas with Chinese educators with advantages in class management, and a better understanding of learners’ diverse English level, cross-cultural barriers and university-stipulated course requirement etc. This joint academic preparation for teaching make it possible for the teaching resources to become interdependent in such collaborative relationships (Chiasson & Olsen, 2006; Dugan & Letterman, 2004; Kluth & Straut, 2003) when both co-teachers contribute their resources, information, or materials for

the collaborative effort to be successful (notably, Dugan & Letterman 2004; Kluth & Straut, 2003). When class begins, Chinese teachers “do something to supplement or complement the instruction” provided by foreign educator (Ann et al., 2009). They either participate in the group discussion or help students overcome timidity or hint foreign teachers of potential barriers either of idiomatic expressions or cultural differences. After class, CTs and FTs are “partners who share responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing the learning progress of students” (Ann et al., 2009). Their collaboration showed how the different expertise areas allowed professors to learn from each other as well as to improve the skills of their students (notably, Jankiewicz, 1999). Besides, both teachers co-teach to accomplish the goal of implementing pedagogical interactions that would more likely match the diverse learning styles of their students (Conderman & McCarty, 2003). To sum up, the reformed collaborative model of teaching aims to enable both teachers to share each others’ preponderant expertise, exchange the interdependent resources and offer more supports to students of diverse language proficiency.

Besides, the multiple interactive learning mode accords with learner-centered pedagogical notion. Vygotsky’s socio-cognitive theory stresses the social interaction and scaffolding in students’ development of skills in the developmental process of mind. Southeast University’s curriculum innovation practices Vygotsky’s socio-cognitive theory in three aspects. Teachers provide “instructional scaffolding” both in class and after class to control well-designed tasks which are beyond the learners’ capabilities for stimulating students to focus on those they can quickly master. Also the “reciprocal teaching involves and interactive dialogue between a teacher and small group of students”. Initially the teacher demonstrates the activities, followed by the teacher and students who takes turns being the teacher” (Schunk, 2000). The third application is the peer collaboration, an effective way for enhancing learning when the students work in group to accomplish the designated tasks. The peer support system can help the learner to internalize the external knowledge and improve his skill in critical thinking, and turn this knowledge and skill into his intelligence.

