An integrated approach to developing and assessing EFL students' speaking ability and strategy use

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Abstract

Speaking a foreign language is a complicated process that involves linguistic competence, skills, and strategy use. Communicating through English in English for Academic Purposes courses is a basic requirement for EFL learners, but it can be a challenge. To improve the quality of speech, strengthen components of speaking competence, and raise learner awareness of metacognition, Goh and Burns (2012) propose an integrated pedagogical approach featuring a teaching cycle for developing and assessing students' speaking. The present study accordingly aimed to test how far the teaching-speaking cycle was able to develop low-intermediate Taiwanese EFL university students' speaking ability. Sixty university students participated in the study, which employed a quasi-experimental design. The Experimental Group (EG) received Goh and Burns' integrated pedagogical approach for 18 weeks, whereas the Control Group (CG) simply practiced speaking as regular in-class activities. Speaking tests and questionnaires were used. The results showed that the EG adopted the rehearsal and social strategies more frequently than the CG. In the case of speaking performance, the EG students steadily improved their speaking ability through the semester. The speaking performance of the CG students, however, was limited. A close inspection of the scores revealed marked improvements in particular speaking components for the EG participants.

Keywords: integrated teaching approach, speaking, strategy, task

Introduction

Over the last few decades, English for Academic Purposes courses have become regular in Taiwanese universities. In recent years, in response to internationalization and globalization, university students in Taiwan have been required to study general English courses or academic subjects via English (Chen & Tsai, 2012; Chou, 2011, 2018; Hamid *et al.*, 2013). English speaking

abilities are emphasized and encouraged in the English curriculum from primary school to higher education in Taiwan (Chen & Tsai, 2012; Chou, 2015, 2017). Nonetheless, speaking is rarely taught and practiced in primary and secondary English classes because this skill is neither formally assessed in school nor in high-stakes, University Entrance Examinations before university level. Consequently, students faced with English speaking tasks may feel anxious when using English to express opinions verbally, hold discussions, or interact with teachers or classmates in university English classes.

Speaking is a highly complex skill that comprises (1) knowledge of language and discourse (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse), (2) core speaking skills (chunking, signaling intention, and turn-taking), and (3) communication strategies (paraphrasing, rephrasing, and approximation) (Goh & Burns, 2012). However, when speaking activities are carried out without a clear and structured pedagogy focusing on speaking skills and strategies, there may be limited room for students to improve their command of language and communication skills in the long run. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of implementing an integrated pedagogical approach on university students' speaking performance, their strategy use, and improvements on different speaking components in a general English course. This study will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the advantages and/or limitations regarding the implementation of an integrated pedagogical approach, and the subsequent development of EFL speaking at university level.

Approaches to Teaching Speaking

Early views of teaching speaking considered speaking to focus on the presentation and demonstration of grammatical structures through question-answer instructions or the use of written dialogues, as in the direct method. In the second half of the 20th century, a number of teaching approaches, such as audiolingual, situational, and functional approaches, developed giving a key role to teaching pronunciation skills and grammatical accuracy, while the interactive discourse pattern and the level of conceptualization within genuine communication were broadly ignored (Bygate, 2010). For example, Byrne (1976) advocated the use of a PPP (Presentation–Practice–Production) approach, in which drills and practice dialogues were used. Morrow and Johnson (1979) developed speaking pedagogies focusing on aspects of interpersonal pragmatics (or functions of spoken language), such as apologizing, inviting, and requesting. Awareness of this need led to the development of communicative language teaching (CLT), which highlighted the importance of enabling learners to develop fluency as well as accuracy through problem-solving tasks and communication with others (Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 1991; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). The wave of CLT has had a huge impact on foreign language teaching and learning in countries where traditional grammar-translation and audiolingual methods prevail (Chou, 2015; Hu & McKay, 2012).

Over the past few decades of research on how to improve speaking and fluency in second and foreign language classroom, a number of suggestions have been made, such as increasing exposure to an English-speaking environment and practice (e.g., Yanagi & Baker, 2016), using a variety of tasks (e.g., Skehan, 1996, 2003; Ulla, 2020), encouraging the use of recurrent multiword expressions in speaking (e.g., Chou, 2018; Meunier, 2012; Nation & Meara, 2020; Szudarski & Conklin, 2014), and observing native and non-native speakers' discourse patterns (e.g., Basturkmen, 2002). These studies have offered practical advice on developing speaking abilities. Nevertheless, Goh and Burns (2012) argue that although speaking activities occur frequently in language classrooms, learners seldom have opportunities to learn the skills and strategies to improve their speaking. Moreover, the quality of language production is closely tied to three characteristics: fluency (ability to mobilize an interlanguage system to communicate meanings in real time), accuracy (ability to handle interlanguage complexity), and complexity (ability to process, reconstruct and elaborate the

underlying interlanguage system) (Skehan, 1996, 2003); how learners manage the three characteristics during limited time constraints demands on their language proficiency and the speed of processing and formulating thoughts. Goh and Burns (2012) stress the point that self-monitoring is an important strategy for language learners to check their speech for accuracy and acceptability, but this strategy may indirectly put demands on other cognitive processes, such as working memory, that are already in operation.

