

Conceptualizing the Integration of a 3As Approach Content-Based Instruction into Teaching Business English Speaking to Chinese EFL Undergraduates

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Abstract

Economic globalization has changed the demand for cross-cultural communication, making business topics increase exponentially. The need for business English has expanded, and it has evolved into an interdisciplinary major in China's higher education systems, cultivating bilingual talents in business context. This urges the need for an effective speaking mechanism that facilitates the construction of improved speaking performance. This paper aims to present a conceptual framework that allows for the scaffolding and meaning construction of speaking skills. Regarding this, this study adopts a qualitative approach and uses document analysis as the method of data collection. Unlike previous studies that merely focused on a mono teaching approach, the findings of the study argue that integrating the three stages of skill development approach, which fosters awareness-raising, appropriation, and autonomy of language learners for speaking proficiency, into the content-based instruction can enhance the confidence and interest of Chinese EFL business English undergraduates with diverse backgrounds by engaging them in the proposed activities in the specified phases. Overall, the conceptual framework presented in this paper is hoped to help Chinese EFL business English undergraduates to develop speaking skills.

Keywords: Awareness-Raising, Appropriation, and Autonomy, Content-Based Instruction, Oral Business English, Speaking Proficiency, Teaching English for Specific Purposes

Introduction

Spoken language is more informal and less structured than written language, and it is often used for different purposes, such as social interaction and conversation (Brown, 1978). According to Cornish (2006), speaking is a collaborative effort in which the participants work together to interpret the intentions underlying their communication. In other words, speaking is a dynamic process that involves the management of turn-taking, and the negotiation of shared understanding among the participants. Gałajda (2017) stated that speakers who are

capable of communication skills are not enough to perform a successful role in mastering the target language. They also need to be willing to engage with others and be aware of the individual factors that can affect communication. For instance, a competent speaker needs to use language to handle communication tasks effectively. However, those speakers who have grammatical competence but lacks appropriateness in cross-cultural contexts could be seen as ineffective in communication (González-Lloret, 2019; Thomas, 1983). As businesses expand their operations across nations, effective communication is crucial for successful collaborations. Thus, business English, as a means of cross-cultural communication, plays a vital role in this process. The growing demand for business English reflects the need for professionals who can navigate the globalization with ease. An effective speaking mechanism is significant as it equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in a cross-cultural business environment. It allows them to understand and adapt to different communication styles, cultural nuances, and business practices. By developing their speaking skills, students can confidently engage in meaningful conversations and convey their messages accurately, leading to more successful interactions.

As previously mentioned, while speaking allows for flexibility in formality, it can be challenging to achieve mastery in speaking proficiency for those whose native language is not English or who use English for specific purposes. For example, Ahmed (2018) underscores the challenges teachers face in teaching speaking, including the necessity for practice-focused sessions and effective implementation in the ESL setting. Paneerselvam (2019) and Trinh (2021) extend the discussion to psychological issues faced by EFL learners, such as a lack of motivation and self-confidence, anxiety, and fear of errors, in addition to linguistic difficulties like vocabulary and sentence construction. Suchona and Shorna (2019) discovered that a supportive speaking environment with constructive feedback can enhance speaking ability, while anxiety, fear, and performance pressure can impede it. AlSaqqaf et al (2023) stress that speaking difficulties pose significant challenges for EFL learners, with speaking proficiency development often overlooked in the classroom. Particularly, teachers of teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) need to identify learners' needs, understand the significance of instructional development and the ability to teach necessary skills and methods to fill up the gap (Hu & AlSaqqaf, 2023). In general, the possible solution to address the dilemma of low speaking proficiency is to help speakers establish effective interactions between the target language and subject content matters through content-based instruction (CBI), including theme-based teaching methods (Zardini & Barnabe, 2013; Snow et al., 1989). It is crucial to utilize appropriate approach to speaking skill development because the language learners could reduce psychological barriers, trigger language awareness, internalize the expressions and knowledge, and increase active participation to oral production (Sykes & González-Lloret, 2020).

Given that, this paper seeks to put forth a conceptual framework that could potentially improve the Chinese EFL business English undergraduates' proficiency in oral business English (OBE), they may feel more supported and encouraged to engage in speaking activities. This could lead to increased confidence, as they see their progress and success in developing their speaking skills. As a result, they might become more interested in continuing to improve their language abilities, not only in the classroom but also in future career growth. It does so by examining extant literature on speaking teaching and emphasizing the concepts that can rectify issues in speaking proficiency.

