



# A Research on the Effect of Introducing Speeches in English Classes on Improving Oral English Ability under the Background of Digital Teaching

Lu Jiayi

Hunan Vocational College of Science and Technology  
No. 4291 Tianxin Avenue, Tianxin District, Changsha City, Hunan Province, China  
E-mail: 396600276@qq.com

**Abstract:** This study investigates how classroom speech training can boost English speaking skills within digital teaching contexts. It reveals that incorporating the ISAS teaching method with English speech training in vocational college courses can significantly enhance students' communication skills, particularly in oral expression. The research employed various methods to demonstrate that classroom speeches effectively elevate students' English speaking proficiency, diversify teaching content and methods, and foster innovation in English speaking education at vocational colleges. Integrating teaching materials with topics relevant to the software field, along with using a range of expressive forms and techniques, aids in broadening students' perspectives, making English classes more practical and engaging, and bolstering their English application skills and professional competencies. The study also highlights the crucial role of teachers' instructional abilities and personal qualities in enriching students' English learning and skill development. It suggests that teachers integrate more speech-focused activities into regular instruction to advance students' comprehensive English capabilities.

**Keywords:** Classroom Speech, Oral English, Ability improvementna.

## 1. Introduction

In today's digital teaching landscape, the English education system at colleges and universities is experiencing transformative changes. The integration of information technology has expanded the scope of teaching methodologies and significantly enhanced the quality and efficiency of English instruction. Leveraging smart devices and online platforms, students have seamless access to an array of English learning materials, including online instructional videos, interactive forums, and digital textbooks[1]. This diversification of learning avenues not only caters to the demand for personalized education but also enriches the learning experience. The advent of multimedia and multimodal learning approaches allows students to engage in a comprehensive interactive learning process that encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing, thereby boosting both the appeal and effectiveness of the educational experience. Furthermore, the introduction of innovative teaching models such as micro-lessons, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and flipped classrooms, has fostered students' proactive learning skills, encouraging a deeper understanding and practical application of the knowledge acquired.

In the realm of English oral speech instruction, the benefits of a digital teaching environment stand out markedly. Traditional speech teaching faces constraints of classroom time and space, limiting students' practice opportunities and delaying feedback. Conversely, in a digital setting, students can leverage online platforms and virtual communities for speech practice and instant feedback exchange, unbound by time or place. This significantly enhances the learning experience's flexibility and interactivity. Furthermore, the abundance of online resources provides a wealth of speech materials and examples, aiding students in refining their speech skills and strategies[2]. This approach leads to a tangible improvement in their oral English capabilities.

This study explores the effect of including speech training in English classes, especially in a digital environment. It aims to see how this training can improve students' speaking skills. By looking at students' learning experiences, their progress in speaking abilities, and how they interact with teachers, the study highlights the importance of speech training in teaching English speaking.

## 2. Literature Review

The teaching of public speaking has seen flourishing development both domestically and internationally. Scholars have focused on and researched various aspects including the theoretical foundations of public speaking pedagogy, curriculum design for public speaking courses, as well as the values and insights derived from public speaking education.

As an internationally renowned scholar and professor who specializes in American speech studies, Dr. Stephen Lucas emphasized that English speech goes beyond simple language skills and involves rhetoric, cross-cultural communication and logic. and other multi-disciplinary[3]. He also wrote books, compiled important speech materials, and shared valuable speech theories and techniques.

In China, there is considerable research on English public speaking education, covering areas such as English public speaking competitions and techniques, as well as the current status of English public speaking education.



For example, Guo Lina (2024) analyzed the characteristics and current situation of public English courses in vocational colleges, proposing effective teaching strategies tailored to the learning characteristics of vocational college students[4]. Additionally, research has been conducted on curriculum design and the value of English public speaking education. For instance, Tian Chaoxia (2018) proposed a semester-long course plan based on theories of language acquisition, cognitive theory, as well as assessment and learning theories. This plan aimed to integrate the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in foreign languages and to cultivate integrated language skills and cross-linguistic comprehensive literacy [5].

Through literature analysis, it is noted that there is limited research on the integration of English public speaking with university English courses, as well as interdisciplinary teaching, particularly concerning specialized English courses for software technology majors. In practice, utilizing a blended learning approach combining online and offline methods to incorporate English public speaking into classroom activities, integrating oral skills with professional knowledge, can enhance students' English proficiency and critical thinking abilities in workplace environments.