Goh and Burns' Teaching-Speaking Cycle

To improve the quality of speech (i.e., fluency, accuracy, and complexity), strengthen components of speaking competence (i.e., knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills, and communication strategies), and raise learner awareness of metacognition (i.e., self-monitoring and self-regulation), Goh and Burns (2012) propose a teaching cycle for developing students' speaking. Their teaching-speaking cycle covers seven stages: (1) focus learners' attention on speaking, (2) provide input and/or guide planning, (3) conduct speaking tasks, (4) focus on language, skills, and strategies, (5) repeat speaking task, (6) direct learners' reflection on learning, and (7) facilitate feedback on learning (Figure 1).
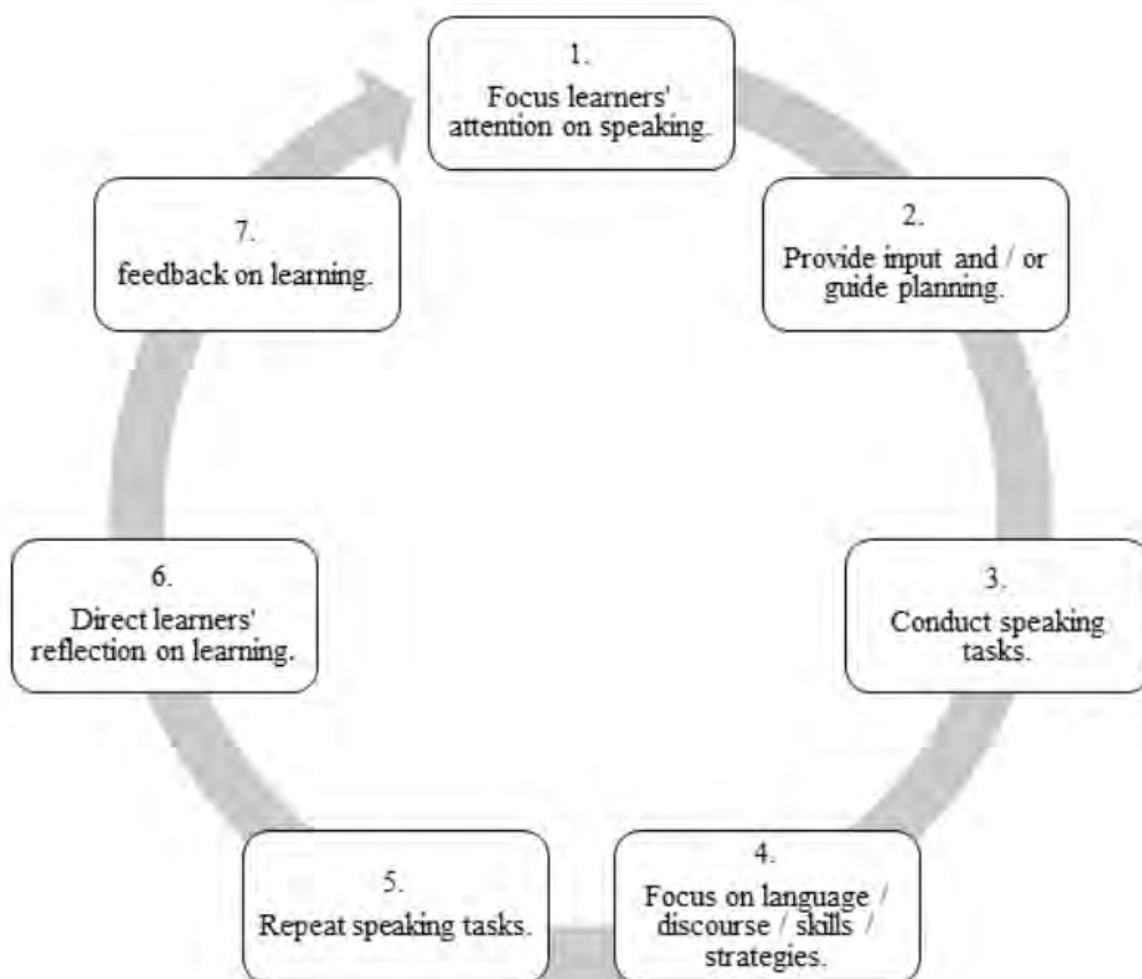

Figure 1 *The Teaching-Speaking Cycle (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 153)*

At Stage 1, the teacher develops learners' metacognitive awareness about learning to speak a second or foreign language, via thinking about their experiences in speaking a foreign language. At Stage 2, the teacher provides input for students to learn appropriate vocabulary and accurate language forms, and to understand social and linguistic contexts related to speaking topics. Next, students learn a range of core speaking skills and develop fluency in the expression of meaning while conducting speaking tasks (Stage 3). Speaking tasks are categorized according to the skills and linguistic knowledge of learners involved in speaking process. For example, Goh and Burns (2012) listed three types of speaking tasks, including communication-gap tasks, discussion tasks, and monologic tasks. Luoma (2004) divided speaking tasks into (1) *open-ended tasks*, involving role-play simulation tasks and tasks with a variety of discourse types such as description, narrative, instruction, comparison, explanation, justification, prediction and decision, and (2) *structured speaking tasks*, such as reading aloud and sentence repetition. Hughes and Hughes (2020), on the other hand, classified speaking tasks based on the techniques involved in the elicitation process: (1) interview (questions and requests, picture description, interpreting, prepared monologue and reading aloud), (2) interaction with fellow candidates (discussion and role-play simulation), and (3) responses to audio- or video-recorded stimuli. In the present study, role-play simulation and discussion tasks were adopted to promote the use of English with regard to the topics/themes in the textbook, the contextualized language use, communication, and interaction between students.

At Stage 4, vocabulary, grammar, and social and linguistic conventions of speech regarding the speaking tasks are re-emphasized by the instructor. Core speaking skills and communication strategies are highlighted as well. Cohen and Henry (2020) categorizes speaking strategies into four types: retrieval (e.g., calling up language materials and schemata from storage), rehearsal, communication, and cover (e.g., using a memorized or partially understood phrase to keep the conversation going). In particular, rehearsal strategies focus on practicing target language structures. For example, language learners may seek out opportunities to talk to native speakers, initiate conversations in the target language, try discussing unfamiliar topics, consider how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way, or practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build their confidence in using those structures (Cohen *et al.*, 2001). Communication strategies (CS), on the other hand, include avoidance or reduction (e.g., leaving a message unfinished), compensatory (e.g., circumlocution, approximation, word-coinage, use of paralanguage, or code switching), stalling (e.g., use of fillers or hesitation), and interactional strategies (e.g., appealing for help, or asking for confirmation in communication) (Cohen & Henry, 2020; Oxford, 2017). Studies have shown that teaching strategies had a significant effect on improving language learners' overall speaking performance, particularly the quality and quantity of strategy use for solving interaction problems and enhancing communication effectiveness (Goh & Burns, 2012; Zarandi & Rahbar, 2016).

