

**Investigating Teaching Approaches Adopted in Teaching Oral English in China  
Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities**

by

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### **Statement of Originality**

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## Abstract

Globalization made English the language of international communication. Hence, the need to learn English speaking skills gained importance in English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum all over the world. For the previous decades, there were already efforts to explore the different methods in teaching oral English in China universities. However, less is known on how teaching approaches are applied in universities from fourth-tier cities. China's fourth-tier cities are composed of less-developed cities, and people who live there represent the majority of Chinese urban population.

Many students from these universities come from poor families and have poor foundation of the English language. With this regard, English major students in Chinese universities, even after spending long years studying English during their primary, secondary, and university education, still face issues with their speaking skills. Being a teacher in one of the universities in China's fourth-tier cities, the researcher had observed throughout the years that this situation exists especially in universities of fourth-tier cities. Unfortunately, there were no previous studies conducted yet that looked into the situation of oral English teaching in these cities. Hence, due to this issue and the lack of literature investigating the situation of EFL in these universities from China's fourth-tier cities, particularly the speaking skill, the necessity of a study investigating oral English teaching has arisen.

Using the case study approach, this study attempted to fill the gap by documenting the teaching approaches that oral English teachers in fourth-tier cities implemented in their classrooms, the perception of the students, and what factors affected the implementation of these approaches. Further, this study applied qualitative methods to interpret and analyze the

classroom data of four oral English university teachers from University A and B which are located in two of China's fourth-tier cities. Two participant teachers were selected from each of the universities and six students taught by each teacher. Two lesson observations for each teacher were conducted together with individual interviews with both the students and the teachers.

The study revealed that the most predominant teaching approach implemented by the teachers was the communicative approach (CA). It was found out that two of the teacher participants were aware of CA and intended to use its features; however, the other two had demonstrated the features of the approach in their lessons but were not aware of CA. The students' perceptions of the implemented approach varied depending on their oral English achievement levels. Students with high oral English level tended to be more motivated and interactive in class compared to those with medium and low oral English levels. Moreover, the teachers have encountered several challenges that affected their teaching approaches including their lack of continuous professional trainings and the limited support from the universities.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by exploring the teaching of oral English in the universities of fourth-tier cities in China. The findings of this study may have significant implications for the development and improvement of oral English teaching practices and provide valuable insights for English teachers in China. There are implications pointing to a need to revise the current curriculum guidelines for the reference of administrators of different universities and the Ministry of Education (MOE) in China.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ALM</b>	Audio-Lingual Method
<b>CA</b>	Communicative Approach
<b>CET</b>	College English Test
<b>CLIL</b>	Content Language Integrated Learning
<b>CLT</b>	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>EFT</b>	English for Teachers
<b>EGP</b>	English for General Purpose
<b>ELCS</b>	English Language Curriculum Standards
<b>ELT</b>	English Language Teaching
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>ESP</b>	English for Specific Purposes
<b>FLTRP</b>	Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press
<b>GTM</b>	Grammar Translation Method
<b>HREC</b>	Human Research Ethics Committee
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOI</b>	Medium of Instruction
<b>NCEE</b>	National College Entrance Examination
<b>PPP</b>	Presentation Practice and Production
<b>PPT</b>	PowerPoint
<b>TBA</b>	Task-Based Approach

<b>TEM</b>	Test for English Majors
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the years, issues related to the difficulties experienced by students in China in learning English continue to rise. These include the students' lack of solid foundation of the English language (Shen, 2013), teachers not having proper trainings in teaching English (Borg & Liu, 2013; Chen & Goh, 2014), the students' lack of interest to master the language because they don't find it necessary in places other than their classrooms (Li, Zhao and Cao, 2016), etc. Oral English is particularly challenging for students who do not have much opportunities to practice speaking the language in their daily life experience. As an English teacher in a university, the researcher saw the need to identify effective teaching approaches to support student learning of oral English.

Proficiency in English, particularly in speaking, has become more important during the twenty-first century. However, most of the time in an English as a secondary language (ESL) classroom, students often get anxious when they are put in a situation that they have to speak (He & Lin, 2018). One of the reasons for this anxiety is because they feel it is difficult to express their thoughts orally in a language they are not fluent with. Dealing with this problem, different strategies were introduced for oral English teachers to help them decide for the best teaching methods to manage their students' oral English learning.

The term oral English, or much commonly known as “spoken English,” is what we call a system wherein a person uses the English language in verbally conveying ideas and information. The use of the English language has been accepted worldwide, making it the universal language of the world. Hence, people from different countries, who are non-native speakers of English, particularly students, are aware of the need to improve their mastery of the English language in

order to meet the growing demands of international relations brought upon by globalization. In the contrary, other published researches show that teachers handling oral English classes in China universities have limited professional training backgrounds and most lack teaching experiences overseas (Borg & Liu, 2013).

From teachers' perspectives, teaching oral English requires fitting techniques and strategies in order to come up with effective results. Over the years, issues related to the difficulties experienced by students in learning English continue to rise. These include the students' lack of stable foundation of the English language, teachers not having proper trainings in teaching English, the students' lack of interest to master the language because they do not find it necessary in places other than their classrooms, etc.

In China, the MOE required universities to provide programs for the students that focus on English language acquisition. Unfortunately, for decades, there were no proper directions and guidelines on how to systematically teach oral English in China universities. This may be an issue to support the teaching and learning of English among university students in China especially in less-resourced cities.

The fourth and fifth tiers, often being grouped together, represent the majority of Chinese urban population with 255 million households and an estimated income of \$7 trillion ("China's City Tier System – Sampi. Co," n.d.). China's greater portion of urban population can be found in what was categorized as "fourth-tier cities." Fourth-tier is composed of less-developed cities, and it is the lowest in China's tier system. Unfortunately, due to the fact that majority of the people in this tier have poor economical background, it is evident that many students in their universities have no established foundation of the English language. Although most of them can do writing and reading, their English speaking skills are very weak. These are based on the



researcher's personal observations given her years of teaching in one of China's universities of fourth-tier cities. Upon checking for the previous studies that specifically discussed the situations of oral English teaching in these cities, no such research has been conducted yet. This is one of the reasons why the researcher specifically chose to conduct the study within the universities of China's fourth-tier cities.

### **1.1. Personal Motivation for the Study**

The personal motivation of this study came from my work experience as a university English teacher teaching English major students for nearly 16 years in University B, Anhui Province, from 2004 up to the present. During these years, I have noticed that the Chinese students I taught faced various difficulties while speaking English due to a variety of reasons.

First of all, the Chinese language influenced the Chinese English students' pronunciation when uttering English words. Therefore, students pronounced English words with a Chinese accent. Since consonant clusters do not exist in Chinese, students usually add vowel sounds between consonant clusters or substitute them with consonant sounds that are easier for them to produce such as saying "dilape" instead of "drape." Moreover, they may even omit some sounds, so "words" becomes "wors" and "cluster" becomes "cusser." Additionally, the sounds /r/ and /v/ are absent in Chinese. I have seen that many students were not able to pronounce these two sounds while speaking English as they replaced them with other sounds. They said "wewe" for "really," "wawy" for "very," "dock" for "dark," and "lub" for "love."

Besides the phonetic obstacle, there is likewise the grammatical one. The Chinese language has no distinction between the singular and the plural noun forms, which leads many English students to utter incorrect sentences like, "I have three dog" or "I wrote many paragraph."

Furthermore, Chinese English students sometimes make word order errors when speaking English. They may say “A blue eyes he has” instead of “He has blue eyes,” or “The best in her classroom has got my sister grade” instead of saying “My sister has got the best grade in her classroom.”

However, these were not the only reasons why Chinese English students suffered from poor speaking skills as they made a lot of unnecessary pauses when speaking English. Therefore, my aim in this study was to find out the teaching approaches used by teachers in universities of fourth-tier cities in China and identify if these approaches were helpful in improving the students’ English speaking skills. Having good speaking skills is very crucial for Chinese students who major in English to find a job such as teaching.

As I have mentioned previously, students in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom always feel anxious when they have to deal with speaking English especially in front of the class or in public. Because of the lack of exposure to the target language, the students frequently commit pronunciation mistakes and even grammatical errors. English teachers must master the English language regardless of their nationality as they ought to speak it both fluently and correctly. However, using a broken and unidiomatic English to teach non-native learners may lead to disastrous consequences.

Thinking that some English major students are going to be teachers someday has worried me a lot. This means that this unfortunate situation will last for longer, and students in primary and secondary schools will carry the burden and be the next victims. I was thinking: “How can they teach students with broken and unidiomatic English? That would be a disaster.” Also,

because I was intending to do my EdD, I thought that the best move that I can do to help my students and even my colleagues would be to study the teaching of oral English.

Pursuing my study, I decided, in this work, to investigate thoroughly the methods and strategies implemented by teachers in teaching EFL in terms of speaking skills. I entitled my study “Investigating Teaching Approaches Adopted in Teaching Oral English in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities,” and I hope it serves its purpose.

## **1.2. Aims and Objectives of the Research Project**

At the end of this study, the researcher seeks:

1. To find out the teaching approaches adopted at the China universities of fourth-tier cities in teaching oral English to English majors
2. To identify students’ perceptions of their teachers’ teaching approaches on oral English
3. To identify the factors that enhance or constrain teachers in implementing the oral English teaching approach(es) they choose.

## **1.3. Research Questions and Methodology**

The major purpose of this study is to find out the teaching approaches, such as grammar translation, task-based, communicative learning, audio-lingual, and/or a post-method approach, which is/are currently adopted by teachers in teaching oral English to English major students in universities of China’s fourth-tier cities. Drawing on the findings, recommendations for improving current practices will be made. Specifically, this will answer the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What are the approaches implemented by the teachers in teaching oral English to English majors in China universities of fourth-tier cities?
- RQ2:** What are the students’ perceptions of the approaches for teaching oral English?

**RQ3:** What are the factors affecting teachers' implementation of the approaches for teaching oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities?

To answer these research questions, this study adopts the case study method with multiple cases involved. The researcher invited four teachers from two different universities to be the teacher participants for this research, two from each university. Six students from each teacher were also interviewed to be able to identify their views and perceptions of the overall oral English course. The data collection includes lesson observations, interviews, and document analysis (e.g., teachers' journal articles, subject syllabi and textbooks, records of assignments, and official curriculum documents from the university).

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in three different ways. Apart from contributing to the literature, this study will inform teachers and university administrators as they teach or formulate policies related to the learning and teaching of oral English.

Firstly, in the past few decades, there have been substantial efforts in exploring methods effective for teaching oral English to students in higher education in China. Teaching approaches in this study refer to the set of principles and ideas about the nature of learning that are implemented in the classroom (Rajkumar, 2011). To this effect, numerous efforts were undertaken in search for the most practical and acceptable English teaching approaches like the grammar translation method (GTM), direct approach, structural approach, ready approach, CA, and task-based approach (TBA). These efforts and the trial and error experiments in effect brought a pendulum effect on language teaching (Nunan, 1995).

The result of this study will identify current teaching approaches and strategies for teaching oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities. The findings of this study would improve

current understanding of existing practices and, thus, provide appropriate recommendations on further development of teaching practices for teaching oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities.

Secondly, the findings of this study will provide insights to university administrators on revising the existing curriculum guideline for teaching methodology and address the needs for the professional development of the college teachers to enhance their English teaching skills. There is an urgent need to design relevant teacher professional development which may in turn best improve teachers' teaching and students' oral English learning performances, as there is a lack of suitable models of teacher development for English teachers in China currently (Borg & Liu, 2013). With efforts on teacher professional development, students will eventually benefit and likewise improve their English learning prowess as well as enhance their motivation and determination to speak fluent English. Graduating with good oral command of English will enhance their opportunity to work abroad or enter into business firms.

Lastly, the previous studies on teaching oral English in China (Shen, 2013; Li, Zhao, & Cao, 2016; Chen & Goh, 2011, 2014) lack support by empirical evidence, especially classroom-based data, and they focus only on non-English majors. Therefore, this study would help to fill the research gap if only in part by classroom-based data, to explore the prevalent approaches implemented by teachers in teaching oral English to English majors in universities of China fourth-tier cities.

### **1.5. Outline of the Study**

This thesis is organized into five chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction:** In this chapter, the personal motivation, the aims and objectives, the research questions, and the significance and the outline of the study were explored.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review:** This chapter aims to provide the reader with extensive information from the available literature about EFL in the Chinese context in general and fourth-tier cities particularly. This chapter tackled the following main titles:

- Development of English Teaching Approaches in China
- Oral English Teaching in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities
- Students' Learning Experience of Oral English in China Universities
- Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology:** In this chapter, the procedure of data collection is described as well as how the qualitative research method was adopted and how the data was analyzed. Also, it reports the framework of the study.

**Chapter 4: Findings:** This chapter presents and discusses the findings of this four-case study.

**Chapter 5: Discussions and Conclusions:** This chapter provides a general summary of the study and key findings to answer the research questions. Then, it gives a list of practice recommendations as well as further research recommendations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The adoption of appropriate teaching approaches is fundamental in enhancing the quality of teaching. Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, and Brown (2012) emphatically suggests that strategic teaching approaches content must be clearly charted so that teachers can view, devise, and prepare earlier tangible chronological methods to teach each part of the lesson with intense focus and accurate activities to engage.

As teachers and teaching are important in facilitating student learning, Castetter (1996) calls for the attention on the quality of teaching at the university level by pointing out that “the success of any existing institution depend upon a large measure on the effectiveness of the people or teachers in the case of the university in the performance of their assigned English teaching work.” In a similar vein, Likert (2006) mandates institutions/organizations to reexamine or revisit its practices, policies, systems, and employees’ or students’ performance and output.

In English language acquisition, the focus should not be limited to both writing and reading. According to Stephen Krashen (Schütz, 2019, p.1), “Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding.”

The term “oral English” or commonly known as “spoken English” is a system through which a person makes use of spoken words in English to give information or to communicate his or her ideas and emotions (Taiwo, 2010). This aspect of English language acquisition focuses on the different components of communicative competence. According Shahbaz et al. (2016), the four components of communicative competence include grammatical competence,

sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Hence, in teaching oral English, it is important to use a teaching approach that caters to not only the teaching of grammatical structures and fluency in speaking but also in developing and understanding meaning. Oral English learning is a continuous process of production and comprehension as well as exchange and negotiation of intended meanings.

The importance of learning and teaching oral English at the university level is pointed out by Orlich et al. (2012) who state that while teaching approaches help all working and prospective teachers to acquire professional knowledge, introducing the students to oral English courses wherein their ability to communicate using the language will be enhanced is essential in achieving effective, proficient, applicable, and productive learning for all students in all parts of the world.

This chapter contains three sections that provide a better view of all the related literature. Section 1 focuses on the development of English teaching approaches in China. Section 2 discusses the oral English teaching in China universities of fourth-tier cities. Lastly, Section 3 gives emphasis to the students' learning of oral English in China universities.

## **Section 1: Development of English Teaching Approaches in China**

### **1. English Teaching Approaches in China**

Teaching speaking, as for all the other language skills like reading, writing, and listening, is a process that has been affected continuously by the various teaching approaches and methods throughout history (Cheng & Wang, 2012). Each approach indeed has got its own features and has marked its contribution to the field of teaching speaking. However, the relationship between the different teaching approaches and a comprehensive theoretical framework in oral English has

not yet been clarified. Moreover, there is a lack of classroom-based studies that reflect the impact of the different approaches on students' perceptions of learning of oral English in China (Cheng & Wang, 2012).

In the study of Wang and Kirkpatrick (2012), there are empirical evidences that advocate to the opinion that using translation and dual languages is very helpful in improving the students' language acquisition as the students are introduced to the new language with the help of another language which is already familiar to them. It is considered as a practical way of learning the language because through word translations the students could easily identify the words and its meanings and later on use these in their speech. This is one of the reasons why some if not most of the teachers in China universities would prefer to use English and Chinese interchangeably in oral English classes in order to maintain continuous interactions with the students.

Lam (2005) further added that as a result from promoting English language education in China, the teachers' competency of the English language is becoming more significant. In order for the teachers to be more competent in their teaching, it is crucial that they be acquainted to new ideas as this will in turn be beneficial for the students who will be learning from them.

This section provides an overview on the teaching approaches and methods adopted for teaching English to non-native speakers in China. There exist five approaches of teaching ESL that have been widely used in different universities, namely, GTM, audio-lingual method (ALM), CA, TBA, and post-method approach. Discussion for each of these approaches is as follows.

### **1.1. Grammar Translation Method**

Developed in Greece and Rome, GTM was used to teach classical languages like Greek, Latin, etc. Now, it is used to teach foreign languages (Dunkel & Chastain, 1988). It was also known as a classical method. Richards (2002) holds that "its aim was to know everything about

anything more than the 122 thing itself.” The goal of using GTM was that “students could study foreign language by translation.” “By memorizing the rules and grammatical structures of target language, learners can understand target language easily” (Richards, 2002).

This former method of language teaching is built on translating authentic literary works from the target language to the mother language. In a much clearer sense, it concentrates on the systematic analysis of grammar, as the main pillar language system, and on the assumption Richards and Rodgers (2014) state, “Grammar translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language.” Indeed, as to this stream of thought, “The students’ native language is the medium of instruction (MOI). It is used to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student’s native language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

For this method, the process of acquiring a foreign language has an extensive reliance on automatic translation and on the extent to which the learners are able to memorize the target language’s grammatical rules to be able to use them in the future. Therefore, as Richards and Rodgers (2014) consider it, “...views language learning as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language.”

### **1.1.1. Functions of GTM**

According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), grammar is taught deductively with focus on rote memorization of grammatical structures and vocabulary in GTM. Grammatical rules are taught and students learn language by practicing rules in an authentic way. The learner learns language

to be familiar with target language literature. “The text from second language is translated into local language; vocabulary and grammatical rules are memorized” (Thanasoulas, 2002). Cunningham (2000) considers GTM a useful method for students of all levels to learn second language. Similarly, Damiani (2003) in his study on GTM affirms that it is the best method to teach grammar and vocabulary, and the teacher believes that his/her students are learning, while in any other method the teacher is not sure that students learn the language.

### **1.1.2. Limitation of GTM**

On the outset, Larsen-Freeman (2000) illustrate pitfalls of GTM – that it focuses on cramming grammatical rules. Students are only taught lexical meanings, and it does not focus on listening and speaking skills. In GTM, the focus of individual is only limited to learning grammatical structures; in real sense, grammar is not language but is an aspect of language that adds to language learning. One of the main disadvantages of this method is that it only teaches the students about language structure, but the actual language is missing. It is teacher-centered so teaching learning environment is not so conducive for active learning, and learner has no opportunity to use techniques for their own language learning (Grammar, 1996).

## **1.2.Audio-Lingual Method**

The ALM emerged meanwhile during the Second World War and turned out to be a foreign language teaching method by the mid-1950s. It is based on the behaviorists’ claim that language learning is a process of acquiring a set of proper language habits. This method prioritizes the learning of oral skills, or spoken language as for the subject matter of research, basing on stimulus-response and then reinforcement model associated with intensive repetitions until learners are able to use the language freely and spontaneously.

Teachers may provide students with a subject, verb, and complement model within a dialogue soon after they get them to extensively repeat that model to the point of learning it by heart (Harmer, 2007). This is shown in the example below:

“Teacher: There’s a cup on the table...repeat.

Students: There’s a cup on the table.

Teacher: Spoon.

Students: There’s a spoon on the table.

Teacher: Book.

Students: There’s a book on the table.

Teacher: On the chair.

Students: There’s a book on the chair.”

By means of words’ substitutions, within the already associated model, and teachers’ reinforcement, as for extensive repetition, learners manage to form new sentences. Harmer (2007) states, “By using the stimulus-response-reinforcement model, it attempted, through a continuous process of such positive reinforcement, to engender good habits in language learning.” Harmer adds, “audio-lingualism relied heavily on drills to form these habits; substitution was built into these drills so that, in small steps, the student was constantly learning and was shielded from the possibility of making mistakes by the design of the drill” (Harmer, 2007).

To put it in theoretical highlights, the ALM values naturalness in language production over the learning of rules. It focuses heavily on language structures and skills as behavior learned by habit formation, not through learning rules explicitly. Teachers create an environment in which

students form good language habit by not making mistakes; hence, the methods are rote memorization of dialogues and pattern practice drills. Learners become fluent and accurate through this methodology although their linguistic repertoires can be rigid and limited (Beretta, 1991).

The ability to separate meaningful units from the speech stream is part of the knowledge needed to comprehend oral discourse. Listening was considered as a “receptive” skill, but it is in no case a passive act. According to the socio-cognitive approach to learning, “listening is an act of constructing meaning.” Listeners take advantage of their store of background knowledge and their expectation of the message to be conveyed as they work actively at understanding a conversation or oral presentation. Teacher’s role is to setup situations for students. In that way, students can develop their own listening goals, acquire English which is most useful in their daily lives, feel the sense of purpose, and engage in real communication practices. This method declares that the teaching of listening may highlight the building of information acquisition, interest, and lifelong literacy (Diaz-Rico, 2008).

### **1.2.1. Functions of ALM**

In audio-lingual teaching, the students repeat exactly what they hear, with an emphasis on correct pronunciation. Minimal pair pattern practice is a common strategy: students are asked to repeat simple phrases that differ by only one phoneme, i.e., “It is a ship/It is a sheep;” He is skipping/He is slipping.” Current methods encourage students to listen to minimal pairs within meaningful contexts. Teachers used poems, nursery rhymes, and song to introduce “rhyming words,” asking students to fill in the blanks at the end of lines to demonstrate their knowledge of phonemic difference and context-appropriate words. In addition, teachers can read aloud books featuring wordplay, alliteration, and tongue twisters, encouraging students to talk about how the



author manipulates words. Graham, Brennan, Farrell, and O'Brien (1988) have created jazz chants from fairy tales, giving younger and less proficient students the opportunity to work with longer texts. Such activities help students to hear the language and to develop phonemic awareness. A listening area can be set up in which the English learners can listen to books on tape, with picture books, or models nearby to support understanding of what is heard. Two such stations might be set up side by side so that students can share this listening experience with a friend. It may be comforting to a child if the voice on the tape speaks English that is accented the way that people from his or her primary language community sound. A bilingual English speaker who lives in the neighborhood or a parent can help (Graham, Brennan, Farrell, & O'Brien, 1988).

### **1.2.2. Limitation of ALM**

In an ALM, the teacher is positioned in the center of the class. He needed to be a good model for imitation and provide students with tape recording and native speaker with utterance accuracy. The students lack learning independency because it is the teacher directing the language learning process and only motivates and requires students to follow, imitate, and respond to the teacher's instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 2002). Only in this sense, students were given the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process. Most of the time the students experience a silent period and are exposed only to listening and repetition practice which appears boring for some active-oriented students.

### **1.3.Communicative Approach**

The history of communicative language teaching (CLT) dates back to late 1960s, and it was presented with the application in CA in traditional British language teaching (Swain, 1985). CA was started in reaction to situational and structural approaches to language teaching. Theories of British Functional Linguists (Ruiz, 2013, & Matthiessen, 1989), as well as American

sociolinguists (Hymes, et.al, 1966) along with the writings of Jane Austin, formulated basis for CLT, considering target language as a means of effective communication (Demirezen et al., 2011). Chomsky and anthropological linguists criticized GTM and behavioral and structural approaches for only stressing on futile mechanistic pattern drills, memorization of grammatical structures, and inadequate reinforcement rather than giving preference to teach foreign language for real-life communication. Hymes (1967) anticipated theory of communicative competence, which formed the basis of CA (as cited in Nunan, 1999). Chomsky's (1959) linguistic competence was criticized, as it was a limited concept in language learning (Demirezen & others, 2011). Traditional approaches focused on learning grammatical rules and structures, but CLT aims at developing communicative proficiency (Benson, 2001; Canale & Swain, 1980). The notion of communicativeness became popular in the mid-1970s (Swain, 1985). Also, there is a paradigm shift from traditional methodologies to communicative methodology (Hymes, 1967; Ruiz, 2013). In comparison of CLT with audio-lingual and grammar translation approaches, CLT creates a real-life and interactive environment which enables learners to communicate effectively, develop vocabulary, and improve grammatical competence. All these contribute to effective second language learning (Belchamber, 2007).

This approach advocates the assumption of learners' need to be familiar with when, where, and how to say what to whom in a given social context. Up to this point of growth, this was an incident that revolutionized the field of language teaching. There are nine components in a CA that are important in identifying the features implemented by the teachers, namely, objective, content, materials, activities, teachers' roles, students' roles, assessment, MOI, and grammar teaching. The concern of CLT, as Harmer (2007) states, "was with spoken functions as much as with written grammar, and notions of when and how it was appropriate to say certain things were

of primary importance.” Harmer (2007) also states, “Language, from a CA viewpoint, is a means of communication; it describes the relation between language and communication in terms of communicative competence, which encourages a person to exchange ideas with others in real life situations in an effective, natural and purposeful way.”

Clearly, enabling the learners to effectively communicate in the target language is the number one aim behind teaching a foreign language. Nevertheless, during the 1970s, experts of language learning observed that their learners were able to produce accurate sentences inside the classroom; unfortunately, these learners did not do well when confronted with real-life situations out of the classroom context. So, the mere mastery, in most cases mere memorization, of linguistic structures solely is inadequate to make them good communicators. As a logical consequence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such observations pushed toward a shift from a linguistic-centered approach to a communicative-centered approach in the field of foreign language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

### **1.3.1. Functions of CA**

The main purpose of CA is incorporating communicative competence; therefore, activities and exercises based on CA intend to develop communicative proficiency among learners in real-life context (Rai, 2003). Communicative competence comprises grammatical and sociolinguistic competence in L2 learners (Canale & Swain, as cited in Sobel & Li (2013)) that is more important than linguistic competence (Hymes, 1971; Ruiz, 2013). Widdowson (1978) asserts that students by using language rules can generate sentences in classrooms, but they are unable to speak the target language in actual life. Students learn to communicate by communicating (Nunan, 2004; Jane Willis, 2007). Larsen-Freeman (2000) suggests that the activities should be organized in such a way that develops fluency, and learners can produce meaningful, consistent,

and effective sentences. Communicative competence can be developed in students by using properly designed language games: problem-solving tasks, using picture stories and role-play methods. Berns et al. (1984) describe CA as student-centered activity which develops confidence through real communication, relates theory to practice, emphasizes on contextual meaning, and provides opportunities to students to take ownership of their own learning (Demirezen & others, 2011; G. Ellis, 1996).

### **1.3.2. Limitation of the CA**

Norland and Pruett-Said (2006) pointed out that “communicative language teaching only focuses on oral competency; therefore, reading and writing skills are neglected” (Norland & Pruett-Said, 2006). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1984), the term “learner-centered” in context of CA is wrong because it does not give learners autonomy of learning. Chen elaborates that even communicative language teaching is considered a successful method, its success depends on the cultural setting of the target classroom (Chen, 2003). Brown criticizes that some experts interpret CLT as catch call term, but it is not in accordance with its application. CA does not produce accuracy among students as it avoids explicit teaching of grammar, which is an essential component in language teaching (Brown, 1994).

### **1.4.Task-Based Approach**

The intended pedagogy in the TBA is generated from the principles of CLT (Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1996). “The task-based teaching approach aims at providing students with opportunities to interact in the target language within distinct natural situations to help them acquire the language in a more communicative way.” Harmer (2007) goes on adding, “students work in groups or in pairs asking and answering questions to their partners as well as their teachers, seeking for clarifications and trying to explore the unknown within the new language” (Harmer,

2007). Problematic tasks, or situations, are handed to the learners to be solved as a means of mutual group negotiations since they are of a great importance. “Students are given a task to perform and only when the task has been completed does the teacher discuss the language that was used, making corrections and adjustments where the students’ performance of the task has shown to be desirable” (Harmer, 2007).

That is, within this approach, “learners work to complete a task. They have abundant opportunity to interact. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

This approach has become the most popular in the field of second language teaching or foreign language teaching in the post-method era. It has also been widely welcomed by curriculum and syllabus makers in many countries due to the popular beliefs about its strengths in promoting second language acquisition.

#### **1.4.1. Tasks**

Tasks need to involve meaningful communication (Ellis, 2018; Nunan, 2004). In TBA, tasks are designed in a way that they fit to certain requirements.

The students are introduced to the task where they need to fill a “gap” and complement each other’s knowledge putting their prior knowledge in use in a negotiators way (the students may have different opinions or different parts of the information). The students will choose how to complete it and which language they need to use. So, there is a clear goal to fulfill, and the students know how and when it is achieved (Ellis, 2018; Nunan, 2004).

This task can be creating a presentation, writing a piece of text, analyzing a recorded tape or a video, fulfilling a real-life task, making a call, working out a solution, making a teaching plan, debating, and negotiating about a certain topic, TV shows or personal preferences, etc. (Willis & Willis, 2013).

Task-based learning is conducted in three phases:

#### **a. Pre-task Phase**

In this phase, the teacher introduces to his students the required task; he motivates and prepares them for it. He has to set his expectations for the task in this phase, and in order to achieve the best outcomes, he needs to well motivate his students for the task, and that is why the task needs to be adapted to his students' preferences. In this phase, the teacher can provide his students with support materials and scaffold properly the task to be done. An example of the completed task can be given to the students to clarify any ambiguity and make the task easier for them (Willis & Willis, 2013). Depending on the nature of the task, the students can be grouped in small groups or make individual work, which is less common in TBA.

In summary, this stage consists on engaging the students, setting expectations, and giving the required instructions.

#### **b. Carrying on the Task**

The students, according to how they were organized in the previous phase, work together in order to achieve the goals from the task. Generally, they would be preferably grouped into small groups or pairs, as bigger groups can represent a challenge for shy students which can make them avoid taking risk in front of their teammates. The students work together in order to find a solution for the risen task, and the teacher is not supposed to join in the task, although he

can give hints whenever needed (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2013). In this stage, the students are going to use the to-be-learnt language and communicate in English in order to fulfill the tasks.

In sum, in this stage the teacher will monitor his students' performance in finding a solution for the problem or negotiating the topic in the target language without using the mother tongue, unless it is really needed.