### **3. Significance and Purpose**

This study aims to explore how to improve students' communicative abilities, especially oral expression skills, in college English classes in higher vocational colleges through the ISAS (Information Search and Analysis Skills) teaching method combined with English speech in the context of digital teaching. In the first eight minutes of each class, the teacher sets up a speech presentation session to encourage students to fully express themselves and stimulate their potential through individual and team speech training, thereby effectively enhancing their oral expression skills and enriching teaching content and form. At the same time, students' preliminary preparation process helps students improve their skills in information collection, problem analysis and solution, thereby promoting the development of their thinking and expression abilities.

This study delves into three key questions, transitioning from theory to practical application: First, it examines if English classroom speeches can enhance students' ability to express themselves orally. Second, it investigates the specific factors that contribute to the enhancement of students' oral expression skills. Third, it analyzes the elements that may influence the further development of these skills. Through this comprehensive exploration and practical engagement, the study aims not only to elevate students' proficiency in spoken English but also to drive the innovation and evolution of spoken English instruction in vocational colleges, thereby pioneering a new frontier in education[6].

### **4. Methodology and Process**

The ultimate training goal of research activities is to cultivate students' "dual abilities" in real contexts, that is, the ability to use language flexibly and the ability to communicate effectively[7]. Based on Albert Bandura's observational learning theory and Swain's language output theory, the teacher selected a class from the second-year students majoring in software technology to conduct teaching research. The study was implemented in two semesters (21 weeks in total), mainly using research methods such as questionnaire survey, research test (twice before and after), observation method, interview method, and computer-assisted teaching method.

The study implements speech training across three phases. In the initial phase, observation and imitation, students engage in learning speech concepts and memorizing classic excerpts. The second phase, the keynote speech phase, involves students delivering presentations either in teams or individually. The final phase, the impromptu speech phase, has students discussing current issues with the teacher and delivering extemporaneous speeches.

#### **4.1 Phase 1**

First semester of sophomore year (Week 3-7)

Based on the freshman English learning, at this phase, the teacher needs to systematically explain and explain the knowledge related to "speech" according to the specific learning situation of the students and closely combine the course content and unit themes of College English 3 (Industry English). In-depth introduction. This includes presentation skills, presentation preparation, verbal expression and non-verbal communication skills, etc., and how to apply these presentation skills effectively in the professional field.

#### **4.2 Phase 2**

(1) First semester of sophomore year (Week 8--16)

Pre-class preparation: The teacher uses the digital resource library to select speech video materials related to the workplace and share them with students through the electronic learning management system (Xuexitong Learning Platform) or social media tools (such as WeChat group). Students can not only help each other correct pronunciation on these platforms, but also share learning resources, ask questions, and receive online guidance from teachers. Additionally, utilize speech recognition software or apps to help students detect and improve pronunciation accuracy while learning independently.

Class activities: When students imitate and recite speeches, they can use smart devices (mobile phones) to record videos of their speeches to facilitate self-evaluation and internal team review. During group activities, group leaders can use digital tools (such as online surveys and interactive platforms) to conduct real-time spot checks and feedback on group members' recitation performance. At the same time, the teacher can use interactive

whiteboards or online voting systems to conduct random checks and student peer reviews, which can not only increase student participation, but also collect data on student learning in real time.

After-school activities: Students upload their own speech imitation videos in their personal space or the Xuexitong platform. They can collect feedback from teachers, students, friends and family through the comment functions of these platforms, and use this feedback for self-reflection and improvement. This process not only strengthens students' learning motivation and participation, but also makes learning effects more visual and quantifiable.

In the first three weeks of this stage, with the help of survey methods and measurement methods (pre-test), the oral expression ability and software English speaking level of the experimental class before the research activities were investigated. In the sixteenth week of the semester, students' personal speech effects will be evaluated through the course "process test". The overall score of the speech is 100 points, and its components and proportions are: 30% for extracurricular (online) task completion, 30% for in-class (offline) speech effect, and 40% for the final personal speech.

(2) Second semester of sophomore year (weeks 2-10)

The content of the speeches is linked to the English textbooks for software technology majors, focusing on the "Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC)" to implement themed speeches at various stages.

Preparation before class: In the learning platform, the teacher uploads the video and background information of this phase and requires students to complete the task study. At the same time, a list of speech topics is distributed. Students need to carry out the prepared speech based on the topic. speech.