At Stage 5, learners employ core speaking skills and strategies appropriately to express meaning more precisely. At the final two stages, learners monitor performance and teachers provide feedback on learning. Goh and Burns' teaching-speaking framework takes an integrated approach that covers a vocabulary- and grammar-based approach to provide necessary inputs and structures, a task-based approach for carrying out speaking tasks, and a strategy-based approach to strengthen speaking skills and communication strategies. Up to this point, it appears that no research findings are yet available concerning the effect of Goh and Burns' integrated teaching-speaking cycle on the development of university EFL students' speaking ability. The research reported here was designed to provide insight into issues that have lacked attention in the literature by addressing to what extent Goh and Burns' (2012) integrated teaching-speaking cycle influences university EFL students' speaking performance and strategy use in an general English course (compared with a group of students received a CLT approach). As a result, the present study aims to explore the following three research questions:

1   Is there a significant difference in the mean English speaking strategy scores of students between experimental and control groups in the pre- and post-test?
2   Is there a significant difference in the mean English speaking scores of students between the experimental and control groups in the pre- and post-test?
3   After the implementation of Goh and Burns' teaching-speaking cycle for the experimental group (EG) students, to what extent does each component of speaking (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content) and the total score improve?

Research Method

The questionnaire for speaking strategies used here was modified from the Language Strategy Use Survey – Speaking Strategy Use by Cohen *et al.* (2001) (Appendix 1). The reliability of the questionnaire assessed by Cronbach's α was .93. In addition to the questionnaire, students in the EG were guided to plan, rehearse, and reflect on speaking tasks following the seven stages of Goh and Burns' teaching-speaking cycle. The scoring of students' speaking performance was adapted from the Council of Europe (2001; see also Luoma, 2004) and Hughes and Hughes (2020); the analytic rating scale for speaking comprised five components: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content. The five components are closely related to the three characteristics that affect speaking – fluency, accuracy (pronouncing words, and using grammar and vocabulary in appropriate contexts), and complexity (processing pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content via the underlying interlanguage system) – proposed by Skehan (1996). Each component consisted of a range of scores (1 to 4) and descriptors (Appendix 2).

Participants

The participants were 60 first-year university students from two intact classes taking the compulsory general English course in a university in Taiwan. The participants' native language is Mandarin Chinese. The speaking lessons focused on topics encountered and/or discussed in everyday life, including personal interests, sports and recreation, world cultures, movies, social life, friendship, and technology. Of the 60 participants, 30 students were in the experimental group and the other 30 were in the control group. The participants had taken an English placement test before attending the general English course and both groups were placed at CEFR B1 Threshold Level (low-intermediate).

Course Design and Data Collection

The general English course lasted for 18 weeks (i.e., a semester) with 100 minutes focusing on speaking training every week. The study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test design. The pre-test was conducted in Week 1, the mid-test was done in Week 9, and the post-test was conducted in Week 18, leaving 15 weeks for pedagogical instruction. Both groups used the same textbook. The EG received the instructional approach, following the theoretical teaching-speaking cycle framework by Goh and Burns (2012). The control group (CG) received a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, focusing on (1) interaction and cooperative learning via group or pair work, (2) learning process with the goal of improving communicative ability in context, and (3) communicative tasks linked to language instruction (Wesche & Skehan, 2002).

Pre-test

In Week 1, both groups of participants took a speaking pre-test. The speaking topics and tasks in the pre-test were from the units in the textbook. After taking the pre-test, both groups of participants

completed a speaking strategy questionnaire. It took five to ten minutes to complete the questionnaire survey.

Experimental Group

Stage 1: Focus learners' attention on speaking / Speaking needs analysis

Starting in the second week, the researcher focused students' attention on speaking and analyzed their needs through discussing their experiences in learning to speak English. A worksheet with the information of five speaking components (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary accuracy, fluency, and content) was provided. Next, students were asked to share which speaking components they considered important.

Stage 2: Provide input and/or guide planning

At this stage, the teacher gave a brief introduction to the topic, and then gave out photos or short videos, along with questions for discussion related to the topic, that were presented as warm-up activities. The participants were expected to establish linkages between the relevant target vocabulary, the contexts, and their past learning experiences through sharing ideas, expressing opinions, providing examples, or giving reasons first to group members and later to the whole class. After the discussion, a short listening activity was given to the participants as an additional input.

After listening, a speaking task ensued. Researchers have recommended a number of speaking tasks: creative dictation, description, role-play simulation, discussion, role-play interview, and debate (Goh & Burns, 2012; Hughes & Hughes, 2020). An initial analysis of the students' needs at Stage 1 showed that the first-year students did not clearly indicate the types of speaking task they wanted in class (possibly due to a lack of speaking practice in the senior high school English classroom), and they expressed anxiety while speaking English. To ease nervousness and encourage interaction, the role-play problem-solving simulation task was chosen as the target task because it required the vocabulary and grammar knowledge gained from the warm-up and listening activities to accomplish a task by exchanging ideas with equals.

The role-play problem-solving simulation task comprised four parts: (1) a description of a situation/problem, (2) the goal of the task, (3) key grammatical structures, and (4) suggested communication strategies (Appendix 3). Specifically, the students were taught how to plan the speaking tasks. Strategies including previewing requirements of the task and task outcomes, reviewing or preparing language and content which they needed for the speaking task, and identifying communication and discourse strategies that could facilitate their interaction or speech (Goh & Burns, 2012) were incorporated into the tasks. A planning guide worksheet modified from Goh and Burns (ibid.) for participating in a role-play problem-solving simulation task was provided to the students (Appendix 4).