### **c. Reviewing the Performance**

Once the students have completed what they were required to do and that they have something to present, the teacher can review their work and give them feedback. Also, colleagues from other teams can contribute in the review process. For effective peer reviews, the teacher can give instructions on how to give positive and constructive feedback (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2013).

In summary, the aim from this stage is to achieve accuracy while reflecting on completed work and analyzing it.

#### **1.4.2. Functions of TBA**

Communicative tasks are helpful in developing the learners' communicative skills and linguistic knowledge system (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). By engaging learners in meaning-negotiated interactions, tasks can drive the learners' acquisition process (Long & Crookes, 1992; Skehan, 1996)). Tasks provide opportunities for naturalistic language learning, which will accelerate learner's acquisition processes (Foster, 1999; Rubdy, 1998; Willis, 1996). Tasks are not only meaning-focused but can also draw the learners' awareness to the form of language, which will bring about both accuracy and fluency in language production and thus catalyze the process of language acquisition (Bowen, 2004; Del Pilar Garcia Mayo, 2002; Long, 1996; Long, 2000;



Nunan, 2004). Lastly, authentic tasks produce a close link between classroom language learning and the real-life situation (Skehan, 1996).

These factors undoubtedly contributed to TBA being adopted as the main pedagogy in the English language curriculum standards (ELCS) in 2001. Although the ELCS displays some features of a medium form of TBA, it does not involve sufficient introduction or clear justification for the use of TBA. Furthermore, there has been limited research investigating the practical process of TBA implementation in classrooms (Carless, 2002). This is especially true in regard to EFL teaching in China (Zhang, 2005). Some scholars (e.g., Carless (2002), Foster (1999), Sheen (1994), Swan (2005)) have also argued against the appropriateness of TBA in the EFL context. In light of this discussion, further studies are needed to explore the implementation of TBA in mainland China (Zhang, 2005).

#### **1.4.3. Limitation of TBA**

Although this TBA has brought about massive positive changes, it has as well been criticized on some aspects. One of which is the communicative task itself; it is “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language, while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.” The task “should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right” (Crookes, 1990).

Another aspect of criticism is concerned with the teachers; teachers had better pick up and adapt their topics to the interest sphere of the students. Then, before presenting the tasks, they have to handle relevant input of expressions, phrases, and key vocabulary to help them warm up to comprehend the task instruction. The learners, of course, work in pairs or in groups discussing the issue, trying to negotiate and come up with an agreed upon solution to the problem the task

raises and then planning the way to present their results to their classmates' ears. Meanwhile, the teacher takes on the role of a guider, monitor, and support provider by directing the learners toward reaching the task's objectives by themselves. Following that, the teacher discusses the outcome along with the learners and provides active engaging and realistic feedback to each presentation members.

Even more, role-plays and simulations like ordering a meal in a restaurant or conducting a job interview enable the students to perform different social roles that they sooner than later will encounter outside of their usual classroom setting. Most importantly, this is meant to help them develop their fluency and raise self-confidence.

## **2. Key Features of the Teaching Approaches GTM, ALM, CA, and TBA**

A comparison of the features of objective, content, materials, activities, teachers' roles, students' roles, assessment, MOI, and grammar teaching of the four approaches will inform the analysis of the teaching approaches in this study. The following table shows the major differences among the four teaching approaches GTM, ALM, CA, and TBA under teaching features.

*Table 1: Major differences among the teaching approaches GTM, ALM, CA, and TBA*

Compo- nents	GTM	ALM	CA	TBA
Objectives	1. Developing reading and comprehension skills 2. Developing writing and translation skills in written texts 3. Focusing on the memorization and usage of grammatical rules through grammar analysis 4. Prioritizing language forms over functions	1. Developing the learning of listening and oral skills through mechanical memorization 2. Prioritizing accuracy over fluency by focusing on accurate pronunciation, tones, intonation, and recitation of formulated sentence patterns 3. Prioritizing forms over functions	1. Enhancing the ability to communicate in the target language 2. Prioritizing the functional usage of language over language forms 3. Enhancing the four linguistic skills but giving priority to speaking and listening over reading and writing 4. Prioritizing fluency over accuracy (forms serving function)	1. Enhancing the ability to complete authentic tasks 2. Developing the four linguistic skills (speaking/listening/reading/writing) especially their integration 3. Prioritizing fluency over accuracy and implicitly reminding students to be aware of language forms and function 4. In TBA, objectives are decided based on the assessment of the needs of the students

Content	<p>1. Teaching vocabulary in forms of lists and isolated words</p> <p>2. Teaching grammatical rules and their usage</p> <p>3. Enhancing translation skills between mother tongue and target language</p>	<p>Through well selected dialogues and drills:</p> <p>1. Teaching language structures</p> <p>2. Forming and teaching rules explicitly</p> <p>3. Teaching grammar rules and vocabulary through drills</p> <p>4. Teaching pre-made dialogue patterns such as dialogues between friends about a certain topic</p>	<p>1. Exposing learners to authentic language and structures including sentences, words, and vocabulary to develop the learner's fluency</p> <p>2. CA contents are selected based on learners' needs</p> <p>Learners' needs can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning numbers and counting</li> <li>• Academic/functional vocabulary</li> <li>• Learning the social register of TL</li> <li>• Learning grammar and forms</li> <li>• Pronunciation practice</li> <li>• Integrating language skills according to priorities</li> </ul>	<p>1. Teaching authentic language, structures, sentences, words, lexical items, and idioms so that the learner can acquire the language functions and then forms</p> <p>2. Learning contents of TBA are primarily decided by learners' needs analysis</p> <p>Learners' needs can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning numbers and counting</li> <li>• Academic/functional vocabulary</li> <li>• Learning the social register of TL</li> <li>• Learning grammar and forms</li> <li>• Pronunciation practice</li> <li>• Integrating language skills according to priorities</li> </ul>
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Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isolated literary passages</li> <li>2. Grammatical write-ups and rules</li> <li>3. Bilingual vocabulary lists</li> <li>4. Sentences to translate</li> <li>5. Authentic literary passages to analyze</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audiotapes of native speakers</li> <li>2. Written speeches</li> <li>3. Formulated sentence patterns</li> <li>4. Daily life conversations in the target language</li> <li>5. Poems, nursery rhymes, and songs</li> </ol>	Textbook, realia, and authentic materials like signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, and pictures	Authentic materials according to the students' needs are adapted and used. Teaching materials, such as newspapers, radio and TV programs, textbooks, resources from the Internet, and so on
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Activities	<p>1. Listening to teacher's lectures about grammatical rules</p> <p>2. Doing mechanical drills of grammatical patterns and translation between target and mother tongue</p> <p>3. Grammatical analysis activities</p> <p>4. Fill in the blank activities</p> <p>5. Writing and translation activities</p>	<p>1. Listening to dialogues and audiotapes</p> <p>2. Listening and repeating aloud after the teacher or the tape</p> <p>3. Doing mechanical dialogical drills</p>	<p>1. Functional communicative activities: describing and comparing pictures, discovering missing features in a map, etc.</p> <p>2. Social interaction activities: conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues, role-plays, improvisations, and debates</p>	<p>1. Performed in three phases: pre-task, task, and reviewing phase. TBA pre-task includes planning and gathering of information. TBA task, on the other hand, is related to real-life situations and can be listing, ordering, sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, creative tasks, etc. Tasks can be performed as solo work, pair work, group work, or whole class work. Tasks in TBA promote meaning negotiated interactions. Lastly, the reviewing phase would be the last phase wherein the matching of the objectives and learning outcomes is done.</p>
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Teachers' roles	<p>1. Authoritative lecturer and expert of grammatical knowledge</p> <p>2. Feedbacker, as soon as errors happen</p> <p>3. Follower of the textbook content</p>	<p>1. Role model of reading aloud and speaking the formulated sentence patterns</p> <p>2. Authoritative expert of grammatical rules related to the selected sentence patterns</p> <p>3. Organizer of peer practice and dialogues</p> <p>4. Controller and education director of the students' language behavior</p> <p>5. Follower of the textbook content</p>	<p>1. Needs assessor: The teacher assesses the needs and interests of his students to select contents and classroom activities.</p> <p>2. Facilitator: In CLT the teacher serves more of a facilitator as she assists and guides the learners in making the classroom activities more comprehensive.</p> <p>3. Organizer and process manager: The teacher organizes and manages the classroom activities.</p> <p>4. Monitor: The teacher monitors the students' communication and interactions.</p> <p>5. Language advisor: The teacher plays the role of language advisor whenever the students need help regarding the language.</p>	<p>1. Needs assessor: The teacher assesses the students' needs in order to choose adequate contents, materials, and tasks.</p> <p>2. Resources developer: The teacher develops their resources according to the learners' needs.</p> <p>3. Task organizer: The teacher selects, adapts, and organizes the students and the tasks.</p> <p>4. Facilitator: The teacher facilitates and provides assistance rather than dominating the education.</p> <p>5. Monitor: The teacher observes and monitors the students' performance.</p> <p>6. Language advisor: The teacher can play the role of language advisor during the tasks.</p> <p>7. Motivator: The teacher motivates the students to take risks during tasks.</p> <p>8. Task participant: The teacher can act as task participant.</p>
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Students' roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Memorizers of the new words</li> <li>2. Learners of grammatical rules and verb conjunctions</li> <li>3. Translation activities doers, by translating sentences between the target language and the native language</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listeners</li> <li>2. Imitators and followers of the teacher's role modeling</li> <li>3. Followers and responders to the teacher's directions</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interactors/negotiators: The students engage in meaningful communicative activities with their peers and teacher.</li> <li>2. Group participants: The students are assigned to different roles within their groups.</li> <li>3. Cooperators: The students cooperate with their group members.</li> <li>4. Monitors: The students monitor their learning process.</li> <li>5. Assessors: The students can assess their peers and provide assistance.</li> <li>6. Risk-takers: The learners take risk during the classroom activities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interactors/negotiators: The students interact and negotiate with their teacher and peers.</li> <li>2. Group participants: Most tasks are conducted in pairs or small groups. Hence, learners will be assigned to different roles.</li> <li>3. Cooperators: The students cooperate closely with their group peers.</li> <li>4. Monitors: The students monitor their learning process.</li> <li>5. Assessors: Capable students can assess their peers and provide necessary assistance.</li> <li>6. Risk-takers: The learners take risks while fulfilling tasks.</li> </ol>
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Assessment	<p>1. Paper and pen test of grammatical rules and translation</p> <p>2. Dictation</p>	<p>1. Listening and matching test</p> <p>2. Reciting</p> <p>3. Discrete-points tests in form of fill in the gap, put the correct verb form, use the right article, etc.</p>	Communicative assessment to evaluate the students' communicative performance and progress	Communicative assessment is used to evaluate the students' progress. Learners were required to speak with and listen to one another. Capabilities of learners are determined through speaking and writing.
MOI	<p>1. Using the mother tongue in teaching grammatical rules of the target language</p> <p>2. Using both the target language and mother tongue in teaching translation</p>	Using the mother tongue in teaching sentence patterns and its grammatical rules	<p>1. Using the target language as the medium of classroom activities</p> <p>2. Using the mother tongue in clearing misunderstandings and maintaining the communication process</p>	<p>1. Use of target language as the main medium of teaching in authentic or real language speaking and task doing</p> <p>2. Occasional use of the mother tongue to clear misunderstandings and maintain the communication process</p>

Grammar Teaching	1. Focusing on spoon-feeding grammatical rules and lexical meaning of the target language 2. Deductive teaching of grammatical rules of the target language	1. Focusing on spoon-feeding selected sentence patterns and its grammatical rules 2. Inductive and deductive teaching: Grammar is not explicitly explained but induced in practice with examples	1. Students gain new knowledge and skills through situational scenes for practical use most of the time 2. Insertion of structured instructions only if necessary 3. Mainly uses explicit teaching with a little intervention of implicit teaching	1. Implicit teaching by allowing students to acquire knowledge through situational scenes (knowledge naturally acquired) 2. Explicit teaching through traditional approach of studying grammar (mindfulness on reason and command while learning) 3. An equivalent content on implicit and explicit teaching approach
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Table 1 summarizes the key features of teaching approaches and will support the researcher in identifying the teaching approach(es) adopted by the teachers in their oral English classes.

### 3. Post-Method Period

Post-method period was introduced to provide a complete picture of the different periods of the teaching approaches after the development of the aforementioned four approaches. When different teaching approaches in oral English classes were introduced, the main challenges encountered by teachers are the method-based restrictions (Chen & Goh, 2014). This led to the rise and fall of the implementation of different teaching approaches, and unfortunately some did not even last for long. In relation to this, the pedagogy for post-method approach was introduced

by Kumaravadivelu in 1994 in order to give response to the demands of teachers to have effective strategies in teaching without the presence of method-based restrictions.

In the early years of the twentieth century, EFL researchers argued that there is no single approach or a method that fits all learners and permits success in teaching a foreign language. Hence, the critical pedagogy appeared to be the foundation of the new post-method era. Brown (2002) defines it as a justification for language teaching and learning, while Balasubramanian Kumaravadivelu explains post-methods as theoretical principles governing language teaching and learning in order to fill the gaps and overcome the limitation of methods (Johnston, 2007).

Kumaravadivelu, based on theoretical and empirical knowledge, states that critical pedagogy's framework is based on ten macro-strategies in order to achieve its purpose (Johnston, 2007).

#### **4. Students' Perceptions of Oral English Approaches**

Considering the students' perceptions of their classroom experiences is relevant as there is a difference between teachers' and students' perspectives. Block (1994) studied the learners' and teachers' view regarding the learning goals and focused on the similarities and differences between both sides. He examined the ways in which learners and teachers describe the classroom activities. Block found that even if the teacher attached great importance to the job posting activity, which took a long time in the classroom, students "tend to write it off" and spoke highly on the reviewing task, which, from the teachers' perspective, "hardly deserved mention." This study emphasized on the gap between teachers and learners and how they apprehend the goals of the education process (Block, 1994)

In another study of Barkhuizen (1998), it was found that students and teachers had different perceptions regarding the classroom aims and activities. The involved teachers in the

study were surprised with the revealing of the study and how hugely their perception differs to that of their students'. Thus, it is crucial for teachers to be aware of how their students perceive their classroom strategies so as to address learning-related concerns as soon as possible.

## **5. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Teaching Approaches in Teaching Oral English**

There are two major types of factors that affect the implementation of oral English in the different teaching approaches. These are the enhancing and constraining factors.

Enhancing factors refer to the factors inside the classroom that add to the motivation of both the teacher and the students in order to build a better learning process. In language learning and teaching, the teacher has to create a rich linguistic classroom environment so that learners discover the linguistic system of the target language and activate their intuitive heuristics. Furthermore, learning is enhanced when both the teacher and the students work together in order to meet the objectives set for the course.

On the other hand, constraining factors refer to the factors that create challenges to both the teacher and the students in meeting their objectives. There are prominent and formidable challenges for promoting the teaching of speaking skills because teachers have to cope with different difficulties in oral English instruction of their respective teaching situations. Further, these factors also limit the progress of the teaching-learning processes inside an oral English class. However, these, on the other hand, could also help in identifying the teachers' flexibility in handling the class despite all the challenges. Under both the enhancing and constraining factors, there are subcategories that identify the specific impacts brought by the factors to the overall teaching-learning process. These are the macro- and micro-contextual influences and the teachers' and students' factors.

The macro-contextual factors refer to “the general work echoes prevalent at the social level.” This includes the anticipation for intrinsic and extrinsic rewards: intrinsic rewards such as “to educate people, to impart knowledge and values, and to advance a community or a whole nation” and extrinsic rewards such as “high salaries and social recognition.” In this respect, teaching is exposed to external influences from every corner of the society, including politicians, parents, and media (Yan, 2009).

Alternatively, the micro-contextual factors are more closely related to “the organizational climate of the particular institution in which the teacher works and the characteristics of the immediate teaching environment, that is, the classroom and the learner group.” The specific factors include the school’s general climate and the existing school norms; the class size, the school resources, and facilities; the standard activity structure within the institution; collegial relations; the definition of the teacher’s role by colleagues and authorities; general expectations regarding student potential; the school’s reward contingencies and feedback system; and the school’s leadership and decision-making structure. These micro-contextual factors with both emotional (appreciation, student/teacher bond, and work climate) and cognitive dimensions (in-service training) have a dual role – strengthening or weakening EFL teachers’ identities (Salinas, 2017).

Lastly, the teachers’ and students’ factors are the ones related to the teachers and the students themselves, their motivations, their interests, etc. The factors that have significant impact on implementing oral English teaching approaches could be teachers’ learning experience and self-perceived speaking ability (Chen & Goh, 2014). The way teachers think and understand what teaching is about significantly helps in shaping the behavior they exhibit inside the classroom. Borg (2001) further added that the self-efficacy a teacher has affects the effort he or

she shows in willingly conducting spontaneous classroom discussions and activities. On the other hand, the factors that significantly affect the students include lack of self-confidence, inadequate preparation, etc. (Shen, 2013). Reasons for these behaviors root from their poor foundation of the English language and the absence of previous opportunities to be fully immersed with the language use.

## **Section 2: Oral English Teaching in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities**

With the increasing effect of globalization, English is gaining unprecedented importance worldwide and in China precisely. English is perceived as a bridge to the future for the Chinese government and also for the people. In the early 1980s, the MOE made English as a compulsory subject in national college entrance examination (NCEE). At the university level, non-English majors have to study English as compulsory course in the first two years and as an elective course for the remaining two years (Chen & Goh, 2011). However, the absence of an official direction, nor having uniform, systematic, and mandated English teaching approaches from the MOE in China, led to serious difficulties as experienced by English teachers in different universities (Chen & Goh, 2011). They were uncertain as to what method or approach to be adopted in teaching which that can equip their diverse non-English-speaking students with proper skills needed to be competitive, proficient, and good communicators (Nunan, 1995; Richards, 2002).

Through the years, teachers were advised to adopt the various approaches such as grammar translation, direct approach, structural method, reading method, audio-lingual approach, and the situation methods. Few English teachers are familiar with the current trends in EFL methodology (Rao & Lei, 2014). They still show more favorable attitudes toward traditional methods (Zhu,

2003) but pay no attention to refreshing the teaching approaches and the reconciliation with western teaching methods.

### 1. Tier Classification System for Cities in Mainland China

In the 1980s, although there is no official announcement regarding the detailed list of this cities' classification, the Chinese central government introduced cities' tier system in order to facilitate the staged development of infrastructure throughout the whole country. This system classified the cities according to development priorities. At first, the tier system was a bureaucratic classification, but in the 1990s, it gained more importance in the real estate development perspectives, commerce, and cosmopolitans, all alongside the old notions of politics, economics, and population size (Chivakul, Lam, Liu, Maliszewski, & Schipke, 2015; Sida Liu, Liang, & Michelson, 2014; Sindy Liu, Perry, Moore, & Warnaby, 2016).

Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen are classified in the first tier, while tier II includes other major cities. Medium and smaller cities are grouped either into tier III or tier IV (Chivakul et al., 2015). However, this tier system is ever changing with the growth of the Chinese cities. Lower-tier cities are ranking up; other cities are merging into bigger cities, which makes the tier system in constant change.



*Figure 1: Tier system classification in China*

## 2. An Overview of the Education System of China

The education system in China, as shown in Table 2, consists of four main stages of schooling: kindergarten, primary, secondary, and post-secondary. The kids will spend three years in the kindergarten and then six years in primary school. The secondary school is divided into two phases: junior (3years) and senior (3years). The post-secondary school also has two main phases: the undergraduate or bachelor's degree (4years) and then the graduate phases with the master's and doctoral degrees (2 and 3 years, respectively) (Baldi, 2016).

*Table 2: Education system in China<sup>1</sup>*

Education system in China			
Education	School/level	Grade	Age
Primary	Primary school	1 to 6	6–12
Secondary	Junior (Lower) secondary school	7 to 9	12–15
Secondary	Senior (Upper) secondary/vocational senior secondary (Upper)	10 to 12	15–18
Post-secondary	Undergraduate level – Bachelor's degree	13 to 16	18–22
Post-secondary	Graduate level – Master's degree	17 to 18	22–24
Post-secondary	Graduate level – Doctoral degree	19 to 21	24–27

### 2.1.English in China's Education System

Since 2001, English became compulsory in elementary school and in Chinese national higher education entrance examination *Gaokao*. With China entering in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the MOE instructed all universities to use the English language in teaching certain subjects like technology, finance, foreign trade, economics, law, etc. This step was taken to improve the students' English level and to reach the same level of English proficiency in Hong

<sup>1</sup>Baldi, S., (2016), Education System in China

Kong. English, being one of the three compulsory subjects in the *Gaokao*, has gained a big importance as it is seen to be a key to success to top notch higher education institutes and an investment for better long-term prospects.

For the abovementioned reasons, parents are investing in their children's education and paying more attention to English, and students are getting more familiar with English even before primary school. This trend is spreading in tier-two cities and also bit by bit spreading to lower-tier cities.

This study, in particular, focuses on universities from fourth-tier cities in order to get a clearer picture on how oral English classes are employed in urban areas. China's fourth-tier cities are undeniably less developed compared to the rest of the tiers, and it is more likely that less-developed cities have greater demands in education. In addition, the researcher has observed throughout the years that there were many teachers with high qualifications who were hesitant to teach in China's fourth-tier cities due to unfamiliar environment. This further strengthens the researcher's desire to know how teachers in China's fourth-tier universities manage their classes and at the same time examine the teaching approaches they use.

## 2.2. Quality Curriculum Standards

The MOE holds the authority to make strategies, policies, regulations, guidelines, and reforms for the educational system (Zhao & Qiu, 2010). In 2011, the MOE implemented a new set of *Compulsory English Curriculum Standards* (义务教育英语课程标准) in order to stay up-to-date and satisfy the social and economic development of the country and to attract more international students. Government institutions aim to meet the needs of the market demand for more and more skilled personnel by implementing this new *Compulsory English Curriculum Standards*.

The new *Compulsory English Curriculum Standards* are based on five objectives: language skills, cultural awareness, learning strategies, language knowledge, and emotional attitude.

One of the five curriculum objectives is to improve language skills for the students. The English curriculum employs several comprehensible activities to develop speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cognitive and communicative abilities (Liu, 2009).

### **Section 3: Students' Learning of Oral English in China Universities**

In 1949, under the order of the Chinese MOE, English became a compulsory subject in high schools and universities in China. Learning English became more fashionable in China after its economic reforms in 1978 and 1979 (He, 2001). However, the lack of a suitable environment to practice English is limiting students' development of their language skills and affected their confidence and competence to use the language. Chinese students learn English as a kind of knowledge or a subject rather than a tool. Thus, they lag behind when it comes to communication skills.

This section provides an analysis of students' learning experience of oral English in China as well as the challenges they face.

#### **1. Teaching and Learning of Oral English in China Universities**

Li, Zhao, and Cao (2016) argue that there were learning problems in students' motivation with respect to empowerment, interest, and success in the article entitled "A Survey Report of Chinese College Students Perceptions of the College English Course." The research gap they identified indicates that little is known about the students' academic motivation and their engagement in their college English course. The progress of time, however, challenged many researchers to undertake different researches aimed at discovering the teaching approaches that address the target need of students in developing oral English proficiency. However, recent

researches focus only on non-English majors, which account for more than 90% of university students in China (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998).

In contrast to non-English major students, English major students tend to be more intrinsically motivated. However, at the same time, due to lack of confidence and fear of losing face, they are found to be lacking in the oral skills, which hinders them from seeking opportunities to practice the target language (Ngo et al., 2015).

After observing the English teaching documents in Chinese universities, it is found that the educational system in China has long been accused for being time consuming and inefficient. In order to change the situation, the Chinese government has initiated several rounds of English curriculum reforms, shifting it from English for general purpose (EGP) oriented to English for specific purposes (ESP) oriented (Yu & Liu, 2018).

## **2. Challenges Encountered by Chinese Students in Acquiring Speaking Skill**

Language learning, especially the speaking skill, can be hard, and English language is no exception. Although, in China, there are thousands of students who have been learning English for many years, still a lot of them cannot speak English fluently. The acquisition of speaking skill can be affected by several factors. These factors vary between the learning environment to the cultural and psychological factors of Chinese students.

### **2.1.Lack of Environment to Practice the Target Language**

There are many students especially in the large cities of China that have good background of the English language; unfortunately, these students were never given more opportunities to practice their English speaking skills besides their classrooms which hindered their abilities to further improve (Baldi, 2016). When a language learner immerse himself in the to-be-learned

language and fully surrounds himself with it, he will quickly acquire that language; maybe in just a few months, he will be able to communicate using it. For that reason, a lot of language learners choose to move abroad to study the language in its original setting. However, the case is different for domestic language learners; due to the lack of this perfect language learning environment, acquiring the language will be much more difficult for them, and finding learning and practicing opportunities will be scarcer. In English classes in China, most of the teachers are native Chinese. English major students do not find opportunities to listen to the authentic language in an authentic setting. It is hard for them to practice English in their daily life basis. Hence, learning the language became a real challenge for them, especially oral English (Qian, 2012).

## **2.2.Students' Lack of Confidence in Speaking English**

Risk taking factor plays a key role in language learning. If the language learners do not have the confidence to communicate, speak, and make mistakes, they will not gain perceptible progress. Chinese students, generally, tend to be shy and anxious about speaking publicly, making mistakes when speaking; they fear being mocked, ridiculed, and judged by their instructors and peers. This makes them miss the already scarce chances to practice the language. Because of this, speaking skill for Chinese students lags behind the other language skills as they do not practice speaking with English native speakers, and the more this situation lasts, the more the students find themselves trapped in a loop circle (Qian, 2012).

## **2.3.The Cultural Clash**

The cultural clash is a crucial factor impacting one's oral English skills; this includes religion, speaking habits, customs, and festivals. For instance, foreigners do not feel comfortable to ask about some private matters such as their earning or their age. On the other hand, Chinese always tend to ask such sort of questions. This cultural conflict creates conflict between the two

contrasts. When asked these questions, foreigners will feel angry and may retort which pushes back the Chinese speaker and makes him avoid speaking to foreigners in the future. Hence, paying attention to these cultural differences plays a major role in avoiding such clashes and prepares the language learners for a harmonious relationship whenever they speak with English native speakers (Qian, 2012).

#### **2.4.The Inert Attitude**

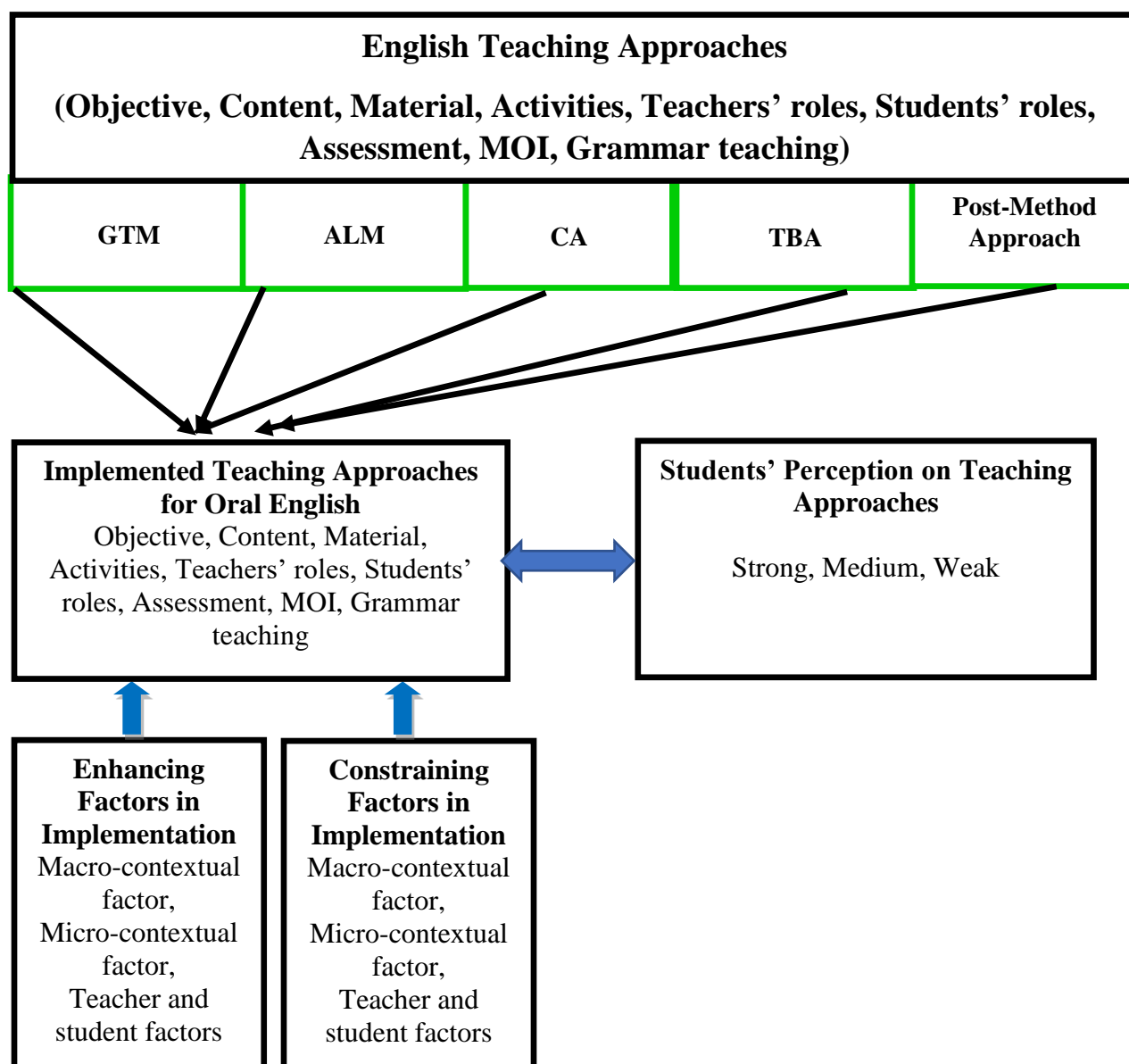
“Inert” here signifies “inactiveness” in the class. In contrast to the conventional classroom environment where the teacher asks questions to the students whom should raise hands to answer, some Chinese students tend to be inactive in the class. Majority of them lower their gazes and ignore the teacher’s question pretending not to be listening. Consequently, they miss the opportunity to stand up and speak in English. When the teacher asks for a group of participants to discuss something, the students avoid and reject to be chosen. What students need to do is to change their timidity and attempt to acknowledge challenges fearlessly in their life, which would contribute significantly to their fluency and would hasten the pace of their learning progress (Qian, 2012).

