Research and Application of Blended Learning in College English Speaking Teaching Based on Smart Mobile Platform

Dongying Su, Caixia Xie*

College of Foreign Languages, Yinchuan University of Energy, Yinchuan, Ningxia, China
Corresponding author

Abstract: *College oral English teaching is the weakest link in college at this stage. English teachers are constantly exploring effective methods and approaches to improve the quality of oral English teaching in their teaching practices. With the advancement of teaching informatization, blended learning has entered the historical stage in line with the development of the informatization era. In the context of educational informatization, this research is carried out for the teaching exploration and practice of blended learning for the three freshmen classes of non-English majors in Yinchuan Energy College from 2021. Through literature review, questionnaire surveys, interviews, and other research methods, practice shows that the oral blended learning model has been recognized by most students in the experimental class. The model effectively promotes the teaching of college oral English, which is of great significance and value from theoretical research to pilot teaching.*

Keywords: *Application, Blended Learning, Oral English Teaching, Mobile Platform*

1. Introduction

English is one of the most common languages in the world. Learning English well and improving English speaking ability will help us communicate and cooperate with foreigners [7]. Therefore, it is of great significance to open college oral English courses in colleges and universities. However, the current overall effect of college English teaching is not ideal. To a large extent, the teaching process is still the traditional teaching mode, where teachers speak and students listen. In addition, although college English is taught in small classes, there are still dozens of students in each class, which results in students not having enough time for oral practice and slow improvement in speaking ability [1]. It can be seen that the traditional teaching content has been unable to meet the different needs of students. The above problems have all posed huge challenges to the traditional teaching mode of college English.

The traditional teaching mode has gradually been unable to meet the daily teaching requirements. College English needs a new learning method to cultivate students' re-learning ability, meet students' personalized learning needs, improve students' information literacy, and improve the teacher-student relationship [4]. Optimize teaching effect. Therefore, as a new online learning mode, mobile learning has attracted more and more attention from teachers and students. It can be combined with classroom teaching to meet the English learning needs of college students. As we enter the era of mobile networks, more and more learners are willing to use mobile phones for learning, and mobile learning methods based on mobile phones will gradually become popular.

To sum up, it is of practical significance to explore mobile phone-based college English mobile learning. Therefore, based on the actual oral English needs of college students, the author tries to organically combine oral college English and mobile learning through the mobile platform and explores the design of a mobile oral college English learning platform, so that the learning mode of college oral English can be changed from the traditional teacher-oriented learning model [2]. The change in the direction of taking students as the main body will enhance the student's enthusiasm for learning oral English and improve the oral English ability of college students.

2. Concept and Theory of Blended Learning

The concept of blended learning is a new learning concept or method as a profound reflection on traditional face-to-face teaching and distance online learning supported by a purely technical

environment. It is mainly used in enterprise training. Due to the different understandings of researchers in China, a common definition has not yet been formed. He, an expert in educational technology, believes that blended learning is a combination of traditional learning methods and digital or networked learning [6]. Sign and Reed believed that blended learning improves students' corresponding learning ability through appropriate learning skills and learning methods to achieve the best teaching effect.

Constructivist learning theory was first put forward by Piaget, a famous Swiss psychologist, who believed that "knowledge is not imparted by teachers, but in mobile situations, with the help of others (including teachers and classmates), using Necessary learning materials are obtained by means of meaning construction [3]." Learning is not a process in which a single teacher imparts knowledge to students, but students take the initiative to use their own knowledge and experience, in a certain teaching situation, with the help of teachers, classmates or others. The process of actively selecting and processing external information or transforming and reorganizing the original experience. In the learning process, students give full play to their subjective initiative and build their own knowledge system. Constructivist learning theory mainly emphasizes the process of active construction of learners [5].