Class activities: In the first five minutes, students will give presentations. The last three minutes are for questions and summaries. The teacher and students need to ask questions based on the content and theme of the speech, and make comments at the end of the speech.

After-school activities: Upgrade the "group leader responsibility system" in the team to a "rotating member responsibility system", thereby giving all team members the opportunity to take on the role of group leader. The group leader needs to edit the video clips or speeches of the group members and upload them to the learning platform to strengthen students' awareness of responsibility.

At this phase, the teacher usually use observation methods to sort out students' classroom feelings and gains in a timely manner to verify whether English speeches can be reasonably integrated into higher vocational English classroom activities by teaching various speech methods and forms.

#### 4.3 Phase 3

(1) Second semester of sophomore year (weeks 11-15)

Pre-class preparation: Ten minutes before the class, the teacher will distribute impromptu speech topics selected based on the textbook content of this semester to students so that students can use their time between classes to prepare quickly.

Class Activities: During the first five minutes of class, students will give impromptu speeches. After the speech, within the next three minutes, the teacher and students jointly asked and evaluated the content of the speech. During this process, the teacher can ask questions by setting specific workplace scenarios, aiming to guide students to effectively apply industrial English knowledge in actual workplace situations and further integrate English learning with workplace practice.

Post-class compilation and feedback: Students need to organize the impromptu question and answer sessions in class into documents and upload them to the designated platform, which will serve as an important reference for assessing students' comprehensive abilities. In addition, the teacher will answer students' questions online during a fixed time period every week to promote students' in-depth understanding and application of knowledge points.

Combining the results of the two previous phases of research, this phase will conduct interviews on the classroom satisfaction of the target class, compare the scores before and after the class oral test measurement, and sort out the students' speech competition situations to verify whether speech activities in the English class can effectively improve students' English speaking ability, and summarizes the factors for improving oral English.

## 5. Characteristics and Results

Through the above research, I believe that speech has certain energy efficiency in college English classroom teaching. The integration of speech into the classroom can improve students' effectiveness and autonomy in using language skills, and at the same time make the classroom have good teaching effects. The research characteristics and effects are as follows:

### 5.1 Rich teaching forms can stimulate students' interest

Building on the ISAS teaching method, this approach employs a "multimodal, multimedia, and multi-resource" training model. Through a process of "observation, memorization, prepared speeches, and impromptu speeches," it integrates individual presentations with team shows to demonstrate specific teaching content or topics. This strategy encourages both individual and team growth, enhancing team cohesion in the process.

Among the feedback from 42 students on the format of classroom speech activities, 42.9% of students liked ISAS team speeches, 30.9% of students liked impromptu speeches, 16.7% of students liked individual theme speeches, and 9.5% of students were satisfied with the article recitation part. interest. These data illustrate that students' preferences show significant diversity in classroom speaking activities. ISAS team speaking ranks first with a

preference rate of 42.9%. Students believe that team speaking can provide more interactive opportunities, allowing them to learn and improve in teamwork, while reducing the pressure of individuals speaking in public. In addition, 30.9% of students prefer impromptu speech, which reflects that some students appreciate the challenge and creativity of impromptu speech, and they may be more inclined to exercise their thinking and reaction skills in unpredictable situations. Relatively speaking, 16.7% of students preferred individual keynote speeches, which shows that some students prefer speech forms that are fully prepared and complete tasks independently. Finally, only 9.5% of students were interested in the recitation part of the article, which shows that most students prefer a more interactive and creative way of speaking rather than simple memorization and retelling.

The teacher can adjust teaching methods based on this feedback to meet the learning preferences of more students, while also encouraging students to try speech forms they are not used to in order to comprehensively improve their oral expression and public speaking skills.

### 5.2 Practical content improves students' abilities

The close integration of teaching content with software major topics not only guides students to expand their thinking, but also helps students express themselves more effectively through diverse expression forms and techniques. This approach not only promotes students' rapid integration, but also gives the English classroom a unique atmosphere and deepens the emotional connection between teachers and students. At the same time, it also enriches the cultural connotation of the classroom, making the learning process not only educational, but also interesting and interactive. Through such teaching strategies, students can learn English in a relaxed and pleasant environment, while improving their understanding and application ability in their own professional fields, achieving dual improvements in knowledge and skills.