Literature Review

This section delves into the existing literature on the current state of speaking instruction in Chinese higher education, the intervention of speaking through awareness-raising, appropriation, and autonomy, and the method of CBI.

The Status Quo of Speaking Teaching in Chinese Higher Education

The teaching of the English language in Chinese higher education has undergone substantial growth over time. The momentum for English as a foreign language (EFL) surged following China's induction into the World Trade Organization in the 21st century, a period marked by substantial investments from multinational corporations in China and the formation of economic alliances (Cheng & Wang, 2012). At present, English is a mandatory subject from primary school to university, higher education institutions play a crucial role in providing students with sufficient English language skills to enter the workforce (Cheng & Wang, 2012). Despite this, the use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is not widespread in China. It is primarily utilized by a select few top universities and offshore branch campuses of English-speaking countries in China (Yu & Liu, 2022), resulting in the proficiency of English speaking among students in Chinese higher education can differ significantly across various institutions and regions (Guo et al., 2018).

In Chinese EFL classrooms, teachers often dominate the conversation with 90% usage of first language, leaving students with limited opportunities to practice speaking English (Wang, 2014; Xie, 2017). Research shows that speaking difficulties of Chinese EFL learners are more related to psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of mistakes, and reluctance to speak than to linguistic factors such as vocabulary deficiency and grammar errors (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021). Large class sizes, which are common in China, often pose a challenge for speaking practice (Wright & Zheng, 2016). Chinese EFL learners have often been criticized for their "deaf English" and "dumb English" (Lin, 2002). In most cases, English is often seen as a set of rules and grammar that must be learned and mastered at school, rather than as a dynamic language that is used to communicate with others. This is evident in their IELTS scores where Chinese test takers generally perform well in the language proficiency required for studying abroad but exhibit weaknesses in listening and speaking skills (Yen & Kuzma, 2009; Wang et al., 2023). When it comes to the speaking proficiency presented by English-major undergraduates, based on China's Standards for English Language Ability (CSE), college students majoring in English are expected to reach Level 7, which indicates a high level of English language skills. However, the actual proficiency can vary (Chen, 2020). According to Naudhani et al. (2018), Chinese English majors feel moderate foreign language speaking and classroom anxiety, and this anxiety is heightened when speaking to the teacher. Furthermore, in the study of Xie (2022), participants' self-reported English levels, more than 59% of Chinese EFL business English undergraduates indicated themselves at basic level of English speaking while only one participant reported himself at advanced level of English listening and speaking.

Content-Based Instruction

Content-based instruction is known for its effective impact on language teaching and learning by involving language learners being exposed to target language through engaging content. According to Snow et al (1989), applying an integrated approach in language instruction underwent some theoretical justifications, i) using integrated second language learning approaches are most effective for young ESL learners because they allow children to use

language in meaningful and purposeful contexts, ii) content can make language learning more interesting and relevant for ESL learners, iii) and it is important to provide extra support to ESL learners to help them learn the different ways that English is used in different contexts. Several studies have been conducted in higher learning contexts worldwide to investigate the impact of CBI on general English education (e.g., Vanichvasin, 2019; Maming et al., 2020), while ESP (e.g., Nguyen, 2011; Cui, 2013). These studies have proven the effectiveness of the application of CBI in English language teaching (ELT). Moreover, in managing to plan meaningful and purposeful instruction, Stoller and Grabe (1997) introduced a Six T's approach, which includes six elements of themes, texts, topics, threads, tasks, and transitions.