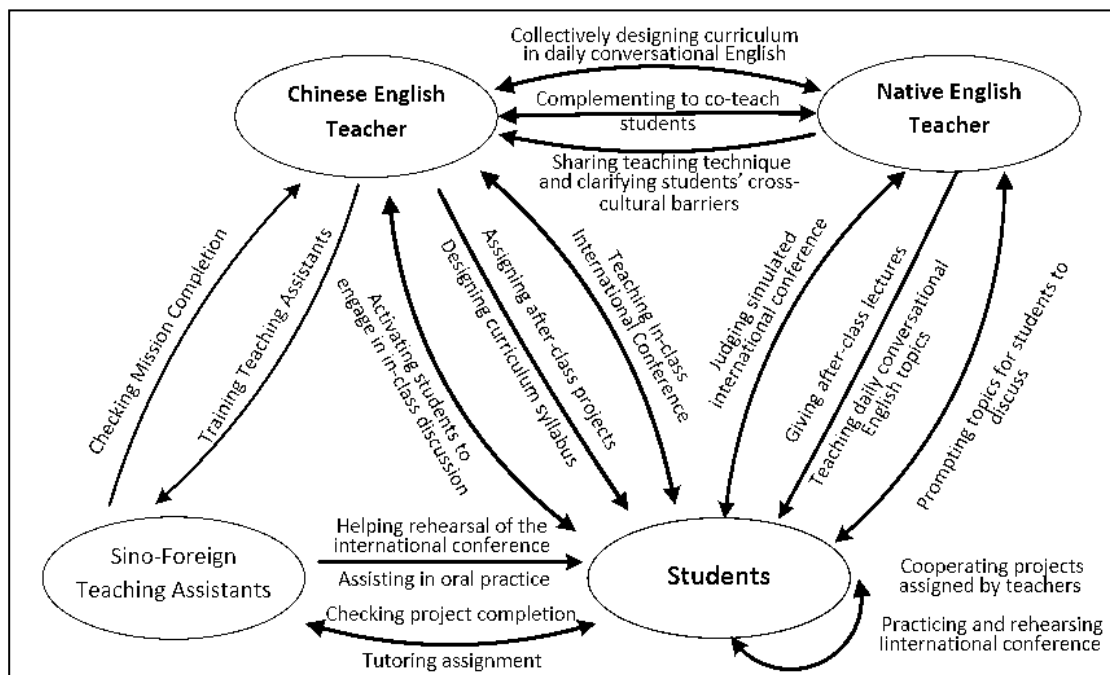


Figure 1. The multiple collaborative interactions with students by teachers and teaching assistants

Fig. 1 depicts how Chinese English teachers, foreign English teachers and Chinese and foreign teaching assistants are collaboratively engaged in multiple interactions with students. Both Chinese and foreign English teachers co-teach in class to enable learners to construct their own meaning by creating ideal language learning environment (Yu, 2009) The reciprocal teaching mode create more interactive opportunities among Chinese teachers & students, foreign teachers & students, students & students and students & teaching assistants. This mode follows the Vygotsky’s theory of the concept of instructional scaffolding in which teachers act as the facilitators instead of the knowledge transmitter. Students involved in interactive activities can either study together with teachers on the tasks that learners could not perform independently because of the difficult level (Schunk, 2000) or are facilitated by peers or teaching assistants to reach what Vygotsky called the proximal development (ZPD). By these multiple dimensional interaction, learners can move into the next layer by either working together with a more competent peer at a level that is just above a learner’s present English proficiency (Williams & Burden, 2000). Besides, the oral practice organized by teaching assistants after class can not only significantly solve the problem of insufficient in-class interactive chances which have been bothering oral English teaching for many years. It efficiently extends limited in-class learning hours into after-class infinite learning ones by peer communication and oral practice.

C. Formative and Summative Evaluation System

The third primary reform in Southeast University is to optimize the assessment system by adding the formative one to the summative one. Oral English assessment including at Southeast University has long been largely grounded on one at the final or two summative assessments both at the mid-term and final term. Such assessment system cannot offer a comprehensive and precise feedback to students' learning behavior, capacity development and performance. As Wu Xiulan (2008) put it, the summary assessment generally by standardized examination constructs only one and incomplete component of teaching assessment. It should be combined with the formative assessment which can underscore learning as its goal and keep track of learning process (Leung, & Mohan 2004; Wu, 2008). The formative assessment has aroused ever-increasing attention of educators and curriculum designers since 1990s (Weir, 1993; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Harlen & James, 1997; Genesses & Upshur, 2001; Heritage, 2008; Zhang, Jia & Hu, 2013; Yang & Wen, 2014). It has become a pivotal complement to the summative assessment because it monitors students' progression and adapts instruction where necessary through evaluating their learning performance, emotions, attitudes, strategies, etc. As a systematic process, the formative assessment (Black, & Wiliam, 1998a, 2004b) continuously gathers evidence and provides feedback about learning while instruction is underway. The feedback identifies the gap between a student's current level of learning and a desired learning goal (Salder, 1989). The above-mentioned multiple interaction among students, foreign and Chinese teachers and teaching assistants can efficiently offer a dynamic mode between target learners and assessment patterns. Such interactive formative assessment includes scientific knowledge and also the students' feedback and requirements and the teachers' concern about students (Cowie & Bell, 1993). Therefore, the critical role of formative assessment can help teachers draw reasonable inferences of student levels from assessment evidence so as to modify instruction for the next instructional steps to close the gap.

Table 1 illustrates the reformed assessment system and its corresponding percentages in diverse aspects. Instead of one or two summative assessment in the previous teaching syllabus, the upgraded one adds the formative one into the assessment system. These factors all contribute to their term's grades concerning students' involvement in in-class or after-class oral English interaction, attendance in in-class discussion, contribution to simulated international conferences and involvement in the teaching assistants' after-class oral practice.