### **3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study**

From the theories and concepts presented in the previous sections, there is a need to identify ways to improve learning; hence, this study looks to understand the current implementation of teaching approaches for oral English in China fourth-tier universities. Figure 2 is a representation of the framework of the study. The upper part of the figure shows how the five English teaching approaches provide the study an understanding of the teaching approaches implemented by the teachers in their oral English classes. A review of the five teaching approaches, namely, GTM, ALM, CA, TBA, and post-method approach will support the analysis

of the teaching approaches. To answer research question 1, the analysis of the teaching approach(es) implemented by the teachers consists of nine basic components (objective, content, material, activities, teachers' roles, students' roles, assessment, medium of instruction, and grammar teaching).

Figure 2: Theoretical and conceptual framework of the study



As teaching and learning are related, research question 2 looks into the students' perceptions of the teaching approaches implemented by their teachers. Furthermore, understanding the constraining and enhancing factors influencing the teachers' implementation of the teaching approaches in their oral English classes is relevant. These factors were divided into two categories, namely, enhancing and constraining factors. Each factor would present description and explanation of its effects on the teachers' implementation of their adopted teaching strategies which range from contextual factors to teachers' and students' factors and provide key data to answer research question 3.



### Chapter 3: Research Methodology

To investigate the teaching approaches implemented in fourth-tier cities in China, it is essential to gain an overview of the context of where this study was carried out and to review the sample, the population of the study, the tools used to collect data, and how the data were analyzed. Therefore, in this chapter, the context and the population of the study are presented. Then, the research design of the investigation is explained.

This study made use of the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a method that helps to study the behavior or the perception of a target audience regarding a particular topic (Hollweck, 2016). There are different types of qualitative research method, among which some examples are in-depth interview, focused groups discussions, content analysis, and case study research.

In this study, the case study approach was adopted. A case study is used to analyze one contemporary individual, group, organization, phenomenon, or the like within its social context (Hollweck, 2016). It has become one of the most common ways of conducting qualitative research (Stake, 2000). It is appropriate for the present study for it allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth study on the intricate complexity of a social phenomenon in its real-life context within a limited time scale (Bell, 2006). This means that a more in-depth inquiry is generally used when “how,” “what,” or “why” questions are asked (Hollweck, 2016).

The researcher deemed it necessary to conduct a multi-case study in order to have a clearer view of the current situation faced by teachers and students in universities from China’s fourth-tier cities and be able to identify the similarities and differences in their experiences. Single case cannot reflect the overall picture of the city or area, considering the complexity of the teaching

experiences in China due to the complex situations in different types of universities and across cities of the same tier. Including multiple purposefully selected cases and having cross-case comparison would further strengthen the exploration and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, through multiple case studies, the researcher was able to identify possible recommendations for further improvements and specific methods which work better with the students. Therefore, to answer the research questions of this study, two different universities were sampled, with one being a normal university. Teachers from each of the two universities and six students for each teacher with high, medium, and low English level were nominated to participate in the study. Each of the four teachers was considered as a separate case. Multiple cases would provide the research questions with information from different perspectives or classroom contexts in the two universities.

## **1. The Research Context**

Both University A and University B were selected for this research because they are located in one of China's fourth-tier cities. The sampling of the two universities included several criteria: the location being in different fourth-tier cities in Anhui, being different types of universities, and the composition of the student population. Lastly, the researcher works at University B which made the gathering of data more convenient.

### **1.1.Profiles of the Two Universities in Fourth-Tier Cities**

Both universities are located in different fourth-tier cities in Anhui, China. University A is in Huaibei city while University B in Suzhou. To address the growing concern of students facing difficulties in speaking the English language, it is essential to know how they were taught inside the classrooms. Among all the universities belonging to China's fourth-tier cities, the researcher opted to choose University A and University B because of the following factors.

First, University A is a normal university with an annual population that ranges from 25,000 to 27,000 students. The researcher believes that the population of the school has a big impact on the overall performance of the teachers and the perceptions of the students. For instance, bigger population leads to more students in one class which will become a challenge for the teacher in terms of meeting the individual needs of the students.

Second, University B has a total population of 17,800 students. It used to be a normal university, but later on as per the mandate of the government, the university offered other courses since 2004. The researcher specifically chose this university because teachers from here have had experiences in dealing with students who were taking up different courses and not just future teachers like in University A.

Third, since both universities are located in China's fourth-tier cities, many of the students come from poor family backgrounds and are more likely to have poor foundation of the English language considering that fourth-tier cities also make up most of China's urban population. This challenge, the researcher believes, is one of the key features that need to be given attention which helps in determining how the teacher's implemented approach is supporting student learning.

Normal University A<sup>1</sup>, located in Huaibei City of Anhui Province, is a provincially governed university with distinctive teacher education features. It was established as a college in 1974, and in 1981, it was approved for awarding bachelor degrees. Normal University A was approved in 2003 to award master's degrees, and in 2007, directed by the MOE, it acquired excellence level in the quality level assessment for the undergraduate education. Currently, there

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<sup>1</sup>Normal university is an over-passed English translation that is still in use in Chinese universities names to describe a university that specializes in education. Normal universities in China mainly train teachers.

are 25,547 undergraduate full-time students and 673 postgraduate students, with 18 schools and 85 undergraduate programs in ten disciplines.

In 2010, it carried its actual name. Academic master's degrees are conferred in 15 first-class disciplines, and professional master's degrees are conferred in seven disciplines. Among all the 1400 teachers in the university, over 600 of them have doctoral degrees, 700 have master's degrees, while 524 of the teachers have been conferred for senior professional titles. Now, the university has a population of 25,547 undergraduate students and 673 postgraduate students.

Normal University A started the oral English courses in 1982 for three-year college students. As all Chinese universities require Gaokao<sup>1</sup> (NCEE) for admission, the admission score in 2019 was 550.

University B is located in Suzhou City, Anhui Province, administrated by Anhui Province with the approval of the State Council. It is a full-time and four -year undergraduate university with 15 schools with 64 undergraduate programs.

It has 1018 teaching staff members; 70 of them are professors, and 224 are associate professors. Of them, 792 have master's degrees and 83 hold doctoral degrees. The number of students has accumulated to over 17,800.

University B started the oral English courses in 1978 for three-year college students. As all Chinese universities require Gaokao (NCEE) for admission, the admission score in 2019 was 527.

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<sup>1</sup> The National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), also known as Gaokao, is standardized academic examination annually held in China as a prerequisite test taken by senior high school students for entrance into higher education institutions.

## 1.2. Sampling

Two teachers from each university and six students of each teacher participated in the study. Purposeful sampling using the selection criteria such as gender and years of oral English teaching was employed. The selected teachers had to be experienced and acquainted with teaching oral English and with more than 10 years of experience; moreover, teachers with professional trainings were prioritized in the selection; unfortunately, we had interviewed only one teacher satisfying such criteria.

To eliminate bias, two oral English teachers in each identified university who gave their consent to participate in the study are involved in the classroom observation. Apart from the two observation sessions and follow up interviews conducted, other data collection procedures for the case were implemented so as the result will not be limited on the classroom observations. These criteria were used as bases for a general guideline to do the initial analysis of videotaped lessons. Later additional questions and relevant issues were raised and included during the final interview after the classroom-lesson encounter. All observed lessons were videotaped for review and were summarized after taking the consent of the teachers and students.

Moreover, the participant teachers in this study had different education background and their number of years of teaching experience also varies. The researcher also checked beforehand the scheduled lessons for each of the teachers, so the possibility of the teachers having the same lesson flow is not probable.

As mentioned, four teachers were interviewed in this study, Lucy and Sarah teaching oral English at University A and Tracy and Bernard teaching oral English at University B. The four teachers met the requirements of the study (teaching oral English at universities in fourth-tier cities of China), and all the teachers were experienced enough and accustomed to their working

environment as they had more than ten years of teaching experience. Demographic data and academic qualifications of the interviewed teachers are summarized in Table 3.

*Table 3: Demographic data of the participating teachers at the time of the study*

Work university	Name	Gender	Teaching experience	Overseas experience	Academic qualifications	Training experience
University A	Lucy	F	13	No	<b>Majoring in English, Master.</b> - 1999–2003 Anhui Agricultural University: Majoring in English, Bachelor - 2007–2010, Hefei Polytechnic University: Majoring in English Translation, Master	No
	Sarah	F	17	No	<b>Majoring in English, Bachelor.</b> - Huaibei Normal University, Anhui: Majoring in English, Bachelor	No
University B	Tracy	F	20	No	<b>Majoring in English literature, Master.</b> - 1995–1999 Anhui Agricultural University: Majoring in English, Bachelor - 2007–2008 Anhui Normal University: Majoring in English Literature, master degree	No
	Bernard	M	11	No	<b>Majoring in English, Master of Education.</b> - 2000–2004 Anhui Normal University: Majoring in English, Bachelor - 2008–2011 Anhui Normal University: Majoring in English curriculum and pedagogy, master of education	2015–2016 Beijing Foreign Studies University, corpus linguistics

On the other hand, six English major students under the supervision of each teacher from each university were invited by the researcher to participate in the study. A total of twenty-four students (six students of each teacher class) made part of the sample based on the selection

criteria set which includes gender and their oral English level (high, medium, and low, according to the teacher's recommendation).

*Table 4: Selected students' criteria*

Teacher	Student	Gender	Year of study	Level	English level	Past English Education experience	Years of English study
Lucy	T1A1	M	Junior	A	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
	T1A2	F	Junior	A	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
	T1B1	F	Junior	B	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
	T1B2	F	Junior	B	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12
	T1C1	F	Junior	C	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Wuhu, Anhui Province	12
	T1C2	F	Junior	C	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12
Sarah	T2A1	F	Junior	A	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Anqing, Anhui Province	12
	T2A2	F	Junior	A	TEM-4	10 years in Xuancheng, Anhui Province	12

Teacher	Student	Gender	Year of study	Level	English level	Past English Education experience	Years of English study
	T2B1	F	Junior	B	TEM-4	6 years in Anqing, Anhui Province	12
	T2B2	F	Junior	B	TEM-4	7 years in Wuhu, Anhui Province	12
	T2C1	F	Junior	C	TEM-4	7 years since middle school in Huaibei, Anhui Province	12
	T2C2	F	Junior	C	CET-6	7 years in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
Tracy	T3A1	F	Sophomore	A	CET-4	10 years in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12
	T3A2	F	Sophomore	A	CET-4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	12
	T3B1	F	Sophomore	B	CET-4	10 years in Chuzhou, Anhui Province	12
	T3B2	F	Sophomore	B	CET-4	10 years in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12
	T3C1	F	Sophomore	C	CET-4	10 years in Chuzhou, Anhui Province	12
	T3C2	F	Sophomore	C	CET-4	10 years in Huangshan, Anhui Province	12



Teacher	Student	Gender	Year of study	Level	English level	Past English Education experience	Years of English study
Bernard	T4A1	F	Sophomore	A	CET-4	10 years in Bozhou, Anhui Province	12
	T4A2	F	Sophomore	A	CET-4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	12
	T4B1	M	Sophomore	B	CET-4	10 years in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
	T4B2	F	Sophomore	B	CET-4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	12
	T4C1	F	Sophomore	C	CET-4	10 years in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
	T4C2	F	Sophomore	C	CET-4	10 years in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province	12

## 2. Data Collection Tools

To investigate the approaches implemented by the teachers in teaching oral English, the factors affecting teachers' implementation of the approaches, and the students' perception on the teaching approaches, three methods of data collection were used in this study: lesson observations, interviews, and document analysis. Table 4 summarizes the methods used in this study, including the interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and their relationship with the three research questions.

*Table 5: Data collection methods*

Research Questions	Teacher Interview	Student Interview	Lesson Observation	Document Analysis
1.What are the approaches implemented by the teachers in teaching oral English to English majors in China universities of fourth-tier cities?	√		√	√
2.What are the students' perceptions of the approaches for teaching oral English?		√		
3.What are the factors affecting teachers' implementation of the approaches for teaching oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities?	√	√	√	√

## 2.1. Interviews

Interviews are normally used to acquire more in-depth information about the subjects' thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about a particular topic (Guest et al., 2006), to probe more deeply and to address widely specific issues or concerns surveyed in a questionnaire (Mason & Bramble, 1997), or to check the accuracy of impressions obtained from observations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). This study adopted interview techniques to have an in depth exploration of the teachers' practices and the students' perceptions of the different teaching approaches such as GTM, TBA, CA, and ALM, as well as the various factors affecting the teachers' implementation of any of these approaches in their oral English classes. The researcher used semi-structured interviews starting with general ideas, topics, or issues for teachers and students to address. This approach granted flexibility for the researcher to shape and adjust the questions according to the interviewee's realities; moreover, issues that emerged from

the interviews provided additional data for detailed explanation, discussion, and expansion of the interviewees' response (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

Interviews with four teachers were carried out before and after the lesson observations. Each interview lasted for about 40 minutes. Student interviews (six students for each teacher) were carried out individually after lesson observation, and each student interview took around 30 minutes. A specific interview protocol was used in the interviews, including structured or prepared interview questions for both pre-lesson and post-lesson observation to students and teachers (see Appendix 1 and 2). The interview questions were designed based on the components of teaching approaches (see Table 1).

All the interviews with the teachers and students were conducted in Putonghua and were audio-recorded, translated, and transcribed for clarity in later analysis and interpretation using the NVIVO software.

## **2.2. Lesson Observations**

Observations enabled the researcher to collect first-hand data about the participants' behavior in real-life context (Morrison, 2000). The main purpose of the study was to find out the teaching approaches adopted by the teachers in teaching oral English, so naturalistic lesson observations were deemed most appropriate. In this study, the researcher conducted a 45-minute lesson observation at least twice for each teacher using a preplanned observation guide (see Appendix 3), accounting to a total of eight observations. All the observed lessons were video-recorded. The researcher also took detailed field notes based on the observation guide.

Depending on the environment where the observation was made, there exist two types of observations: laboratory observation and naturalistic observation. Laboratory observation is

carried out in setup settings, while the latter is made in a real-life-context. In this research, naturalistic observation was adopted. The observed classes were conducted in the natural and usual way. There were no specific setups or special preparations so that the teachers and students could act the same way they used to do. According to previous studies (Gold, 1958), the researcher can play one of four roles during the observation: a complete participant, a participant as observer, an observer as a participant, and a complete observer (Gold, 1958). In this research, the researcher was a complete observer.

Attending two lessons for each teacher, 90 minutes per lesson period, the researcher had gathered four observations from each university which provided a better understanding about what teaching approaches each teacher used and the teaching approaches adopted in each university. Also, it gave the researcher a better understanding about factors that affected the implementations of oral English teaching approaches. These observations, alongside the other data collected using the other tools, provided enough data to understand the findings.

### **2.3. Document Analysis**

Documents provide a rich repertoire of evidence which not only contributes to the research findings directly but also substantiates the data from direct observations and interviews (Bell, 2006; Patton, 2001). Documents are valuable in that they are stable, exact, and unobtrusive records of names, references, and details of an event (Hollweck, 2016). This research employed the method of analyzing documents to study the different teaching approaches in the intended curriculum, the resourced curriculum, as well as the teaching approaches being implemented.

The following documents and materials were requested from the teachers for analysis:

- University official curriculum documents and teacher training materials concerning teaching approaches
- The fourth-tier teachers' journal articles or theses on different teaching approaches
- English subject syllabi, textbooks, lesson plans, and teaching resources of the two teachers
- Records of assignments and test paper/examination paper results used in the teaching process

Various documents were gathered from different sources in this study. The official documents concerning the curriculum innovation were extracted from the Internet and the local education authorities in China universities of fourth-tier cities or directly from the teacher-trainers. Teachers' journal articles or theses were collected from popular education periodicals in mainland China or from the teachers participating in the study. Textbooks, lesson plans, teaching resources, and examination papers were also collected from the teachers. Moreover, the assignments were requested from the students participating in this study. All gathered documents were synthesized, analyzed, interpreted, and summarized.

### **3. Data Saturation**

Data saturation refers to the point in the research process where no new information are discovered in the data analysis, and this redundancy signals to researchers that data collection may cease (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). It is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'reilly & Parker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). This is especially problematic because of the many hundreds if not thousands of research designs out there (Walby, 2015). There is no shape that fits all the research.

Moreover, interview questions should be structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions; otherwise, one would not be able to achieve data saturation as it would be a constantly moving target (Guest et al., 2006).

In this research, the interviews were structured in a way that the researcher asked the interviewees the same questions. Twenty-four students and four teachers were interviewed to achieve thick data. At the same time, the interviews with the students included 15 questions which should provide rich data to the analyses. Regarding the interviews conducted with the four teachers, these were structured in two parts: pre-lesson observation interviews and post-lesson observation interviews. The first part consisted of ten questions, while the post-lesson observation interviews included 16 questions. In total the teacher interviews included 26 questions, which provided rich data analyses and helped in achieving data saturation.

#### **4. Triangulation**

For triangulation purposes, the data were collected from different sources; different methods were used to provide information in order to answer the same research question. The theory from different perspectives helped in interpreting the collected data. The cross-check analysis of the same data in different periods were employed for comparison of the findings of other researches analyzing the same data at the same time, therefore ensuring the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

An in-depth investigation of each case was undertaken employing the multiple-method design of triangulation. A variety of data were gathered from the teachers before and after the lesson observations and interviews as well as various documents to ensure validity and reliability.

For triangulation and reliability purposes, three measures were taken in order to gather the valid data:

- Data were collected from two different locations: In this study, we collected data from University A and University B. This measure was taken in order to collect more accurate data and to identify whether there are distinctions between the two universities. University A and University B are located in two different cities: Huaibei and Suzhou, respectively. This gives an idea that factors and conditions may differ between the universities of fourth-tier cities. Hence, the researcher chose to investigate the implemented oral English teaching approaches in these two universities instead of only one university.
- Data were collected from four oral English teachers: In this study, four teachers were interviewed, which gave more credit to the collected data. Two teachers who handle oral English classes from each university were interviewed in order to vary the sources of data collection.
- Data were collected in two instances for each teacher: When conducting this research, the researcher had to conduct classroom observations in order to understand the classroom interactions, materials used, teachers' and students' roles, etc. Furthermore, in order to collect more data, two classroom observations for each teacher class were made to reduce the possibility of affecting students or teachers' behavior due to the presence of the researcher during the classroom observation and ensure an accurate understanding of the implementation of the teaching approaches.

## 5. Data Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke, a thematic analysis is “A method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All the collected data in this study were reviewed, translated, categorized, and summarized. In order to analyze it, the researcher used the NVIVO software for the initial coding and in conducting a thematic analysis oriented by three research questions.

When conducting qualitative research, it is widely common to use thematic analysis to analyze the collected data. In 2006, Braun and Clarke issued a step-by-step explanation of how a thematic analysis should be carried. They state that in order to conduct a solid and reliable qualitative research, it is indispensable to use a solid thematic analysis as it is the foundation of qualitative research.

In order to ensure clarity and rigor when conducting a thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke defined the following six steps:

### 5.1. Getting Familiarized with the Data

Braun and Clarke (2006) have said that it is important for the researcher to immerse himself in the data and to become very familiar with it. Verbal data is to be transcribed. The researcher has to read again and again his entire data (data corpus) before any coding or searching for themes or patterns.

### 5.2. Generating Initial Codes

Once all the data were gathered and there is already an established familiarity these data, Braun and Clarke said that the research can start making initial codes. This can be done either

manually by highlighting and coloring and taking notes or using a specialized software like NVIVO. They say that the researcher has to systematically code all the gathered data.

### **5.3. Searching for Themes**

At this point, the researcher has a long list of different codes. In this step, the researcher has to sort out all the codes into potential themes and collect them together. During this stage, it is preferable to visualize the data in tables, mind maps, or flash cards. Codes are to be regrouped into major themes and subthemes, and other codes might be discarded (or kept as outliers). By the end of this step, Braun and Clarke made it clear that the research has to end up with a list of themes and subthemes.

### **5.4. Reviewing Themes**

In this stage, the researcher had to refine the themes, regroup them, collapse them into other themes, or break them down to smaller themes, depending on their importance and how much they served the research objectives.

In this stage, reviewing has to be done on two levels:

At the coded data level, the researcher reviewed all the data that were coded in the second step, whether they fit into the themes or not and if further coding is necessary or not.

At the themes level, the researcher needed to consider each theme in relation to the data corpus. A thematic map would help to visualize the relationships between the coded themes. In this step, the researcher had to consider the relationships between the chosen themes form a coherent pattern and to see if the data needed further rearrangements. By the end of this step, the research had to form a satisfactory thematic map of the data.

### 5.5. Defining and Naming Themes

After reviewing the themes, the researcher already gained a better understanding about what each theme was about and what data the theme captured. The researcher then formed an overall narrative with all the data. The researcher analyzed each theme and its narratives. Themes and subthemes were clear at this point and were officially named, and final thematic map was issued at this step. When data was coded, the project identified the following themes and subthemes:

*Table 6: Example of coded themes and subthemes*

Coded themes	Coded subthemes
Implemented teaching approach	Objectives Content Materials Activities Teachers' roles Students' roles Assessment MOI Grammar teaching
Students' perception	Activities Challenges in oral English learning Student teacher relationship
Factors	Contextual factors Teacher-related factors Student-related factors

### 5.6. Producing Report

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this stage involves the final analysis and write-up of the report. Depending on the nature of the research (thesis, research paper, newsletter), the researcher has to make a report of his findings in a concise, coherent, logical, and non-repetitive way. Evidences, using vivid example from the analyzed data, have to be provided when discussing each theme.

In this study, NVIVO10 software was used to conduct a thematic analysis of the collected data. The same abovementioned instructions by Braun and Clarke were used during the data analysis process.

First, after conducting the interviews and observations, the audio-recorded data were transcribed and formatted in NVIVO 10-supported documents (word documents). After that, all the documents were imported to the NVIVO project.

After importing the documents and getting familiarized with the data, the researcher coded the documents into themes as shown in Table 5 (after circle or reviewing and refinement).

## **6. Ethical Considerations**

After taking their consent to be part of our study, both teachers and students participating in this study were treated according to the guidelines on ethics in research of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Education University of Hong Kong. The study involved no potential risk. Identifying information were removed from the data file and stored separately, with the link between identifying information and data made through codes only. Entered data were stored on a password-protected file and a password-protected computer, while original, anonymized hard copies of the pre- and posttests will be stored in a locked office until two years past the completion of the EdD thesis.

## **7. Limitation of the Study**

Due to time constraints, this study used convenience sampling from two target universities of fourth-tier cities in Anhui. Although purposeful sampling was used to identify the teachers for the in-depth lesson observation, only four teachers, two from each university, and 24 students,

six from each of the teacher participants, were studied. The limited number of sampled universities constitutes a limitation of this study.

In addition, this research is conducted only in the context of fourth-tier cities in Anhui, thus making it difficult to generate a full picture of all the fourth-tier cities in China. Further studies in contexts of different provinces could contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the teaching approaches in teaching oral English in universities of fourth-tier cities in mainland China.

## **8. Challenges**

It was difficult to find time to interview teachers and students about their immediate perceptions of the lessons because of their busy school schedules.

The outbreak of COVID-19 had slowed down the pace of data collection and disturbed the schedule of the research work.



## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter discusses the four cases involved in this study, namely, the cases of Lucy, Sarah, Tracy, and Bernard, on how the teaching approaches were implemented in these cases and whether there were variations in students' perceptions. The following section aims to picture how each teacher was teaching his/her classes in his respective university, and it attempts to describe the learning experience in his/her classroom. It analyzes then the perception of the students to the teaching approach used and deduces the factors that affect the implementation of oral English teaching approaches in the classroom. Findings are discussed and summarized in this chapter.

### 1. Case of Lucy

#### 1.1. Profile of Lucy

As shown in Table 3, Lucy studied her bachelor's degree in English at the Anhui Agricultural University from 1999 to 2003. In 2010, she graduated from Hefei Polytechnic University with a Master of Arts in Translation and Interpreting Studies.

With neither practical training nor further professional training after her graduation, she started her job in University A 13 years ago. At the time of the study, she was responsible for teaching two subjects: English writing, as she taught three junior classes, once per week (90 mins for each class), and oral English (90 minutes for each class, with a total of 27 hours for the whole semester), as she was also responsible for teaching three other junior classes once a week.

Lucy mentioned that her assignment in teaching English writing affected greatly the time she has for the preparation of her lessons in oral English. It has been known that the level of difficulty in learning English writing equals to that of oral English. Lucy, being the facilitator of

the lessons, had to make sure that she gives her students the quality step-by-step guidance in learning English writing, meaning she has to properly balance the time she spends in preparing her learning materials for both subjects without compromising the other.

Although neither had Lucy experienced overseas teaching and in-service training nor had she taught a pedagogy subject before, she has accumulated enough professional teaching experiences through her 13 years of teaching at University A including two years of involvement in teaching oral English.

## **1.2. Teaching Practices of Lucy**

### **1.2.1. Objectives of Teaching**

Lucy has two objectives in teaching oral English: a primary objective that was officially selected by the university administration, which was Lucy's major focus, and a secondary objective that was unofficially and personally selected by Lucy, based on her own learning experiences, e.g., her interactions with native English speakers, reading of English books, participation in English classes, etc., and her teaching experience:

1. **Primary objective:** Providing opportunities for students to fluently speak and interact using the English language to enhance their communication skills especially those related to public speaking

As for the primary objective, officially set by the university, it took two-thirds of Lucy's teaching periods. She encouraged interactions with the students because she believed this can considerably improve the students' speaking skills. She put great emphasis in supporting students' development through speaking fluently and interacting in English as she said:

“There are a lot of interactions in my class, between the students and myself and among students, because it is a very practical lesson, and most of the interactions are fruitful” (Lucy-interview-202004).

Lucy looked positively into these interactions, and she described them as being fruitful. She thought this practice served her objective of improving the students’ communication skills. Furthermore, in analyzing the textbook Lucy used to teach her students, points such as oral expressions, importance of public speaking, and practices that can improve communication skills were highlighted.

Lucy focused more on fluency and speaking and paid little attention to grammar and accuracy. She made the students learn through trial and error as she commented on this, saying: “what’s important as oral English teachers in our university is to make students familiar with foreign accents and be fluent in oral English” (Lucy-interview-202004). However, even if she gives little focus on grammar and accuracy, it cannot be avoided that discussions related to language rules especially the basic ones are inserted in between discussions about speaking and fluency.

2. **Secondary objective:** Enhancing the student’s teaching strategies by completing activities related to teaching English to pupils in primary and secondary schools (e.g., making a lesson plan, how to teach oral expression, how to teach grammar)

This secondary objective, which focuses on enhancing students’ pedagogies and strategies for English Language Teaching (ELT), was unofficially chosen based on different factors. Lucy believed that allowing the students to learn these pedagogies and strategies would add up to the skills that they will need to have as teachers in the future. Studying in a Normal University meant that Lucy’s students were being trained to be teachers; thus, Lucy thought it was reasonable to

teach her students teaching strategies especially that she did not get the chance to learn these when she was a student herself. For that reason, she thought pedagogy is a skill her students should learn.

Lucy devoted one-third of each period for ELT pedagogy. For example, at the last half hour of the first observed period, Lucy taught a lesson on how to teach oral English for primary school students (e.g., lessons about morning routines). This particular lesson allowed the students to learn effective strategies and plans to teach oral English. She said, “I will show them some examples of teaching plans which are very intriguing” (Lucy-interview-202004).

When she was asked about what ELT pedagogy she was going to teach in the next lesson, she said, “My next lesson will be about: How to teach oral English for middle school students” (Lucy-interview-202004).

When Lucy was asked about her design in teaching grammar, she responded by saying that she does not follow a particular design. Rather, she focuses more on teaching her students the strategies on becoming a good grammar teacher and only inserts teachings in grammar whenever deemed necessary. She even added, “Because I teach oral English, even when I teach students how to teach grammar, I would mix grammar teaching with oral practice” (Lucy-interview-202004). However, she was aware that the attention she gave in teaching grammar was lesser compared to that of speaking English practices.

Lucy wanted to include in her classes activities that would give the students the opportunities to practice teaching in real-life context, as this type of activity serves her second teaching objective of improving the students’ teaching skills.

Lucy expressed her desires for improvements whenever she has the chance to. This clearly depicted how her second teaching objective had greatly affected her teaching decisions.

“I would like them to really act out in a primary school class or middle school class if there is a next time” (Lucy-interview-202004).

Lucy decided to set these two objectives based on administration guidance from the university and her personal learning and work experience. Communication skills especially public speaking skills were chosen as an objective due to its importance, which was clearly stated in the definition of public speaking in the textbook she adopted, “...Public speaking, by definition refers to any kind of speech delivered in public. Therefore, one is doing public speaking on many occasions, ranging from a casual chat with friends to answering questions in class. As long as one is not talking to himself (i.e., doing monologue), it counts as a kind of public speaking.”

To sum up, Lucy has two objectives: a primary objective officially set by the university administration, taking two-thirds of her teaching periods, aimed to help the students improve their communicative skills especially public speaking, and a secondary and unofficially set objective, which took the remaining one-third of her teaching periods. The second objective was set to prepare the students for their teaching careers. Moreover, these two objectives had affected Lucy’s teaching choices regarding content, materials, and classroom activities.

### **1.2.2. Teaching Content**

Two of Lucy’s main resource materials used in teaching were provided by the university which contained topics about speech and debate trainings. Following her primary and secondary objectives, Lucy’s lessons focused mainly on textbook contents, which can be categorized into two streams:

**a. Words, expression and rhetorical devices, and speeches for special occasions**

Initially, to serve her primary objective, Lucy incorporated different contents in her lessons, such as new vocabulary and expressions, rhetorical devices, speech techniques, and speeches for special occasions.