3. Advantages and Necessity of Blended Learning in College Oral English Teaching

Practical research shows that traditional classroom oral English teaching and pure online learning have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of the overall English teaching effect. Oral language teaching is conducive to the verbal, physical, and emotional interaction between teachers and students. It plays an important role in emotional factors in the English learning process and helps teachers timely understand students' mastery and understanding of what they have learned. The teaching progress is adjusted and optimized for teaching strategies to teach students with their aptitude. At the same time, there are also deficiencies in oral English teaching. Group teaching is not conducive to the development of students' individualization as the time for classroom teaching is limited. Certain teaching tasks must be completed within the specified time, giving students less time to think and participate. Thus, students are unable to fully develop and cultivate their intelligence and abilities.

Online learning can expand students' learning time and space. Considering students' learning styles and individual needs, rich learning resources are provided to support students' learning. Online learning allows learners to independently arrange the time and place outside of classroom learning and independently choose learning resources. At the same time, teachers can use the online teaching platform and social tools to track and understand the real-time learning of students, give personalized guidance, activate students' personalized learning, and effectively realize hierarchical teaching. However, online learning has higher requirements for students' self-learning and self-discipline ability and teachers' ability to organize teaching activities.

Blended oral language learning combines the advantages of classroom teaching and online learning. Blended oral language learning effectively combines group teaching, independent learning, and collaborative learning. It provides teachers and students with a variety of interaction methods, a variety of teaching tools, and learning resources. With blended oral language learning, teacher-led teaching and student-centered learning help to better develop students' abilities with a personalized and systematic learning experience. It also maximizes learning effects and learning goals. The advantage of blended oral language learning is to solve the problems existing in traditional oral English teaching to a certain extent. Table 1 presents the difference between traditional and blended oral English teaching. It is necessary to carry out blended learning in the colloquial language classroom.

Table 1: Comparison of Traditional Oral Teaching and Blended Oral Teaching

		Traditional oral teaching		Blended Oral Teaching	
Classroom composition		In class	After class	Before class	In class
Classroom tasks		Learn	Consolidate	Learn	Consolidate
Teaching subject	Teachers	Explain knowledge	Evaluation work	Assign tasks, make micro-lectures, upload materials	Solve problems, deepen knowledge, and teach in stages
	Students	Lectures, taking notes	Review, complete homework	Watch micro-course videos, find problems, discuss, and summarize problems.	Deepen discussions, solve problems, and complete assignments.

As the pilot study of the blended oral language learning model, we conducted random interviews

with the students who participated in the experimental class of the course. According to the interview results, most of the students agreed that the model is conducive to the improvement of oral language ability. They also indicated that they would actively participate in oral class training, but believed that class time was limited and there were fewer opportunities to speak. Obviously, oral classroom teaching has advantages, but the needs of students' oral practice are not met. In terms of online platforms, most students believed that the platform was rich in learning content, flexible, and free to learn. Most students recognized the rich content and flexible learning methods provided by the online platform.

At the same time, after further interviews with the students, it was found that although the students wanted to participate in the traditional offline oral class. Due to a large number of class members and fewer class hours, the time for in-depth communication with teachers was far from meeting the needs of oral language training. Sometimes it is carried out unilaterally, and good feedback is not obtained from teachers. The traditional offline class has outstanding advantages, but with limitations. In the class of non-English majors, the advantages and disadvantages are particularly prominent. The introduction of the mobile network learning platform makes up for these shortcomings. Of course, the mobile online learning platform also has its shortcomings. Students think that the evaluation of the platform is a bit stereotyped and rigid, and the evaluation of speaking ability is not flexible enough. This also explains the reason why students do not recognize the online platform. In addition, students said that they did not need online guidance from teachers and believed that after earnestly studying in foreign teachers' classrooms. They could complete autonomous learning independently. If they had problems, they could find solutions by themselves. Several students had strong learning abilities and a certain self-learning ability.

