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Research on the Reform of Teaching and Learning of College English Oral Skills from the Perspective of Skills Competitions

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Abstract: With the rise of skills competitions, more and more higher vocational colleges are focusing on how to use this platform to promote the reform and innovation of English oral skills teaching. This paper explores the current situation and existing problems in college English oral skills teaching from the perspective of skills competitions, analyzes how skills competitions have become an effective tool for improving students' English oral skills, and proposes a new type of English oral teaching model. Through participation in skills competitions, students can not only improve their English oral skills but also enhance their communicative ability and overall qualities. The paper also discusses specific paths and strategies for reforming English oral teaching in vocational colleges, covering aspects such as curriculum content, teaching methods, and teacher capabilities, aiming to promote the modernization and practical application of English oral teaching in these institutions. Finally, the paper looks forward to the development prospects of skills competitions in college English oral teaching and offers relevant suggestions for improvement.

Keywords: college English oral teaching; skills competitions; teaching reform; English oral skills; teaching model; educational innovation

1. Introduction

As globalization progresses, English has become increasingly important as the main language of international communication. In higher vocational colleges, the development of English oral skills is essential for students' overall education. However, traditional teaching methods often result in slow improvement in oral skills, limited classroom interaction, and monotonous teaching, hindering students' ability to effectively express themselves in English. This is especially true in vocational colleges, where more effective teaching models are needed. Skills competitions, as a practical educational approach, have gained popularity in recent years. Many vocational colleges organize or participate in these competitions to boost students' motivation and interest in learning, promoting the reform of oral teaching. Skills competitions not only provide students with opportunities to showcase their abilities and improve oral skills but also encourage teachers to explore new teaching methods and evaluation systems. Through such competitions, students improve their speaking abilities while also developing teamwork and practical application skills, enhancing both knowledge and proficiency. This paper explores the current challenges in English oral teaching in vocational colleges from the perspective of skills competitions. It aims to propose a new teaching model that integrates these competitions, offering theoretical and practical support for the reform and innovation of oral teaching in vocational education [1].

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2. Analysis of the Current Situation of College English Oral Teaching

2.1. Challenges in College English Oral Teaching

With globalization accelerating, English oral skills have become a vital part of vocational education. However, many challenges still hinder the improvement of students' oral abilities in vocational colleges. Firstly, the monotony of teaching methods limits the effectiveness of English oral teaching. Most colleges rely on traditional grammar and vocabulary-based teaching, lacking sufficient oral interaction and practical application. This approach focuses on theory rather than developing actual oral expression skills, and in-class exercises are often limited to formal dialogues, lacking real-world language practice. Secondly, low student motivation is a significant issue [2]. Many students are disengaged from oral learning, focusing mainly on exam preparation rather than developing practical speaking abilities. In colleges without an English-speaking environment, students struggle to use English in daily life, which further diminishes their interest in improving oral skills. Additionally, insufficient teaching abilities and resources are challenges faced by many English teachers. With limited experience in oral skills teaching, outdated methods, and a lack of interactive approaches, many teachers struggle to engage students. Moreover, many vocational colleges lack the necessary teaching equipment and language practice opportunities. Finally, the limitations of the assessment system fail to accurately evaluate students' oral proficiency, focusing too much on grammar and pronunciation, neglecting communication skills and flexibility. Reform is urgently needed in teaching methods, resources, and assessment to better develop students' oral skills [3].

2.2. The Current Application of Skills Competitions in Oral Teaching

With the growing promotion of skills competitions, vocational colleges are increasingly using them to enhance students' English oral skills. Skills competitions not only provide a platform for students to showcase their abilities but also encourage diverse teaching methods and actively engage students in learning. Firstly, skills competitions offer a practical platform and real-world scenarios. By simulating authentic language exchange environments, these competitions allow students to practice their oral skills in situations beyond the classroom. During competitions, students face various communication scenarios, testing their adaptability, communication skills, and teamwork abilities, compensating for the lack of practical application in traditional teaching. Secondly, skills competitions boost student engagement and motivation. The competitive nature encourages active participation. Unlike traditional learning, the use of evaluations and rewards in competitions motivates students to improve their oral skills. The variety in competition formats and content also helps students expand their knowledge and boosts their confidence. Thirdly, skills competitions promote the comprehensive development of oral abilities. Beyond language expression, they assess critical thinking, language organization, and cultural understanding. In tasks like speeches, debates, and situational dialogues, students must quickly think and organize their language, improving their flexibility and confidence in oral communication. Moreover, skills competitions foster innovation in teaching strategies. They push teachers to adopt more interactive, practical methods, such as group discussions, role-playing, and simulated competition scenarios, which increase classroom engagement and student interest. However, limitations exist, such as insufficient teaching resources and low student participation in some colleges, which may affect competition outcomes. To fully realize the potential of skills competitions, optimizing competition formats and evaluation standards is key. In conclusion, skills competitions play a positive role in improving vocational English oral teaching, fostering both student skills and innovative teaching practices [4].