Following the textbook activities, Lucy made the students learn and memorize new words, such as “audience,” “eloquent,” etc., and required them to use these words during their presentations and debates. Primarily, she would highlight the list of words found in the textbook activities, then explain them to the students, and would later on require the students to use these words in their future speeches. For example, Lucy explained to her students the words “cruise” and “disoriented”; she would then later ask them to use these words in their debate speeches.

The same goes for expressions. Lucy explained to her students the meaning of expressions used in the textbook and had the students use them. Among these expressions observed in the classroom were *wagging his tail*, *dwelling in the past*, and *in harm’s way*. These expressions were used in the conversations and narrations found in the textbook, and Lucy wanted the students to understand their correct usage; thus, she insisted on letting the students use these newly learned words in every opportunity.

Another teaching content from Lucy’s lessons was grammar feedback. Although Lucy did not conduct grammar lessons, she made mini-grammar lessons by giving irregular verb examples and feedbacks.

Rhetorical devices also made an important part in Lucy’s lesson contents. Teaching the students oral English and how to make speeches, Lucy gave lessons in rhetorical devices from the textbook.

Lastly, speeches for special occasions represented an important lesson content that served Lucy's primary objective. From her official textbook, Lucy analyzed, with the students, speeches for special occasions, such as acceptance, dedications, etc. She particularly discussed with the students the apology of President Bill Clinton wherein significant everyday English words were used in the speech. Lucy believed that allowing the students to read contents such as this would help them better understand the usage of the words. She would also conduct speech contests in the classroom to give the students more motivation to the practice using the words they have learned.

Due to these different contents, the students were able to deal with different language functions. From the observations of classroom activities and teaching documents, Lucy guided the students in asking questions, making descriptions, criticizing, defending ideas, comparing, denying, and making claims convincing, all along with normal social interaction functions. Among the language functions covered in her classes are shown in Table 7.

The addition of the debates and students' presentations made the lesson content more varied. In a form of British Parliamentary Style Debate, a major form of academic debate in which the students were divided into two teams of two people on each side, there were various lesson contents and topics presented in a way that permitted the students to learn new academic vocabulary about education, politics, economy, and actuality topics. To improve her students' speech performance in the debates, Lucy also taught them how to use rhetorical devices.

Further, some of the topics focusing on public speaking that were taught from the textbook include the process of writing a speech, talking about personal experiences in the speech, putting particular experiences into the speech, doing research in speech preparation, and so on. Lucy wanted the students to learn how to express themselves and gain solid public speaking strategies.

Table 7: Language functions included in Lucy's classes

Primary Objective		Secondary Objective
Debates	Presentation	Designing Lesson Plans
Agreeing and disagreeing Asking questions Comparing and contrasting Criticizing and defending Denying Describing cause and effect Evaluating Explaining Expressing and supporting Opinions Interpreting Making claims Persuading Planning and predicting Reporting Summarizing	Comparing and contrasting Defining Describing cause and effect Describing spatial and temporal relations Explaining Expressing and supporting Opinions Interpreting Making claims Reporting Summarizing	Analyzing Comparing and contrasting Comprehending text or speech Defining Describing cause and effect Drawing conclusions Explaining Generalizing Interpreting Planning and predicting Reporting Summarizing

### b. Learning and teaching strategies

In addition, Lucy included teaching strategies in her lesson contents to arouse the students' interest in the lessons. Lucy's choices were made based on her own teaching experience assuming that her students, being in a Normal University, are going to be teachers in the future. For this reason, she allocated the last 30 minutes or so of each teaching period to teach pedagogy and teaching strategies. Some of the lessons Lucy taught in pedagogy include allowing the students to collaborate with each other in classroom activities, encouraging the students to use prior knowledge and new experiences in playing an active role in the learning process, and frequently asking students to explain and elaborate ideas instead of simply having lectures. As for the teaching strategies, Lucy merged actual learning processes and strategic theories in order for the students to have actual visions of how things work inside the classroom. For example, at the end of the first observed period, Lucy taught the students how to teach oral English lessons for primary school students. She used "morning routines" inside the classroom as an example

lesson. She found this as a good example since morning routines in classrooms mostly involve a morning message, a question of the day, etc. This would allow the primary school students to talk and express their ideas, hence a strategic way integrate oral English lessons.

*Table 8: The researcher's course guide of Lucy's oral English class*

Period	Subject: Oral English		
27 hours	Content	Overview	Lesson objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to communicate</li> <li>• Listen to respond</li> <li>• English for everyday situations</li> </ul>	Students will be taught how to communicate effectively and listen to exchanges of ideas in an everyday context	The students will be able to speak clearly to be heard and understood in simple exchanges of thoughts and ideas and listen to respond properly and achieve effective communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech fluency</li> <li>• Speech compositions</li> </ul>	The students will be taught how to make different types of speeches and practice their ability to speak the English language through constant speech presentations	The students will be able to master the use of the English language in speaking and in speech performances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar awareness and structure</li> <li>• Vocabulary development</li> </ul>	The students will be introduced to helpful vocabulary words that are helpful in everyday conversation and be taught how to spot errors in grammar structures and ways to correct them	The students will be able to confidently communicate without grammatical errors in their sentence structures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving pronunciation</li> </ul>	The students will be taught how to properly pronounce words and be introduced to the techniques in mastering fluency in pronunciation	The students will be able to speak confidently and with expressions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debates</li> <li>• Role-plays</li> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Speech presentations</li> </ul>	Students will be given activities to boost their confidence and improve their English speaking abilities	The students will be able to master the skills that they have learned in oral English and will have a continuous process of application for them to achieve mastery of the target language.

To sum up, Lucy focused primarily on the communicative skills but at the same time provided the students effective strategies in teaching to boost their self-confidence in the English language. She gave emphasis on topics related to making a speech, doing presentations, preparing for debates, and proper delivery of lessons in schools.

### 1.2.3. Materials

Lucy used different sets of materials in order to achieve her predefined teaching objectives. When she was asked about the type of materials she used in teaching her lessons, she answered, “All kinds of reference books, powerpoint (PPT), and the teacher’s personal presentation” (Lucy-interview-202004).

Following the teaching objectives, Lucy had two types of teaching materials: teaching materials that served her primary objective (communication and public speaking) and teaching materials that served her secondary objective (teaching strategies and pedagogy).

For her primary objective, Lucy used two main teaching materials: one provided by the university administration and another one personally picked by her. The university provided Lucy and the students a textbook entitled *Series of textbooks for college English elective courses: English speech and debate training: A guide to English speech and debate* (Zhang, 2011).

This textbook, published by Nanjing University Press in 2011, formed the main teaching material for Lucy. The textbook is arranged based on practical practice, covering every specific step of speech and debate, with model essays as well as discussion and analysis. It has a relatively complete system, real and fresh corpus, and reasonable practice design, so it can be used in oral English skills classes to improve the students’ ability of prepared speech, impromptu speech, and thematic debate. It emphasizes practicability and practicality. Each unit is based on a variety of materials, including famous contemporary speeches, as well as excellent speeches by

college students in various competitions. Each unit has corresponding exercises to consolidate the learned. At the same time, the textbook closely integrates the important speech and debate competitions in China, which can help teachers guide students to achieve good results in the competitions. It was not organized in the traditional way of themes and topics; rather, it was divided into 15 chapters that discuss speech techniques, styles (debate, impromptu, and special occasion speech), and speech analysis examples with assignments to practice on. These chapters include the following:

*Table 9: Textbook chapters with time spent on each chapter at the time of the study*

Textbook Chapter	Number of Periods
Fundamentals of public speaking	1 period
Talking about our personal experience in the speech	1.5 periods (the study included classroom observations from this chapter)
Putting your experience into your speech	1.5 periods (the study included classroom observations from this chapter)
Doing research in speech preparation	*
A good beginning is half of the success	*
Drawing a circle in your speech	*
Rhetorical devices in the speech	*
The process of writing a speech	*
Basics of an impromptu speech	*
How to prepare an impromptu speech	*
Preparing for a speech contest	*
The British parliamentary debate 1	*
The British parliamentary debate 2	*
Speech for special occasions 1	*
Speech for special occasions 2	*
An example of multi-draft speech	*

\*This chapter was not part of the researcher's period of classroom observation; hence, the number of periods was not determined.

Another teaching material that served the same primary objective was the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) Cup Speech Contest videos. The second material was more practical wherein Lucy played the videos in front of the class and discussed with her students the contents and the public speaking techniques used by the contestants.

Lastly, the students' speeches, presentations, and performance during the various classroom activities also form part of the teaching materials, as they were objects for discussion and analysis.

These different types of materials used by Lucy, as summed up in Table 10, were intended to boost the students' speaking skills. In her lessons, she also used some videos from a TV program with Chinese students' participating in English public speaking contest. She then discussed with her students the strategies and mistakes the participants have made. The videos were mainly from FLTRP ETIC Cup (See Appendix 4) .

*Table 10: List of teaching materials used by Lucy*

Type of teaching material	Teaching materials	
	Communication and public speaking	Teaching strategies and pedagogy
Materials officially set by the administration	<i>Series of textbooks for college English elective courses: English speech and debate training: A guide to English speech and debate</i>	
Materials chosen by the teacher	FLTRP Cup speech contest TV Program Teacher's personal presentation, e.g., instructions for activities	Textbook: <i>English Teacher Development Series: Design of Oral English Teaching Activities</i> (in Chinese)
Students' work used in the lesson	Students' speeches and presentations as an object of discussion analysis	Students' teaching plans as an object of analysis.

Videos of FLTRP were played in the classroom and would then later be analyzed by the students with the guidance of their teacher. In her lessons, FLTRP videos were of great use. Lucy would explain the strategies in making a speech, play videos of excellent contestants, and analyze them with the students. The students would compare the performances of the contestants

and the strategies they used and would later on apply what they have learned in the presentations which were assigned to them.

For her secondary objective, Lucy picked from a bookstore a book about pedagogy entitled, *English Teacher Development Series: Design of Oral English Teaching Activities*. This book was written in Chinese. This teaching material was unofficially chosen by Lucy out of convenience, and the students did not have access to. Another teaching material that served the same secondary objective was the students' presentations and teaching plans. Lucy used these teaching materials, represented by the students' presentations, as an object of analysis to determine what still needs to be improved in the students' performance.

#### **1.2.4. Activities**

The classroom that Lucy designed for her students introduced them to different forms of oral English communication activities such as debates, public speaking, etc. They were made to do exercises such as different forms of speeches, role-playing, etc., in order to practice their speaking skills. Also, Lucy made sure that all activities give focus to the learners, hence letting them have a meaning negotiated interaction. This is Lucy's reason in adopting the CA in her teaching strategies. She was aware that this approach would particularly provide opportunities for her students to have meaningful interactions. She added, "There are so many meaningful interactions in my oral English classes ... and discussions are fruitful" (Lucy-interview-202004).

Following the two objectives set by Lucy, her classroom activities were clearly distinguished into two categories, as shown in Table 8: The first one is a set of activities that served her primary objective which took two-thirds of each period; these activities were mainly about making presentations, debate, and sharing personal experiences. The second set of

activities served her secondary objective which took the remaining one-third of the time; these activities focused on designing a lesson plan.

In order to fulfill her first objective, Lucy would give a presentation where she explains the requirements for the activities and gives the necessary input for the students in the first five to ten minutes of the lesson. After that, the students would make a presentation, debate, do problem-solving, and share personal experiences related to the activity they were assigned to. For the last step, Lucy would assess the students' performance based on fluency in speech delivery, content, conviction in presenting the ideas, and the student's ability to communicate effectively. Lucy then gives feedbacks to the students. Using this set of activities, Lucy aimed to improve her students' communicative and speaking skills.

Lucy prepared the activities with the characteristics of a CA in her mind. She was familiar with its features and she believed that it would help her in meeting her objectives of improving her students' proficiency in the English language. She also organized her students in ways that they would have continuous social interactions with each other as they complete the activities given to them, hence the purpose of group works.

Another type of activities which Lucy used in her lessons included allowing her students to talk about the contrast of Western and Chinese culture. Topics range from table manners and family education to events like weddings and even the evolution of Chinese clothing.

Lucy believed that the students have to be interactive; hence, she would encourage them to share their understanding with their assigned small group and with their peers in the same class. This is the reason why most of Lucy's class activities involved group works. However, in some instances, one-third of Lucy's students were not being interactive with the activities. Because of this, the duties were mostly performed by the remaining two-thirds. To solve this problem, Lucy

would individually meet with these non-interactive students during their free time and talk to them about their struggles in class. She would encourage them to perform better in the next activities and ask them of the things that could motivate them. Lucy supposed that through this action, all the students in her class will benefit something from her teaching, not only those who have confidence in class participation.

For Lucy's secondary objective, the remaining one-third of each period was allotted to the teaching of pedagogy. In order to do this, she discussed with the students some examples of teaching plans. In one instance, Lucy assigned the students a teaching plan for primary school students with "morning routines" as its example.

This activity took the remaining 28 minutes of the period which was divided into performing the following activities:

1. The first eight minutes was used for the discussion on the vocabulary of the proposed lesson – vocabulary and verbs of morning routines. This was an open discussion where all the students contributed to.
2. After giving the decision on the teaching objectives and contents, ten minutes were given to the students to discuss the possible teaching activities and games to practice routine verbs with primary school students.
3. Finally, the remaining ten minutes was a wrap up of the lesson.

For this particular session, Lucy gathered the students into groups with four –five members. She required them to design their own lesson plan as a homework assignment.

Using this type of activity, Lucy aimed to foster in her students the ability to design a teaching plan together with the development of their oral English.

Lucy's classroom activities were designed mainly for group work and pair work, less often individual work. After the observation of the first lesson, Lucy was asked about the possible learning outcomes from the lesson she had just given the students. She answered, "Students are required to form a group of four –five persons and design a teaching plan which will be presented in the next class" (Lucy-interview-202004). This gave the idea that the learning outcomes will be made known once the students have presented.

The classes are based on the learners' needs, and students were given activities that would particularly promote negotiated interactions.

*Table 11: Teaching flow of one of the observed lessons*

Period	Chapter 5 (A good beginning is half of the success)			Time (mins)		%	
Primary Objective							
Class 1	Part 1	Reading aloud the transcript of the speech	07 mins	42 mins	62 Mins	46%	
		Explanation and analysis of the speech	10 mins				
	Part 2	Lecture (importance of a good beginning for the speech)	10 mins				
		Practice (discussion about how to start seven example speeches)	15 mins				
5 mins Break							
Class 2	Part 3	Lecture (common ways to begin a speech)	10 mins	20 mins	62 Mins	23%	
		Practice (discussion about how to start three example speeches)	10 mins				
Secondary Objective							
Class 1 and 2 Second part	Pedagogy: designing a lesson plan (morning routines) PPP model	1. Vocabulary and verbs of morning routines	08 mins	28 mins		28 Mins	31%
		2. Activities and games to practice the routine verbs	10 mins				
		3. Wrap up and homework assignments	10 mins				
Total			90 mins		100 %		

Giving the students these specific duties proved how Lucy attempted to improve her students' speaking and communication skills. She used these activities in designing her lesson

plans to give her students the necessary skills as future teachers, which is at the same time beneficial to the improvement of the students' speaking skills.

### **1.2.5. Teacher's Role**

Lucy believed that her students should be active partners in the educational process, and for that reason, she played different roles during the classroom activities:

Firstly, she was a needs assessor. Lucy, according to her professional and learning experiences, set two teaching objectives for her students: improving their communication and public speaking skills and teaching pedagogy to her students. Although it was a subjective step from her behalf, she came to this decision based on her 13 years of teaching experience. Also, Lucy chose her teaching objectives and contents based on her students' needs. Even though some of the students had shown little interests in the activities, Lucy made sure that her lesson contents were appropriate and understandable to her students. In this case, she was also a resource developer as she picked and developed her teaching resources. She further made follow-up of her students' progress to make sure their needs had been met.

Furthermore, Lucy acted as a facilitator wherein she assisted and guided her students in completing the classroom activities. In addition to that, she also served as a language adviser especially when the students need help with the language and a monitor as she always made sure that her students communicate with each other meaningfully.

### **1.2.6. Learners' Roles**

In Lucy's classes, the students played different roles. As partners in the educational process, they could make decisions and discuss the teaching strategies and learning activities, express their views, and evaluate their peers' work. They had chances to discuss the teaching and learning activities.

The different roles that the students performed depended on the nature of activities and provided to them. For instance, when the teacher was introducing them to their specific assignments, the students played the role of information receivers. They were given avenue to voice their opinions. They also contributed to the decision-making relevant to their oral English learning which allowed them to become interactors and negotiators.

Moreover, Lucy's students played the role of group participants as they were often organized into groups of four to five members. This allowed them to exchange information and ideas, cooperate, monitor, assess, and support their peers to fulfill the necessary requirements for the assignment. Some of the students were also required to deliver speeches and present their group work; others were asked to create speech drafts and presentations, while others were made to answer questions about their work, etc. These scenarios depicted that the learning environment gives the students opportunities to cooperate and be mindful of their individual responsibilities where the main goal was for them to have contributions to the educational process. Unfortunately, in Lucy's class, one-third of her students exhibited lesser interests in group participations resulting to most of the performances and presentations done by the remaining two-thirds. As a solution, Lucy would ask the students what makes them interested and motivated in order for her to improve her class activities to achieve full student participation in her classes.

#### **1.2.7. Assessment**

Lucy used communication skills assessment in determining the overall performance of her students. Through this assessment, she was able to distinguish key features related to the teaching of communicative language. Lucy executed this assessment by means of classroom

observation, oral presentations, regular assignments, and so on. This, in particular, served Lucy's first objective of giving her students the opportunities to improve and master oral English.

Lucy claimed that she based her criteria for assessing her students' performance on activity output. She stated, "I'll see how they act out their teaching plan. Of course, sometimes I'll check their written teaching plan, but I pay more attention on their communicative part of activities" (Lucy-interview-202004). She also observed her students' activity performance so she could acquire a basic understanding of her students' mastery of the lessons.

As far as regular assignments are concerned, Lucy gave her students assignments, such as portraying English teaching scenarios in the classroom, making a persuasive speech, and so on. She would ask them to come up with presentations and perform them in front of their classmates.

Lucy explained, "...I usually ask them to design teaching plans to act out as a group or make them do presentations" (Lucy-interview-202004). Lucy went on to say that she paid more attention to the execution part and lesser attention to the written part. She said, "...Of course, sometimes I'll check their written work, but I pay more attention on their communicative part of activities" (Lucy-interview-202004).

At the end of each semester, Lucy conducts a communication skills assessment in the form of final exams in order to evaluate the students' performance and progress and to test if they have met the requirements to continue in the next school year. Lucy managed this communication skills assessment by letting each student speak for five to ten minutes. She would then evaluate the students' performance based on the following grading criteria:

- Pronunciation and intonation (25%)
- Grammar and vocabulary (20%)
- Fluency (25%)

- Communicative ability (30%)

Using the four aforementioned grading criteria, Lucy categorized her students into four levels, in accordance to their performance:

*Table 12. Determining scores for students' level of performance*

Scores	Performance
85–100	The language is coherent; manner of speaking is fluent; speaking speed is appropriate; pronunciation and intonation are accurate; there are no grammatical errors; proper phrasing is observed; and good interaction is established. The discourse structure is reasonable and logical, with important and difficult opinions.
75–85	The language is coherent and clear; accurate pronunciation, natural intonation, and good interaction are observed; there are no grammatical errors; imitation of English or American pronunciation is apparent.
60–75	The language is coherent; the speaking speed is appropriate; and the pronunciation is basically correct. The language organization is mostly reasonable and no obvious grammatical errors are perceived.
60 or less	The pronunciation is not accurate; language organization is unreasonable; obvious grammatical errors are perceived; communicative skills are lacking; teacher-student interaction is absent; students work individually.

Using the communication skills assessment, Lucy made an evaluation of the students' final performance.

### 1.2.8. MOI

Lucy mainly used the English language as the medium of instruction in her classes because she was teaching oral English. However, as mentioned previously, some of the students in Lucy's classes were passive learners and found it difficult to meet the same level of understanding as the rest of the students. Hence, Lucy would also use Chinese especially when she saw that her students had difficulty understanding the discussions, but this was not solely for passive learners since there were also instances that all students really found the discussions difficult to decipher. For instance, if the topic Lucy was discussing involved words that were not familiar to the students or sentences that were too complex to understand, Lucy translated or discussed the meaning in Chinese for the students to fully comprehend the thought of the matter. It was her internal classroom rule that she may use both English and Chinese, although she did encourage her students to respond in English most of the time. She did this to maintain the communication process and to make sure that her students fully grasped what she was talking about.

### 1.2.9. Grammar Teaching

Lucy rarely included implicit grammar teaching in her ELT. She deliberately avoided grammar teaching because she thought her students had already acquired enough knowledge about grammar. Her students studied English for 12 years and had either CET-6<sup>1</sup> or TEM-4<sup>2</sup> English level. This saved her a lot of effort to focus on grammar lessons.

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<sup>1</sup>CET Colleges English Test is national summative assessment for English proficiency of non-English Majors in China.

<sup>2</sup>TEM Test for English Majors is another similar but more rigorous test that English Majors are required to pass as it is a graduation requirement.

However, even if grammar was not a major part of Lucy's teaching objectives, she would still make sure that the students were aware of their grammar use when practicing oral communication which in turn gave them a chance to improve their grammar. For instance, when the students are communicating orally or having an oral presentation in front, if she noticed that the students had several grammar errors, she would include in her feedback the students' mistakes and explain to them how it should be properly done. Common grammatical mistakes made by students on the grammatical structures of their sentences, e.g., subject-verb agreement, tenses of the verbs, etc., were also carefully noted. If she noticed that the students committed grammatical errors while practicing oral communication, she made sure to give them feedbacks after the performance.

Lucy summarized this, saying, "Because I teach oral English, even when I teach students how to teach grammar, I would mix grammar teaching with oral practice" (Lucy-interview-202004).

### **1.3. Students' Experience**

As previously mentioned, six of Lucy's students were chosen as subjects for this study, two from high level, another two from medium level, and lastly two from low level. All of the interviewees were third-year students (junior) who have been studying English for 12 years.

Table 13 summarizes the students' profile information:

*Table 13. Information of the interviewed students from Lucy's class*

	Gender	Year of study	Level	English level	Past English Education Experience	Years of English study
Student 1: T1A1	Male	Junior	A	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
Student 2: T1A2	Female	Junior	A	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
Student 3: T1B1	Female	Junior	B	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Huainan, Anhui Province	12
Student 4: T1B2	Female	Junior	B	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12
Student 5: T1C1	Female	Junior	C	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Wuhu, Anhui Province	12
Student 6: T1C2	Female	Junior	C	CET-6	12 years since primary school in Suzhou, Anhui Province	12

Data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The following subsections discuss the student's experience in learning English in terms of their perceptions of learning objectives, materials, activities, and assessment.

### **1.3.1. Objectives of Learning**

All the students wanted to improve their fluency in English as well as their presentations and speech skills. According to one student, "After learning this part, I understood that a good speech presentation should have a good beginning and logical structure, as well as emotional expression" (T1A1-interview-202004).

The students also expressed their desire to correct their mistakes and improve their communication skills. One of the students said, "...Because we all know that the speakers who make it to the national finals are fantastic, and no doubt we'll learn a lot from watching their videos. Of course, no one is perfect, they also have shortcomings. What we should do is to correct mistakes if you have made any guard against them if you have not" (T1B2-interview-202004). Another student said, "I would actively participate in the group activities and express

my own opinions. This helped me gain a lot of knowledge by communicating with the group members” (T1A1-interview-202004).

During the course of this study, though it was observed that majority of Lucy’s students were motivated to improve their oral English skills, the diversity in learners’ views and understanding had made some differences visible. For instance, those students with higher level of understanding toward the subject were more likely to participate in class activities compared to those who preferred to be passive learners. Although all of them wanted to improve their English speaking skills, it was still evident that their level of motivation and interest differ depending on their level of understanding.

Furthermore, during the interview, it was found out that the students were not fully aware of the objective on ELT pedagogy. They thought the activities intended for this objective were still part of the oral English practice. Nonetheless, the students were cognizant of the importance of the ELT pedagogy and showed determination to learn. Overall, the students wanted to acquire a solid foundation in oral English and improve their debate skills as they enjoyed the FLTRP video materials and found motivation in it.

### **1.3.2. Students’ Perception of the Teaching Materials**

Observations show that there were slight variations on the way Lucy’s students perceived the teaching materials which was caused by the diversity in their level of oral English achievement. Majority of them, who belong to the high level, expressed satisfaction with the materials, especially with the FLTRP Cup videos. They found these materials inspiring and exciting because seeing those professional speakers made them want to be proficient in the English language as well. One of the students pointed out to have preferred the videos over textbooks and PPT presentations.

Moreover, the presentation of the videos also worked for those students who belong to the medium and low level. They did not vocally express that they were satisfied with the materials; however, they had shown to have been interested and to pay attention whenever the videos were playing. They have also exhibited more focus when the videos were presented to them which seldom happened during other periods wherein the activities were more focused on textbooks and other presentations.

As regards the appropriateness of the teaching materials, the students asserted that the materials utilized by Lucy were appropriate and matched the learning objectives. However, they preferred the FLTRP videos the most; as one of the students said, “...because it’s vivid and clearer” (T1B1-interview-202004).

### **1.3.3. Students’ Perception of the Activities**

The same with how the students perceived the teaching materials, there were also variations in their perception of the activities mainly because they possessed different levels of oral English achievements. For those students who were under the high level, they found the activities interesting and enjoyable especially that they were often assigned to do group works. They found it exciting to have constant interactions with their other classmates. One of the students said, “The teacher would arrange us to discuss in groups in class. Every time, I would actively participate in the group activities and express my own opinions. At the same time, I also gained a lot of knowledge by communicating with the group members” (T1A2-interview-202004).

However, this was not always the case for the rest of the students. There were more or less ten students in each of Lucy’s oral English classes who had medium and low level of oral English achievement. It was observed that these students did not particularly show enthusiasm in

completing the assignments given to them. Whenever they were given group activities, these students did not put in uniform effort to complete the activities. They most of the time remained passive learners and opted to just listen to their other classmates instead of sharing their ideas and have meaningful conversations with their classmates. Unfortunately, these variations involving the students' participation resulted in uneven contribution to the classroom activities.

#### **1.3.4. Students' Perception of the Assessment**

Although the students enjoyed their classes, they showed some reluctance when it came to the public speaking assignments wherein they engaged in debates, discussions, speech delivery, etc. The students found the speech assignments challenging and admitted they still lacked self-confidence in terms of oral English performance. One of the students explained, "I actually prefer to write a report because I find it difficult to speak fluently. I am afraid of expressing myself orally and I usually do not know how to express my thoughts clearly" (T1B1-interview-202004). They found the speech assignments challenging.

### **1.4. Discussion**

#### **1.4.1. Lucy's Teaching Approach**

When Lucy's teaching strategies were matched to the features of different approaches found in Table 1 of Chapter 2, it was evident that she had demonstrated attributes of CA in her oral English classes. Lucy commented that she was aware of how a CA works and that she intended to use most of its features in her oral English classes. A comparison between the features of a CA and the teaching approach adopted by Lucy is summarized in Table 14.

Table 14 analyzed Lucy's teaching as compared to the characteristics of the CA. It shows that Lucy used several features that matched to the characteristics of a CA. Each of the nine components has shown evidence of demonstration of such approach.

Together with the official guidance provided by the administration, Lucy added her own teaching objectives and evaluated her students' needs based on her subjective assumptions and personal experience, which in turn affected her choices of teaching contents and classroom activities. In terms of the type of classroom activities, content, and materials, Lucy made sure to provide her students the activities that would open opportunities for social interactions, and the materials and contents were prepared with the main consideration of motivating the students and awakening their interests. As for the grammar teaching, Lucy did not give much focus on this. Although grammar is necessary in assessing the content of her students' output, she did not particularly allot time for grammar teaching. Lessons on grammar were only inserted if the students continuously commit the same grammatical errors in order to correct their practice.

*Table 14. Analysis of Lucy's teaching approach*

Components	Lucy's case	Analysis
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication skills (public speaking, debate, presentations)</li> <li>- Skills for teaching English to primary and secondary schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focused on improving learners' proficiency</li> <li>- Prioritized the practical use of the language</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public speaking strategies, vocabulary</li> <li>- Teaching strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided authentic contents on language forms and structures, words, and sentences</li> <li>- Contents were chosen with the learners' needs in mind</li> </ul>
Materials	<p>A. Textbook: <i>A guide to English speech and debate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. FLTRP cup speech contest videos</li> <li>b. Teacher's personal presentation</li> </ul> <p>B. Textbook: <i>English Teacher Development Series: Design of Oral English Teaching Activities (in Chinese)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Textbook topics on linguistic materials (role-plays, language games)</li> <li>- Actual videos of speech competitions</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performing Public speaking</li> <li>Doing presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided interactive activities through social interactions (role-</li> </ul>

Components	Lucy's case	Analysis
	Participating in debates - Designing teaching plans for primary and secondary school students - Performing in front of the teacher and classmates	play, dialogues, etc.) -Activities focused on the function of the language
Teacher's role	- Needs assessor - Resource developer - Language adviser - Lecturer - Facilitator - Monitor - Motivator	-Assessed the needs and interests of the students and guided them in completing the assigned activities -Assisted in the queries of the students with regard to language functions
Learners' role	- Interactors/negotiators - Group participants - Cooperators - Monitors - Assessors - Risk-takers - Followers and responders to the teacher's directions (Roles exhibited differently by passive learners)	-Engaged in meaningful communicative activities -Assigned to specific roles and cooperated with the group
Assessment	- Communication skills assessment	-Determined students' overall proficiencies in English through communicative performances
MOI	- Target language is the main medium of teaching. - Mother tongue is rarely used to clear misunderstanding or to maintain the communication process.	-Instructions given in authentic grammar and language structures -Students performed real speaking scenarios
Grammar teaching	Teaching grammar explicitly	-Most activities leaning toward explicit teaching by introducing students to situational scenes but with occasional structured instructions

Students in Lucy's approach performed roles similar to what CA recommends, which are interactors/negotiators, group participants, cooperators, monitors, assessors, and risk-takers. Also, her ELT classes focused on meeting the needs of the students. Therefore, rather than taking full control of her students' learning, she also portrayed the roles matched to CA, that is, being the needs assessor, resource developer, language adviser, lecturer, facilitator, monitor, and motivator.