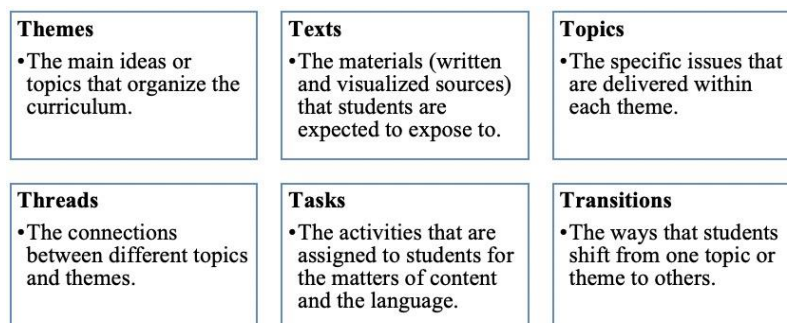


Figure 1: *Elements constituted Six T's Approach*

When applying the Six T's approach to instructional design, these six elements play distinct roles in defining theme-based instruction as the core of CBI, expanding CBI to accommodate the language-driven context, organizing coherent content resources for ELT, and choosing suitable language learning activities. In relation to this, the Six T's approach equips teachers with a framework to construct instruction around a determined theme. This ensures a coherent learning experience, where activities and materials are interconnected, and students are allowed to perceive the links between various topics. Besides that, it is dedicated to interweaving language instruction into content instruction through offering students the chance to expand and apply their knowledge of both content and language aspects. Furthermore, it empowers teachers to select topics that resonate with students' learning interests and experiences, thereby making the learning process more engaging and stimulating for students as they can explore topics of their interest subtly. Several studies have been carried out to examine some thoughts of CBI where the Six T's approach is applicable to develop materials for ESP education (e.g., Cui, 2013; Xi, 2017; Lv, 2018; Inkrungkao et al., 2022)

Awareness-Raising, Appropriation and Autonomy as Speaking Intervention

Thornbury (2012) proposed a three-stage approach for effective speaking lessons, which allows learners to move effectively from theories to practices. The first stage is termed awareness-raising, which involves contacting learners with features of spoken language and they are asked to identify these features on their own. In the second stage, appropriation, learners practice using these learned features until they can use them with ease. In the final stage of autonomy, learners become independent speakers who can use spoken language in a variety of relevant contexts. These three stages of skill development underlie a solid theoretical foundation where cognitivism and sociocultural perspective are seen within the integrated approach to teaching speaking proficiency (Thornbury, 2012). In addition to this,

Thornbury's (2012) approach to teaching speaking is referred to as the 3As approach (initialism for awareness-raising, appropriation, and autonomy) in this study for ease of use.



Figure 2: Theories Underlying 3As Approach

In detail, awareness-raising stage is guided by cognitivism to make learners aware of spoken features in the target language to be mastered, they are not restricted to giving attention to pronunciation, intonation, and stress but also different discursal patterns and communication strategies before language learners are adequately equipped with desired knowledge (Zhang, 2004). Several techniques are advised to be included in facilitating spoken language awareness, such as using recording and transcripts, using noticing-the-gap activities, and paying attention to selected features in language (Thornbury, 2012). In addition to this, it should be noted by language that when fostering students' awareness, they should also incorporate authentic materials, which are generally preferred by language learners, especially in ESP (Mahaputri & Taslim, 2014)

Besides that, learners must bridge established understanding into their prior knowledge. The term of appropriation is derived from the sociocultural perspective (Lensmire & Beals, 1994). It is believed that interaction can benefit language acquisition. This is kind of guided performance, where collaboration and scaffolding are taken place among individuals, allowing learners to gradually enhance their current abilities to a subsequent level (Wen et al., 2015). Intended skills that are initially regulated by learners become self-regulated orientation. In other words, it is important for teachers to be supportive and to provide guidance when needed. However, the intended goal for learners is to become self-directed learners who can take control of their own learning. To be appropriated, Thornbury (2012) recommends some activities that are engaging enough to take ownership of it, such as drilling and chants, writing tasks, reading aloud, dialogues, and communicative tasks.

Moreover, in the context of the cognitivism of learning, learners are hoped to independently apply their learned skills in real-world activities in essence (Chong & Reinders, 2022). This suggests learners achieving autonomy in the target skill, for example, they should be able to adapt to spontaneous changes, getting involved in unexpected events accordingly, and become skilled to complete the tasks on diverse topics using resources at hand through the conduct of presentations, drama, role-play, discussion, debates, conversation, and after-class speaking tasks as suggested by (Thornbury, 2012).