In a survey about English speech activities in class, 42 students who participated found them beneficial (Table 1): 78.5% said they were somewhat helpful, and 21.5% found them helpful, indicating a generally positive reception. This suggests that such activities play a significant role in boosting students' English skills, particularly by enhancing oral expression, boosting confidence, and improving logical thinking.

Table 1. Survey on the degree of help of English class speech activities to students [N (total number) = 42]

| Content<br>Value | Do you think English speeches in class are helpful to you?<br>(single choice) |           |              |              |
|------------------|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|
|                  | . Quite helpful   | . Helpful | .Not helpful | . Don't know |
| Number of People | 33  | 9         | 0            | 0            |
| Percentage       | 78.5%   | 21.5%     | 0%           | 0%           |

Overall, this survey result emphasizes the value of English classroom speech activities as a teaching method. It can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also effectively improve their language use ability. In addition, through such activities, students have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their language skills in a safe environment, further enhancing their confidence and ability when facing public speaking. Therefore, teachers can consider integrating more such activities into daily teaching to promote the overall development of students' English abilities.

### 5.3 Effective teaching methods strengthen comprehensive quality

Through the shooting and sharing of three-minute speech videos and the teaching strategy of flipped classroom, students not only have a deep understanding and application of the multimedia and multi-modal nature of speech, but also develop skills in speech, narration, listening, writing, answering and debating, etc. Get comprehensive training in multiple sessions. This process significantly improves students' ability to use English. Through workplace simulation activities, students become more familiar with the workplace environment and improve their ability to use English thinking and expression in the actual workplace, thereby comprehensively enhancing students' comprehensive quality.

In a survey about the effectiveness of speech activities in English classes (Table 2), a significant majority of students found these activities beneficial in several ways: 85.7% felt their ability to express themselves improved; 80.9% reported increased courage and self-confidence; 50% believed their thinking became more active and creative; and 38% noted enhanced communication skills. These findings indicate that speech activities in English classes positively impact students by improving their language fluency, confidence, creativity, and ability to share ideas effectively.

Table 2 Survey on how English class speech activities help students

[N (total number) = 42]

| Content          | How does classroom English speaking benefit your English skills?<br>(Multiple choice) |      |    |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------|---|------|----|------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | Value   |      |    |      |      |      |      |      |
| Number of people | 5   | 5    | 1  | 4    | 4    |      | 3    |      |
| Percentage       | 8%  | 5.7% | 0% | 0.9% | 3.3% | 0.1% | 0.9% | 5.7% |

- A. Strengthen communication skills
- B. Improve expression ability
- C. Activate thinking
- D. Exercise courage and increase confidence
- E. Enhance writing and reading levels
- F. Increase extracurricular reading volume
- G. Accumulate essay material
- H. Earn praise from teachers and peers

### 6. Analysis

This teaching and research activity has overall improved students' oral expression ability in terms of pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary and other aspects. The factors that affect students' oral expression ability mainly include objective factors and subjective factors.

#### 6.1 Objective factors

##### (1) Environmental factors

The influence of external environmental factors on the improvement of speaking ability is inevitable, such as the growing environment, examination mechanism, existing teaching conditions and learning atmosphere.

First of all, the students' growth environment lays a preliminary foundation for their oral expression. Students in a multilingual communication environment tend to have better language adaptability and imitation abilities, which is naturally conducive to the rapid improvement of speaking ability. On the contrary, students whose language environment is relatively closed may encounter certain obstacles in their oral language development.

Secondly, the setting of the examination mechanism directly affects students' attitudes and efforts toward oral English learning. If the exam can fairly assess students' speaking ability, students will invest more energy in speaking learning. However, if the evaluation system focuses on written ability and ignores oral language, students' enthusiasm for oral language learning may be greatly reduced.

Teaching conditions, including modern teaching facilities, rich teaching material resources and a high-level teaching team, are the material basis for improving students' speaking ability. Superior teaching conditions can provide students with more practical opportunities and promote the development of their speaking skills.

Finally, the impact of learning atmosphere cannot be ignored. A positive learning environment that encourages communication can significantly increase students' interest and frequency in learning spoken English, which is particularly important for the growth of speaking ability.

##### (2) Teacher factors

As the main body of teaching activities, teachers' teaching skills and personal qualities play a vital role in students' English learning and ability improvement. The diversity and effectiveness of teaching techniques, such as being able to conduct effective classroom management, using interactive teaching methods to increase student engagement, and being sensitive to and adapting to student differences, can directly enhance students' learning experience and knowledge absorption.