TABLE 1
FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

	formative 50%	percentage	Summative 50%	percentage
Academic spoken English	Attendance	10%	Final Oral exam	20%
	Participation in class discussion			
	After-school oral practice assisted by TA	10%		
	Progressive Tests	15%	Final paper exam	30%
	Simulated international conference	15%		

In order to evaluate the efficiency of the existing reform, a questionnaire survey among 670 students in 22 sampled classes of six major disciplines was conducted in December of 2015 after a two-year-pilot curriculum reform.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

The questionnaire survey aims to address a series of questions on the efficiency of the oral English curriculum reform. Specifically:

Can the teaching content with its focus on speaking and listening tailor the students' need?

Can the diverse interactive opportunities created by collaborative teaching and learning can develop students' interests in cultivating their competence to pragmatically use oral English?

Can the formative teaching assessment supplemented into summative assessment elevate students' passion to practice oral English and enhance their confidence to speak in the public?

B. Methodology

A questionnaire survey among 670 students in 22 separate classes was conducted in January of 2015 after a two-year-pilot curriculum reform. The targeted population is the first-year postgraduate students at Southeast University. 669 questionnaires were anonymously collected as the valid ones. It contained fifteen distinctive schools, including School of Information Science and Engineering, Economic Management Institute, Institute of Computer Science and Engineering, College of Law, College of Humanities, School of Mathematics, School of Physics which represented five major discipline fields at Southeast University, namely, Arts, Science, Engineering, Laws and Medicine. 586 out of all the subjects have passed CET-6 (a unified national English proficiency test in listening, reading, writing and translation), amounting to nearly 87.6% of all subjects. The rest have passed CET-4 (College English Band IV), nearly to 12.4%. Although the majority of students have passed CET-6, assumed to have reached the upper-level English proficiency, the students' oral English competence is disappointing and the majority of the students. The questionnaire encompasses four sections: students ranking their most required English skills (Section One), the general acceptability of the reformed course (Section Two), students' satisfaction of the newly established teaching mode and teaching content

(Section Three) and students' adaption to formative teaching assessment (Section Four).

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Needs and Motivation Surveys

In this section, students were required to rate English skills which they want to improve by descending order concerning listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Each option was given by points and then calculate each option's mean value respectively, and finally ranked them based on the mean values. For instance, if a student opted to rank the English skills by the descending scale such as listening and speaking > professional documents reading > academic English writing > integrated four English skills > delivering a speech at an international conference, five points were used to rate listening and speaking skills, four points for professional documentary reading, three points for English academic writing, two points for integrated skills of English and one point for ability to participate the international conference. The SPSS19.0 was employed to process the data and the result was shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
RATING DIFFERENT ENGLISH SKILLS WHICH STUDENTS ASSUMED TO REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D
Listening and Speaking skills	669	1	5	4.27	1.060
Academic writing skills	669	1	5	2.84	1.017
International conference presentation skills	669	1	5	1.68	0.937
Professional document reading	669	1	5	3.15	1.251
Data in valid number	669				

The mean values in Table 2 shows us that students rank listening & speaking as the priority skill to be considered, followed by professional document reading ability, integrated skills of English and academic English writing ability. Their requirement to obtain the skills to present themselves at the international conference ranks the last.

In contrast, in terms of their learning motivation, a SPSS19.0-generated bar chart (Fig. 2) explicitly depicts that the survey result is inconsistent with their above-mentioned need survey. More students learning English are driven by reading academic English journals for their future work. What they need to be urgently strengthened does not correspond to what they deem to be important. But the data also shows us that students attach the least importance to the simulated international conferences.