There are several justifications for choosing Thornbury's (2012) 3As approach to attribute to the conceptual framework for the study. First, it is an integrated approach that considers possible aspects of speaking proficiency development, including awareness-raising, appropriation, and autonomy. Other approaches to teaching speaking may focus on one or two of these mentioned aspects (e.g., Yufrizal & Flora, 2017; Cargnelutti et al., 2019; Yusnimar, 2019; Umarova, 2022), but this approach addresses these three in one, which is essential for conducting effective and conducive speaking instruction. Second, it is characterized by graduality and progression, learner-centered nature. For example, learners

start training their speaking proficiency by developing awareness of the different features of spoken language, then they practice speaking to take ownership of these discoursal patterns and communication strategies, and finally they could apply what they have mastered to the real-life activities as well as help learners to become more motivated and engaged in their learning. This gradual and progressive approach allows learners to develop the skills and knowledge they require to become effective speakers at their own pace. Therefore, it is believed to have Thornbury's (2012) 3As approach in enhancing learners' speaking proficiency.

Research Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research method was adopted to construct a conceptual framework for oral business English instruction to overcome potential hurdles within the context of Chinese English for ESP. The flexibility of qualitative research, as highlighted by Strauss & Corbin (1990), allows for the exploration of new phenomena or a deeper understanding of familiar topics. This is particularly crucial given that research on the application of the 3As approach and CBI in China, especially in relation to OBE instruction, is still in its nascent stages. Furthermore, Gray (2009) elucidated that qualitative methods can be instrumental in exploring new concepts and relationships prior to the application of quantitative methods for testing variables and concepts. The research methodology employed in this study is characterized by a qualitative approach, specifically through the analysis of documents in an inductive manner. This method allows for a thorough comprehension of the topic at hand. The literature review, a critical component of this research, is extensive and includes a variety of resources. These resources range from research studies to scholarly articles, providing a broad spectrum of information and perspectives that contribute to the depth and breadth of the study.

Conceptual Framework

The discussion focused on a flowchart below that proposed a hypothetical relationship between the 3AsCB Teaching Speaking Module (the independent variable) and the speaking proficiency of Chinese EFL business English undergraduates (the dependent variable). The underlying assumption of this diagram is that the 3AsCB Teaching Speaking Module, with its multifaceted components, has the potential to enhance the speaking proficiency of Chinese EFL business English undergraduates. This improvement could be attributed to the carefully designed module to foster language awareness, facilitate the acquisition of appropriate language skills, and promote learner autonomy through themes, tasks, texts, topics, transitions, and threads offered in the module. By incorporating 3As approach (awareness, appropriation, and autonomy) and CBI, the teaching speaking module coined as 3AsCB Teaching Speaking Module instills a meaningful context for language use, leading to improved language skills. The relevance and engagement of module are ensured by tailoring it to the specific needs of Chinese EFL learners of business English in higher education. To evaluate the effectiveness of module, a quasi-experimental design is employed, comparing the outcomes of an experimental group utilizing the module to a control group employing traditional methods.