Stages 3 & 4: Conduct speaking tasks and focus on language / skills / strategies

The paired participants were given 15 minutes to prepare a two-minute conversation, and they then presented it in front of the class. These role-play problem-solving simulation tasks provided the students with opportunities to plan, organize, and evaluate the information of the conversation through the processes of discussing, listening closely to each other's views, making notes, and responding to views. The pairs also monitored each other's responses while practicing their conversations. Students were encouraged to check their overall performance, the appropriateness and accuracy of what they said during a speaking task, and recognize any negative emotions during

speaking (Goh & Burns, 2012). Meanwhile, the teacher acted as a facilitator who walked around giving strategic and linguistic help to the pairs. After the preparation, pairs of students were nominated to demonstrate their conversation to the class. Other students listened to them, observed the language performance, and responded to the content (e.g., laughing at a joke). The teacher gave feedback to each pair after they finished the conversation. Form-focused grammatical instruction and strategies relating to the topical contexts were then reinforced by the teacher. The total process of speaking (preparation and presentation) lasted for approximately 50 minutes.

Stage 5: Repeat speaking task

At this stage, the pairs were given time to discuss and reflect on their performance. The teacher then analyzed the task successes and failures of some of the pairs, and encouraged the class to learn from successful simulation models, or demonstrated a better pattern of information exchange to the whole class.

Stage 6: Direct learner reflection on learning

Students were asked to check the appropriateness and accuracy of what they had said when the task was over, reflect on whether the strategies they selected and used for completing the task had been useful, and assess their overall success on the task by completing the worksheet (Appendix 5).

Stage 7: Facilitate feedback on learning

Teachers collected students' worksheets, gave personalized feedback on their performance and recommended additional communication or learning strategies for them. Worksheets were compiled into a portfolio by each student. After Stage 7, the cycle went back to Stage 2 and continued until Stage 7 for the next lesson.

Control Group

The textbook and tasks selected for, and preparation (15 minutes) and conversation time (two minutes) given to the EG and the CG were the same. To differentiate the teaching of speaking in the CG from the teaching-speaking cycle in the EG, the CG neither followed any task planning guidance nor completed any worksheets. Instead, they received a CLT approach, which was organized around situations, oral texts, knowledge domain and tasks with emphases on encouraging students to practice asking and answering questions, initiating conversations, and responding to English in pairs and groups (Thornbury, 2017). The procedure of teaching speaking in the CG involved three parts: warm-up and listening activities, role-play simulation speaking activities in pairs, and teacher feedback. Similar to the EG, the total process of speaking lasted for approximately 50 minutes. Though grammatical structures and communication strategies were offered to the students, explicit teaching of these was not done in the CG. After the CG participants finished the speaking activities, the teacher provided personal feedback orally to each pair.

Mid-test and post-test

In Week 9, both groups took a speaking mid-test, while the post-tests were done in Week 18. As with the pre-, mid- and post-test tasks were based on the topics in the textbook.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data included the questionnaire pre-test and post-test and participants' speaking test

scores, following the analytic scale modified from the Council of Europe (2001; see also Luoma, 2004) and Hughes and Hughes (2020). To ensure the reliability of the rating scale, the participants' speaking practices were video-recorded and scored by another teacher in the same university who also taught the same course. Inter-rater reliability using the rating scale was .88. Paired-sample t-tests and one-way between-groups MANOVAs in SPSS version 23 were adopted to compare the questionnaire responses and speaking performance scores in the pre- and post-tests of the CG and the EG. In addition, one-way repeated measures of MANOVA were used to compare the speaking test scores at three time points: (1) Week 1 – pre-test (prior to the speaking practice), (2) Week 9 – mid-test (following the speaking practice), and (3) Week 18 – post-test, for the CG and EG groups, respectively.

Speaking needs analysis was done in the first week of the course for both CG and EG students. Descriptive statistics showed that approximately two thirds of the students considered pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary accuracy, fluency, and ability to understand, ask, and answer questions appropriately in speaking very important (Table 1).

Table 1 *Comparison of Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Need Analysis*

Components	Group	N	Very important		Important		Not important	
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. Pronunciation	CG	30	19	11	11	19	0	0
	EG	30	14	17	15	13	1	0
2. Grammar	CG	30	21	19	8	11	1	0
	EG	30	16	21	10	8	4	1
3. Vocabulary accuracy	CG	30	20	22	9	8	1	0
	EG	30	17	22	12	8	1	0
4. Fluency	CG	30	21	18	8	12	1	0
	EG	30	19	24	10	6	1	0
5. Understand content and respond appropriately	CG	30	22	22	7	8	1	0
	EG	30	19	22	10	8	1	0

Results

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the mean English speaking strategy use of students between the experimental and control groups?

A one-way between-groups MANOVA was performed to investigate speaking strategy differences before the teaching intervention. Three dependent variables were used: 'rehearsal strategy', 'compensatory strategy', and 'interactional strategy'. The independent variable was CG and EG. There was no statistically significant difference between CG and EG, either on the combined dependent variables, $F (3, 56) = .77$, $p = .516$; Wilks' Lambda = .96; partial eta squared = .04, or on the separate dependent variables (Table 2). After the teaching intervention, another one-way between-groups MANOVA was performed to investigate differences in speaking strategies for CG and EG. There was a statistically significant difference between CG and EG on the combined dependent variables, $F (3, 56) = 4.15$, $p = .010$; Wilks' Lambda = .818; partial eta squared = .18. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, two differences in statistical significance were noted using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017; namely (1) rehearsal strategies, $F (1, 58) = 6.57$, $p = .013$; partial eta squared = .10 and (2) interactional strategies, $F (1, 58) = 6.14$, $p = .016$; partial eta squared = .10, indicating medium effect sizes. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that EG adopted rehearsal ($M = 25.83$, $SD = 6.32$) and interactional strategies ($M = 10.83$, $SD = 2.11$) more frequently than CG ($M = 21.70$, $SD = 6.17$; $M = 9.53$, $SD = 1.94$) (Table 3).