The interview also found that in offline classroom teaching, several students had difficulty communicating with the teacher because of their poor English, and they did not even dare to speak. When it comes to mobile online learning platforms, students generally face the problem of being overburdened financially by the need to use the Internet. Blended learning through teaching practice may reflect various problems caused by individual differences and needs of students, school hardware equipment, and teachers' teaching ability. Blended learning requires continuous summarization and improvement in teaching. At this stage, blended learning has been recognized by students, and it is of great value and significance for promoting the improvement of students' oral ability and the improvement of oral teaching. Therefore, this paper constructs a mobile phone-based hybrid college oral English learning model (see Fig 1).
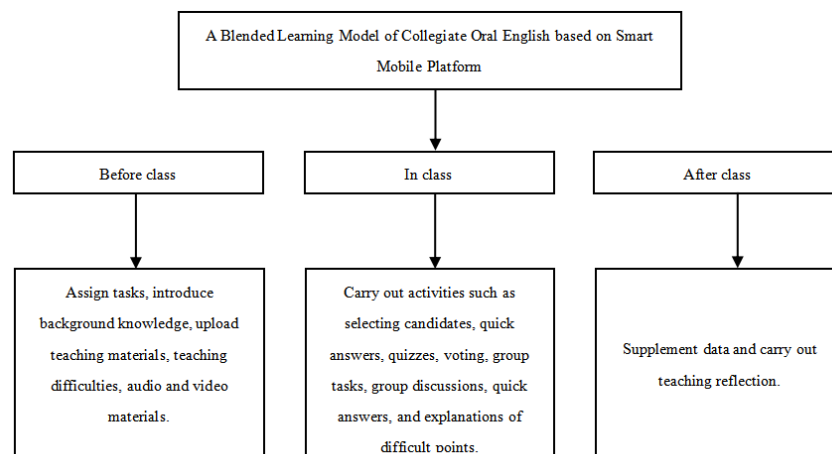

Figure 1: Blended learning model of collegiate oral English based on Smart Mobile Platform.

We selected three classes of freshmen of grade 2021 non-English majors in Yinchuan Energy College as the experimental objects to carry out the mixed teaching of collegiate spoken English based on the multimedia mobile platform. The platform required teachers to make adequate preparations in advance. Teachers needed to combine the main content of the syllabus, clarify the teaching objectives and difficult points, and modularize the important and difficult knowledge. They also made courseware, micro-courses, MOOCs, and other resources for students to learn independently and uploaded them to the mobile learning platform. At the same time, teachers published learning resources such as exercises and discussions on related topics through the learning platform to help students conduct autonomous learning before class and expand related knowledge. Students comprehensively learned knowledge through the Learning Pass mobile APP. During the period, students talked to each other through class

group chat or sought help from teachers. Students reasonably arranged their learning content and learning progress according to their actual learning situation, and expand their knowledge. Teachers summarized in time according to the actual situation of students for self-learning and adjusted teaching content or teaching design to meet the needs of different students' learning needs.

3.1. Classroom teaching stage

In the process of college English teaching, teachers use the Learning Pass APP to design various teaching activities, enrich classroom teaching content and teaching design, and more effectively stimulate students' interest in learning.

3.2. Sign in to the event

In the traditional college English classroom, it is time-consuming and laborious for teachers to call attendance. However, using the sign-in function of the Xuetong APP, teachers can quickly and conveniently grasp the attendance of students by posting sign-in activities online. The sign-in method is also flexible to save costs. Class time can also attract students' interest.

3.3. Selection and rush to answer activities

Using the Xuexitong online learning platform and mobile APP, the question-and-answer session in the classroom can be realized through the selection and rush-to-answer function. In the traditional college English classroom with a large number of students, teachers may ignore the learning situation of individual students and have no way to take into account all of them. Using the learning platform, teachers can select students through the mobile phone selection function, and the system randomly selects classmates. Teachers can choose one or more people to participate together according to their needs to improve students' classroom concentration and enhance the activity and interest of the classroom. For questions that many students want to answer, teachers can use the rush answer function to set score rewards according to the order of rush answers and encourage all students to participate in classroom activities and speak actively.

3.4. Set up topic discussions in advance

Teachers set the topics to be discussed in advance, and students express their opinions in replies. Students can comment to exercise their learning and solve problems. It is also possible to set up group discussions or exchanges in the classroom, and language expressions and discussions can be saved in the form of live broadcasts or recordings. It is convenient for teachers to grasp the participation of students, realize mutual communication between students, and improve the application ability of spoken English.