3. Teaching Model of College English Oral Skills from the Perspective of Skills Competitions

3.1. *The Impact of Skills Competitions on Improving English Oral Skills*

Skills competitions have a profound impact on English oral teaching in vocational colleges, particularly in enhancing students' speaking abilities. These competitions provide students with opportunities to improve their oral expression skills and practical language application in various contexts. Firstly, improving fluency and accuracy is a core benefit. Competitions often require students to give speeches, engage in dialogues, or participate in debates within a limited time, which intensively trains them to speak fluently and accurately. Through repeated practice and simulating real-life scenarios, students reduce pauses, vocabulary errors, and grammatical mistakes, thus improving their language expression. Secondly, enhancing listening comprehension and adaptability is crucial. Competitions involve interactive elements where students must quickly respond to others' questions or viewpoints. This not only tests their speaking abilities but also requires quick listening and adaptation, helping students use language more flexibly in real-world situations. Thirdly, cultivating language communication skills and cultural understanding is vital. Many competitions involve cross-cultural communication or simulate professional scenarios, which help students understand communication methods and language habits in different contexts [5]. This training enhances their ability to communicate effectively in international settings. Additionally, boosting self-confidence and language application occurs through practical performance. Students gain confidence by showcasing their skills and receiving feedback, which helps them become more natural and fluent in real-life communication. Finally, promoting overall student development is a key result. Skills competitions also foster teamwork, time management, and stress management, which are valuable for students' future careers. In conclusion, skills competitions play a crucial role in enhancing English oral skills by providing practical language application, cross-cultural training, and confidence-building, contributing to the reform of oral teaching in vocational colleges [6].

3.2. *Constructing a New Teaching Model*

As skills competitions gradually play a more significant role in English oral teaching in vocational colleges, traditional teaching models need to be transformed to meet new educational demands and enhance students' language abilities. From the perspective of skills competitions, constructing a new teaching model can not only improve students' English oral proficiency but also cultivate their overall qualities, stimulate their learning interest, and promote innovation in teaching content and methods. Below is the construction of a new English oral teaching model based on the skills competition perspective: First, task-driven teaching as the core. The new teaching model should design classroom activities around task-driven learning, allowing students to improve their English oral skills by completing real-life tasks. For example, teachers can design tasks based on real-world scenarios, such as simulating job interviews, international conference speeches, or business negotiations. These tasks align with students' actual needs and help improve their ability to use English in real-world contexts. Through task-driven learning, students not only learn standardized English expressions but also apply language flexibly in different contexts, thereby enhancing both their oral abilities and communication skills. Second, increased classroom interaction and cooperative learning. Traditional teaching methods are usually teacher-centered, with low student participation [7]. The new teaching model should emphasize interaction and cooperation in the classroom. Teachers can encourage student interaction through group discussions, role-playing, and situational simulations, improving students' English expression and teamwork abilities. Under the background of skills competitions, cooperative learning can help students work together in practice and preparation, increasing language usage opportunities and enhancing the

practicality of English oral skills. Third, integration of multimedia and information technology in auxiliary teaching. The rapid development of information technology provides rich resources and tools for English oral teaching. For example, teachers can use online platforms, video conferences, and language exchange tools to facilitate cross-school and cross-national language exchanges, enhancing students' language practice opportunities. Additionally, multimedia teaching tools, such as audio recordings and video recordings, can help students self-assess and reflect on their pronunciation, grammar, and expression. The format of skills competitions can also leverage these technological tools for online competitions and simulation training, improving students' technical skills and English oral proficiency. Moreover, the implementation of flexible assessment mechanisms and feedback systems is necessary. Traditional English oral assessment mechanisms tend to be overly simplistic, often focusing solely on students' grammar and pronunciation, neglecting communication effectiveness and language applicability. In the new teaching model, a multi-dimensional assessment system should be established that considers not only fluency and accuracy but also communicative effectiveness, contextual adaptability, and creativity in expression [8]. By using the assessment criteria from skills competitions, teachers can provide students with more comprehensive and detailed feedback, helping them identify shortcomings in their oral expression and make timely adjustments and improvements. Finally, support for personalized learning. Each student has a different English proficiency level, learning style, and interests, so teachers need to provide personalized teaching based on students' characteristics. In the new teaching model, teachers should offer more opportunities for autonomous learning and choice, allowing students to select learning content and formats according to their interests and goals. At the same time, teachers should provide personalized guidance and assistance based on students' learning progress and development needs, ensuring that every student is fully trained and improved during the preparation for skills competitions. In summary, the new teaching model based on skills competitions should focus on task-driven learning, enhance classroom interaction and cooperative learning, integrate multimedia and information technology for auxiliary teaching, establish flexible and diverse assessment and feedback mechanisms, and emphasize personalized learning support. Through these educational reforms, English oral teaching in vocational colleges can better meet real-world needs, improve students' oral skills, stimulate their learning motivation, and lay a solid foundation for their future career development [9].