Table 2 *MANOVA Pre-test Results of CG, EG, and Speaking Strategies*

	Levene's test		MANOVA						
Variables	**F (1, 58)**	**p**	**Group**	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**F**	**p**	**η^2**
1. Rehearsal strategies	1.49	.23	CG	30	20.80	6.33	.34	.564	.01
			EG	30	19.90	5.67			
2. Compensatory strategies	.24	.63	CG	30	18.07	3.88	1.90	.174	.03
			EG	30	16.53	4.70			
3. Interactional strategies	.00	.95	CG	30	9.30	2.28	1.72	.195	.03
			EG	30	8.50	2.45			

Note: η2 = partial eta squared

Table 3 *MANOVA Post-test Results of CG, EG, and Speaking Strategies*

	Levene's test		MANOVA						
Variables	F (1, 58)	p	Group	N	M	SD	F	p	η2
1. Rehearsal strategies	.04	.84	CG	30	21.70	6.17	6.57	.013	.10
			EG	30	25.83	6.32			
2. Compensatory strategies	2.11	.15	CG	30	17.93	3.05	.05	.834	.00
			EG	30	18.13	4.20			
3. Interactional strategies	.23	.64	CG	30	9.53	1.94	6.14	.016	.10
			EG	30	10.83	2.12			

Note: η2 = partial eta squared

Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate the impact of the CLT on CG students' scores on three types of strategy use. There was no statistically significant difference in scores of three types of strategies from pre- to post-test: (1) rehearsal strategies, t (29) = −.57, p = .571 (two-tailed), (2) compensatory strategies, t (29) = .17, p = .869 (two-tailed), and (3) interactional strategies, t (29) = −.42, p = .679 (two-tailed). In the case of EG, however, paired-sample t-test results showed that there were statistically significant increases in:

1 'Rehearsal strategy' scores from pre-test (M = 19.90, SD = 5.67) to post-test (M = 25.83, SD = 6.32), t (30) = −4.28, p <.0005 (two-tailed), and

2 'Interactional strategy' scores from pre-test (M = 8.50, SD = 2.45) to post-test (M = 10.83, SD = 2.12), t (49) = −3.81, p = .001 (two-tailed).

The eta squared statistic (.39 and .33) indicated large effect sizes. Appendix 1 included the descriptive statistics of the speaking strategies used by the EG.

RQ2: Is there a significant difference in the mean English speaking scores of students between the experimental and control groups?

The participants' speaking performance was assessed at three different time frames: (1) Week 1 – pre-test (prior to the speaking practices), (2) Week 9 – mid-test (following the speaking practice), and (3) Week 18 – post-test. First, an independent-samples t-test was first conducted to compare the English speaking performance prior to the speaking practices (Week 1) for CG and EG participants. There were no significant differences in pre-test and mid-test scores for CG and EG (Table 4). The result showed that the participants in both groups had similar speaking proficiency at the beginning and middle of the course.

Table 4 *T-test Results of CG, EG, and Speaking Scores*

	Levene's test		t-test						
Variables	**F (1, 58)**	**p**	**Group**	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**t**	**p**	**η2**
Week 1 – pre-test	.48	.72	CG	30	12.40	1.86	1.75	.086	.05
			EG	30	11.77	1.79			
Week 9 – mid-test	1.34	.21	CG	30	13.37	1.89	1.97	.054	.06
			EG	30	12.60	1.94			
Week 18 – post-test	1.96	.42	CG	30	13.20	1.03	–4.38	.000	.25
			EG	30	15.00	2.00			

Note: η2 = eta squared

To compare the post-test scores of CG and EG, an independent-samples t-test was conducted, and the results showed that there was a significant difference in scores for CG ($M = 13.20$, $SD = 1.03$) and EG ($M = 15.00$, $SD = 2.00$; $t(58) = –4.38$, $p < .0005$, two-tailed) (Table 4). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean differences = 1.80) was large (eta squared = .25).

RQ3: To what extent did each component of speaking (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content) and the total score improve after the teaching intervention?

A one-way repeated measure MANOVA was conducted to compare scores on the speaking test scores (five components and total) for the CG at Week 1 (pre-test), Week 9 (mid-test), and Week 18 (post-test). There was a significant effect for the CLT over the three time points, Wilks' Lamdba $= .67$, $F = 1.98$, $p = .033$, multivariate partial eta squared $= .18$, indicating a large effect size. Post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean of the 'Vocabulary' score in the pre-test was statistically significantly different from the mid-test and post-test. The mid-test did not differ significantly from the post-test. Additionally, the mean of the total score in the pre-test ($M = 12.40$, $SD = 1.86$) was statistically significantly different from the mid-test ($M = 13.37$, $SD = 1.89$, $p = .001$) and post-test ($M = 13.20$, $SD = 1.03$, $p = .005$). The mid-test did not differ significantly from post-test.

In the case of EG, a one-way repeated measure MANOVA showed that there was a significant effect for the speaking intervention over the three time points, Wilks' Lambda $= .35$, $F = 6.08$, $p < .0005$, multivariate partial eta squared $= .41$, indicating a very large effect size. The results showed statistically significant increases in the EG scores of all five speaking components and the total score over the three periods of time (Table 5). Post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean of the total score for Time 1 ($M = 11.77$, $SD = 1.79$) was significantly different from that of Time 2 ($M = 12.60$, $SD = 1.94$, $p = .048$) and Time 3 ($M = 15.00$, $SD = 2.00$, $p < .0005$). Time 2 also differed significantly from Time 3 ($p < .0005$).

Judging from the pre-test mean scores of the five speaking components at Week 1, the EG participants' 'Grammar' ($M = 2.20$) and 'Fluency' ($M = 2.27$) were lower compared with 'Pronunciation' ($M = 2.47$), 'Vocabulary' ($M = 2.37$), and 'Content' ($M = 2.43$) (Table 5). The scoring for each component ranged from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) (see Appendix 2 for the detailed description of scoring), making the total score 20 for every participant. Half way through the academic semester, the participants had improved their 'Pronunciation' ($M = 2.67$), 'Grammar' ($M = 2.43$), 'Vocabulary' ($M = 2.70$), and 'Content' ($M = 2.73$) except for 'Fluency' ($M = 2.27$).