With regard to the MOI, she interchangeably used English and Chinese because she believed that this would help her students to better understand the message and information.

Generally, Lucy's teaching demonstrated characteristics that are essential in building the learners' proficiency of the English language and aligns with the CA.

#### **1.4.2. Students' Perceptions**

The perceptions of Lucy's students vary individually considering that they have different oral English levels. There is no single strategy that fits all the students in the classroom, but the findings revealed that the majority of them had favorable attitude toward the classroom activities, the learning atmosphere, and the challenges they encountered in the classroom.

The activities given in Lucy's classes created an encouraging impact to the overall performance of the students who were classified to have high oral English achievement. Their participation was noticeable in every class discussion, and they showed interest in the lessons. However, it was also evident that a few students in Lucy's classes did not demonstrate great improvements due to their relatively low level of oral English achievement. Although these students had shown interests to some of the lessons, their weak foundation of the English language made it difficult for them to catch up with the rest of the class.

Nonetheless, majority of the students' evaluations were positive, and this can be ascribed to the motivating learning environment that language tasks created. Majority of the students expressed their appreciation of the learning activities.

When asked about the reason behind their participation and motivation, answers pointed out to the beneficial impact of the assigned activities and group discussion on their speaking skills. It was also found out that the good relationship these students shared with their teacher and the general environment of the classroom being learner-centered were two of the important factors why students had come up with the positive perceptions. The collaborative environment also made a great contribution to the students' performance. Although a few students expressed to have been demotivated due to their lack of self-confidence, this did not happen all the time. In most of the sessions, even the students with medium and low level of English achievements had shown to have appreciated the effort that their teacher had exerted in meeting their needs.

In summary, nearly all of the students developed a strong and positive relationship with their teacher.

#### **1.4.3. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Teaching Approaches in Teaching Oral English**

There were several factors that greatly influenced how Lucy executed her choice of teaching strategies in her oral English classes. This section carefully examines and elaborates these factors which were classified into two – enhancing and constraining factors.

### 1.4.3.1. Enhancing Factors

#### A. Teacher Factors

- a. **Teacher's high English proficiency level** – The teacher's high level of target language proficiency is a great advantage in providing extensive input for the students. Due to Lucy's high English proficiency level, she as the teacher for the most part succeeded in supporting her students develop proficiency in oral English as a second language. In fact, most of her students had positive feedbacks about her lessons/classroom activities and her teaching strategies.
- b. **Teacher's rich pedagogical knowledge** – Although Lucy admitted not having received formal pedagogical training, her pedagogical knowledge is strengthened by the fact that she had 13 years of experience teaching oral English. Her long years of teaching background somehow contributed greatly to her pedagogical knowledge, and using everything she had learned from experience, she managed to properly execute the strategies she had prepared for her oral English lessons.
- c. **Teacher's beliefs about effective ELT** – Lucy's belief in teaching oral English has helped her in implementing appropriately her choice of teaching strategies for her oral English classes which correspond to the features of a CA. Aside from accomplishing the first objective, which was imposed by the university, she also realized the second objective, which was her personal choice, with the strong belief that, aside from teaching lessons in oral English, it is also imperative to teach students how to teach oral English.
- d. **Continuous teacher professional development by self-study** – Since the start of Lucy's teaching career, she never had any formal pedagogical training. The knowledge she had on pedagogy were based on her learnings from her studies and her experience. Over her course

of years in teaching, Lucy documented all the “ups” and “downs” she had encountered in teaching. She made use of these experiences to compare her teaching styles and come up with ideas to enhance her teaching, and at the same time these experiences helped her to see the gaps in her teaching strategies that she needed to fix or improve. Furthermore, Lucy also researched on other teachers’ education practices for she believed that knowing these things would give her the opportunities to fully understand the complex relationship between learning and teaching, which helped her a lot in dealing with her oral English classes.

- e. **Maintaining good relationship with students** – Lucy made sure to maintain a good relationship with her students. In every class activity, she would always make her students feel that they can approach her whenever they have questions or if they encountered challenges in completing the assigned tasks. This also greatly helped Lucy in meeting the learning needs of her students because this allowed her to have a better understanding of her students’ strengths and weaknesses.

### **B. Student Factors**

- a. **Students’ positive attitudes toward English** – Achieving proficiency in a target language is not relying solely on the intellectual capacity of the students. Their attitude toward language learning is also vital. Students who had a sincere desire to acquire English language skills participated actively in Lucy’s classroom activities. They showed appreciation for the lessons and enjoyed doing their assignments.
- b. **Students’ motivation to improve** – The students’ motivation to acquire a new language is a big factor that influences their rate and level of language development. Fortunately, most of Lucy’s students were highly motivated to learn the English language and showed dedication

in completing the activities. This motivation that they exerted in class accelerated their progress in acquiring the target language.

- c. **Students' recognition of teacher's effort** – Lucy was handling six classes in total for subjects related to oral English. In each of these classes, she was dealing with 25 to 35 students per class. The effort she put in planning for lessons and activities and teaching them was never an easy process for her. Fortunately, Lucy's students had seen her efforts and verbally expressed their appreciations to her. This recognition gave Lucy the motivation to continue striving and doing her best, and this inspired her to grow dynamically and aim for more achievements.

### C. Contextual Factors

#### C.1. The macro-context

- a. **The university giving value to teacher's decision-making** – Many teachers would like to have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making especially when it comes to the welfare of their students. This type of practice has a positive impact toward the teachers in both emotional and cognitive perspectives. In Lucy's case, the university provided her a specific textbook to use in her oral English classes; however, they also allowed her to pick a textbook of her choice. Furthermore, Lucy was given the freedom to have full authority on how she should handle her classes. This social system inside the university provides a positive outlook that teachers' decisions are really valued. Lucy greatly appreciated this gesture, and it encouraged her more to enhance her teaching performance and look for other strategic teaching suggestions that the students and the university could benefit from.
- b. **Contribution to community advancement** – Part of the main goal of oral English teachers is molding their students to become good contributors in the community. Given that fourth-

tier cities have more educational needs due to their economic situation, knowledge on oral English language skills would give the students a sense of place in the community by allowing them plenty of opportunities to enhance their skills in communication. This indeed motivated Lucy to improve the students' exposure to the target language.

## **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Extensive teaching materials and facilities** – Teaching materials and facilities were adopted as supplementary learning tools with an intention to captivate the students' attention and the adequacy of material resources in an oral English class is a major factor. Lucy received support from the university by providing her a textbook for her classes and at the same time a classroom wherein she could show videos to her students. These helped Lucy to develop techniques to stimulate her students' interest in learning oral English.
- b. Students' expectations** – Being a teacher for 13 years, Lucy knew that her students had high expectations of her teaching performance. This idea contributed to Lucy's dedication to continuously give her best when it comes to teaching her students. She did not want them to doubt her teaching capabilities, and at the same time she wanted them to see that she was performing well in teaching.
- c. Encouraging collaboration** – Lucy believed that another thing that greatly impacts the teacher's motivation is the opportunity to work together. In University A, Lucy experienced a working environment wherein she was able to ask other English teachers about their best teaching strategies and at the same time she saw that the effort put by the younger teachers was also given acknowledgment. Having teachers' collaboration gave Lucy the determination to do her best.

### **1.4.3.2.Constraining Factors**

#### **A. Teacher Factor – lack of continuous professional development**

Lucy had it in mind that a teacher is only as good as what they know. She believed that if the teacher knows the subject matter very well, he or she can play a decisive role in the learning process. However, in Lucy's case, after she had finished her studies, she never had the chance to have further professional and practical trainings. Basically, the foundation of her teaching strategies and techniques was based on her continuous self-study. This lack of sufficient knowledge about the subject matter and the teaching strategies somehow affected Lucy's teaching performance. She had thought that even if she was succeeding in teaching her students, if she were given more training and exposure to the subject matter she was teaching, she could still do better and even provide high-quality teaching experience for the students.

#### **B. Student Factors**

- a. Students' limited background in English** – The students' background knowledge in English plays a strong role in their overall understanding of the language. In Lucy's classes, her students' limited English background affected their performance in the activities given to them. Students who lack English speaking skills (i.e., pronunciation) and vocabulary knowledge encountered challenges in learning oral English.
- b. Learners' diversity** – There are different types of learners with varying interests and preferences. It is inevitable that some students have a positive attitude toward oral English learning while others feel otherwise. These diversities in students' interests and preferences pose a challenge to the teacher when delivering the lessons. Lucy, in particular, experienced how this diversity affected the participation and performances of the students in her classes. For instance, in group activities, she observed that one-third of the students were showing

activeness in the activities, while another one-third were trying hard to meet expectations. Unfortunately, the remaining one-third of the students were passive learners. This had been a challenge for Lucy to successfully meet her objectives.

- c. Students' passive attitude toward the lessons and levels of English ability** – Lucy's students differ in terms of levels of English skills and attitude toward learning oral English. Although some of the students were enthusiastic and highly motivated in class, other students, specifically those with low achievement level, were passive learners and were less motivated because they felt that they were way behind their classmates in terms of English ability.

*Table 15: Comparison between the students' factors affecting students of different English achievement levels*

Achievement level	Learning purpose (positive factor)	Avoiding risk taking (negative factor)
Low	+	---
Medium	+	N/A
High	+	-

The comparison on students' factors affecting their learning reveals that the purpose of the students in learning the English language is similar with each other. Their main motivation to perform well in class is their desire to significantly improve their competence in oral communication. However, students with low English achievement level expressed their hesitations in taking risks. This came in contrast with those students of high English achievement level. For this reason, the distinction among students became more evident. Furthermore, with regard to the information on students with medium level of English achievement, the data gathered were limited to be able to come up with a clear distinction on whether their ability to take risk had affected their performance in learning the language or not.

## C. Contextual Factors

### C.1. The macro-context

**The lack of English-speaking environment** was the macro-contextual factor that greatly affected Lucy's implementation of her teaching approaches. Lucy's students live in an environment where it is not common for the people to speak the English language. Somehow, this had affected their progress because the learning became more form-focused rather than application-oriented. They were not able to put into use the words, sentences, and dialogues they have learned in school since there were no appropriate place to use them outside the school.

### C.2. The micro-context

- a. **Insufficient time for communicative activities** – Communicative activities are meant to engage students in situations or scenarios that allow them the chance to speak and verbally express their ideas and emotions. To achieve this goal of communicative activities, the teacher needs ample time to implement her designed activities for the students. Having limited time for communicative activities significantly affected students' acquisition of mastery of the lessons since the time available for conducting activities will also be limited. Also it hinders the teacher from covering all the contents which the students need to know or learn. The teacher would then tend to just focus on one aspect of the discussion without exploring on other areas. Lucy could have done more for her students in oral English if only she was given sufficient time instead of just 1 hour and 30 minutes to teach per week.
- b. **Teacher-students ratio** – Lucy has observed in many circumstances that the smaller the number of students in a class, the better the process of learning will be. In learning oral English, each student must have a great amount of individual attention from the teacher in order to keep track of their progress. Unfortunately, in Lucy's case, given the large number

of students per class, this had become a challenge. Lucy could not give her students the right amount of time for individual interaction since there were too many of them in a class of only one hour and a half per period.

*Table 16: Summary of factors affecting the implementation of teaching approaches in teaching oral English*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Enhancing factors</b>	<b>Constraining factors</b>
<b>Teacher factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's high English proficiency level</li> <li>• Teacher's rich pedagogical knowledge</li> <li>• Teacher's beliefs about effective ELT</li> <li>• Continuous teacher professional development by self-study</li> <li>• Maintaining good relationship with students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of continuous professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Student factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' positive attitudes toward English</li> <li>• Students' motivation to improve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' limited background in English</li> <li>• Learners' diversity</li> <li>• Students' passive attitude toward the lessons and levels of English ability</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ The university giving value to teacher's decision-making</li> <li>Community advancement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Extensive teaching materials and facilities</li> <li>➢ Students' expectations</li> <li>➢ Encouraging collaboration</li> <li>➢ Students' recognition of teacher's effort</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Lack of English-speaking environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Insufficient time for communicative activities</li> <li>➢ Teacher-student ratio</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 1.5. Summary of Lucy's Case

With the overall observation of Lucy's case and the data collected from the interviews, it can be concluded that she implemented the features of a CA in her oral English classes. One dominant feature of a CA that Lucy demonstrated was that she gave priority in letting her students be aware of the functional usage of the target language. Her main objective was to make her students proficient speakers of the English language by introducing them to activities that would enhance their communication skills and by introducing them to real-life conversations that would require them to speak the target language. Lucy was aware of the features of a CA, and she intentionally used it in her classes because she believed that it would be beneficial for her students.

On the other hand, majority of the students had shown positive perceptions on the content, materials, and activities used by Lucy. They stated to have found the activities interesting and motivating especially when they were doing group works. Also, the students have shown great attention to the FLTRP Cup videos because they find these more relatable and engaging. However, since Lucy's students have different levels of oral English achievement, they have different perceptions of the oral English course. A few of them, mostly having relatively low oral English level, did not find the activities interesting but rather difficult. Due to their weak oral English foundation, they could not catch up with the performance of the rest of the class which further led to their lack of enthusiasm to participate in class activities.

In addition, Lucy encountered a few challenges in implementing her oral English approach at University A. First, the diversity of her learners made it challenging for her to set her lessons and activities since the students had different levels of understanding and interests in the subject matter. The students-teacher ratio also posed a challenge because it limited Lucy's chance to

have individual interaction with the students. Lastly, the time intended for the classes were insufficient to have enough communicative activities.

However, given the range of constraining factors, Lucy was still able to plan her lessons and activities, and the students had met her requirements. Her overall classroom environment and contents focused on the students' needs. Therefore, regardless of the students' level of oral English achievement, she was fair in addressing their individual needs. Lucy also managed to establish an interactive classroom setting where she and her students could work alongside one another. Factors such as the recognition she received from the students, the extensive teaching materials she adopted, and most of the students' positive attitude toward the subject motivated Lucy in doing better with her classroom management, and these made teaching challenging but worthwhile for her.

These interrelated factors intertwined to shape the teaching approach Lucy had implemented in her oral English classes. These factors also partly affected how the students perceived the course. All in all, Lucy had shown dedication in meeting her objectives and in nurturing her students' proficiency in oral English.

## **2. Case of Sarah**

### **2.1.Profile of Sarah**

Sarah is an English teacher at Normal University A. She graduated from Huaibei Normal University, Anhui, with a Bachelor's Degree in English.

With neither practical training nor further professional training after her graduation, she started her job in University A 17 years ago. At the time of the study, she was responsible for teaching two subjects, Phonetics and Oral Expression. She taught phonetics for two classes, junior and sophomore. Moreover, she had to teach other three junior classes oral expression once

per week for 90 minutes each period. Teaching phonetics took a lot of her preparation since she had to make sure that the students will not only recognize the sounds of words but also learn how to properly say them. Although this took up plenty of Sarah's time, she was able to manage since both subjects were related.

Sarah had no proper training experiences, no overseas experience, and no in-service training and had not taught pedagogy subjects before; however, she had been teaching English (with areas in communication and speech, grammar, and developmental reading) for 17 years, with two years specifically in oral English. It was through these years of experience that she has acquired the techniques and strategies in teaching English.

## **2.2. Teaching Practices of Sarah**

### **2.2.1. Objectives of Teaching**

Sarah personally determined her teaching objectives based on her learning and job experiences. Since her students will be future English teachers, she wanted them to not only learn how to speak the language but also to prepare them for their future job as teachers. Hence, Sarah developed the following objectives.

**1. Primary objective:** Training the students to be fluent English speakers by increasing their knowledge of oral English through second-language acquisition and by ensuring that they acquire high levels of functional proficiency in English

Sarah supposed that for the students to learn the English language effectively, they must be able to understand the variables that make up the foundation of second-language learning, such as sentence structures, word meanings, pronunciation, etc. In line with her primary objective, Sarah wanted to improve her students' English speaking skills by broadening their knowledge in oral English. She sought for her students to have functional proficiency in speaking English, and

she did this by exposing her students to classroom activities such as speaking presentations and stage performances. To further meet her primary objective, she taught her students how to make speeches, how to properly pronounce words, and how to properly perform different types of speeches on stage. She believed that by boosting the students' confidence, they will find it easier to be comfortable in using the language and use it in everyday real-life basis.

For instance, for the first observed lesson, Sarah introduced to the students Chapters 5 and 6 of the textbook she was using which were entitled “A Good Beginning is Half of the Success” and “Drawing a Circle in Your Speech” respectively. These lessons were intended to train the students in preparing for the right strategies and plans to make a speech in English which served her primary objective.

It was also because of her primary objective that she gave more focus on fluency and speaking rather than structures of grammar. Sarah believed that when the students become more confident and fluent in speaking, learning grammar would not be too challenging.

**2. Secondary objective:** Preparing the students for their future jobs as teachers by acquainting them to real-life teaching situations in an oral English class and the teaching strategies that go with this

Because of the number of her teaching years and the teaching experiences that she had, Sarah accounted that students need to be introduced to real-life teaching situations such that they would not be too surprised when they will start their teaching careers. Sarah believed that the knowledge she must impart to her students should not focus on the fluency of the English language alone. She wanted them to be aware of the factors inside the classroom that make up an efficient learning process, such as the willingness of the students to engage in spontaneous English communication, the continuous process of student-teacher exchange of ideas in English,

and so on. With this, her students will be taught on how to deal with real-life situations wherein their ability to speak in English will be tested.

Sarah further wanted to make her students understand that lessons in English language classes are pre-planned and the progress of the students are fairly achieved in a predictable manner; however, as future teachers, they must also comprehend that sometimes there are barriers that hinder the effectiveness of the lesson process, such as students' attitude and willingness to learn. Therefore, it is crucial that future English teachers will learn how to deal with real-life teaching situations such as this, hence, the importance of Sarah's secondary objective.

### **2.2.2. Teaching Content**

Sarah's main focus in her classes was on public speech, fluency, presentations, and building students' confidence. She believed that making her students acquire these characteristics would shape them to become proficient speakers of English. Therefore, as part of her strategies and approach in teaching, Sarah has planned the following contents:

#### **a. Communication skills**

To serve her primary objective, Sarah introduced her students to various communication skills and strategies that would help them in molding themselves into becoming adept speakers of the English language. Sarah believed that it is important to recognize the necessary skills that build up good and effective communication, such as clarity, conciseness, correctness, confidence, open-mindedness, and so on. This is the main reason why she included in her teaching content the different communication skills. She had a principle that putting in effort to improve one's communication skills is essential to allow others to understand the information more accurately

and quickly. Sarah delicately picked her lesson contents to boost the students' skills and for them to improve their English speaking performances and gain fluency.

#### **b. Public speech and real-life conversations**

In order to motivate her students, Sarah included in her teaching contents the topics on making a public speech and conversations that happen in real-life. By introducing her students to these contents, Sarah supposed that they will be allowed to form connections, influence other people, and even motivate change.

From her teaching experience, Sarah noticed that public speaking had been dreaded by most of the students. It was the lack of confidence and exposure to the real-life context of the language that made the students anxious about this type of activity. Therefore, in order to address this, Sarah introduced her students to different contents that despite being challenging as this would give them the chance to improve their English speaking abilities and conquer their fears. Practicing the students' public speaking skills and introducing them to real-life situations will not only help the students' general oral communication but would also give them the courage to explore and learn.

#### **c. Real-life teaching scenarios**

Sarah's students will be future teachers, and she wanted to prepare them for their future job. In line with this, she thought that it was necessary for the students to be introduced to the various situations of real-world teaching. Hence, she included in her lesson contents the teaching strategies and real-life teaching scenarios that she believed her students need. This, on the other hand, served her secondary objective.

Table 17. The researcher's course guide of Sarah's oral English class

Period	Subject: Oral English		
27 hours	Content	Overview	Lesson objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundational skills and competencies of oral communication</li> </ul>	The students will be taught to develop oral language skills both directly through meaningful interactions with each other and indirectly by creating an environment wherein they can learn from each other through stimuli	The students will become competent English speakers with strong language foundation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication and creative expressions</li> <li>Speech fluency</li> </ul>	The students will be taught how to creatively express themselves and at the same time how to improve their fluency in speaking	The students will be more expressive and creative with their ideas and will be more confident to share them to others
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar awareness and structure</li> <li>Vocabulary development</li> </ul>	The students will be introduced to helpful vocabulary words that are helpful in everyday conversation and be taught how to spot errors in grammar structures and ways to correct them	The students will be able to confidently communicate without grammatical errors in their sentence structures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real-life classroom situations</li> </ul>	The students will be taught how to deal with real-life situations in an oral English class. They will be further taught how to overcome challenges and develop strategies to handle difficult situations	The students will be prepared for their future jobs as teachers and will be equipped with knowledge to manage challenging classroom situations, such as cooperative learning, behavior management, and so on
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debates</li> <li>Role-plays</li> <li>Public speaking</li> <li>Speech presentations</li> </ul>	The students will be exposed to activities that would enhance their confidence and improve their English speaking abilities	The students will be able to master the English language and will have a continuous process of application for them to build a strong foundation of the target language

Furthermore, as future teachers, Sarah's students must bear in mind that teachers are expected to express competence both in the delivery of the lessons and in handling situations in the classroom. She was determined to prepare her students for their future careers. She wanted them to not only understand how things work inside an oral English class but also to apply the strategies into practice even while they were still studying.

### 2.2.3. Materials

In order to achieve her predefined objectives, Sarah used different teaching materials that ranged from textbooks, speech videos of some speech contest winners, PPT presentations prepared by her, the student's presentations, and debates. These teaching materials, summarized in Table 18, were specifically chosen by Sarah to boost her students' speaking skills and prepare them for their future teaching jobs.

Table 18: List of teaching materials used by Sarah

Type of Teaching Material	Teaching materials
Materials officially set by the administration	Textbook
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Series of textbooks for college English elective courses: English speech and debate training</i> <i>A guide to English speech and debate</i></li> </ul>
Materials chosen by the teacher	Teacher's personal presentation
	FLTRP Cup speech contest videos
Students' work used in the lesson	Students presentations
	Debates

Sarah used the textbook *Series of textbooks for college English elective courses: English speech and debate training – A guide to English speech and debate* by Zhang Yi. Sarah found in this textbook different topics that cover a multitude of practical practices on speeches and debates. The activities and lessons found in this textbook were based on sound learning principles and were properly paced. This also helped Sarah a lot in saving time for material production.

On the other hand, the FLTRP videos were played in the classroom, and the students will be given time to analyze t

hem with the guidance of their teacher. Through these videos, the students were given the opportunity to see how a real speech is performed. Sarah would also explain to the students the strategies used in making a speech and would choose to play videos of excellent contestants. Through this, the students will be able to analyze every important detail that makes up a very good speech performance.

Other teaching materials that Sarah used in her classes were the PPT presentations that she prepared. She would use these presentations to explain the first part of the lesson and the speaking strategies. In her presentations she would give all the information about the lessons she was about to teach and would give the required information that the students need to put in use to fulfill their duties in the activities they will be provided.

To serve her teaching objectives of enhancing her students' fluency in English and preparing them for their future teaching jobs, Sarah made her students make a public speech and present it in class. The students' personal presentations were analyzed and assessed, and whenever feedbacks were needed, the teacher would intervene. These presentations, made by the students, were good teaching materials too. Sarah thought that in this way, her students will gain practical experience, correct their mistakes, and discuss the varied situations with their peers.

#### **2.2.4. Activities**

Sarah designed her class activities in a way that students were required to fulfill specific assignments that would serve as their practice to improve their English speaking skills and to prepare them for their future teaching jobs. Sarah had mentioned that she wanted to provide her students with activities that would engage them into cooperative learning. She believed that

through constant interactions with each other using the target language, their proficiency of the language will also improve. Sarah did not particularly mention that she was aware of CA, but the strategies she wanted to incorporate in her oral English classes correspond to its features. She said, “I want cooperative learning as the main strategy, and I want my students learn the functional use of the English language” (Sarah-interview-202004).

First, she would give a presentation of the lessons and where she would also explain how the activities would go and what goals should the students meet. The common activities she had assigned to the students include delivering a public speech, reporting a passage from a certain article or story, and group presentations. She would provide them the necessary input before they start the activity. Apart from the presentation of important details, Sarah would also show her students videos of speech contests. This would give them more idea on how to properly execute their performances.

Sarah would further provide activities related to real-life situations, such as asking for directions, answering calls, etc. These promote meaningful interactions among the students because the topics were relatable. She gave her students opportunities to share personal experiences, dealing with possible everyday scenarios. She realized that involving the students to interactive communication helped them in building their confidence to speak the English language. Also, these activities promote self-assurance to the students so that they could deliver the message properly.

In every group activity, they were provided time for an interactive discussion with each other about the specific assignments given to them. While the students were discussing with each other, Sarah would go from one group to another checking whether the students have questions or if they need assistance. Rather than giving the students all the details of their presentations,

she would give them the opportunities to interact with each other using the English language and think of their own strategies and techniques in performing. Through this they will acquire the language in a more communicative method.

Once the students were ready, they started with their group performance. A group of three or four students would perform, give presentations, or make debates. Sarah would carefully assess the students during presentations and would take note of necessary details. After all the presentations, Sarah gave feedbacks to the students.

Furthermore, in one of the activities, Sarah gave her students a printed copy of a particular speech. She would ask the students to circle the words or phrases that they find difficult to understand. Once they were done, they would discuss it with their groups, and each group would present in front what they have discussed and try to compare whether they have the same difficulties as the rest of the class. This activity helped Sarah identify the common weaknesses of her students.

To serve her secondary objective, Sarah also gave her students activities wherein they would be asked about challenging situations inside the classroom. The activity started by grouping the students into three or four. She would give each group a sample classroom scenario, such as students not participating well in class, half of the students not understanding the lessons, and so on. She would then let her students discuss within their group how they would handle such situation. Instead of directly providing the students solution to the situation, this would make them figure out their own best option to handle such challenging situation. Again, Sarah would take note of necessary observations and give feedback to the students afterwards. Because of this particular activity that Sarah alternately gave her students, the latter learned different

ideas on how they would deal with different classroom situations, preparing them for their future life as English teachers.

*Table 19. Teaching flow of one of the observed lessons*

Period	Oral Expression		Time		%
Class 1		Objectives/Flow			
		Primary objective			
	Part 1	Introducing the lesson to the class	03 mins	15 mins	17%
		Giving information about the significance of the topic in speech writing	05 mins		
		Showing the students a recorded video of a winning speech	07 mins		
	Part 2	Asking the students about their comment of the video	03 mins	28 mins	31%
		Drawing observation from the video: interactive discussion with the students (about the lesson and video the students have watched)	15 mins		
		Summary of discussion	05 mins		
		5-minute break	05 mins		
		Secondary objective			
	Part 3	Groupings (students will be grouped into 3–4 students per group) and giving of instructions	03 mins	38 mins	42%
		Students will review a particular speech they have previously made and draw circles on relevant points or topics	15 mins		
		Each group will present in front the speech (one speech for each group) and explain afterwards their process in finalizing their speech	20 mins		
Part 4	Teacher’s feedback	06 mins	09 mins	10%	
	Wrapping up and giving homework	03 mins			
Total			90 mins		100%

### **2.2.5. Teacher's Role**

Sarah, during her classes, played different roles depending on the activities she assigned to the students and the progress of these activities. She first presented the teaching activities. Then, she would organize the students into groups and manage the learning process and made sure that they know what they are expected to do. She organized the temporal and spatial aspects of the activities, setting the time for the different steps and organizing the students along with their duties and responsibilities.

She monitored the learning process of her students and gave feedbacks whenever needed, but she believed that her duty was not only to convey the language to-be-taught. Hence, she worked hard to encourage her students to gain real-life skills and played the role of a motivator where she launched the students into action by constructing joint projects such as the activities assigned to them.

In sum, Sarah believed that her students were not mere receiver and that she was not a mere lecturer; rather, she and the students were active partners in the educational process, and for that reason, she played different roles according to the students' needs.

### **2.2.6. Learners' Role**

The roles of the students in Sarah's classes depended on duties they were performing. When they listened to their teacher introducing to them the lessons, they are the information receivers. They were also partners with each other in the education process. They were each given a chance to voice out their feelings and opinions.

Since students were grouped into three to four members per group, they were able to exchange information and ideas with each other, while they were fulfilling their assigned requirements. Apart from this, the students were able to engage in peer assessment of their

classmate's performances and also give feedbacks. Although this was just a subjective assessment and done only through observation of their peer's speaking abilities and progress, this was still helpful in motivating the students to do their best in class. This made Sarah's classes learner-centered which further contributed to the learning process.

However, Sarah also noticed that sometimes some of the students were being less motivated with their assigned roles, especially when the lessons involved individual presentation in front of the class. She supposed that the possible reason for this was the students' lack of self-confidence. This had greatly affected their performance in individually fulfilling their roles. Sarah would always think of interventions to involve those students with low oral English level in the class discussions. For instance, she would sometimes call out these students to answer simple questions. This was not intended to cause weary to her students but to build their confidence to speak up. Moreover, to address this concern, Sarah put a suggestion box at the back of the classroom, and each period, the students were required to answer two questions written in a piece of paper: What did you like about today's activity? What did you not like about today's activity? The students answered this before dismissal and the papers were dropped into the box. This practice would allow Sarah to reflect on which parts she had done right and the parts that needed further improvement. Through the feedbacks she got from the students, she was able to find out the struggles of her students in the classroom and at the same time the activities they like, which in return helped her in improving her teaching strategies.

#### **2.2.7. Assessment**

Since Sarah's objectives focused on developing her students' communicative skills and at

the same time preparing them for their future jobs, she used the communication skills and classroom performance assessments in evaluating her students' performances in different activities.