At the same time, teachers' personal qualities, including depth of professional knowledge, excellent communication and empathy, and continuous self-renewal and learning, can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also cultivate their self-confidence and courage to face challenges. Especially in English teaching, teachers' language skills and cultural understanding can provide students with a real and rich learning environment and help them better understand the application of language in different cultures and situations.

Therefore, improving teachers' teaching skills and personal qualities can not only improve students' language skills, but also promote the development of their lifelong learning abilities and personal comprehensive qualities, which has a profound impact on students' overall growth.

## 6.2 Subjective factors

Improving oral expression ability is a comprehensive process, which not only involves subjective factors such as students' own cultural literacy, language ability, learning methods, and psychological literacy, but is also affected by the external environment. In terms of cultural literacy, students need to have intercultural communication skills and cultural sensitivity, which will help them express themselves more freely in a multicultural communication environment. Language skills include vocabulary, grammar, and correct pronunciation and intonation, which are the basis for ensuring accurate communication of information. In addition, critical thinking, information acquisition and processing abilities are also skills that students need to focus on developing in their learning methods.

In terms of psychological literacy, self-confidence, self-efficacy, emotion management and stress resistance are crucial to improving oral expression skills. Confidence and emotional stability enable students to be more comfortable and express their opinions and emotions effectively in public speaking or daily conversations. At the same time, the richness of social environment and communication opportunities can provide more occasions for practicing oral expression and strengthen students' practical application ability.

Thus, the research highlights that in routine English teaching activities, teachers should focus on factors influencing spoken English improvement while also intensifying teaching reforms. Efforts to enhance English speech instruction should be increased to effectively guide and assist students in enhancing their spoken English skills.

## 7. Limitations

### 7.1 The number and scope of research objects are relatively small

This study only took students from one class as the teaching research subjects, and did not conduct research on multiple classes in the whole college. The number was small; the experimental subjects were only some software technology major students in this higher vocational college, and it was not conducted in multiple majors. Research on teaching activities, the professional scope is not wide.

### 7.2 The professional depth of teaching implementation content is not enough

Considering students' foundational knowledge and the duration of the teaching experiment, the content and themes of English speeches primarily focus on accessible topics from daily life and the software industry. In instruction, while adopting the ISAS (Software Specialization) teaching model, the course does not delve into topics deeply integrated with software specialization.

## 8. Conclusion

This study, through practical teaching, has confirmed the positive impact of classroom speech skills training on enhancing English speaking proficiency. Such teaching activities have been effective in improving both students' oral expression skills and the overall teaching outcome. However, it's important to acknowledge certain limitations. Moving forward, there's a need for a more targeted and deeper selection of topics for English speeches, a greater utilization of informational tools, and a closer integration with professional fields. This approach aims to better serve professional groups by enhancing students' workplace speech abilities and their capacity to articulate professional knowledge in English. The goal is for students to effectively apply and demonstrate their English skills within their fields, enabling them to "act" and "speak" confidently in professional settings. It's anticipated that these insights will further advance English speech education in vocational colleges.

## References:

- [1]. Zhang Dan(2019). Research on the construction of college English digital teaching materials based on MOOC. View on Publishing, 24, 82-84.
- [2]. Zhang Jingyuan & Zhao Hongyan(2024). Innovative paths for college English teaching in the context of digital transformation. Foreign Language Research, 02, 84-91.
- [3]. Stephen E. Lucas & Paul Stob(2021). The Art of Public Speaking, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.
- [4]. Guo Lina(2024). Exploration on effective teaching strategies for public English courses in higher vocational colleges. Learning Weekly. 10, 81-84.
- [5]. Tian Zhaoxia(2018). Re-examining the localization of "English Speech" courses in Chinese universities—design and implementation of formative assessment courses. Foreign Language Education in China, 01, 26-34+91.
- [6]. Cai Jigang(2021). Practical Teaching of ESP (English for Specific Purposes): The 5-Minute Scientific English Speech Contest for Chinese University Students. Frontiers of Foreign Language Education Research, 4(03), 43-48+94.
- [7]. Sun Min(2023). Critical Review of Foreign Language Classroom Teaching Innovation: Taking English Speech as an Example. Frontiers of Foreign Language Education Research, 6(01), 17-22+92-93.