By the end of the semester, the top three most-improved speaking components were 'Content' ($M = 3.27$), 'Vocabulary' ($M = 3.20$), and 'Fluency' ($M = 2.87$). In the cases of 'Content' and 'Vocabulary', while the EG participants were expressing opinions on general topics such as family, hobbies and

interests, work, travel, and current events, they searched for content words conspicuously and expressed themselves with hesitation and circumlocutions in the first few weeks. With the implementation of an integrated teaching-speaking framework, the guided worksheets helped them plan, monitor, and reflect their performance. By the end of the semester, they expressed themselves better with a more sufficient command of vocabulary use, without much conspicuous searching for content words. As for fluency, though the participants' ability to use appropriate words to communicate comprehensibly enhanced, they still paused for grammatical planning and repairing was evident, especially in longer stretches of free production. Though improvements were observed in 'Pronunciation' ($M = 2.93$) and 'Grammar' ($M = 2.63$), the gain scores were quite small. In the case of the CG, 'Vocabulary' ($M = 2.73$) was the only component on which the participants slightly improved.

Furthermore, the relationship between the scores on the five speaking components was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There were strong, positive correlations between (1) 'Vocabulary' and 'Fluency', $r = .70$, $n = 30$, $p < .0005$, (2) 'Vocabulary' and 'Content', $r = .80$, $n = 30$, $p < .0005$, and (3) 'Fluency' and 'Content', $r = .64$, $n = 30$, $p < .0005$, with high levels of vocabulary, fluency, and content associated with one another (Table 6). There were medium, positive correlations between (1) 'Grammar' and 'Vocabulary', $r = .39$, $n = 30$, $p < .01$, and (2) 'Grammar' and 'Content', $r = .42$, $n = 30$, $p < .01$. Grammar was not associated with Fluency, and Pronunciation was not correlated with the other four speaking components.

Table 5 *Mean Scores and One-way Repeated ANOVA Results of the Five Speaking Components for the CG and EG*

| | Scoring range (1 to 4 for each component) | | | | | | | | | | Total (total score: 20) | |
| | Pronunciation | | Grammar | | Vocabulary | | Fluency | | Content | | | |
	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG
Week 1 – pre-test	2.43	2.47	2.40	2.20	2.47	2.37	2.40	2.27	2.70	2.43	12.40	11.77
	(.50)	(.63)	(.47)	(.41)	(.51)	(.49)	(.50)	(.52)	(.47)	(.57)	(1.86)	(1.79)
Week 9 – mid-test	2.57	2.67	2.60	2.43	2.73	2.70	2.53	2.27	2.87	2.73	13.37	12.60
	(.53)	(.55)	(.50)	(.50)	(.45)	(.47)	(.51)	(.45)	(.35)	(.58)	(1.89)	(1.94)
Week 18 – post-test	2.53	2.93	2.53	2.63	2.73	3.20	2.54	2.87	2.83	3.27	13.20	15.00
	(.51)	(.52)	(.51)	(.62)	(.45)	(.61)	(.58)	(.63)	(.38)	(.52)	(1.03)	(2.00)
Greenhouse-Geisser	.29	3.29	.62	2.82	1.42	10.56	.36	7.20	.47	10.69	16.02	169.09
F	1.47	8.38	3.83	7.32	5.69	20.71	.94	20.61	3.22	19.40	11.07	38.24
p value	.239	.001	.043	.002	.006	.000	.388	.000	.072	.000	.000	.000
Partial eta squared	.05	.22	.12	.20	.16	.42	.03	.42	.10	.40	.28	.57

Table 6 *Correlations among the Post-test Scores of the Five Speaking Components*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Pronunciation	–				
2. Grammar	.14	–			
3. Vocabulary	.26	.39*	–		
4. Fluency	.18	.23	.70**	–	
5. Content	.09	.42*	.80**	.64**	–

* p < .05
** p < .01

Discussion

The present study investigated the effects of implementing Goh and Burns' (2012) integrated teaching-speaking cycle on first-year EFL university students' speaking performance and strategy use, compared with a control group of students who did not receive any particular teaching intervention. Statistical analyses showed that the participants in both EG and CG improved their English speaking abilities through tasks in the first half of the semester (i.e., nine weeks). Nevertheless, after the second half of the semester, the EG participants' speaking performance continued improving markedly, while the CG participants did not improve.

The use of Goh and Burns' integrated teaching-speaking approach provided the EG participants with a guided framework to enhance the quality of speech (especially in content, vocabulary use, and fluency), strengthen components of speaking competence (more frequent use of speaking skills and communication strategies), and raise learner awareness of metacognition (self-monitoring and self-regulation at the end of the speaking tasks) to a certain degree. Researchers have suggested that exposure to English-speaking settings and frequent speaking practice improved EFL learners' speaking abilities (Chou, 2018; Cutrone & Beh, 2018; Yanagi & Baker, 2016). In the present study, both EG and CG participants were exposed to the same hours of the English speaking course and carried out the same speaking tasks. However, as the test scores of the CG showed, the participants' speaking performance did slightly improve, but merely in the first half of the semester. This showed that a CLT approach without explicit teacher instruction and clear scaffolding to guide students to plan speaking tasks, use the target language and relevant communication strategies, and monitor output process, resulted in limited oral progress. Moreover, before the teaching intervention, both groups of participant adopted the speaking strategies to a similar degree. As the EG participants progressed, however, they employed rehearsal and interactional strategies, which were closely connected to Stages 2 (provide input and/or guide planning), 3 (conduct speaking tasks), and 4 (focus on language, skills, and strategies) of the framework, more frequently than did the CG students. A closer examination of their responses to the questionnaire revealed that the frequency of using the strategies such as "practicing new grammatical structures in different situations" (Q1), "thinking about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way" (Q2), "trying to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining" (Q6), and "encouraging others to correct errors in their speaking" (Q16) increased (see Appendix 1). Teaching strategies was found to have a positive impact on improving language learners' overall speaking performance, particularly the quality and quantity of strategy use for solving interaction problems and enhancing communication effectiveness (Goh & Burns, 2012; Zarandi & Rahbar, 2016). In the present study, strategic help was given to the EG students at Stage 4. The increasing use of speaking strategies and post-test scores from the EG has confirmed the close relationship between high language proficiency and frequent strategy use.