For communication skills assessment, Sarah administered this through observations on classroom activities, oral recitations, speech performances, and so on. This particular assessment served Sarah's primary objective of increasing her students' knowledge and proficiency in oral English through second language acquisition. By allowing her students to continue to practice the English language, she was able to observe their progress in each activity.

For every topic discussed, Sarah would give her students assignment and would have them present it in front of the class the next day or depending on the schedule. She would give the students rubrics so they will be guided as to how they will be graded. Sarah will keep record of the students' assessment and would also give feedback especially on areas that the students really need to know, such as their pronunciations, their use of grammar, the confidence they exhibited in front, and so on.

For group presentations, Sarah would also set a guideline for the students to follow. She would carefully observe the groups' performances and record their strengths and weaknesses. She would give advice to the students about the things they should give more attention in their future performance.

The communication skills assessment was helpful to both Sarah and the students. Through this, Sarah could carefully check the improvement of the students with regard to their communication skills, whether they were doing things correctly or if they need further practice.

At the same time, this was helpful for the students because they were made aware of the things they were good at and were given the chance to improve in areas that they still needed practice

On the other hand, for the classroom performance assessment, Sarah administered this by including in her total grading criteria the results on students' speaking performances, group cooperation, and overall class participation. Sarah particularly chose this assessment to motivate passive learners to perform better. She wanted her students to feel that each of them have individual responsibilities to fulfill the activities and that if they accomplish them, they will have good grades.

When she was asked about what criteria she based her assessment of her students' performance, she answered: "Activity output" (Sarah-interview-202004). She observed her students' activity during the lessons and check if they acquire basic understanding or their mastery of the lessons taught.

Moreover, through her students' performance and her observation of students' performance during the lessons, she also evaluated the effectiveness of her teaching methods. During the interview, she was asked about how she evaluates her teaching strategy. Her answer was, "Through students' performance. If they can perform well, I will think my teaching strategy is effective. Otherwise, some changes are needed" (Sarah-interview-202004). Hence, Sarah used the students' performance in the classroom activities as a reflection for both her teaching methods and the students' achievements.

#### **2.2.8. MOI**

Sarah primarily used English in her classes and rarely used Chinese. She would only use Chinese when necessary, especially when dealing with students with low level of English

speaking skills, for instance, during class discussions wherein some students expressed their inability to fully grasp the lesson due to language barrier. Sarah wanted her students to not only speak the English language but to also understand its meanings. When students find it hard to understand the teacher's instructions, Sarah did not immediately shift to Chinese. First, she would try to explain the sentences using simpler English, in simple forms that she knew the students have already learnt. If the students were still not able to fully grasp the idea, only then will Sarah explain it using the native language.

### **2.2.9. Grammar Teaching**

In Sarah's classes, she focused more on speaking rather than grammar. The same as the other teachers in this study, her students already had studied English for several years. Therefore, she believed that their foundation of the English grammar was already good. Unfortunately, there were still instances, especially when the students were performing in front of the class, that she would notice some of them still making grammatical errors. These were the only times that Sarah would give some time after the presentations, more or less five minutes, to discuss about grammar, focusing only on the mistakes committed by the students.

When she was asked about this, she said: "I give little or even no attention to grammar. Cooperative learning and audio- visual learning with my explanation, if needed, are the main strategies" (Sarah-interview-202004). This was also the very reason why grammar did not constitute an important part of her teaching objectives.

### **2.3. Students' Experience**

Like the other cases, six of Sarah's students were chosen for this study, two from each English achievement level (high, medium, and low level). These students exhibited similar characteristics as the rest of the students in other cases. All of the interviewees were junior

students with TEM-4 certificate in English except for one student who had CET-6. Table 20 summarizes the students' profiles' information:

*Table 20: Information of the students interviewed in Sarah's class*

	Gender	Year of study	Level	Teacher	English level	Past English Education experience	Years of English study
Student 1: T2A1	Female	Junior	A	T2	TEM-4	12 years since primary school in Anqing, Anhui Province	12
Student 2: T2A2	Female	Junior	A	T2	TEM-4	10 years in Xuancheng, Anhui Province	10
Student 3: T2B1	Female	Junior	B	T2	TEM-4	6 years in Anqing, Anhui Province	6
Student 4: T2B2	Female	Junior	B	T2	TEM-4	7 years in Wuhu, Anhui Province	7
Student 5: T2C1	Female	Junior	C	T2	TEM-4	7 years since middle school in Huaibei, Anhui Province	7
Student 6: T2C2	Female	Junior	C	T2	CET-6	7 years in Huainan Anhui Province	7

Data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The following subsections report the students' experience in learning English in terms of their perceptions of learning objectives, materials, activities, and assessment.

### **2.2.10. Objectives of Learning**

Improving their English communication skills was the main goal of Sarah's students. They were aware that even if they have learnt English for years, they still commit grammatical and pronunciation errors from time to time and that their level of comprehension was not that good yet. As one of the students had mentioned, "...especially for the part that we need to draw a circle in our speech, because it helps me a lot, and I always make mistakes in that aspect" (T2A1-interview-202004).

On the other hand, Sarah also mentioned that whenever she would ask her students to do an individual presentation in front of the class, some of them showed hesitation and fear. When the students were asked regarding this, most of them answered that they lacked the confidence and that they were scared to be laughed at.

Both Sarah and the students strongly agreed to the idea that to be a good speaker of English, one must have the confidence to speak the language. Hence, the students expressed that the encouragement they get from their teacher made them include in their personal objectives the determination to improve their confidence in speaking. Whenever they were showed videos of successful speakers, they mentioned that Sarah would always remind them that those speakers were once students, too, only that they all conquered their fears and mastered their confidence. This reminder added to their motivation to meet their learning objectives regardless of their achievement levels.

#### **2.2.11. Students' Perceptions of the Teaching Materials**

The students showed their appreciation of the materials used by Sarah in class. They agreed that the materials helped them to understand the lessons making the contents easier and clearer for them. For instance, the students mentioned that the FLTRP videos particularly made them understand how speeches should be properly delivered. One of the students said, "Teacher often plays the videos about the FLTRP Cup National College Students English Speech Contest by PPT. She contrasts different kinds of speech and then analyzes them and gives more details about her opinions. I think the materials used are appropriate because we can learn from other people's experience by watching the videos" (T2B1-interview-202004). Students in Sarah's classes, regardless of their level of oral English proficiency, showed almost the same degree of interest in activities related to the FLTRP Cup videos.

Furthermore, the students asserted that the FLTRP videos were much more motivating than any other teaching materials. As another student commented, “Videos are very valuable to our study, and it makes it easier to understand the knowledge that the teacher teaches in class. It also can attract our attention” (T2B2-interview-202004).

### **2.2.12. Students’ Perceptions of the Activities**

All of the interviewed students and majority of Sarah’s students, based on their feedbacks in the suggestion box, had a mutual comment that her classes were interesting and vivid. In the observed classes, more than half of Sarah’s students participated actively in the activities. They particularly enjoyed group discussion activities and public speaking. One of the students explained by saying, “I like the oral speaking more, because I consider that oral speaking can improve our speaking skills and it can make us get out of our comfort-zone to speak in public more calmly and confidently” (T2A1-interview-202004).

On the other hand, there were a few of Sarah’s students who did not share the same level of positive perception toward the classroom activities. Due to their rather low level of oral English achievement, they tend to be quiet and passive in some of the activities even with those involving group works.

One of these students mentioned that because of his weak level in English and lack of confidence, he did not participate actively in the classroom activities. He said, “Maybe due to my grades and self-esteem about English. I dare not open my mouth to speak. It’s incredible. Meanwhile, I also think that I can’t write well. It’s puerile” (T2B2-interview-202004).

### **2.2.13. Students’ Perceptions of the Assessment**

Both the assessments used by Sarah in her classes involved the students to speak. The students with high and medium English levels found this challenging but interesting. They

showed great enthusiasm to participate. A student with medium English achievement level said, “...our assignment was oral speaking for the next lesson. I like oral speaking more, because I consider that oral speaking can improve our speaking skills, and it can make us get out of our comfort-zone to speak in public more calmly and confidently” (T2A1-interview-202004).

However, while most of the students expressed their interests in speaking, for students with low English level, the assessments seemed difficult for them, and they felt reluctant due to lack of self-confidence most of the time. One of them said, “In fact, I don’t like speaking assignments especially in front of the whole class. Maybe due to my grades and self-esteem about English, I don’t dare to open my mouth to speak” (T2B2-interview-202004).

These varied reactions from the students posed a challenge to Sarah. However, the students claimed that she made sure no one was left out in class by reaching out to them and asking them of their needs so she could work for ways to meet those needs.

## **2.3.Discussion**

### **2.3.1. Sarah’s Teaching Approach**

Most of the features Sarah used in her teaching approach matched with the characteristics of a CA found in Table 1 of Chapter 2. Sarah did not particularly mention the use of CA; however, when she mentioned the strategies she wanted to use in her class, they coincide with the features of a CA.

A comparison between the features of a CA and the teaching approach adopted by Sarah is summarized in Table 21.

Table 21: Analysis of Sarah's teaching approach

Components	Sarah's case	Analysis
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop communication proficiency through English language acquisition (learning sentence structures, word meanings, pronunciations)</li> <li>- Skills for teaching English in preparation to students' future jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focused on developing learners' proficiency in oral English communication</li> <li>- Enhancing the students' abilities to use the English language in practical use</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication skills</li> <li>- Public speech and real-life conversations</li> <li>- Teaching strategies and real-life scenarios teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided authentic contents focused on the forms, structures and functions of the English language</li> <li>- Activities focused on the needs of the students</li> </ul>
Materials	<p>A. Textbook: <i>Series of textbooks for college English elective courses: A guide to English speech and debate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. FLTRP Cup Speech Contest videos</li> <li>b. Teacher's personal presentation</li> </ul> <p>B. Students' presentations and debates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Textbook topics on real-life speech activities (role-plays, language games)</li> <li>- Use of actual speech videos</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performing public speaking</li> <li>Doing presentations</li> <li>Participating in debates</li> <li>- Performing real-life situations inside the classroom</li> <li>- Performing in front of the teacher and classmates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided interactive activities through social interactions (role-play, dialogues, etc.)</li> <li>- Activities were provided wherein learners were engaged in meaningful interactions</li> </ul>
Teacher's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs assessor, resource developer, lecturer, facilitator, monitor, motivator, adviser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessed the needs and interests of the students and guided them in completing the assigned activities</li> <li>- Assisted in the queries of the students with regard to language functions</li> </ul>

Components	Sarah's case	Analysis
Learners' role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interactors/negotiators, group participants, cooperators, monitors, risk-takers, followers and responders to the teacher's direction</li> <li>- Students with low English achievement level had difficulty in properly performing each activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students were engaged in communicative activities</li> <li>-Students cooperated closely with their groupmates (teacher intervention happens when some become non-participative)</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication skills assessment</li> <li>- Classroom performance assessment</li> </ul>	-Determined students' proficiency of the English language through overall communicative performances
MOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly English</li> <li>- Rarely uses Chinese, only when very necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Instructions were given using the authentic language structures</li> <li>-Target language is used as the main MOI</li> </ul>
Grammar teaching	Explicit and implicit (mainly explicit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Structured instructions were only presented when necessary</li> <li>-Students learned from situational scenes for practical use</li> </ul>

With reference to the Table 21 presented , the analysis of Sarah's case revealed that she evidently performed in her teaching approaches features of a CA. Her objectives focused on developing her students' communicative skills and at the same time introducing them to English language forms and structures.

On the other hand, she used two types of assessments, namely, communication skills assessment and classroom performance assessment. Both assessments aimed to determine the English proficiency of the students which in turn meets the primary objective. For the secondary objective, evaluation was carried out from the data taken from classroom performance assessment.

Furthermore, Sarah's students had various roles to portray inside the classroom. Unfortunately, due to the students' different levels of English achievement, there was an uneven distribution of duties. For example, in group activities, there were instances that students with low oral English levels would prefer to just be quiet and leave the rest of the responsibilities to his or her classmates with high oral English level. In order to avoid this situation and support these students that need attention, Sarah had intentionally maximized her role as the motivator and organizer through reaching out to the students or checking the progress of each group whenever there were group works.

Sarah also primarily used English as her MOI and very rarely used Chinese. With regard to her grammar teaching, she had little intervention with grammar teaching. She would only give grammar lessons to her students when they repeatedly commit grammatical errors during presentations.

All of these features made Sarah's teaching approach an adapted CA.

### **2.3.2. Students' Perceptions**

In Sarah's case, while there were students who greatly enjoyed group activities and class presentations, there were also those who seemed reluctant. This was caused by the students' different levels of oral English achievement. It was found out that most of the time, the students' perceptions vary depending on their oral English level. There were instances that some of the students were not in favor of the activities provided to them because they were uncomfortable doing it, e.g., individual presentations. However, despite the reluctance of the other students, the majority of them were still in favor of the activities Sarah prepared for them. They even expressed that they like how they were challenged because the challenge boosted their motivation to improve and do their best.

The students expressed positive evaluations concerning the classroom activities. They said that the motivating learning environment encouraged them to do their best in the given assignments. During the classroom observations, there was noticeable participation of the students, especially in group discussions. However, there were always instances that some students would opt to be passive learners due to different factors such as fear and lack of confidence. Sarah had extended her help to students who were experiencing this. This was greatly appreciated by the students and in return they exhibited improvement in their class participation.

To summarize, the students had positive perceptions regarding the classroom activities as they saw it was beneficial for their learning process.

### **2.3.3. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Teaching Approaches in Teaching Oral English**

This section examines and elaborates the factors that influenced Sarah's implementation of her teaching approach which proved to have corresponded to the features of a CA. These factors were also categorized into two, i.e., enhancing and constraining factors.

#### **2.3.3.1. Enhancing Factors**

##### **A. Teacher Factors**

- a. Teacher's creativity in instructional method** – One of the many things that Sarah could categorize as her strength was her dedication to make her methods of teaching creative and student-centered. She made sure that the activities would motivate the students to learn. For instance, when she was showing the students videos of different speeches, she would give an activity to the students afterwards with reference to the video such as creating their own speech with the same topic and letting them deliver these speeches in creative ways. This had

allowed the students to be more innovative with their ideas, and at the same time this allowed them to enhance their confidence in speaking.

- b. Teacher's passion toward teaching** – Sarah believed that if teachers are highly satisfied with their career, they would be willing to give their hearts out for their work unlike those who are unsatisfied. Fortunately, Sarah found great satisfaction in teaching. She had been doing this job for 17 years, and she could not imagine herself doing another job. Hence, because she was satisfied with her career path, it greatly affected positively her teaching performance. Even if she encountered challenges along the way, her drive to teach the students and help them grow was never lessened.
- c. Rich teaching experience** – As mentioned earlier, Sarah had been teaching English and communication for 17 years. She had met so many students and had mastered several teaching techniques. Although she may never have continuous professional trainings, she had learned a lot of things with these years of teaching. She believed that she had learned more with experience than from any other books she had read. She acquired better understanding of the students by being exposed to their diversity, and as she said, every year she's learning new things.
- d. Maintaining a good relationship with students** – Apart from making sure that she was able to deliver all the lessons well, Sarah also maintained a good relationship with her students. She believed this to be beneficial since this allowed her to openly discuss with her students the progress of their learning. Also, this gave the students that assurance that they could approach her whenever they encounter challenges and difficulties in meeting the requirements of the subject.

## **B. Student Factors**

- a. **Students' harmonious relationship with their teacher** – Sarah was glad of the relationship she had built with her students. Due to the positive atmosphere they had developed in class, the giving of instructions became smoother for her. Sarah also found it helpful that her students could freely voice out their concerns and questions to her. Through this, the process of learning was continuous, and they were able to maintain positive interpersonal interactions with each other.
- b. **Students' determination to improve their English speaking skills** – Majority of Sarah's students expressed how they would be willing to exert more effort to improve their English communication skills. They wanted to improve their pronunciation and at the same time improve the structures of their sentences. This student determination in return motivated Sarah to do better in her teachings and instructions. She wanted her students to meet their goals because she shares the students' goals as her goals as well.

## **C. Contextual Factors**

### **C.1. The macro-context**

- a. **Acknowledgment coming from peers** – Sarah had been teaching for 17 years. Everything that goes along with her teaching journey had become a significant of her life. She had dedicated plenty of her time in school not only to teach her students but also to help her co-teachers whenever they needed assistance in school works. With this regard, it is essential for teachers to have a network of relationship among their colleagues and peers in order to build a social system with a stable foundation. Sarah felt fortunate that, from time to time, she had received compliments from her coworkers. The simple “thank you” she received from them

had become a part of her strength throughout time to continue her endeavor to provide quality work.

- b. University recognition** – Although the university had never given Sarah the chance to have continuous professional development, she still appreciated how the university gave value to her suggestions especially that she had dedicated 17 years of her life to the school already. The recognition a teacher gets from the school/university he or she is working for undeniably strengthens the social relationship they have with each other. During meetings, especially when discussing about the English department, Sarah always got the chance to be heard, and her ideas were taken into consideration. This added to her confidence to prove her capabilities. Furthermore, the sense of recognition she had received from the university served as one of the core factors that contributed to her emotional dimension which in result helped her mold her identity as a teacher.

## **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Good relationship with colleagues** – The same with Tracy, Sarah also shared a good working relationship with her colleagues. Knowing that she had been with the school for a very long time, her colleagues would always regard her with respect. She also reciprocated this respect in all her colleagues regardless of their designation. This created a good working environment for Sarah which helped her in motivating herself to continue doing better with her teaching.
- b. Sufficient teaching materials** – Sarah and Lucy were working in University A by the time of this study. Fortunately, apart from a classroom conducive for learning, Sarah also received a textbook from the university for her to use in class. This textbook had provided her ideas on

what activities to provide the students and at the same time techniques on how to manage situations in the classroom.

### **2.3.3.2. Constraining Factors**

#### **A. Teacher Factor**

- a. Lack of professional training for the program** – Sarah had been teaching oral English for years; however, the same with the rest of the teachers in this study, she never really had any professional training about this specific program. This had given her doubt with her performance since most of what she had learned and had been applying was based on her personal experiences and self-study. However, Sarah never let this factor hinder her effectivity in teaching. Although most of her knowledge on teaching strategies were self-taught, she made sure that the needs of the students were always met.

#### **B. Student Factors**

- a. Students' challenged motivation** – As mentioned earlier, most of Sarah's students were enthusiastic about the lessons and that they showed great dedication to improve their communication skills. However, like in any other classes, it cannot be avoided that some students would feel less motivated and dedicated. This posed a challenge to Sarah because one of her objectives was for all her students to be proficient speakers of English. Due to this factor, there were instances that instead of moving on to the next lesson, Sarah would allot time to cater to these students' needs because she thought it was useless to move on to the next lesson considering that there were students who had not understood the previous one. Although, as much as possible she would do interventions like this during consultation hours in order not to affect the learning progress of the rest of the class.

**b. Some of the students' lack of foundation of the English language** – It was stated previously that Sarah's students had already been exposed to the English language for years. They had been taught basic grammar rules and structures as well as pronunciations. However, Sarah had observed that their foundation of the target language was not that established yet. They would still commit grammatical and pronunciation errors frequently. Therefore, instead of just polishing the students' communication skills in English, Sarah had to go back to the basics in order for the students to establish a strong foundation of the language. Fortunately, she was able to manage this situation, but occasionally she still had to do some interventions whenever students commit the same mistakes.

*Table 22: Comparison between the student factors affecting students of different English achievement levels*

Achievement level	Learning purpose (positive factor)	Avoiding risk-taking (negative factor)
Low	+	---
Medium	+	N/A
High	+	-

It was found out that the students have the same aim in learning the English language, specifically when comparing the students' factors. They all wanted to develop their competency in oral English communication which also added to their motivation. However, given that there are students with low level English achievement, it was further found out that students from this level avoid risk taking in contrast to those with high level. Unfortunately, for students with medium level of English achievement, their answers did not create a pattern for clear distinction.

## C. Contextual Factors

### C.1. The macro-context

Both Sarah and Lucy were teaching in University A by the time of this study. Hence, both of them experienced the same constraining macro-contextual factor – the lack of English-speaking environment for the students to practice what they have learned in school. Sarah believed that in order for her students to master what they have learned in school, they need to be able to use it continuously. Unfortunately, the English speaking skills of the students were limited inside the school premises since there were very rare instances to use them outside school. Sarah considered this as a challenge for this had greatly impacted the process of meeting her teaching objectives as well as the students' process of meeting their learning objectives.

### C.2. The micro-context

- a. **Number of students in each class** – Sarah wanted to keep track of the individual progress of her students. Unfortunately, since there were more or less 30 of them in each class, she found it a challenge to guide them individually considering that she only had 90 mins per period. This was the reason why Sarah chose to have group activities most of the time. She did not want to give up her teaching objectives, and she believed that by being grouped together, the students will learn from each other as well. Sarah expressed that it would have been better if she had fewer students since she could take focus on their individual progress and could give more time for individual activities.
- b. **Number of periods per week** – University A provided Sarah the schedule for oral English classes to be done once a week. Though this may seem reasonable, Sarah believed that for the students to really improve their English proficiency, they need more time for this subject.

However, Sarah understood that this would also greatly affect the schedule of the university. Instead, she would make use of the time provided for her classes in meaningful class discussions and interactive activities.

*Table 23: Summary of factors affecting the implementation of teaching approaches in teaching oral English*

Domain	Enhancing factors	Constraining factors
Teacher factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's creativity in instructional method</li> <li>Teacher's passion toward teaching               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich teaching experience</li> </ul> </li> <li>Maintaining a good relationship with students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of professional training for the program</li> <li>Heavy administrative duties</li> </ul>
Student factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' harmonious relationship with their teacher</li> <li>Students' determination to improve their English speaking skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' challenged motivation</li> <li>Students' lack of foundation of the English language</li> </ul>
Contextual factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Acknowledgment coming from peers</li> <li>➤ University recognition</li> </ul> </li> <li>The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good relationship with colleagues</li> <li>➤ Sufficient teaching materials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of English-speaking environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of students in each class</li> <li>➤ Number of periods per week</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 2.4. Summary of Sarah's Case

After analyzing all the data in Sarah's case gathered through interviews and classroom observations and analysis of the documents, it is evident that the strategies Sarah used in her oral English classes correspond to the features of a CA. Her main objective was to improve the English proficiency of her students and she used strategies that is in line with that of CA. Sarah made sure that the students would be exposed to the functional communicative use of the target language.

On the other hand, as regards the students' perception of the teaching approach, materials, and activities, it was observed that even though majority of the students had positive feedbacks, there were a few who expressed to have found the activities too challenging for their level. These students happened to belong to the level with low oral English achievement, and their lack of confidence and poor English foundation may have influenced their perceptions of Sarah's lessons. Since Sarah's classes followed a learner-centered environment, Sarah maximized her role as motivator and organizer in order to address these concerns and support the students who encountered difficulties in their learning.

Nonetheless, Sarah expressed that she was happy to have met her teaching objectives, but the process was never easy for she had to meet challenges that tested her patience and determination as a teacher. There were factors that enhanced yet also constrained Sarah's implementation of her teaching strategies. For instance, even though she lacked the professional training to teach oral English, she managed to deliver the lessons to the class properly with her perseverance to self-study and by learning or improving her teaching from her years of teaching experience.

The number of students for each class as well as the lack of English-speaking environment also made teaching oral English challenging for Sarah. Fortunately, majority of her students were motivated learners and they were also vocal in expressing their appreciation of Sarah's effort. This positively affected Sarah and she made this as her motivation to continue to do better in her teaching.

All in all, Sarah had demonstrated much effort in meeting the needs of her students for them to become proficient in using the English language and in meeting her teaching objectives of strengthening her students' foundation in English.



### 3. Case of Tracy

#### 3.1. Profile of Tracy

Tracy had her English bachelor's degree at the Anhui Agricultural University from 1995 to 1999. Eight years after her graduation, she returned to the university to finish her studies. In 2008, Tracy finished her master's degree in English literature.

At the time of the study, Tracy had been teaching oral English courses for one year at University B. However, on top of this one-year experience, Tracy also had a history in teaching different English subjects, such as speech, grammar, and a bit of literature, for 20 years at the same university.

Tracy was responsible for teaching oral expression subject once a week for one semester for six freshman classes. She neither had overseas experience and in-service training nor had she taught pedagogy subject before.

#### 3.2. Teaching Practices of Tracy

##### 3.2.1. Objectives of Teaching

Tracy was determined to enhance her students' oral English proficiency by enabling them to use the target language in real-life situations. She believed that students who are less responsive to discussions may be more responsive if the topics are designed based on real-life contexts. Tracy set two objectives in her teaching of oral English and they are as follows:

**1. Primary objective:** Giving her students the chances to develop their English speaking abilities and improve their knowledge in doing real-life activities that would showcase their skills, such as performing speeches and having debates on stage.

The very aim of a language class is to empower the students to speak clearly, comprehensibly, and confidently using proper communicative strategies. Tracy officially set the first objective because she strongly believed that involving situations in real life would make the students be motivated to participate in class discussions which will then improve their confidence in themselves and their oral English proficiency. When asked about the improvements she would have made if given a chance, she answered, “Perhaps I’ll give them more chances to be involved in lesson activities which simulates real-life situations and talk more freely” (Tracy-interview-202004).

When students are introduced to scenarios applicable to the real world, they are being prepared how to react when they find themselves in similar situations. Tracy thought that no matter how much the students learn in class, if they do not get the chance to apply it, there will always be the tendency for them forgetting it. Also, she believed that it would be easier for students to retain information if they could visualize the situation and could relate to it.

Furthermore, the proficiency in English speaking skill is the relevant goal of oral English learners. Therefore, Tracy was convinced that allowing her students to be more interactive with each other and talk about things they could relate to added improvement to their communication skills. Whenever students interact socially, this gives them a new opportunity to practice the language.

**2. Secondary objective:** Exposing the students to the culture of the target language by providing the students authentic materials such as videos of native English speakers

This second objective was set by Tracy with the intention to not only make her students speak the language but also expose them to the language culture. She aims for the students to have the flexibility and openness in communicating amidst cultural differences. Tracy supposed

that language and culture are significantly correlated with each other, and it is important for the students to realize that when they are learning a foreign language, they should also learn the culture that this language is tied upon. Hence, immersing the students to the culture of the target language would make it easier for them to master it. This was why on top of the speaking skills that Tracy taught her students, they were also exposed to discussions about culture.

To sum this up, Tracy's oral English classes aimed to improve the students' speaking skills while at the same time exposing them to real-life situations and the language culture, giving them the chance to not only speak the language but also know about the language.

### **3.2.2. Teaching Content**

Tracy focused mainly on fluency, presentations, and cultural knowledge. The contents present in her classes included authentic language forms and structures, culture-specific concepts in language, and the process of effective verbal communication. Tracy used the contents found in the textbooks combined with real-life conversation setup.

#### **a. Authentic language forms and structures**

To serve her primary objective of enhancing the students' oral English proficiency that is applicable in real-life contexts, Tracy incorporated in her lessons contents that cover authentic language forms and structures. She believed that language is universally used as an expression, and it is best to understand language as an action rather than just merely functions. Tracy had regarded that students will learn more effective ways to improve their knowledge in English language if they were introduced to meaningful exercises that would require their total engagement and that would challenge them.

Using the textbook activities, the content in Tracy's activities comprised ideas on how things work in real life. For instance, in one of her observed classes, she taught the students how

to communicate orally in English while shopping, e.g., making inquiries, ordering, etc. She titled this lesson “Shopping.” According to her, this particular lesson will prepare the students for real-life situation and will give them a better picture of the ways on how to use English in different situations of daily living. With this, students learned how to properly use conversational English in an authentic situation. She added, “The students would know more about different shopping ways and shopping experience and explore the reasons for the change” (Tracy-interview-202004).

#### **b. Culture-specific concepts in language**

Tracy’s secondary objective prompted the concept that mastering fully a certain language requires understanding the culture where it came from. The variations in culture can be reflected in the languages they use. Therefore, the distinctions they find in the English language may hinder their entire understanding of the language if they were not introduced to the background of the language. Tracy believed that the students need to open themselves to these cultural differences to gain full grasp of the target language. Hence, she included in her classes contents that focus in speaking skills.

#### **c. Process of effective verbal communication**

Tracy has borne in mind that to have an effective communication requires understanding the process of communication. In connection to her primary objective, she added in her teaching content the concept on how to communicate properly – it could either be a conversation between two people or through group discussions. In order for the students to develop effective communication skills, Tracy discussed concepts on how to listen properly, how to keep an open mind while listening without judgments, how to properly organize thoughts and ideas to form speech, etc.

Table 24. The researcher's course guide of Tracy's oral English class

Period	Subject: Oral English		
27 hours	Content	Overview	Lesson objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oral languages in English</li> <li>Overview of the cultural background of the English language</li> </ul>	Students will be taught to demonstrate understanding of familiar words used to communicate their personal experiences, ideas, thoughts, actions, and feelings. They will also be introduced to the background of English culture for them to have full grasp of the English language-rich environment they are introduced to	The students will be able to understand spoken discourse and to talk and interact with other students about their personal experiences and the texts they have read or listened to
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonological skills</li> <li>Phonic and word recognition</li> </ul>	The students will be taught to demonstrate understanding of sounds and sound patterns for production of words and familiarization of word meanings for appropriate word use	The students will be able to demonstrate phonological awareness through identifying sounds in words and syllables which is crucial in the process of hearing and segmenting of words
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar awareness and structure</li> <li>Vocabulary development</li> </ul>	The students will be taught to demonstrate understanding of concepts of parts of speech for identification and description as well as enhancing their vocabulary for effective communication	The students will be able to demonstrate grammatical awareness by being able to speak correctly. They can effectively communicate in oral forms using correct English grammar structure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluency</li> <li>Speech compositions</li> <li>Oral interpretation</li> </ul>	The students will be taught to demonstrate understanding and interpretation of informational texts for effective oral expression	The students will be able to read and speak effortlessly and accurately without hesitations and with proper expressions. They will also be able to express their ideas efficiently and fulfill their purpose of sharing their thoughts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debates</li> <li>Role-plays</li> <li>Public speaking</li> </ul>	These will be given to the students all throughout the semester for them to practice mastery of the English language	The students will be able to master the skills that they have learned in oral English and will have a continuous process of application for them to achieve mastery of the target language

Tracy also believed that when the students know that their classmates were actively listening to their thoughts and ideas, this would also give them the confidence to express themselves, a process that will then lead to their mastery in speaking the English language. Tracy delicately chose her lessons. She made sure to include the discussions on topics that would increase the students' level of confidence and that would give them a chance to improve their spoken language, gain fluency, and wipe their worries. She focused her lessons particularly on public speeches, presentations, communication skills in relation to culture, and so on.