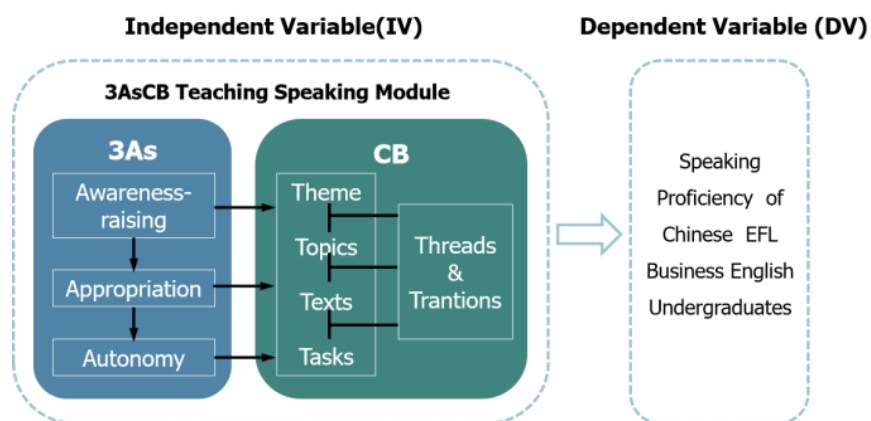


Figure 3: *Conceptual Framework of OBE*

Interestingly, none of the studies reviewed in the literature exclusively focused on the pedagogical effectiveness of integrating the 3As approach and CBI to significantly enhance speaking proficiency in business English. Based on this knowledge, it is assumed that conducting a quasi-experimental study of its effectiveness, using the following methodology, would yield a more rigorous evaluation of the integrated framework as an instructional design. The proposed research methodology necessitates the identification of the needs for OBE from stakeholders (e.g., students and teachers) to design and develop a tailored teaching speaking module. Two groups of participants, with similar characteristics (i.e., grade level and speaking proficiency at the beginning of the intervention) are to be selected from two intact classes. The difference between the two groups should have a standard deviation of less than 0.25, based on the variation of the speaking proficiency conducted by a pretest with samples (Ho et al., 2007). A teaching speaking module, based on the 3As approach and CBI, is to be designed and developed for implementation with an experimental group. A control group will receive concurrent regular instruction to compare the effectiveness of the intervention. The effectiveness of the module, designed by the conceptual framework, will be examined based on t-tests (two-tailed test with a P value of 0.05) from pretests and posttests to be conducted before and after the intervention. The effect size of the quasi-experimental study is to be computed using SPSS version 29, with reference to Cohen's (1977) index. This index represents the percentile rank of a control group of students who performed at the same level as the average experimental group of students. Additionally, a follow-up semi-structured interview will be conducted with participants from the experimental group whose scores have improved and have caused a positive, significant increase in the improvement of speaking proficiency in OBE.

Results and Discussion

Overall, the following prototyped lesson plan is a worked example guided by the conceptual framework of the integration of the 3As approach and CBI for OBE. The lesson plan aims to develop students' content knowledge and speaking proficiency for engaging in business communication, and specifically about company strategy in the workplace. It is hoped that, by the end of the lesson, students can acquire relevant supporting expressions commonly used in relevant setting and develop communicative strategies necessary for meaning negotiations.

Table 1

Overall Outline of the Lesson

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Duration | 120 minutes (2 periods), with a 10-minute break |
| Theme | Competitive Strategies |
| Topic | Company strategy |
| Intended Learning Outcomes | By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: i) identify the hidden strategy used in each company's mission successfully (refer to Worksheet 5A, A group work, page 43), ii) rewrite the passage by correctly using four out of six forms of expressions given (refer to Worksheet 5A, B pair work, page 43), iii) apply the components of SWOT analysis in some certain related fields refer to Worksheet 5A, C pair work, page 43), vi) give an oral presentation of a product using SWOT analysis successfully (refer to Worksheet 5A, D group work, page 44). |

According to the talent training plan of the business English program of the target university, the recommended textbook is titled *Business English: Viewing, Listening, and Speaking*. Under the condition that the teaching arrangement remains unchanged, appropriate teaching materials are designed according to the teaching themes of the recommended textbook. Based on the results of needs analysis for OBE, the case given in this part is constructed based on one of the prerequisite themes, "Competitive Strategies." In this case, students learn around the topic "Company strategy" within this theme. Throughout the 3As approach, the tasks progressively enhance in difficulty, reflecting the progression from comprehension (identifying the strategies used from company's mission) to evaluation (using SWOT analysis to give a presentation of a product), demanding a more sophisticated grasp of English proficiency and requisite skills.

Table 2

Overall Outline of the Lesson

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Procedures of Implementation | 6Ts | Set Induction (5 mins) |
| | Theme | 1. Teacher and students greet each other mutually, then teacher introduces the topic of the lesson – company strategy to students. |
| | Topic | 2. Teacher plays a video related to the local context: how local Chinese fashion businesses take their strategies to survive in this changing society. |
| | Task | 3. Students are asked to conclude the content of the video by listing out at least two strategies local businesses have used to its revitalization. |
| | Transition | 4. Teacher then moves to the next stage of the lesson. |

In the realm of teaching, the initial phase, known as set induction, is crucial and is best achieved through teacher-student interaction. This process, within the given conceptual framework, diverges from the traditional "warm-up" activities that typically commence a lesson. Instead, the primary objective of this set-induction process is to stimulate students' curiosity and pave the way for the introduction of new themes (Mpewe, 2019). It employs

multimedia resources as a tool to facilitate this transition, thereby enriching the learning experience, which ensures students are not merely passive recipients of information, but active participants in the learning journey, ready to explore the topic of the lesson (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016).