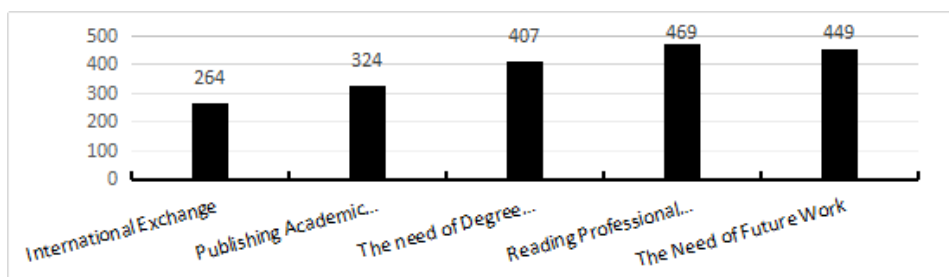


Figure 2. Students' learning motivation

To sum up, Table 2 and Fig. 2 suggest that the fundamental English listening & speaking were considered as the weakest skills from the students' perspective while the professional journal reading was deemed as the most useful skill for their career development. In contrast, the data has shown us a comparative lower demand for developing the ability to deliver their research paper or exchange their academic achievement at the international conference.

B. Students' Satisfaction of the Renovated Oral English Curriculum Compared with Any Other Previous Oral English Courses Which They Have Learned

TABLE 3:
SATISFACTION OF THE REFORMED COURSE COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS ONES

		frequency	Percentage	Efficient percentage
Data collected	A	371	75.7	56.1
	Much more beneficial			
	B	207	15.3	31.3
	beneficial			
	C	73	9.7	11.0
not much beneficial				
D	10	2.5	1.5	
no beneficial				
sum		661	98.7	100.0
Invalid Data	System	9	1.3	
Total		670	100.0	

Table 3 tells us that the majority of the students (75.7%) considered the reformed course as being more beneficial for them in contrast with their previous English courses. Only 2.5% evaluated it to be unhelpful for them. In terms of efficiency and outcomes of learning, among 661 effective questionnaire, 56.2% of students claimed to have made remarkable progress and 31.3% percent, to some extent a progress. Altogether, 87.4% students applauded to the reform and admitted that they benefited from the current oral English.

Meanwhile, data collected in the questionnaire shows us that Teamwork Spirit and Confidence in speaking English in the public ranks the top two, obtaining 467 and 419 voters respectively among 670 voters. In contrast, 109 and 37 students voted for the improvement of their cross-cultural background and research capacity. In other words, the profit from accumulating multi-cultural knowledge and ability to do scientific research obtained relatively low votes, which were at 109 and 37 votes respectively.

C. Learning Modes and Teaching Content

“Collaborative learning is an instruction method in which students work in groups toward a common academic goal. Proponents of cooperative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking (Gokhale, 1996). Faculty who co-teach value the opportunity to be creative and report attaining a sense of fulfillment that they had not previously experienced in their professional roles (Bass, 2004; Vasquez-Montilla, Spillman, Elliott & McGonney, 2007). The statistics shows that the innovative learning modes and teaching content were acclaimed by students regarding the oral practice activities assisted by teaching assistants, in-class and after-class peer discussion and debating, the interaction with Chinese and foreign teachers at the foreign-Chinese teachers’ collaborative teaching class and students’ cooperative team projects to rehearse the simulated international conference. The teaching content contains two separated but compatible focuses, i.e. the daily communicative topics and the simulated international conference. The first teaching topics are co-taught by Chinese and foreign teachers in the same class while the latter is undertaken by Chinese English teachers by themselves. 670 questionnaires are included into statistics due to one questionnaire discarded for the incomplete answers. Data indicates that the oral practice assisted by TA was deemed as the most popular one by students, gaining 516 votes and amounting to 77.1%. Interaction with both Chinese and English teachers at co-taught classes by foreign and Chinese teachers is acclaimed by 60% voters, ranking the second popular teaching mode while practice on the simulated international conferences after class and attending the oral English classes only by Chinese teachers themselves gain respectively 154 votes (23%) and 147 votes (22%), which are less acceptable.

Table 4 depicts the students’ preference of two different teaching contents, daily conversational English and international conference presentation. It represents 660 efficient questionnaires out of overall 670 ones processed by SPSS 19.0. The figure tells us that 552 students out of 660 show their fondness for the daily conversational English topics among whom 14.3% students express their significant interests toward it. 665 questionnaires are collected regarding the students’ favor of the international conference. Comparing with 82.4% of students who prefer to learn daily conversational English, the students’ interests in international conference is comparatively lower, amounting to 61.8% among whom only 8.1% of students express their great affection towards it.