### 3.2.3 Materials

Tracy used different teaching materials in delivering her lessons, such as published books and textbooks bought online. She had taken from these textbooks activities that she used to improve her students' speaking skills and at the same time topics and activities that would introduce the students to the culture of the English language. Quoting from her words she said, "...I use my computer and the textbook for examples which were bought online" (Tracy-interview-202004).

*Table 25: List of teaching materials used by Tracy*

Type of teaching material	Teaching materials	Matched objective
Materials chosen by the teacher	Textbook: <i>New Inside Out Intermediate</i> by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones Online-bought textbooks	Primary and secondary
Materials prepared by the teacher	Teacher's personal presentations	Primary and secondary
Students' work used in the lesson	Students presentations	Primary
	Debates	Primary

These different types of materials used by Tracy, as summed up in Table 25, were to help the students improve their communication skills. Although they do not have the physical copy of the textbooks, Tracy made sure to make presentations of the content and show it to class. In her lessons, she used the *New Inside Out Intermediate* by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones.

The *New Inside Out* is an international 6-level general English course which ensures that language becomes memorable for adult students, by drawing on their own interests and experiences to deliver language in a meaningful way (Kay & Jones, 2009, pp. 2–3). Table 26 shows the content and activities from the *New Inside Out* textbook which were adopted by Tracy.

In her classes, Tracy used the intermediate level textbook and discussed with her students the different textbook lessons, which ranged from practice of functional, real-world language to grammatical structure, etc. Tracy also conducted the activities found in the textbook with her students.

Tracy did not rely solely on a single resource to teach her students. One of the teaching materials she used in presenting her lessons was in the form of a PPT presentation. She used these presentations to explain the parts of the lesson to be discussed, which included the required information the students may need as the classroom activities progress and the speaking strategies that need to be used.

Table 26 shows the topics included in Tracy's subject discussions. Furthermore, the personal presentations made by the students as well as the feedback on their performances were used by Tracy to discuss and analyze with the class the factors that need improvement and more focus. Tracy thought that, in using these materials, her students will gain practical views of the experience, correct their mistakes, and discuss the varied situations with their peers all along using functional everyday language.

Table 26: Topics and activities from the New Inside out Intermediate Student's Book

Units & Topics	Speaking & Writing	Reading & Listening Texts	Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation
<b>1 Friends</b> Friends Lifestyle Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends</li> <li>Getting to know you</li> <li>How people communicate</li> <li>Emails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Schwimmer: Q&amp;A</li> <li>Three people talking about keeping in touch with friends</li> <li>Keeping in touch</li> <li>That was then; this is now</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Question forms, tense review</li> <li>Questions with prepositions, subject questions, adverbs of frequency</li> <li>Friendship expressions</li> <li>Extra using dictionary</li> <li>Fractions and percentages</li> </ul>
<b>2 Adrenalin</b> Experiences Sports Injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exciting experiences</li> <li>Sports</li> <li>Injuries</li> <li>Describing a city/town</li> <li>Story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deadmike.com</li> <li>Three people talking about experiences</li> <li>Two people talking about the sports they do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present perfect simple, past simple, and continuous; comparatives and superlatives</li> <li>Gradable and non-gradable adjectives, time expression, sports</li> <li>Extra adjectives: exploring synonyms</li> <li>Intonation to show strong feelings</li> </ul>
<b>3 Relationships</b> Family Dating Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal photos</li> <li>Family</li> <li>Firsts</li> <li>Dating</li> <li>Informal letter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who do you carry around?</li> <li>Twenty-first century dating</li> <li>Two people talking about their relationships</li> <li>Six people talking about their ideal partner</li> <li>What's your type?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic and stative meanings, present perfect simple, and continuous</li> <li>Family, relationships; describing character</li> <li>Extra: sounds and spelling</li> <li>Words stress</li> </ul>
<b>4 Party</b> Festivals New year Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Festivals</li> <li>New years</li> <li>Parties</li> <li>Letters of thanks and apologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Las Falls</li> <li>An interview with someone about Chinese New Year</li> <li>How to throw the best party ever (and enjoy it)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phrasal verbs, future forms ; pronouns, <i>anybody</i>, <i>somebody</i>, <i>etc.</i></li> <li>Festivals, do and make, parties</li> <li>Extra phrasal verbs</li> <li>Connected speech: <i>gonna</i>, <i>gotta</i>, <i>wanna</i></li> </ul>
<b>5 Edible</b> Food Eating Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chocolate</li> <li>Describing food</li> <li>Eating habits</li> <li>Letter of complaint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chocolate trivia</li> <li>Some facts about chocolate</li> <li>An interview with a person who has eaten some unusual food</li> <li>Memories of food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Countable and uncountable nouns, quantity expressions, used to/would</li> <li>Partitives: <i>a bar of</i>, <i>a bowl of</i>, <i>etc.</i>, describing food, taste and texture</li> <li>Extra nouns and articles</li> <li>Word stress</li> </ul>
<b>6 Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time-keeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test you attitude to time-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propositions of time, modals of</li> </ul>

Units & Topics	Speaking & Writing	Reading & Listening Texts	Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation
Time Punctuality Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work and jobs</li> <li>• Business letters</li> <li>• Letter requesting information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping</li> <li>• Time-saving tips: lists</li> <li>• Three people talking about their jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obligation and permission</li> <li>• Time expressions, phrasal verbs, work</li> <li>• Extra words that are sometimes confusing</li> <li>• Ordinal numbers</li> </ul>
<b>7 News</b> Paparazzi News stories Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrities and the paparazzi</li> <li>• News stories</li> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Personal news</li> <li>• Essay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An interview with a paparazzo</li> <li>• News in brief</li> <li>• A news Bulletin</li> <li>• An email with personal news</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verb patterns, passive structures</li> <li>• Adjectives to describe celebrities, crime, headline language</li> <li>• Extra verb patterns</li> <li>• -ed endings: /t/, /d/, /id/</li> </ul>
<b>8 Journey</b> Travel Places Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travelling</li> <li>• Describing places</li> <li>• Holidays</li> <li>• Describing a place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extract 1 from <i>The Beach</i></li> <li>• Extract 2 from <i>The Beach</i></li> <li>• Bondi/Portinatx beaches</li> <li>• Two people discussing a friend's travel web page</li> <li>• Coast to coast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modals of deduction, past perfect</li> <li>• Geographical location, describing places; fixed expressions: <i>now or never</i>, <i>take it or leave it</i>, etc.</li> <li>• Extra dictionary labels</li> <li>• English names for famous geographical features</li> </ul>
<b>9 Opinions</b> Stereotypes Books Films	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men and women</li> <li>• Books, films, and music</li> <li>• A book review</li> <li>• Film review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men and women, survey</li> <li>• Men and women, survey results</li> <li>• Seven conversations about books, films, and music</li> <li>• Mr. Nice Guy</li> <li>• Book choice</li> <li>• <i>Pride and Prejudice: Synopsis</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reported statements and questions</li> <li>• Books, films, music; -ed and -ing adjectives</li> <li>• Extra collocations</li> <li>• Word stress</li> </ul>
<b>10 Childhood</b> Children Childhood Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and parents</li> <li>• Bringing children up</li> <li>• Letter of advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's descriptions of a mother</li> <li>• Children defining things</li> <li>• Lies, white lies, and psychologists</li> <li>• TV interview with "pushy parents"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining relative clauses, real conditionals (first conditional), indirect questions</li> <li>• Phrasal verbs, childhood, verb-noun collocations, proverbs, <i>make</i> and <i>let</i></li> <li>• Extra word families</li> <li>• Words with silent letters</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing rockers</li> <li>• Regrets</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Discussing dilemmas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A conversation about a Rolling Stones gig</li> <li>• Poem: <i>If</i> – from a Harley Davidson advert</li> <li>• Ageism turned me into a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreal conditionals (second and third conditionals), wishes, and regrets</li> <li>• Adverbs of attitude and manner, age</li> </ul>

Units & Topics	Speaking & Writing	Reading & Listening Texts	Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• liar</li> <li>• Conversation between a woman and a man about age</li> <li>• Three situations and dilemmas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra idiomatic expressions</li> <li>• Word stress</li> </ul>
<b>12 Style</b> Fashion Appearance Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical description</li> <li>• Describing yourself</li> <li>• Describing a film character</li> <li>• Describing a person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How I get dressed</li> <li>• Four people talking about their favorite clothes</li> <li>• Extract from <i>Come Together</i></li> <li>• Two friends talking about a TV program, <i>Ten Years Younger</i></li> <li>• Morning routines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjective order, <i>have something done</i></li> <li>• Clothes, physical description, verb phrases</li> <li>• Extra exploring meanings</li> <li>• Sounds and spelling.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.3. Activities

Tracy's classroom organization reflects the features found in a CA. This includes allowing her students to do role-playing, story-telling, dialogues, etc., and since the focus was on the learners, they were made to engage in meaning negotiated interactions. Tracy intended to incorporate the CA in her approach because she was certain its features would meet the needs of the students given that her subject was oral English. She was aware that in a CA, the students will be exposed to functional communicative activities. As she mentioned, "Activities on real situations involving the functional use of the language would allow my students to talk more freely" (Tracy-interview-202004).

Tracy would start by introducing the topic and instructions to the students. She would then allow her students to complete the activities in groups using the language resources that they had, while Tracy monitored their progress and gave them encouragements. For instance, Tracy would instruct her students to write down a list of everyday scenes that occur between two people (e.g., inquiry while shopping, people arguing, etc.). The students divided in groups would then discuss

with each other the different situations and think about what could be said by each person involved in that real-life conversation. Also, Tracy made sure that she gave her students feedback for each activity so they would know where they have excelled and where they needed further improvement.

Tracy designed her classes in a way that students would run debates and discussions (the same setting with group works). In order to accomplish this, she would present the lessons, explain them, and run group discussions. To prepare her lessons, Tracy used the *New Inside Out* text and adopted the different activities in the book. These activities did not focus on speaking skills only. Referring to this textbook, Tracy also required the students to do listening and reading activities, with an emphasis on speaking activities. Students were given assignments like presentations or debates, and Tracy would assess the students' performances and give feedbacks whenever necessary.

Tracy's classroom activities consisted mainly of group works. She said, "The students will be organized in groups to do the classroom activities. Each class consists of 30 students. I usually divide them into 6 groups so that the discussion result can be collected relatively easily" (Tracy-interview-202004). She grouped her students into five students per group. She made them work together – cooperate to make speeches and discussions in front of their peers. She thought that in this way, exchanging of ideas and information could be done easily. She also thought that smaller groups were less stressful for shy students. She said, "Freshmen are sometimes unwilling to speak in public. It is more acceptable to share their ideas within a small group" (Tracy-interview-202004). Tracy believed that five students per group had made the discussion manageable and had given the individual student enough opportunity to speak.

When Tracy was asked about the activities she employed in the observed lesson for the students to engage in, she said that the activities were conducted in the following order: lead-in questions, group discussion, oral discussion report, and sometimes reflection essay. The students discussed the different cultural topics, carried out activities related to everyday life contexts, conducted debates, wrote essays with their teammates, and so on. They were also encouraged to make comments on their peers' performance. This made the class vivid and full of interactions between the students themselves and between them and their teacher.

*Table 27. Teaching flow of one of the observed lessons*

Period	Communication in real-life situations: “Shopping”		Time		%
Class 1		Objectives/Flow			
		Primary objective			
	Part 1	Introducing the lesson to the class	02 mins	8 mins	09%
		Explanation on the purpose of the lesson	03 mins		
		Providing examples of real-life scenarios to the students	03 mins		
	Part 2	Lecture (how to initiate the conversation)	05 mins	20 mins	22%
		Lecture (how to respond to a conversation)	05 mins		
		Practice conversation	05 mins		
		5-minute break	05 mins		
		Secondary objective			
	Part 3	Groupings (students will be grouped into 5) and giving of instructions	03 mins	51 mins	57%
		Students will discuss and practice with themselves sample scenarios	20 mins		
		Each group will present in front (minimum of 4 mins per group)	28 mins		
	Part 4	Giving feedback to the groups	08 mins	11 mins	12%
		Wrapping up and assigning homework	03 mins		
Total			90 mins		100%

### **3.2.4. Teacher's Roles**

Tracy, during her classes, played different roles depending on the activities she was giving her students and on the progress of each activity. She played the role of a lecturer by presenting the teaching activities to the class. She was then the facilitator by assisting and guiding the students as they complete their given assignments. She made sure that they know what they were expected to do.

Furthermore, Tracy monitored the learning process of her students and gave feedbacks whenever needed; however, she believed that her duty was not only to convey the language to be taught. Hence, she focused on encouraging her students to gain real-life communication skills and played the role of a language advisor where she assisted the students with their queries regarding the target language.

Therefore, Tracy played different roles according to the learning needs of her students. She was not solely a source of information but an active partner in the educational process.

### **3.2.5. Learners' Roles**

Tracy's students played different roles depending on the activities they were assigned to do. When their teacher was introducing to them the learning activities, they played the roles of information receivers, followers, and responders. They followed Tracy's instructions and did what they were assigned to do. Tracy's students were also able to voice out their questions about the activities during classes.

Whenever Tracy was presenting the lessons, the students needed to be all ears to her discussion for they were also listeners. However, this does not mean that this is how the class was managed all the time. In other instances, the students were assigned to work in groups and

given the chance to lead their learning process. This made the students partners in the education process, where they had a chance to voice out their feelings and opinions in group discussions.

In Tracy's classes, there were 30 students; each group is made up of 5 students. Members of each group were assigned to make discussions, therefore giving them the opportunity to interchange information and ideas and cooperate with each other while fulfilling the required activities. Furthermore, the students could also monitor their peers' performance and give feedbacks, making them contributors to the teaching process.

### **3.2.6. Assessment**

Tracy used three types of assessments in her classes, namely, communication skills assessment that measures the students' overall proficiencies in oral English throughout the course of the subject, the assessments for class performances, and regular assignments which Tracy specifically included.

#### **3.2.6.1. Communication Skills Assessment**

During classes, Tracy would assess her students through regular classroom observations, marking their assignments, asking students questions, and observing their performance. She would carefully observe the performances of her students in all the activities given. She would also take note of any possible feedback, for instance, if the students need more improvement in structuring the statements they were saying. Usually, a written report will be given to the students to summarize the key points of the feedback. The written report could be for each student if the activity was done individually or by group for group works. This type of assessment is beneficial for the students because this gives practical feedback about the language

used in real-life situations, and at the same time, this is beneficial for Tracy since this serves as her guide in keeping track whether the students have met her set objectives or not.

Furthermore, Tracy also assessed the secondary objective using the communication skills assessment. For instance, one of the ways Tracy exposed her students to the language culture is through videos of native English speakers. After showing to the students the video, Tracy would give them activities related to the video they have just watched. Tracy would then assess the students' performances by observing whether they have acquired the manner of speaking of the native English speakers as well as the manner they deliver the words and sentences.

She would perform the communication skills assessment using the following criteria:

- Pronunciation and intonation (25%)
- Grammar and vocabulary (20%)
- Fluency (25%)
- Communicative ability (30%)

#### **3.2.6.2. Classroom Performance Assessment**

Through Tracy's subjective observation of the classes, she had gained a rough idea of her students' performance. She was able to evaluate how far the students have mastered what she was teaching them and was able to identify the issues the students faced with oral English. When asked about how she would assess her students, Tracy answered, "As an oral lesson, oral expression in class is an important part in assessing students' performance. However, the reflection after class is also necessary" (Tracy-interview-202004).

Systematically, Tracy observed her students' performance during class activities to acquire basic understanding of their mastery of the lessons taught. She did it by assigning the students activities from the *New Inside Out* textbook. This gave her a clearer idea of the level of mastery

the students have with oral English and at the same time allowed her to point out things that need further development.

She would perform the classroom performance assessment using the following criteria:

- Knowledge on the content presented (25%)
- Clarity in demonstration (25%)
- Organization (20%)
- Communicative ability (30%)

### **3.2.6.3. Regular Assignments**

Tracy, as mentioned before, would assign her students to do specific activities. These activities included reading, completing exercises suggested in the textbook, speaking, making presentations, acting out in the classroom in front of their peers, and listening during group discussions.

When she was asked about the assignments she had given her students, she answered by saying, "...Usually, assignments involving speaking and presenting are given to them so as to summarize the key points" (Tracy-interview-202004). However, when asked about whether the students have achieved the learning outcomes she expected from the first lesson observed, Tracy replied, "The result is not as good as I expect, but they're making great efforts" (Tracy-interview-202004). Regardless of this not too positive response, Tracy emphasized that the students' communication skills are improving.

The criteria she used for regular assignments are as follows:

- Content (30%)
- Grammar and vocabulary (20%)
- Organization (20%)

- Communicative ability (30%)

By the end of each lesson, Tracy would keep record of the assessment results of her students. These records will serve as her reference when finalizing their grades. The criteria she used in grading include the assessment of the students' performance.

At the end of each semester, Tracy performs an overall assessment of all three forms of assessments using the following criteria:

- Communication skills assessment (50%)
- Classroom performance assessment (25%)
- Regular assignments (25%)

### **3.2.7. MOI**

Tracy solely used the English language during her classes. When she was asked about her internal classroom rule in speaking, whether it was purely English or mixed code, she answered, “purely English” (Tracy-interview-202004). The reason for this is that she believed that her students have to be immersed in the English language environment. Tracy had observed that many students would make a dramatic improvement in their English communication skills when they are immersed in an environment wherein they really have to speak the language in expressing themselves, and Tracy wanted to see the same results for her students. This was also why Tracy merged the teaching of the English language with its cultural background.

### **3.2.8. Grammar Teaching**

In relation to Tracy's objectives of developing the students' flexibility and openness of mind in communicating and their overall proficiency in the English language, she gave her students additional insights about grammar especially if she sees that her students were struggling with sentence constructions and forms. She used the activities in the *New Inside Out*

intermediate textbook to teach her students grammar rules, such as adverbs and adverb phrases, adjectives ending in -ed/-ing, tenses of the verbs, etc., alongside vocabulary and pronunciation rules. Although the students had studied English for 12 years and that they had CET-4 level in English, it was evident that they still faced issues with pronunciation and grammar. As a result, Tracy chose to give her students additional lessons in grammar like forming questions and sentences using the basic tenses of verbs and the correct subject–verb agreement. She included points on grammatical correctness when she graded her students’ performances. For instance, when her students were having a debate, she would listen carefully to the students’ statements not only to check their fluency in speaking but also to check if they were using the correct grammatical structures in their statements.

### **3.3. Students’ Experience**

As mentioned before, six of Tracy’s students were chosen for this study, two from each level (high, medium, and low English level). All of the interviewees were sophomore students and have been studying English for ten years.

Data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The following subsections report the students’ experience in learning English in terms of their perceptions of the learning objectives, materials, activities, and assessment.

Table 28: Information of the interviewed students from Tracy's class

	Gender	Year of study	Level	Teacher	English level	Past English Education experience	Years of English study
Student 1: T3A1	Female	Sophomore	A	T3	CET4	10 years in Suzhou, Anhui Province	10
Student 2: T3A2	Female	Sophomore	A	T3	CET4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	10
Student 3: T3B1	Female	Sophomore	B	T3	CET4	10 years in Chuzhou, Anhui Province	10
Student 4: T3B2	Female	Sophomore	B	T3	CET4	10 years in Suzhou, Anhui Province	10
Student 5: T3C1	Female	Sophomore	C	T3	CET4	10 years in Chuzhou, Anhui Province	10
Student 6: T3C2	Female	Sophomore	C	T3	CET4	10 years in Huangshan, Anhui Province	10

### 3.3.1. Objectives of Learning

All the students wanted to improve their fluency in English and their overall communication skills as well as their performances in debates. One of Tracy's students confirmed this by stating that his learning objectives were "... speaking loudly and confidently, improving the language organization ability during debate, and more importantly, team integrity" (T3C1-interview-202004).

The students expressed their goal to acquire a solid foundation in English and improve their debate skills. They also mentioned that they enjoyed activities such as classroom debates and group discussions because they found these activities as opportunities to practice and enhance their speaking skills.

### **3.3.2. Students' Perception of the Teaching Materials**

Tracy had carefully chosen her materials in a way that each of her students would appreciate and learn from them. Tracy's students have varied English achievement levels. They were classified to have high, medium, and low oral English levels according to their scores of final examination. For those students with high English level, they found the materials helpful in making them understand the lessons better. They said that when Tracy was having class discussions, the use of PPT presentation was really guiding them all throughout the lecture. The activities from the textbooks were also full of new knowledge, and it did help them in mastering their use of the English language.

Meanwhile, for those students with medium and low level English levels, they said that they really did not give much attention to the materials. One of the students with low English level explained that regardless if there were other materials used, if he thought the lesson was hard, the use of the materials would not matter with his understanding at all.

### **3.3.3. Students' Perception of Activities**

When the students with high oral English level were interviewed, it was realized that they found the debates, group discussions, presentation, and games fun and interesting. They agreed to have enjoyed Tracy's classes, and this was the reason why they always wanted to participate actively during class activities. One of the students explained by saying, "Because it's fun, but also we can exercise with courage our oral English" (T3C1-interview-202004). These students would prefer activities that would allow them to practice their speaking skills and have meaningful interactions with each other rather than merely having textbook lectures.

However, as expected, those students with medium English level did not exhibit such enthusiasm at all times. There were few instances that the teachers would notice them not

actively participating in class activities. Whenever there were group works, they opted to just listen to their other classmates talk. This usually happened when they were not so confident with the activities provided to them. The same is true with those students with low oral English level. It was observed that they would prefer for their other classmates to do most of the duties and just be silent. When asked about the reason behind their behavior, they expressed that they could not always put into words the ideas in their minds because they have poor English vocabulary. This challenge had greatly affected the way these students perceived the activities provided to them by their teacher. Tracy, on the other hand, reached out to her students to address this concern. This is the reason why she made time to meet with her students outside the time period allotted for the class to talk to them and help them with their struggles.

#### **3.3.4. Students' Perceptions of Assessments**

The majority of the students liked the presentation and group discussion assignments. They saw in it an opportunity to improve their speaking skills. However, there were some students, those with medium and low English achievement level, who were not confident enough to be evaluated because they did not have the confidence to take risks. A student with low English achievement level explained by saying, "The teacher asked us to make a speech about our invention and to have a PPT presentation, which should be considered as a project. It took me a lot of courage to perform because I was not confident with my skills. My spoken English is not very good" (T3C1-interview-202004). Another student with low English achievement level added, "I think I have always been dumb in English, only able to express in writing, not good at oral expression" (T3C2-interview-202004).

Although the student expressed that she would rather write than speak, Tracy explained to her that their subject is oral English; therefore, she needed to muster her confidence and try to speak up, in which the student did.

### 3.4. Discussion

#### 3.4.1. Tracy's Teaching Approach

When comparing the teaching approach adopted by Tracy with the features of teaching approaches from Table 1 in Chapter 2, it was found that the strategies she had implemented correspond to the features of a CA. Tracy further mentioned that she wanted to expose her students to the functional use of the target language and that she was aware that the CA has this feature. A comparison between the CA and the teaching approach adopted by Tracy is summarized in Table 29.

*Table 29: Analysis of Tracy's teaching approach*

Components	Tracy's case	Analysis
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Real-life trainings (oral English, conversations, public speaking)</li> <li>-Giving feedback to keep track with learning progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Activities aimed at developing students' communicative skills</li> <li>-Enhancing the linguistic skills of the students particularly in speaking and listening</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Group discussions, fluency, presentations, cultural knowledge</li> <li>-Real-life communicative language forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Exposing the students to the authenticity of the target language together with its structure</li> <li>-Taking into consideration the needs of the students</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Textbook: <i>New Inside Out Intermediate</i> by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones</li> <li>-Teacher's personal presentation</li> <li>-Online-bought textbooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Practice of real-world activities</li> <li>-Materials are authentic</li> <li>-Textbook topics on linguistic materials (role-plays, language games)</li> </ul>

Components	Tracy's case	Analysis
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Public speaking (debates, presentations)</li> <li>-Performing real-life communication scenarios</li> <li>-Performing in front of the teacher and classmates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communicative activities were functional</li> <li>-Provided interactive activities (debates, presentations, etc.) to encourage social interactions among students</li> </ul>
Teacher's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lecturer</li> <li>-Monitor</li> <li>-Instructor</li> <li>-Controller</li> <li>-Facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assessed the needs and interests of the students</li> <li>-Managed classroom activities</li> <li>-Guided and assisted the students with language comprehension</li> </ul>
Learners' role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learners' center (information receiver, follower, and responders)</li> <li>-Initiator</li> <li>-Participant</li> <li>-Cooperator</li> <li>-Monitor</li> <li>-Risk taker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in meaningful communicative activities</li> <li>-Encouraged to cooperate within the group</li> <li>-Took risk during classroom activities</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communication skills assessment</li> <li>-Classroom performance assessment</li> <li>-Regular assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Determine students' English proficiency through different forms of communicative performances and give practical feedback</li> </ul>
MOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Main language used is English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Inside the classroom, students were immersed in the target language environment</li> </ul>
Grammar teaching	Teaching grammar explicitly but with minor implicit interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Introducing students to situational scenes for the practical use of the target language</li> </ul>

Table 29 shows that Tracy's teaching approach illustrates the characteristics of a CA. The attributes exhibited in each of the nine components are mostly in line with the features of CA. Tracy was aware of the CA and mentioned to have implemented its features in her teaching strategies.

In terms of classroom activities, content, and materials, Tracy's approach strongly gives focus into developing her students' English language proficiency with the use of real-life trainings. Concerning grammar, Tracy chose to teach explicitly with occasional implicit interventions. She would give her students refreshers in grammar especially when she observed grammatical errors from students during presentations. This matches with guidelines of a CA. On the other hand, she used communication skills assessment, classroom performance assessment, and regular assignments for evaluation. The roles of Tracy's students inside the classroom also mirror the CA; they were cooperators, negotiators, initiator, monitor, information receivers, and risk takers. Tracy's ELT classes mainly focused on meeting the students' needs. Her students were directly involved in the education process; she accompanied them and played the roles of facilitator and monitor. In terms of the MOI, she solely used English because she believed that her students should be fully immersed in an English language environment.

From Tracy's perspective, the teaching objectives she had set for her oral English classes were met. The adoption of the CA was observed in her lessons with a little of grammar teaching and English was used throughout her lessons.

### **3.4.2. Students' Perceptions**

Tracy's classes were composed of students with different levels of oral English achievement. Majority of them had shown to have high oral English level. However, around four to six of the students in every class can be considered to fall under the medium level because they did not show consistent participation in classroom activities, while around three to five of low level; these were the students who rarely participated in any form of classroom activities. These differences then led to the students' varied perceptions of Tracy's teaching approach. Tracy, however, upon noticing that some of the students were not very participative in class,

made some interventions, such as individually meeting the students who struggle in class in order to know more of their needs.

Positively, majority of the students had favorable attitude toward the activities and the educational atmosphere inside the classroom. They expressed how the teacher-student relationship had helped them overcome the challenges they faced in doing the activities. They were positive that their English communication skills have improved over time.

When the students were asked about the classroom activities, most of them made it clear that they enjoyed it. Even in the classroom observation, there was a noticeable participation among the students, especially in group discussions. The students were motivated to discuss with their teammates the activities they were required to do.

However, given that Tracy had students with medium and low level oral English achievement, it was expected that some of them would admit to be hesitant in taking risks especially in activities that would require them to present in front of the class. These students lacked the confidence to speak because they doubt their capabilities to do so.

Nonetheless, the overall students' evaluations of the classroom activities were mostly positive, and this can be ascribed to the motivating learning environment that language activities can create. All the students said that they relished the learning activities except for one student with low academic ability who said that he was not motivated to participate.

When the students were asked about the reason underpinning their motivation to participate in lessons, the answers of students with high oral English level were mostly related to how they saw these activities and group discussions as beneficial to their speaking skills. One of them said, "...because the lesson is fun, and it also exercises our courage and oral English"

(T3A1-interview-202004). With this, the students had positive perceptions regarding the classroom activities. They thought that it was beneficial and fruitful to their learning.

Furthermore, in learning the English language speaking skill, the students faced three major issues: pronunciation, vocabulary, and lack of English setting to improve their speaking skill. Pronunciation mistakes represented a challenge for the students. All the interviewed students were concerned about their pronunciation, and they said that pronunciation mistakes made a big challenge in speaking the language. One of the students said, "...Second, I am afraid of making mistakes and dare not open my mouth..." (T3C2-interview-202004). However, the difficulty in pronunciation was addressed by Tracy by letting her students hear the correct pronunciation of the words and by giving them corrections whenever necessary.

The second issue was the vocabulary and the language register. Students were lacking in vocabulary, and they did not master the use of words in an authentic way. One of the students confirmed this by saying, "...I lack vocabulary in my spoken English. And my grammar is not very good, so there are some problems in oral expression..." (T3A1-interview-202004).

Lastly, the lack of English-speaking environment to practice English presented an issue for the students to improve their English communication skill. One of Tracy's students explained this saying, "In fact, I reckon that the lack of practice is the biggest challenge in learning oral English because we lack the atmosphere that everyone speaks English from time to time. What's more, our vocabulary is also a problem and sometimes we don't know how to express our real feeling in English, so we don't practice oral English" (T3C1-interview-202004). This issue had hindered the students from improving their language and had created an empty circle for them. Nonetheless, since Tracy created an English-only classroom environment for her students, this

had become the students' training ground to continue using the English language they have learned.