4. Pathways and Strategies for Reforming College English Oral Teaching

4.1. Reform of Curriculum Content and Structure

To enhance the effectiveness of college English oral teaching, reforming the curriculum content and structure is essential. Traditional English oral courses often focus on grammar, vocabulary, and basic oral training, neglecting the development of actual communication skills and contextual application. Therefore, based on the perspective of skills competitions, curriculum reform should emphasize practical language use, diversify course content, and design courses according to students' varying levels. Firstly, the curriculum should emphasize practicality and contextuality. Unlike traditional courses that focus mainly on vocabulary and grammar knowledge, the new curriculum should focus on simulating real-life situations and training in oral expression. For example, courses can include modules on business negotiations, job interviews, travel communication, and academic presentations, allowing students to practice language use in various contexts and improve their communicative abilities. These context-based courses help students express their ideas more confidently and fluently in real-world situations and develop the skills to handle various social settings. Secondly, the curriculum structure should be tiered and systematic [10]. Since students in vocational colleges have varied levels of English proficiency, the content should be designed to match their language skills. For beginners, basic oral training should focus on mastering everyday conversation patterns and expressions.

Intermediate students can improve their speaking abilities through themed discussions and situational simulations. Advanced students should engage in more complex tasks, such as speeches or debates, to challenge their oral skills and foster critical thinking and creative expression. Tiered course designs will meet the needs of different students and help them gradually improve their oral proficiency. Thirdly, integrating interdisciplinary knowledge and diverse learning methods into the oral curriculum is important. Students should be encouraged to combine English oral skills with knowledge from other fields, such as business English, tourism English, or technical English. This integration enhances both their language proficiency and their ability to apply English in professional contexts. Additionally, a variety of learning methods, such as project-based learning, teamwork, and role-playing, should be used to increase student engagement and motivation. These innovative learning methods will make students more proactive in their learning and help them continuously improve their oral skills through practice. Moreover, reforming the assessment system is critical. Traditional oral assessments primarily focus on pronunciation, grammar, and fluency, which do not fully reflect students' ability to use language for communication. The new curriculum should adopt a multi-dimensional assessment system, considering not only fluency and accuracy but also communicative effectiveness, adaptability to contexts, and creative language use. By following the assessment standards of skills competitions, teachers can provide more comprehensive and specific feedback, helping students improve their oral skills throughout the learning process. Finally, flexible course scheduling and time management are necessary. In traditional schedules, oral courses are often limited in class hours, which prevents sufficient practice of speaking skills. In the new teaching model, courses should have a well-organized schedule and make flexible use of time. For instance, increasing extracurricular activities, organizing English corners, club activities, and online language exchanges will expand students' opportunities for oral practice. Additionally, incorporating extracurricular activities like skills competitions gives students more opportunities to demonstrate and improve their oral skills, further supporting the reform of course content and structure. In summary, the reform of college English oral courses should focus on practical language use, emphasize context-based and tiered course designs, integrate interdisciplinary knowledge and diverse learning methods, and update the assessment system. These changes will better cultivate students' oral skills, enhance their overall quality, and promote the improvement of English oral teaching in vocational colleges.

4.2. Enhancing Student Engagement and Establishing an Incentive Mechanism

In college English oral teaching, student engagement directly impacts the effectiveness of learning. Traditional teaching models are often teacher-centered, resulting in low student participation, which not only limits the improvement of oral skills but also affects their motivation to learn English. To enhance student engagement, establishing an effective incentive mechanism is crucial. A well-designed incentive system can stimulate students' interest in learning and, through diverse incentives, help them stay committed to improving their oral skills. First, enhancing classroom participation. Traditional classrooms are often lecture-based with limited opportunities for student interaction, which leads to low engagement in oral learning. Therefore, classroom design should increase opportunities for student participation through interactive activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and situational simulations. These activities allow students to engage with peers, practice oral communication, and learn from their classmates' expressions, further improving their speaking skills. Teachers can also introduce a classroom participation grading system to encourage students to actively speak and engage in discussions, increasing their involvement in class. Second, establishing a diversified incentive system. The incentive system should include both material rewards and psychological encouragement. Material incentives can include scholarships, prizes for English oral competitions, or awards for outstanding students, motivating students to perform well in