TABLE 4:
THE FEEDBACK ON EFFICIENCY OF TEACHING CONTENTS

	Frequency	Percentage		Efficient percentage		Cumulative percentage	
		Daily Topic	International Conference	Daily Topic	International Conference	Daily Topic	International Conference
efficiency	Very like	96	54	14.3	8.1	14.5	8.1
	Like	456	360	68.1	53.7	83.6	62.3
	not very like	101	233	15.1	34.8	98.9	97.3
	dislike	7	18	1.0	2.7	100	100
	Sum/total	660	665	98.5	99.3		
Data missing	System	10	5	1.5	0.7		
Total		670	670	100	100		

D. Enhancement of Formative Assessment

666 questionnaires are counted into statistics because 4 questionnaires are excluded due to incomplete answers. The statistics demonstrates that 67.1% students reflect that formative assessment in terms of oral practice with teaching assistants is acceptable and can be accomplished within the designated time. 27.2% students find it challenging, but are still willing to try their best. In contrast, only 3.7% students dislike their interactive oral English practice with teaching assistants and 1.9% students consider the tasks too easy for them to arouse their enthusiasm. It is evident that 94.3% of the students clap their hands to teaching assistants for engaging them in after-class oral exercises. 36.1% students think this formative assessment is appropriate for them, and they can smoothly finish it. 45.5% of the students think the quantity of their extracurricular exercises with teaching assistants is a little heavy although they can manage them. 16.4% students think the amount is too heavy to finish, while only 1.8% students think it easy enough. Thus, totally 83.6% students think after-class interaction in peer and with teaching assistants are moderate to be manipulated by them.

V. RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The reform of combining daily conversational English with simulated international conference as two major teaching content have received popularity from students although they have not been aware of its association with their future professional development. The majority consider the reformed oral English course as being more useful comparing with any other English courses they have learned before. Thus, the oral English curriculum reform has proven to be efficient and has met the initial anticipation of tailoring the students' needs to cultivate their practical demand in their future career development. In summary, the data has confirmed us that the reform has been oriented to the right direction in taking listening and speaking at academic scenarios as the teaching focus.

A. *Multiple Interactions Upgrade Confidence in Spoken English*

Meanwhile in-class and after-class oral practice assignment compels each teammate to collaborate with their peers on playing virtual roles at simulated international conferences by either chairing a conference, delivering keynote speech or asking questions at the conference etc. This interaction among peers can extremely help them summon up courage to articulate explicitly and spontaneously in English. It can significantly enlarge oral practice chances and relieve the complaints from English teachers and students about their shortage of time for practicing oral English. This improvement, to some extent, can efficiently relieve dumb English phenomena that have perplexed English teaching education for decades.

B. *Task-driven Team Work Projects Boosted Teamwork Spirit*

It is also satisfactory to find that the current course has boosted their teamwork spirit. The new English curriculum arrange students to do uncountable after-class teamwork projects such as routine oral practice by teaching assistants and rehearse a simulated international conference by teams with diverse themes negotiated among teammates. These task-driven assignment provide students plentiful time to exchange ideas and work collaboratively. They learn to negotiate, organize and do their assigned work. Their teamwork spirits have been cultivated and in return students gradually learn how to do the teamwork efficiently.

C. *Collaborative Teaching Mode Can Boost Both Chinese and Foreign English Teachers to Exchange Preponderant Expertise*

This new collaborative teaching mode by which Chinese and foreign teachers has been highly appraised and has been proven equally feasible in Chinese higher learning contexts. Both Chinese and Foreign teachers can cooperate in class efficiently to avail themselves of their merits to be fully developed. This collaborative teaching can offer students timely feedback in class, reduce students' nervousness to face native foreign teachers, reduce the transition of becoming acquainted with foreign teachers, lessen foreign teachers' energy to invest on knowing students' English level, motivation, weaknesses and unload foreign teachers' pressure of managing classroom and students. And thus it can upgrade the classroom efficiency and maximize the communicative interactions among teachers and students.