Table 3

Second Stage of the Lesson – Awareness-raising

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Procedures of Implementation | 6Ts | Awareness-raising (30 mins) |
| | Theme | 1. Teacher first checks their outcomes of preview task related to company strategy. And then, teacher updates their answers by introducing the points of competitive strategies for a company. |
| | Topic | 2. Students then are told to identify the strategies used in the examples of company missions given by working in groups of four (<i>focusing on selected language features</i>). |
| | Task | 3. Teacher checks their answers by asks two students to share his/her opinions with the class. |
| | Transition | 4. Then, teacher asks the causes and effects upon the relationship between the company and the market. |

In a lesson guided by the conceptual framework, the main task of each unit can be broken down into smaller, more manageable sub-tasks. These sub-tasks are designed to focus on specific topics that are related to the main theme (Kirschner & Wexler, 2002). This approach, known as transitions, helps to reduce the complexity of the tasks in each unit and provides students with a clear roadmap to complete the final task. The relationship between the main theme and the sub-tasks should be clearly explained to the students. This helps them understand how each sub-task contributes to the overall objective of the unit. To further support the students, scaffolding should be provided. This involves providing step-by-step guidance so that students can follow along and complete the tasks (Lee & Tee, 2021). Instead of providing fixed answers, teachers should encourage peer learning by using answers generated by the students as references. This method not only makes the learning process more interactive but also helps students understand the output effects more easily (Pica, 1994; Hurst et al., 2013). It fosters a collaborative learning environment where students learn from each other, promoting deeper understanding and knowledge mastery. This method of teaching, which combines task transitions, detailed explanations, scaffolding, and peer learning, can be highly effective in helping students grasp complex concepts and improve their skills.

Table 4

Third Stage of the Lesson – Appropriation

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Procedures of Implementation | 6Ts | Appropriation (35 mins) |
| | Topic | 1. Teacher uses a table that illustrates the different business scenarios to reveal the causes and effects between the company and the market. |
| | Text | 2. Then, students are asked to work in pairs and rewrite a passage by using the impressions they learned (writing task). |
| | Task | 3. Upon the completion, students are told to share their respective work by reading it in the class (reading aloud). 4. Teacher continues to introduce the concept of SWOT analysis to students. 5. Students are told to work in pairs to do a SWOT analysis for a Chinese university. And teacher checks students' answers with the class. |
| | Transition | 6. Teacher asks students to recall the key points of how to prepare a presentation from last lesson. |

In the context of a teaching speaking module, each unit is designed with a specific topic in mind. The teacher, based on these topics, should identify potential scenarios that students might encounter in their future career growth (Taat et al., 2020). These scenarios serve as the basis for defining the communicative objectives that need to be clarified for the students. For instance, one of the units in the module aims to equip students with the ability to describe competitive strategies in business. To facilitate this, the teacher could set up a scenario where the students are attending an International Education Fair in London as official representatives of their university. Their task would be to promote their university to attendees who are interested in studying overseas, particularly in China. The students are then encouraged to deliver tailored productive tasks based on their current knowledge base (Joannes & AlSaqqaf, 2023).

This activity is designed to help students identify any gaps in their content knowledge and speaking skills, motivating them to actively seek the necessary knowledge and skills to complete the tasks. Through this process, students are expected to enhance their speaking skills and expand their knowledge base, preparing them for similar real-world scenarios in the future. In this scenario, students are tasked with completing a SWOT analysis on a given worksheet to attract prospective students to the university. This task not only requires a deep understanding of the university's selling points but also an ability to effectively communicate these points to the audience. After that, the teacher then asks the students to compare their answers. This comparison allows students to learn from each other, gain different perspectives, and improve their understanding of the topic (Felder & Brent, 2005).

However, such a critical task of analyzing and comparing education systems can be daunting. Students might feel anxious when they realize they lack certain content knowledge or discoursal structures to deliver an effective presentation. This anxiety, however, can be a powerful motivator (Gong et al., 2022). It can drive students to actively seek out the knowledge and skills they need, fostering a self-driven learning environment. This process not only enhances their presentation skills but also prepares them for future real-world scenarios.

It encourages active learning and motivates students to take ownership of their learning process.