their oral training. These rewards help students recognize their progress and feel the results of their hard work. In addition, psychological incentives, such as immediate positive feedback and encouragement from teachers, can boost students' confidence. For example, teachers can provide verbal praise or personalized feedback after each classroom activity, helping students feel that their efforts are valued and reinforcing their motivation to continue learning. Third, stimulating student competition through skills competitions. Skills competitions, being highly practical and competitive, stimulate students' motivation to engage in oral learning. By participating in various English oral competitions, students can not only showcase their oral abilities but also compete with others, which enhances their sense of competition and drive for self-improvement. To encourage further participation, teachers can organize internal or inter-school English oral competitions, offering multiple awards such as "Best Speaker", "Best Team" and "Most Creative" among others. Competitions allow students to continuously improve their speaking abilities under pressure and challenge, which motivates them to excel in future learning. Additionally, personalized incentives and goal orientation. Each student has a unique learning pace, interests, and needs, so the incentive mechanism should be flexible and personalized. Teachers can set individual learning goals and incentives based on students' needs. For example, students with weaker oral skills can have short-term improvement goals, such as completing a daily conversation or participating in a mock speech. Stronger students can aim for more complex tasks, such as winning a competition or debating on a challenging topic. By setting specific learning goals and rewards, students can clearly see their progress and stay motivated. Finally, ongoing feedback and improvement. The learning process should involve continuous feedback and improvement, rather than relying solely on end-of-term or post-competition evaluations. Teachers can provide timely feedback through regular oral tests, classroom interactions, and peer evaluations, helping students identify their strengths and weaknesses. By using this feedback, students can adjust their learning strategies and continue to improve. Teachers can also provide personalized learning plans and adjust the incentive mechanism based on students' progress to ensure they remain engaged and motivated throughout their learning journey. In conclusion, in college English oral teaching, student participation and the incentive mechanism significantly affect learning outcomes. By enhancing classroom interaction, establishing a diversified reward system, stimulating competition through skills competitions, offering personalized incentives, and providing continuous feedback, students' motivation and oral skills can be effectively improved. A well-designed incentive mechanism not only gives students a sense of achievement but also helps them improve their skills through practical application, laying the foundation for their future professional development.

5. The Impact and Prospects of Skills Competitions on College English Oral Teaching

Skills competitions are playing an increasingly important role in college English oral teaching, especially in enhancing students' oral skills, stimulating learning interest, and driving teaching reform. First, by providing real-world application scenarios, skills competitions enable students to practice their oral expression skills in authentic language communication environments. Compared to traditional classroom teaching, skills competitions focus more on the practical use of language, effectively filling the gap left by the lack of real-world context training in the classroom. By simulating various life and professional scenarios, students not only improve their fluency and accuracy in speaking but also enhance their ability to cope with complex communication situations. Moreover, skills competitions possess a strong competitive and challenging nature, which significantly stimulates students' motivation and participation. Many students showcase their language abilities in competitions and, through comparing themselves with other participants, continuously recognize their weaknesses, which drives them to further improve. This competitive awareness and self-improvement process help students maintain high enthusiasm in their daily learning, leading to a further enhancement of their English oral skills. Skills

competitions have also driven innovation in the teaching model of college English oral skills. While guiding students in preparing for competitions, teachers not only focus on enhancing students' language abilities but also encourage them to develop creative thinking and teamwork skills through practical application. The new teaching model emphasizes the development of students' overall qualities, integrating oral expression with real tasks, and cultivating their cross-cultural communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. These skills are crucial for students' future career competitiveness. Looking ahead, the impact of skills competitions on college English oral teaching will deepen further. With the acceleration of globalization, the practical application of English oral skills is becoming an increasingly important competency in the workplace. Skills competitions will become an essential platform for advancing English oral education in vocational colleges. In the future, schools should continue to invest more in skills competitions, optimize competition formats, improve evaluation standards, and integrate them closely with teaching content, providing students with more opportunities for practical language application. At the same time, teachers should continually innovate teaching methods, fully utilize skills competitions as a platform, and foster students' comprehensive language abilities and practical application skills.

6. Conclusion

Skills competitions, as an integral part of college English oral teaching, have significantly enhanced students' English oral skills and overall quality. Through scenario simulations and practical applications, students are able to practice speaking, adaptability, and cross-cultural communication, thereby stimulating their learning interest and motivation. Skills competitions have driven the innovation of teaching models, and teachers have guided students in more targeted language training through competition practices. However, to fully realize their potential, curriculum design must be improved, evaluation standards optimized, and teaching reform should continue to be advanced based on practical needs. In the future, skills competitions will play an even more critical role in college English oral education, laying a solid foundation for students' career development.

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