On a closer examination of the five speaking components (Table 5), the EG participants' scores of 'Content', 'Vocabulary', and 'Fluency' were found to increase more, compared with their 'Pronunciation' and 'Grammar' scores. Two studies by Chou (2011, 2018) have shown that university students in Taiwan regarded fluency, content, and vocabulary use as three top difficulties they encountered in speaking English. The adoption of Goh and Burns' speaking framework in the present study had a positive impact on enhancing quality of content, vocabulary use, and fluency in speaking for the university students at low-intermediate level in Taiwan. Though linguistic aspects were dealt with at several stages of the framework, such as Stages 2 (input), 4 (focus on language), 6 (learners' reflection), and 7 (teacher feedback), and the EG participants reported using strategies to practice grammatical structures (Q1) and new expressions (Q8), the improvements in pronunciation and grammar remained quite limited. Several studies have suggested a variety of approaches to

improving pronunciation, including (1) teacher correction, learner self-study in the language laboratory, and interactive activities (Macdonald *et al.*, 1994), (2) segmental instruction and global instruction (i.e., a focus on features of speaking rate, intonation, rhythm, and word/sentence stress) (Derwing *et al.*, 1998), (3) pronunciation strategy instruction (Sardegna, 2009, 2012; Sardegna *et al.*, 2018) and (4) student-read dictations (Hughes & Hughes, 2020; Martinsen *et al.*, 2017). While Macdonald *et al.* (1994) acknowledged that their findings were less conclusive, it was discovered that the global instruction in Derwing *et al.*'s (1998) study, pronunciation strategy instruction, and student-read dictations had more beneficial and long-term effects on improving students' pronunciation. In the present study, a surprising finding was that pronunciation performance scores were not correlated to the performance of the other four speaking components. A number of possible explanations include the participants' low-intermediate English proficiency, fossilized errors which emerged when speaking English mostly with their own language groups (Dormer, 2013), lack of experience with interacting with native English speakers (thus potentially leading to insufficient self-awareness of mispronunciation of words), and limited cognitive load for monitoring pronunciation while speaking. To effectively improve pronunciation from a pedagogical perspective, additional instruction in pronunciation practice, such as student-read dictations, or strategy training, is recommended for low-intermediate EFL learners. In other words, in addition to the regular English courses, extra hours need to be devoted to training pronunciation accuracy.

Compared with pronunciation, which usually involves some versions of pedagogical instruction or practices, research on improving accuracy in speaking has mainly focused on learners' self-awareness of grammatical errors and their self-correction ability (Dormer, 2013; McCormick & Vercellotti, 2013; Vercellotti, 2019). However, the participants' English proficiency was advanced and they spoke English fluently in the three studies. It seemed that the ability to be aware of ones' grammatical deficiencies and to correct them depended on learners' high level of English proficiency. As Skehan (1996, 2003) pointed out, in order to maintain fluency and adequate content information in speaking, accuracy is frequently sacrificed. In the present study, the participants' English proficiency was at low-intermediate level (CEFR B1). It was demanding and challenging for them to figure out *what* to say and *how* to say it in a limited period of time, let alone paying attention to grammatical accuracy, which requires an extra cognitive load. The correlation table of the five speaking components (Table 6) agrees with the findings in the present study that vocabulary, content, and fluency were strongly correlated with one other, while grammar was not associated with fluency. Grammar, on the other hand, was associated with vocabulary and content, albeit moderately. Since vocabulary and grammar are highlighted at several stages of Goh and Burns' (2012) pedagogical framework and the use of multiword expressions is closely tied to native-like fluency (Meunier, 2012; Nation & Meara, 2020; Szudarski & Conklin, 2014), it is suggested that teachers can integrate common multiword expressions, such as phrasal verbs, collocations, compound words, and formulaic expressions, at high frequency and in a variety of forms, into course content.

Conclusion

The present study explored the effect of using Goh and Burns' (2012) teaching-speaking framework on a group of low-intermediate EFL university students in Taiwan and their strategy use for speaking English. This integrated teaching approach focused on lexical/grammatical knowledge, communicative purpose, and strategy use, and helped the EG participants gradually increase speaking proficiency (vocabulary, content, and fluency) and develop use of rehearsal and interactional strategies. Without an explicit framework or clear guidance, speaking progress remained temporary, as in the case of the CG.

Although the present study has yielded findings that have both theoretical and pedagogical

implications, it has some limitations. The first limitation concerns the generalization of the results to other populations with different educational backgrounds and language proficiency. Second, the use of Goh and Burns' (2012) integrated teaching-speaking framework suffers from the difficulties of effectively improving certain linguistic abilities, say, pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, in speaking, which may require additional training and more advanced language proficiency to develop it. Further research might usefully extend the present use of the speaking framework to examine the impact of a variety of tasks to learners of different English proficiency.

Developing and enhancing fluency, accuracy, and complexity in speaking a foreign language is a long process. In an EFL learning context where English is mainly used and spoken in the classroom, creating an environment for students to practice the learned language, skills, and strategies, guiding them to carry out the tasks, and allowing them to reflect on their own learning outcomes are necessary. Previous studies have shown that specific teaching approaches, such as task-based language teaching or strategy-based instruction, have had positive impacts on improving students' speaking ability in general (Nakatani, 2006; Skehan, 1996, 2003; Ulla, 2020). This study has taken a step further in the direction of (1) investigating the positive effects of integrating the three key pedagogical features (i.e., vocabulary/grammar, task, and strategy) into a complete framework in an general English speaking course for low-intermediate EFL learners, (2) assessing the development of each speaking component, and (3) providing pedagogical implications to speaking a foreign language.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 *Questionnaire items and descriptive statistics of speaking strategies (Experimental Group pre-test vs. post-test)*