Table 5

Fourth Stage of the Lesson – Autonomy

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Procedures of Implementation | 6Ts | Autonomy (35 mins) |
| | Topic | 1. Teacher briefly introduces the main stages of giving an oral presentation, the template of a presentation is provided. |
| | Text | 2. Teacher encourages students to do a SWOT analysis for a commercial product they are familiar with, then work in groups of four to prepare a presentation by following steps suggested in the handout (<i>presentation</i>). |
| | Task | 3. Teacher randomly chooses one group to give the presentation and the rest of them are asked to upload their work to Chao Xing MOOC platform. |
| | Transition | |

The learning effects should indeed be assessed in progressive and summative ways. An ongoing evaluation can help students adjust the quality of their work, allowing for continuous improvement (Peterson et al., 2011; AlSaqqaf et al., 2024). Teachers play a crucial role in this process by providing constructive feedback. Students can then use this feedback to refine their work, repeat the practice, and ultimately achieve the expected objectives autonomously (Buckingham Shum et al., 2023). This multifaceted process of creation, feedback, and revision is key to effective learning. In the context of OBE lesson, the most effective evaluation method is to deliver timely feedback for improved performance through a shared e-learning platform named Chao Xing MOOC (Shu & Gu, 2023). For instance, the platform can be used for sharing teaching resources, assigning tasks, and providing evaluation and feedback. Students are encouraged to use this platform to upload their work and evaluate the work of their peers. It also encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, fostering independence and self-directed learning skills.

Table 6

Fifth Stage of the Lesson – Closure

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Procedures of Implementation | 6Ts | Closure (5 mins) |
| | Threads | 1. Teacher asks students to summarize the main content of the lesson, leaves a question for students to think about, “why is leadership so important to a company?” 2. Teacher posts the assignment on Chao Xing MOOC platform before the dismissal of class. |

The rationale of making thread of the OBE lesson in such a way serves multiple purposes. In this study, firstly, it primes the students by stimulating their thought process about the upcoming topic in advance. This proactive thought makes them more receptive to new information when it is formally introduced in the subsequent lesson. Secondly, the thread aims to encourage active learning. By pondering a question related to the theme of

the next lesson, students actively engage with the material, enhancing their understanding and retention of the content. In addition to these, the thread also plays a crucial role in creating a smooth transition between lessons. They are also confirmed by Cai et al. (2014) that Chinese teachers are known for their detailed lesson planning, creating a smooth flow of instruction through well-structured sequences, timely transitions, and purposeful questioning. They actively engage with textbooks and evaluate student understanding, modifying their teaching methods to tackle difficulties and seize learning possibilities. It links the content in a meaningful way, providing continuity in the learning experience, thereby making the learning experience more coherent and effective for the students.

Speaking is a fundamental yet challenging skill for EFL students to master (Nhi Nguyen & AlSaqqaf, 2023). Over the past few years, various methods have been introduced to aid in the teaching of speaking. These methods consider the diverse and intricate aspects of L2 speaking. It is suggested that a lesson plan that encapsulates this conceptual framework can assist teachers in providing their students with more well-structured and consistent support. This guidance is designed to be linguistically, cognitively, and collaboratively in line with the solid principles of ELT.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that the presentation of relevant terms and concepts, and engaging activities varying in business settings are required by the framework, which might increase a cognitive exposure for ESP learners who are unfamiliar with the content knowledge and language use in business being presented. The framework was explored, and it was revealed that the tenets of CBI, communicative curriculum, scaffolding learning, and comprehensible input are exemplified by it (Maming et al., 2020; Jia, 2021). Unlike other ESP courses, OBE courses should focus on how to help students apply their knowledge and skills in dealing with business activities in real-world settings. In addition to knowledge input, output is also more important. Teachers should consider how to motivate students to actively participate in the learning experience and help them produce satisfactory learning outcomes under the necessary knowledge input and useful teaching resources (Singh, 2011). Implication of the study can be the instructional alternatives for EFL teachers teaching OBE. Due to the language challenges faced by Chinese EFL business English undergraduates, based on the 3As approach and CBI, which were perceived to consolidate the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives demand imposed by the design for teaching arrangement and learning tasks. A substantial number of evidence-based effectiveness studies of integrating the 3As approach and CBI to teaching speaking in the literature could not be uncovered by it adequately, so the discussion was concluded with a carefully thought-out conceptual framework for researchers to conduct a rigorous, systematic assessment of its effectiveness. For future research, this conceptual framework can be implemented in formal business English speaking courses to explore its prospective application in practice. Using a quasi-experimental research design, it could be embedded as a teaching intervention to enrich experiential learning among stakeholders.

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