3.5. Voting and questionnaire activities

Teachers can use the learning platform to quickly carry out voting or questionnaire surveys, grasp students' views and opinions on a certain issue, summarize in time, adjust teaching content and teaching methods in a timely manner, effectively promote students' interest in learning, and improve students' classroom experience.

3.6. Quiz

In the oral language teaching activities, teachers can use the Learning Pass learning platform and mobile APP to quiz at any time to grasp the student's mastery of knowledge in time. Teachers can publish pre-entered questions to students at an appropriate time. Students can directly receive answers through mobile phones, and the objective question system is automatically scored. Teachers can immediately understand students' learning effects and focus on the common problems of students. Explanation helps students learn knowledge points and improve their English performance.

3.7. Post-class feedback summary stage

After the course, teachers can design various forms of after-school learning tasks based on what they have learned in this class, and publish them on the Xuexitong platform. The Xuexitong APP

reminds students to complete the after-school exercises in time in the form of notifications or phone text messages. Students can submit learning tasks in various forms, and teachers can grade or make appropriate comments based on the assignments or exams submitted by students. Teachers can also push relevant resources in the resource library as supplements based on the content of a chapter to expand the scope of students' knowledge and enhance learning interest. They can also arrange for students to search and collect relevant English materials by themselves, share resources through the group chat function, and discuss together. Students learn, solve the difficulties encountered in the learning process and exchange ideas. Through the process of autonomous learning, students stimulate their interest in learning. They change the learning process of traditional teaching and gradually develop autonomous learning teachers. Then, students perform independent analyses and enhance their problem-solving ability to improve their English expression ability. At the same time, Xuexitong's system assessment method integrates procedural evaluation and summative evaluation. In addition to testing scores, Xuexitong's background statistics record students' participation in various activities which is convenient for teachers to understand and supervise students' autonomous learning process. Teachers summarize and reflect on time according to the feedback of students to adjust the teaching mode or content and improve the quality of teaching.

3.8. Results and analysis

In this study, after the 8th week of testing the pilot program of this model, the students were randomly distributed for the blended language learning with the mobile learning platform. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed, and 47 valid questionnaires were received. Using SPSS software, a statistical one-sample T-test was used for statistical analysis of the questionnaire data. The survey results are shown in Table 2. The data shows that "teaching content is easy to accept" (M = 3.85); "Enhance interaction and communication between teachers and students" (M = 3.79) and "Facilitates knowledge complementarity" (M = 3.94). After the single-sample t-test, the mean of the 12 items is significantly different from the test value "3" ($p < 0.05$), which indicates that the students participating in the experiment as a whole have no interest in mixed language teaching with the mobile learning platform. The overall effect of the teaching is in line with the teaching objectives, teaching design, and learning strategies. The two dimensions of teaching mode and learning effectiveness were both high in student satisfaction.

Table 2: Satisfaction survey of blended oral language learning based on mobile platform

Item dimension	Item description	Mean	Standard deviation	T value
Teaching mode	Contributes to autonomous oral learning	4.02	0.76	10.673
	Facilitate the interaction between teachers and students and between students	4.23	0.68	12.412
	Help students expand their knowledge of Chinese and English	4.34	0.51	9.427
Teaching content	Practical	4.10	0.78	8.670
	Easy to understand	3.85	0.60	10.421
	Novel	4.11	0.76	12.231
	Various forms	4.35	0.89	9.807
Teaching interaction	Enhance interaction and communication between teachers and students	3.79	0.75	10.035
	Enhance interaction and communication between students	4.08	0.61	8.430
	Facilitate knowledge complementarity	3.94	0.72	9.430
learning effectiveness	Improve students' language skills	4.20	0.84	12.350
	Students have a wider range of knowledge	4.05	0.72	10.352

4. Challenges of a blended teaching model based on web platforms and mobile tools

Yinchuan Energy College is still in its infancy for the Smart Mobile Platform. Blended teaching effectively ensures the quality of teaching is an urgent problem for teachers.