	Questionnaire items	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Rehearsal Strategies	Q1. I practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.	16.7	40.0	33.3	10.0	0
		3.3	20.0	26.7	50.0	0
	Q2. I think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way.	13.4	33.3	30.0	20.0	3.3
		6.7	23.3	20.0	46.7	3.3
	Q3. I regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.	26.6	40.0	16.7	16.7	0
		10.0	30.0	20.0	36.7	3.3
	Q4. I initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.	16.7	43.3	33.3	6.7	0
		6.7	20.0	26.7	40.0	6.7
	Q5. I try topics even when they aren't familiar to me.	40.0	36.7	13.3	10.0	0
		6.7	33.3	30.0	26.7	3.3
	Q6. I try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining.	16.7	40.0	26.6	16.7	0
		3.3	16.7	26.7	50.0	3.3
	Q7. I plan out in advance what I want to say.	3.3	40.0	33.3	10.0	13.3
		0	10.0	30.0	46.7	13.3
	Q8. I practice saying new expressions to myself.	6.7	20.0	43.3	20.0	10.0
		6.7	6.7	30.0	46.6	
Compensatory Strategies	Q9. When I can't think of a word or expression, I look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym.	3.3	16.7	36.7	23.3	20.0
		3.3	6.7	13.3	53.3	23.3
	Q10. When I can't think of a word or expression, I make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use.	3.3	23.3	46.8	13.3	13.3
		3.3	13.3	16.7	50.0	16.7
	Q11. I use gestures as a way to try and get my meaning across.	10.0	10.0	16.7	43.3	20.0
		3.3	13.3	23.3	36.7	23.3
	Q12. I switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said.	6.6	16.7	16.7	40.0	20.0
		3.4	23.3	30.0	23.3	20.0
Interactional Strategies	Q13. I direct the conversation to familiar topics.	13.3	16.7	36.7	23.3	10.0
		3.3	10.0	16.7	56.7	13.3
	Q14. I ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.	23.3	36.7	26.7	13.3	0
		3.3	23.3	23.3	40.0	10.0
	Q15. When I can't think of a word or expression, I ask for help from my conversational partner.	13.3	23.3	30.0	26.7	6.7
		0	3.3	26.7	56.7	13.3
	Q16. I encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.	10.0	13.3	33.4	23.3	20.0
		0	10.0	23.3	50.0	16.7

Appendix 2 *Analytic rating scale for spoken language (adapted from Council of Europe (2001; see also Luoma, 2004) and Hughes and Hughes (2020))*

	Score	Description
Pronunciation	4	No conspicuous mispronunciations, but would not be taken for a native speaker.
	3	Marked "foreign accent" and occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.
	2	"Foreign accent" requires concentrated listening, and mispronunciations lead to occasional understanding and apparent errors in grammar or vocabulary.
	1	Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent make understanding difficult, require frequent repetition.
Grammar	4	Few errors, which no patterns of failure.
	3	Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns but no weakness that causes understanding.
	2	Frequent errors showing some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding.
	1	Constant errors showing control of very few major patterns and frequently preventing communication.
Vocabulary	4	Professional vocabulary broad and precise; general vocabulary adequate to cope with complex practical problems and varied social situations.
	3	Professional vocabulary adequate to discuss special interests; general vocabulary permits discussion of any non-technical subject with some circumlocutions.
	2	Choices of words sometimes inaccurate, limitations of vocabulary prevent discussion of some common professional and social topics.
	1	Vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas (time, food, transportation, family, etc.).
Fluency	4	Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptively non-native in speed and evenness.
	3	Speech is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and groping for words.
	2	Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be left uncompleted.
	1	Speech is very slow and uneven except for short or routine sentences.
Content	4	Can express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional topics.
	3	Can express viewpoints on general topics, without much conspicuous searching for content words.
	2	Can express opinions on general topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, with conspicuous searching for content words.
	1	Can communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.

Appendix 3

(1) A and B are talking about the situation that young people spend too much surfing the Internet. (2) A lists three advantages of surfing the Internet and B lists three disadvantages of it. They need to respond to each other's statements. Use the conversation strategy and grammar below.

(3) **Grammar:** Do you know what …..? Can you tell me what…..? I don't know what……, how to, where to, what to

(4) **Suggested strategy:** I know what you mean, but… That's true. Maybe. On the other hand,… I am no so sure. Don't you think…? You know what I mean? You know what I'm saying?

Appendix 4 *Worksheets of stage 2 (provide input and/or guide planning)*

Explaining a procedure or process: planning and rehearsing
Part 1: Guidelines to help you prepare for the task
1   Identify a topic you are interested in or know quite a lot about (replaced by the activities in the textbook)

2   Write the main points you want to cover in the space provided below:
    a   _____
    b   _____
    c   _____

3   Write down *a phrase* or *an expression* you would use to show that you will be moving from Point A to Point B, and then on to Point C.

    Point A
    Point B   _____
    Point C   _____

Planning for discussion: content and participation
In this lesson, you will be discussing __( )__. The following guiding questions are meant to help you plan what you can say during the discussion. Write down your answers after each question.
1   Which __( )__ will you choose? Jot down three reasons for your choice.
    _____
    _____

2   When you are giving your reasons, what phrases or expressions will be useful to help you present your views?
    _____
    _____

3   What would you say to members in your groups if they …..?
    a   Disagree with you
    b   Support your views
    c   Do not explain themselves clearly
    d   Make a good point

Appendix 5 *Worksheet of stage 6 (direct learners' reflection on learning)*

Evaluating my speaking performance	Your teacher's feedback:

1   In this speaking practice, things I do well in speaking:
    _____
    _____
    _____
 2   From this speaking practice, things I can do to improve my speaking next time:
    _____
    _____
    _____
 3   This is how I feel about my learning this week (biweekly):
    a   I am confident that I can do this again. ( )
    b   I am not very confident that I can do this again. ( )
    c   I am still unsure about what I have to say and do in such a situation. ( )
    d   I still feel anxious about speaking. ( )
    e   I feel less anxious about speaking. ( )
 Put a check (☐) next to the sentence that best describes how you feel in these two weeks.	