However, the survey also has some implications for further implementation of oral English curriculum reform. First of all, students' burden from other subjects especially from their major-related courses curbs their investment in oral practice. Students have complained of the frequent and over-crowded exams during their first academic term which incur insufficient devotion to oral English practice. Students at Southeast University who mostly major in engineering are overwhelmingly occupied by nearly 10 major-relevant courses and massive lab projects assigned by their supervisors every week. They might be eager to contribute more time to oral English practice but discouraged by other professional courses. Besides, the unawareness of the significance of the simulated international conference largely results from their misconception of its uselessness. As the first-year post-graduate student, they cannot associate what they learn with what they need to master for their future career development. They have not been aware of the point that SIC acts as the agent which creates a macro language environment to correlate language skills and communication (Hu, 1998). Besides, post-graduate students, unlike Ph.D candidates, are not compulsory to attend international conferences as prerequisites of graduation. Besides, comparing with Ph.d candidates, they have less chances to be engaged into the international exchange programs. Therefore, their anticipation to learn how to deliver a speech at an academic context is not strongly driven. Apart from these two implications, the data (109 out of 666) reveals that students don't believe that their cross-cultural awareness has been enhanced. This result doesn't correspond to our expectation. We assume that the teaching content has not been deliberately designed to explore the inner part of cross culture. Culture, as Cutler (2005) puts, is like an onion. The outer skin contains subjective elements such as tangible elements such as behavior, lifestyle and workstyle etc. The inner part is the value system which consists of ways of thinking, value, human identity etc. Apparently, the in-class English learning focus more on the basic truth of the culture instead of deeper value or thinking way.

VI. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the analysis of data suggests that English learning had better extend one academic year to two academic years so that students would have more chances to be exposed to oral English learning environment. Their investment on English would not conflict with their time on their majors. Besides, the teaching content of the simulated

international conference can be adjusted to the second academic term in which students usually do not have any major courses and thus they can have more time to concentrate on language learning. Secondly, students should be explicitly taught the significance of the simulated international conference as a platform for them to be prepared for voicing their opinions in their major-related academic contexts and meeting ever-increasing demand for cross-cultural involvement in their professional fields. Once they are offered with these tangible blueprints, they might be equipped with more passion and enthusiasm to invest on oral English learning. Thirdly, when in co-taught English class, the Chinese English teachers should stimulate the native English teachers to touch the core culture and explicitly underscore the distinctive way of thinking and communicating in the western cultures. The collaborative teaching mode can be implemented more efficiently and yield fruitful results.

After one-term Spoken English Reform at Southeast University, a 670-student questionnaire survey was analyzed to evaluate the satisfaction of spoken English teaching reform project among 22 classes involving five primary disciplines of liberal arts, engineering, medicine, law and humanities in 15 schools. The objectives are to diagnose the appropriateness of the content of teaching, the teaching means & modes and teaching achievement assessment. The data indicates that the current teaching reform has exerted positive impact on improving speaking English ability. It also indicates that the spoken English course reform enables them to build up their confidence, teamwork spirit and their interests in practicing oral English. Meanwhile, an unanticipated lower rate of students' recognition of the simulated international conference suggests a remodeling of students' better understanding of the significance of its role in integrating four comprehensive English abilities into assessing their pragmatic ability in their academia.

To sum up, the Oral English Course reform concerning collaborative teaching mode, multiple interactive learning model and the combination of formative and cumulative assessment have been proven to be satisfactory. 91% of students evaluate teaching mode and teaching curriculum to enhance their oral communication skills and be more associated with future profession. 82.4% of students applaud the Sino-foreign teachers' co-teaching modes and 83.6% favor the after-class oral practice tutored by teaching assistants. This pilot oral English reform has provided us with valuable experience for the upcoming academic writing course reform. We also need more extra-curriculum activities such as English corners, seminars, workshops for boost their after-class interests so that students can easily pursue a friendly environment and more chances for oral English practice.

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