4.1. Ability of teachers to use modern information technology

Compared with traditional classroom teaching, hybrid teaching combines the network platform and mobile tools for teachers to have higher information technology literacy. In order to effectively complete online oral language teaching, teachers must complete the change of roles, master advanced information technology, and use information technology to convey knowledge to students through micro-lecture videos and other methods. Teachers need to carefully prepare instructional design, guide students in the teaching process, and monitor students' learning situations, learning processes, examination, and performance management. It is a huge challenge for English teachers to conduct real-time supervision through platform technology and to grasp the students' learning dynamics.

4.2. Selection of teaching resources

With the advent of the era of the Internet and big data, the resources on the network platform are huge in number and complex in content. When teachers select teaching resources, they must choose resources in line with the students' actual English level and difficulty. The easy resource cannot mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning, while the difficult one discourages students' enthusiasm for language learning. Therefore, in the massive learning resources on the network platform, teachers need to pay attention to the interestingness and timeliness of the resources and select the resources reflecting students' lives, abilities, and their majors. This helps improve their oral English ability and arouses the students' learning. At the same time, it is necessary not to take too long to complete the materials and to ensure that students use the fragmented time to complete their studies and gradually develop autonomous learning abilities.

4.3. Diversified teaching design

Our school has a wide source of students from all over the country, and the students have different learning foundations, especially the level of oral English. There is no oral test when they are admitted to college. Because most students have poor learning self-control, they are easily affected by rich online entertainment. In order to ensure that each student can learn independently through the platform, teachers need to continuously improve the teaching design and carry out teaching activities to ensure the enthusiasm of students to learn. The explanation of course knowledge needs to be combined with real-life or current topics. By using group discussions, performances, and other forms, opportunities for students are given and their English language skills are practiced. When designing teaching activities, teachers need to pay more attention to teaching content rather than information technology. The design of teaching content and activities effectively improves students' English levels. At the same time, the blended teaching model does not completely replace traditional classroom teaching with online teaching. Difficult problems can be taught to students more efficiently through traditional classroom teaching. Therefore, college English teaching needs to combine online and offline, organically integrate textbook knowledge and network resource learning, continuously expand the depth and breadth of students' oral English learning, and improve students' oral English ability as much as possible.

5. Conclusion

The introduction of Smart Mobile platforms and tools into college English teaching has become inevitable at present. Therefore, teachers should continue to reform the English teaching model and continuously guide students to use Smart Mobile platforms or tools for autonomous learning. Taking 2021 non-English major freshmen of Yinchuan University of Energy as the experimental object, the college English teaching integrates the Smart Mobile platform and information technology to cultivate students' English speaking proficiency. It is of great significance in improving the quality of English teaching and cultivating applied talents.

Acknowledgement

References

[1] Ten-year development plan of education informatization (2011-2020) [EB/OL] http://www.edu.cn/ html/info/10plan/.2012-3-30.

[2] Yang Y. F., & Kuo N. C. (2021). Blended learning to foster EFL college students' global literacy. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 1-22.

[3] Saidalvi A., & Mansor W. F. A. W. (2012). Utilizing constructivist learning environment (CLE) in designing an online help for students in acquiring public speaking skills. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 66, 518-528.

[4] Zhang Yunxia. The blended teaching mode based on the U campus is in the application-oriented Application Research in College English Courses of Private Colleges and Universities [J]. English Square, 2021(3): 45-47.

[5] Zhong Huiyan. Design and Application of Teaching Model Based on Smart Classroom--Taking English Listening and Speaking Class Teaching as an Example[D]. Beihua University, 2018.

[6] He Kekang. Does "Internet+Education" Really subvert and Reconstruct Traditional Education? [J]. Education Science in China, 2019(4):3-8.

[7] Gu Xiaoying. The application of mobile network blended learning mode in college English audio-visual teaching [J]. Journal of Chifeng University, 2019, (04): 157-158.