

Improve Your Spoken English

Advice for Struggling Students



Written
by

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INTRODUCTION

Every college student in China seems to be studying English. I see them listening to radio programs on their dormitory bed, studying the dictionary in the back of the classroom, and completing grammar exercises in the cafeteria. But still, these same students come to me and ask the same question: "Teacher . . . my spoken English is very poor. How to improve my spoken English?"

This short book is my answer to their question. This book will reference modern research, but it is not a book for scholars. This book will contain information that will benefit English teachers, but it is not a book for teachers. This is a book for you, the student.

In my reading, much of the literature concerning language acquisition theory and research are designed for teachers. This is great for teachers. And I'm sure many students have benefited from this if their teachers have read them. However, I believe students should not be dependent solely on the ability of the teacher. I desire to give knowledge to the students themselves so that you will be empowered to take charge of your own learning.

This knowledge is not given so that you can minimize your teachers. No matter who your teacher is; no matter what he does in the classroom, you can learn from him. My hope is that you will eagerly learn from whatever type of instruction you receive in the classroom and then use this knowledge to guide your self-study efforts outside of the classroom.

Aptitude

First, let me be frank. There is no magic formula to become a fluent speaker of any language. One of the reasons this is so is that each individual is unique. Students learn differently. Moreover, just as some students are better at basketball or math than other students, some students are better at studying foreign languages than other students. One's natural ability to learn another language is called language aptitude. The higher your language aptitude; the easier it will be for you to learn a foreign language. The lower your language aptitude; the harder it will be. However, no matter what your language aptitude, everyone is able to make progress.

Motivation

Motivation. The reason why we study. Though researchers describe numerous subtleties, two types of motivation reoccur throughout the