On the other hand, all the interviewed students gave positive to neutral feedbacks about their relationship with their teachers and the classroom environment in general. Taking one of the students' comments, she said, "...I don't find it hard to fit in the classroom atmosphere very well, because it is always very funny to have oral English class" (T3A2-interview-202004). However, another student commented on her relationship with her peers saying, "...Some of them still don't understand. So, it's not that easy for me but I am trying" (T3B1-interview-202004). This proved that not all the students had the same level in English which somehow affected their interactions.

As regards the students' perception of their teacher, most of them were satisfied about their relationship with Tracy, as one of the students commented, "I have a good relationship with my teacher; I make contact with her after class. The relationship is good. Students should communicate with the teacher as much as possible" (T3A2-interview-202004). Another student confirmed that saying, "Our teacher always taught us so that we will be familiar with her teaching mode and will speak enthusiastically in general" (T3B2-interview-202004).

To sum up, the students had good relationship and developed strong communication bonds with their teacher, Tracy. However, sometimes, these students cannot express themselves which somehow affected their participation in the classroom.

### 3.4.3. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Teaching Approaches in Teaching

#### Oral English

Tracy's implementation of her teaching approaches was influenced by the following factors:

#### 3.4.3.1. Enhancing Factors

Tracy believed that one of the ways to achieve teacher effectiveness in an oral English class is through deeply understanding the individual profiles of the students such as their strengths and weaknesses and at the same time providing them the materials that they need. In achieving this goal, teachers should put more focus on the enhancing factors that played significant roles in the teacher's improvement in teaching. In Tracy's classes, she made basis of the factors that would help her achieve her teaching objectives. These factors were divided into three categories: teacher factors, student factors, and contextual factors.

#### A. Teacher Factors

- a. **Teacher's high English proficiency level** – This factor can influence how the teacher administers the teaching approach in class. The teacher's fluency and proficiency in the English language determines the flow of the discussions. In Tracy's case, she had a high level of English proficiency; hence, it was easier for her to hand over the lessons to the students. Furthermore, she evidently succeeded in implementing CA. This is supported by the fact that her students had positive feedbacks about her lessons/classroom activities and her teaching strategies.
- b. **Teacher's willingness to administer feedback** – Giving feedback to the students is very necessary especially in dealing with subjects such as oral English. For teachers, it is crucial

to make the process of providing feedback a positive experience for the students. Being positive or at least being neutral with the feedback would avoid negative impacts to the students especially that some students are afraid to take risks in performing in subjects such as oral communication. In Tracy's case, she used this chance to establish a stronger connection to her students and be more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Through this, the students were also made aware of their progress in learning English oral communication.

- c. **Maintaining good relationship with students** – Tracy's students believed that her being approachable, transparent, engaging, and open-minded added up to their motivation in class. Because they felt at ease that their teacher would assess their performance or provide feedback without judgment, they became more confident to participate. Nonetheless, Tracy made sure that the students felt the positive atmosphere of the classroom; hence, learning became more exciting and memorable for the students.
- d. **Students' exposure to the language** – Tracy lived up to the idea that exposing the students to the target language both informally and formally could actually enhance their speaking abilities. This is one way for them to improve the sound, stress, and intonation in their pronunciations. This was also one of the reasons why Tracy strictly implemented the English-only policy inside the classroom and why she used real-life scenarios with most of her activities. This language exposure that the students get will provide them more opportunities to learn and enhance their English proficiency.

## **B. Student Factors**

- a. **Positive attitude shown by the students in classroom activities** – When Tracy gave the activities to the students, she carefully observed their reaction, whether they were interested

or not. This would allow her to also assess her strategies, whether she was being effective or still needed to revise her arrangements. Fortunately, majority of Tracy's students exerted great effort to improve their communication skills through her classroom activities. Although some of the activities were quite challenging to them, they still appreciated the value of each lesson and the effort that their teacher exerted in providing them quality activities. The students had a great desire to develop their communication skills which made Tracy more motivated in providing them meaningful classroom activities.

- b. Students' verbal ability** – Tracy posited that in oral English classes, verbal ability along with subject knowledge is a sufficient measure of good teaching. As observed in her classes, again, majority of Tracy's students showed great improvement in their verbal abilities which can be assessed by how they facilitate in putting their ideas into words and verbally share them. This as well gave Tracy the motivation to continue enhancing her teaching strategies in order to level with her students' progress in their verbal ability.

### **C. Contextual Factors**

#### **C.1. The macro-context**

- a. Acknowledgement coming from peers** – Another component in a social system that greatly affects the teachers is the appreciation they get either from their students, their colleagues, or even the university administration. Tracy finds it fulfilling that her manner of handling her classes was greatly recognized by her students. Some of them vocally expressed their appreciation of her efforts to teach them effectively. Despite the challenges she was encountering brought upon by various factors, this recognition Tracy received from the students motivated her to continue doing better in her teaching. The more she felt that her

students were very interested in her lessons and activities, the more she wanted to provide them good-quality education experience.

- b. Empowering teacher's strengths** – Another factor that influences a teacher's identity with regard to emotional perspective is the climate she gets from the working environment and the school culture that goes with it. The school had given Tracy the freedom to follow the teaching strategies that she was most comfortable with. This gave her the empowerment to make use of her strengths in handling her classes. Tracy believed that when teachers were able to use their strengths inside the classroom, it would also be easier to engage and inspire the students to participate.

## **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Students' potential to master the English language** – Majority of Tracy's students exhibited interest to learn English and gain mastery in speaking the language. This potential that Tracy observed in her students became one of her motivations to properly guide them in becoming fluent English speakers. Tracy believed that it is essential for teachers to set a general expectation of their students' potential and set a standard on how to improve that potential in order to achieve the learning goals.
- b. Good relationship with colleagues** – One of the many things that Tracy was grateful for in the university she was teaching was her relationship with her colleagues. Having a positive relationship with her co-teachers made Tracy feel at ease with her works which further made her more determined to meet the expectations of both her students and the university as a whole.

### 3.4.3.2. Constraining Factors

While Tracy aimed to develop the English proficiency of her students, it cannot be avoided that there were certain factors that constrained the implementation of her teaching strategies. The constraining factors were divided into three categories, namely, the teacher factors, student factors, and contextual factors.

#### A. Teacher factor

- a. **Lack of professional education and development** – Tracy never had a formal training and preparation for teaching English particularly oral English. Most of the teaching strategies she used in her classes were acquired through her years of experience in teaching. Hence, it was not guaranteed that Tracy followed the standard process of teaching students oral English, making this a constraining factor in Tracy's case. It is a given fact that to ensure high-quality teaching performance from teachers, they must be given regular training opportunities. Students' attitude in learning changes overtime, and it is essential that teachers must adapt to this change, too. Hence, they must need a regular participation to formal trainings.

#### B. Student Factors

- a. **Leaners' diversity difficult to cater for** – There are various sorts of students with differing interests and inclinations. It cannot be avoided that inside a learning environment, there will be students who will show interests and motivations to the lessons, while there will also be those who remain uninterested and less motivated. This was evident in Tracy's classes, as her students with low level English skills were not as interactive as those with high level. This became a challenge to her whose main goal is for all the students to learn and progress in performance of the given subject matter.

- b. Students' limited levels and background in English** – In Tracy's classes, her students' background of the English language influenced their execution of the activities given by their teacher. The students have encountered challenges in learning oral English which is related to their inability to speak fluently of the language, and their limited vocabulary added to their struggle. Even though the students had years of learning experience with the English language, they still showed struggles with their mastery of the language.
- c. Lack of confidence in oral English** – In Tracy's classes, low level English students were afraid of being judged by their peers; thus, they did not want to speak publicly. They were anxious to commit mistakes and get judged. This hindered their study and limited their opportunities to practice the language and get positive feedback from their peers and teacher. Risk-taking was a barrier for these students with low English level during group discussions and public speech activities.

*Table 30: Comparison between the students' factors affecting students of different English achievement levels*

Achievement level	Learning purpose (positive factor)	Avoiding risk taking (negative factor)
Low	+	---
Medium	+	N/A
High	+	-

When comparing the students' factors, it was found that all the students shared the same purpose of learning the English language. They all wanted to improve their communication competence which created a motivation factor for them. On the other hand, the students with low English achievement level were found to be avoiding taking risk in contrast to those with high English achievement level who showed more risk-taking abilities. This made a clear distinction between the two levels (students with high and low English achievement level). Unfortunately, the data gathered from medium students was not enough to make clear distinction on how deeply

the risk-taking factor had affected their learning process. From the interview with two students from medium level, their answers did not make a clear pattern, and they were falling between students with low and high English achievement level.

### **C. Contextual Factors**

#### **C.1. The macro-context**

- a. Absence of a proper environment to practice English** – There were no opportunities for students to practice English in their daily life basis other than those times that they were in Tracy's class. This has highly affected the students' activity in the classroom. The learning tended to be form-focused instead of being application-oriented. This hindered the students' progress and made them focus on memorizing the words, sentences, dialogues, and written presentations instead of properly doing the presentation activity.
- b. Limited resources** – Tracy was in short of resources in implementing her teaching, especially with the absence of support from MOE and the university. In order to meet the objectives of the teaching approaches she was using, she adopted some online textbooks and adapted them so that she can put them in use in her classes.

#### **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Lack of university support** – Unfortunately, Tracy did not get the necessary support from the university in terms of curriculum design and teaching resources. She had to adopt online teaching materials and textbooks since there were no customized teaching resources from the university.
- b. Class size** – Tracy could not give the students the individual opportunity to practice English face to face with her due to the large number of students, ranging from 25 to 35 students per class. This is why she adopted group discussions and group works. Consequently, this

lessened the chances of students to speak and use English one by one in class. A better class size in English learning should have a range of 10 to 20 students per class; hence, the large class size in Tracy's case created a challenge in maximizing the learning opportunities for all the students.

- c. Limited time for each period** – As regards the allotted period for oral English, Tracy had time management issues in catering to the individual needs of her students and in meeting all her expectations for the class. For instance, the given period for the class was not enough to work on the students' issues on pronunciation which is an essential factor for an oral English class. She gave correction feedbacks to her students but time was limited. This was mainly the reason why she had to ignore some of her students' pronunciation mistakes.

*Table 31: Summary of factors affecting the implementation of teaching approaches in teaching oral English*

Domain	Enhancing factors	Constraining factors
<b>Teacher factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's high English proficiency level</li> <li>Teacher's willingness to administer feedback</li> <li>Maintaining good relationship with students</li> <li>Students' exposure to the language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of professional education and development</li> </ul>
<b>Student factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive attitude shown by the students in classroom activities</li> <li>Students' verbal ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaners' diversity difficult to cater for</li> <li>Students' limited levels and background in English</li> <li>Lack of confidence in oral English</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Teacher appreciation</li> <li>➢ Empowering teacher's strengths</li> </ul> </li> <li>The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Students' potential to master the English language</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Absence of a proper environment to practice English</li> <li>➢ Limited resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Lack of university support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	➤ Good relationship with colleagues	➤ Class size ➤ Limited time for each period
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### 3.5. Summary of Tracy's Case

All the data gathered through face-to-face interview, classroom observations, and document analysis suggest that Tracy implemented the CA in her lessons. As mentioned, Tracy was familiar with the features of this approach and intended to implement these in her teaching strategies. She believed that the attributes of CA would help in the development of her students' oral English skills.

On the other hand, the perceptions of the students with regard to Tracy's teaching approach and the materials and activities she had provided them vary. The main reason for this variation was the students' different levels of oral English achievements. Tracy's classes had students who manifested the inclination to participate in all types of classroom activities. These students were categorized to be with high level of English achievement. These students had also shown to be the most cooperative during group activities. On the contrary, Tracy also had students who were not as cooperative as those who belong to the high English achievement level. For the students with medium and low level of English achievement, they found it hard to participate in the activities due to their lack of self-confidence and because their foundation of the English language was low. In order to address this concern and to ensure that the students were provided equal opportunities to improve, Tracy reached out to the students personally, asked for their strengths and weaknesses in oral English, and then included the appropriate interventions such as providing activities that they find interesting.

Furthermore, although it could be concluded that Tracy succeeded in meeting her teaching objectives in general, she still faced a few challenges in implementing her oral English teaching

approach at University B. First of all, she faced a lack of support from the university in terms of teaching materials and continuous professional training as she did not receive any professional training after her recruitment since 20 years ago. Second, she had to ignore some students' mistakes as the class size was large and the lesson periods were not enough for her to provide individual intervention to her students. Lastly, Tracy's students lack a proper environment outside the school to practice the English language skills they have learned in class. In addition, due to class size and limited periods, some students with low English achievement could not cope with the learning pace. They felt that they were left behind.

Nonetheless, Tracy managed to maintain a harmonious relationship with her students and her classes were full of interactions. Despite the challenges, most of the students acknowledged her efforts and showed their appreciation. The students also had the potential to successfully master the English language. Besides, Tracy's high level of English proficiency helped her a lot in meeting the needs of the students and in assisting them in developing their communicative skills despite some difficulties.

Lastly, Tracy diligently administered feedback to her students. While she believed that collaborative learning is very helpful in enhancing students' communicative skills, she also wanted her students to keep track of their progress, and for her the best way to do this was through continuous administration of feedback.

#### **4. Case of Bernard**

##### **4.1. Profile of Bernard**

Bernard has an overall teaching experience of 11 years at University B. He has been teaching English subjects in different contexts such as basic grammar, developmental reading,

and speech. At the time the study was conducted, he had been teaching oral English courses for four years at the same university.

Bernard studied at Anhui Normal University from 2000 to 2004 and finished his English bachelor's degree in 2004. After four years, in 2008, he returned to the university to continue his studies, and, in 2011, he finished his Master of Education major in English curriculum and pedagogy. Among the other teachers of this research, Bernard was the one to be specifically trained in English curriculum and pedagogy. Furthermore, in 2015, he received a one-year training of corpus linguistics in Foreign Studies University, Beijing. At the time of the study, Bernard was responsible for teaching two subjects: oral English and ELT pedagogy. He taught pedagogy for three sophomore classes once a week and oral English to other three sophomore classes for one semester.

Bernard thought that teaching pedagogy helped him shape his teaching approach. He said, "English pedagogy is a very practical subject. As a teacher I also learn and benefit a lot from it. It equips me with the advanced pedagogy. Surely, I benefit a lot from teaching the pedagogy course. From time to time, I update myself with the EFL teaching approaches" (Bernard-interview-202009).

Bernard neither had an overseas experience nor in-service training in pedagogy; however, his four-year experience in teaching oral English and teaching pedagogy had greatly helped him to be knowledgeable in different teaching approaches and oral English practices.

## **4.2. Teaching Practices of Bernard**

### **4.2.1. Objectives of Teaching**

Bernard wanted to help his students grow knowledgeably when it comes to oral English. Hence, he developed three major objectives in his classes with the aim of improving his students'

communication skills in English and raising awareness in cultural differences. Quoting from his words, he said, “...Nothing but teaching your students well. Cultivate their awareness of the English-speaking culture and teach them to be proficient in using English for in-depth communication in a certain field” (Bernard-interview-202004).

**1. Primary objective:** Improving his students’ oral English by introducing them to interesting topics of real-life situations that would encourage them to be interactive in class discussions.

Bernard believed that for his students to develop their communication skills, they must be given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas and be allowed to be interactive with their classmates. Hence, he wanted to give them chances to improve their English language proficiency through regular practice and speaking drills.

Being introduced to real-life situations would also practice the students how to react and deal with the conversation when they find themselves in similar situations outside the school. Furthermore, immersing the students to communicative activities that occur in the real world allows them to exercise their minds in formulating ideas and forming them into words, phrases, and sentences that they will then share to others.

Bernard further explained that improving the students’ communication skills is not merely about pronunciations and intonations. The students must be acquainted to the factuality of the language, such as daily dialogues, presentations, etc., and adopt certain strategies to use the language in daily life.

**2. Secondary objective.** Raising students’ awareness in cultural differences in order to develop their abilities to use it in understanding the meanings and connotations of different terms,

such as *catch up* (return to a schedule after falling behind), *make hay* (maximally utilize an opportunity), *heavenly* (very pleasurable), etc., and the speech of natives of the target language.

One of the many purposes of teaching the English language is to develop the students' awareness of the differences in culture that are reflected in the target language. Bernard believed that the customary way of teaching oral English through the sequence of phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary is mainly the reason why there are misconceptions.

Through his years of teaching, Bernard noticed that many second-language learners have acquired the knowledge of forming phrases and sentences and use these in conversations; however, they often make mistakes in the application of the target language in real-life situations. Bernard further noticed that since most of the previous learnings of his students were focused on the importance of language structures and forms, the social meanings as well as the language application in reality had been put aside, therefore leading to the students' misconceptions and misunderstanding. Therefore, in order to support his students to gain in-depth understanding of the target language, Bernard set an objective to introduce his students to the differences in language culture. With this aim, the students will be able to bridge the gap in cultural differences which will help them in avoiding misunderstandings in their study and communication.

**3. Tertiary objective.** Develop the students' pedagogy for ELT by training them how to devise their own philosophy of teaching that would help them manage their expectations about the teaching methods they will use.

Since Bernard also taught pedagogy classes, he included in his objectives the goal to develop his students' pedagogy for ELT in the oral English courses. Bernard believed that apart from learning the abilities to teach properly, his students should also acquire the skills to manage their own expectations about teaching. Since he handles classes wherein his students will be

future teachers, he wanted his students to understand that a teacher's work is never done. Teaching is a continuous process of lesson preparation and grading, and student diversity is beyond the teacher's control. Therefore, introducing his students to different techniques in organizing classroom administration and managing their own expectations would be helpful in tackling challenges head on and overcoming possible teaching adversities.

To sum up, Bernard had three objectives. Each of the objectives mentioned above took one-third of his class period, meaning 30 mins for each objective. All these objectives were interrelated with each other in molding the students to become proficient speakers and teachers of English equipped with the knowledge on the culture of the language.

#### **4.2.2. Teaching Content**

Bernard's main focus in his oral English classes is to enhance his students' English language proficiency by introducing them to the different forms and structures of the target language and the culture that it is tied up into. Hence, as part of his teaching strategies, Bernard incorporated in his teaching various contents such as oral English, communicative skills, language functions, bridging cultural differences, and learning and teaching strategies.

##### **a. Interesting topics relevant to oral English**

In line with the primary objective, the students in Bernard's classes were introduced to interesting topics that would prepare them for real-life situations. Bernard believed that it is by exposing the students to topics that they feel they could relate to and have a say on that, they would want to participate more in the learning of oral English, and whatever knowledge they will learn from this content they will later on use in enhancing their communication skills. This specific content was also helpful in improving the students' fluency, self-expression, and self-confidence.

**b. Communicative skills**

In relation to his primary objective, Bernard introduced his students to contents focusing on different communicative skills that would greatly help them in developing their proficiency of the target language. Bernard supposed that delivering communicative skill contents is the starting point for the students to work out what constitutes better communication in different situations. He also deliberately introduced his students to various communication scenarios that would develop their skills such as delivering a speech publicly, communicating with strangers using the English language, and so on.

**c. Language functions**

In designing the contents of his lessons, Bernard considered the idea that for his students to achieve communicative competence, they must be able to learn the use of the language for a variety of functions. He emphasized that language functions actually form a significant part in the entire communicative language development and that the knowledge in language functions can provide a lot of advantages to students who are learning a target language. Language, rather than just a grammatical structure, is an expression of thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Therefore, teaching the students the functions of the language they are speaking would give them a more in-depth appreciation of the target language.

**d. Background of the English culture**

In connection with Bernard's secondary objective of raising his students' cultural awareness of the target language, he incorporated in his teachings contents that would introduce the students to the background of the English culture. Bernard wanted to help his students in realizing that different nationalities vary in thoughts and views and that it is crucial for them to know the cultural background of the English language they are learning so as to help them in

developing a comprehensive English ability. Bernard highlighted that it is only when a learner knows how to respect the English culture that they will be able to fully comprehend the importance of the English language.

#### **e. Learning and teaching strategies**

In addition to Bernard's teaching contents that focus on improving the students' speaking skills, he also included contents that would awaken the students' attentiveness in class discussions and contents that focus on teaching strategies which will be very helpful for his students as future teachers themselves. Bernard allotted one-third of his teaching period for this particular content.

Some of the lessons taught by Bernard in pedagogy, particularly in learning strategies, included collaborative learning among students, elaborative expression of thoughts and ideas, raising questions when necessary, and so on. On the other hand, as regards teaching strategies, Bernard included lessons on understanding learners' diversity, engaging students to various activities, strategic theories in teaching oral English, and so on. Bernard would give the students sample classroom situations, e.g., in a class of 20, two of the students did not meet the passing grade for English. He would then ask the students their thoughts about this matter and how they would deal with the problem. Activities like this would allow the students to come up with ideas and strategies in handling different classroom situations.

Table 32. The researcher's course guide of Bernard's oral English class

Period	Subject: Oral English		
	Content	Overview	Lesson objectives
27 hours	Introducing differences in meaning and connotations of different terms by raising cultural awareness	The students will be taught of different English terms that have different meanings and connotations based on the language's background culture. They will also be taught how these terms will be used in conversations	The students will have an increased understanding of the language and will find it easier to understand different terms and will learn how to make use of these terms
	Various areas of interesting real-life scenarios	The students will be introduced to interesting topics related to real-life scenarios as a way of encouraging them to be more interactive which is fundamental in developing their oral English skills.	The students will have more interests in class discussions and would be more interactive with each other, therefore allowing them to improve their communication skills through meaningful interactions
	Subject and verb agreement Uses of pronouns Verb tenses with uses	The students will be taught how to properly structure their sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. They will also be taught how to properly use pronouns and verb tenses in their sentences	The students will be more cautious in forming their sentences and will exhibit eloquence in their delivery of speech
	Using English in real-life situations Speech patterns	The students will be taught how to use the English language in real-life situations, be introduced to interesting relatable topics, and be acquainted on the different patterns of speech	The students will be more confident to speak the English language in real-life contexts
	In-class listening and speaking practice English song presentation Listening practice	The students will be introduced to these activities to expose them more to the English language and gain mastery in both speaking and understanding the	The students will have a first-hand experience of speaking the language and will acquire strategies to enhance their English language proficiency in their own pace

Period	Subject: Oral English		
		language.	
	Pedagogical skills	The students will be taught how to initiate, lead, and develop education and teaching, and they will also be trained to develop their own attitude in teaching which would lead to better management of their expectations	The students will be able to reflect on different teaching practices and identify the strategies that work inside the classroom

### 4.2.3. Materials

Bernard used different materials to teach his students oral English. When he was asked about the teaching materials he used in his classes, he said: “Textbook will be the fundamental material. Additionally, in teaching a particular topic about “Love,” I also made reference of some PPT and famous people’s thoughts about the topic to help me facilitate my teaching” (Bernard-interview-202004).

The different types of materials used by Bernard are summed up in Table 33. These materials were designed to help the students improve their communication skills, broaden their knowledge about the culture of the language, and learn more about ELT pedagogies. In his lessons, he used the *New Inside Out Intermediate* by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones.

Following his primary objective, Bernard referenced two different textbooks for his class topics and activities, namely, the *New Inside Out Intermediate* by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones and *A Guide to English Speech and Debate* by Zheng.

Table 33: List of teaching materials used by Bernard

Type of teaching material	Teaching materials	Matched objective
Materials chosen by the teacher	Textbook: <i>New Inside Out Intermediate</i> by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones Textbook: <i>A Guide to English Speech and Debate</i> by Zheng, Qiuyan (2011)	All objectives
Materials made by the teacher	Teacher's personal presentations	Primary and secondary
Students' work used in the lesson	Students presentations and discussions	All objectives
	Debates	Primary

He used the former textbook in designing his classroom activities by using topics that focused on more contextualized structures that are interesting to the learners. This particular textbook is designed for topics, texts, and activities that would engage the students in different forms of classroom activities. Furthermore, the *New Inside Out Intermediate* textbook emphasizes on speaking outputs that are designed to develop the learners' fluency of the language and introduce them to classroom activities that are transferable to the real world, such as daily dialogues, reporting, etc. Some of the topics from this textbook are useful phrases, comprehensive grammar refreshers, and vocabulary enhancement.

Alongside that, he equally used the textbook by Zheng (2011) for topics related to speeches and public speaking. This textbook offers different techniques and strategies to master fluency in the English language through different forms of speeches and communication exercises.

Moreover, other teaching materials that Bernard used in his classes were the PPT presentations that he personally made. These, on the other hand, served his secondary objective of raising his students' awareness of cultural differences and tertiary objective of introducing ELT pedagogies to his students. He would include in these presentations the introduction to the

topics, parts of the lesson, and important features that involve cultural aspects such as the language functions.

Furthermore, he also used the students' presentations and performances as added materials for his classes. Bernard believed that these will serve as a guide for the students' demonstration which was also very helpful in allowing the students to assess themselves and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

#### **4.2.4. Activities**

Bernard designed his classes with the objectives of developing his students' proficiency in the English language. The strategies he used correspond to the features found in CA. Bernard did not particularly mention how a CA works. However, when he was asked about the strategies he implemented in his oral English classes, he mentioned features that were in line with the features of a CA. He said, "I want to foster the cooperative abilities of my students as they learn to develop their speaking skills using the English language, and I also want to give them contents that are based on their needs" (Bernard-interview-202004).

To start with communicative activities, Bernard would start the class by giving his students an overview of the topic to be discussed. To set the mood of the class and encourage interactions from his students, Bernard would ask his students questions with relatable answers. For instance, in his class discussion about the topic "What is Love?" he started off by asking his students questions such as "Have you ever been in love?" and "Is love important to you?"

Once he got the students' interests, Bernard would then proceed with his discussions. Since he always opted to choose real-life topics for discussions, these questions that Bernard asked his students before the proper discussion was very helpful in setting their confidence to be interactive all throughout the class. Bernard believed that promoting and encouraging classroom

discussions through raising questions help the students not only in learning from one another but in understanding and retaining the topics and information better.

Bernard would then group his students and assign them certain activities. He would allow the students to choose the topics they wanted to talk about in relation to the assignment given to them. After the instructions were provided to the students, they will be given time to discuss the subject matter and share opinions with each other. This would allow them to develop their communication skills through meaningful exchange of ideas with their peers. After the brainstorming activity, the students will be asked to present their ideas in front of the class.

Furthermore, among the set of activities Bernard used with his students were singing songs or chants, listening to various speeches and reading stories, pair-work activities, group work, and oral presentations. The students were asked to perform according to the activity requirements and make presentations, have debates, prepare written reports and essays, read texts, and do listening activities. After the activities, he would assess the students' performances and give feedbacks whenever necessary.

Because some of the activities were group work activities, students had the chance to discuss the topics with their peers and team mates. They were also encouraged to make comments about their peers' performances and discuss their ideas and opinions publicly. This made the class vivid and full of interactions between the students themselves and between them and their teacher. Bernard used group work to improve his students' cooperative abilities and to develop their confidence to share information and exchange ideas. Students were divided into small groups to do presentations and fulfill group activities.

Table 34. Teaching flow of one of the observed lessons

Period	What is love?			Time (mins)		%	
Primary Objective							
Class 1	Part 1	Introducing the lesson to the class	04 mins	30 mins	60 Mins	33.3%	
		Letting the students read a text about “love”	08 mins				
	Part 2	Lecture (giving information about the topic and the target language)	08 mins				
		Practice (asking the students a set of questions)	10 mins				
5 mins Break							
Secondary Objective							
		Lecture (cultural differences and relating it to the text read by the students)	05 mins				
Class 1	Part 3	Groupings (students will be grouped into small groups) and giving of instructions	03 mins	30 mins			33.4%
		Collaborative activity (students share with each other their opinions and ideas about “love”)	08 mins				
		Each group will present in front the common and different viewpoints they have come up about “love”	14 mins				
Tertiary Objective							
Class 1	Pedagogy: strategic ways in addressing classroom situations	1. Everyday English in a classroom setting	05 mins	30 mins	30 Mins	33.3%	
		2. Activities and games to practice handling problematic situations	15 mins				
		3. Wrap up and homework assignments	10 mins				
Total			90 mins			100 %	

Furthermore, Bernard organized his students according to the activities he chose for them. Since he used a variety of teaching activities, he had set different activities for different goals. When asked about his classroom activities, he said, “Individual and group work will be my choice in this class. I can find the individual differences and give them respective help to understand the topic. By means of group work, I hope it will help to foster their cooperative abilities” (Bernard-interview-202004).

Bernard believed that students have to be interactive and must learn how to share their thoughts and ideas with their peers. That is why he gave them enough space to be interactive learners. The classes were learner-centered in discussion activities, and the students were given freedom to express themselves either individually or in groups. After the presentations, they were given feedbacks and comments from their teacher and peers. This interactive way of teaching made the classroom environment more conducive to learning.

#### **4.2.5. Teacher's Role**

It is the role of the teacher to prepare a classroom management plan to assist in the development of an effective learning environment. During his classes, Bernard played different roles depending on the activities. He gave his students activities that involve meaningful communication, such as when he gave his students quite vague topic choices to present in front of the class like “current event.” The purpose of making the topics vague was for the students to be given the freedom to choose what interests them and not letting his own interests to dictate the learning. Here, Bernard played the role of a facilitator where he organized the students into groups and managed the learning process and made sure that they know what they were expected to do.

He monitored the learning process of his students and gave feedbacks whenever needed. However, he believed that his role is not only to convey the language to be taught; hence, he made sure to choose his lessons carefully. He chose topics that would encourage his students to immerse in the classroom discussion. Furthermore, he played the role of a motivator where he required his students to make presentations and public talks. He also had the role of facilitating the activities and the communication process among students.

All in all, Bernard played different roles and adjust his roles according to the requirements of the lesson activities and teaching objectives.

#### **4.2.6. Learners' Role**

Learners play an essential and active role in the education process. Bernard's students also had different roles depending on the activities they were required to do. When their teacher plays the role of instructor, they play the role of information receivers. They involved themselves in class discussions and participated in the class activities provided by their teacher. However, although these roles may be true to most of the students, learner's diversity was evident in Bernard's classes. There were some instances that few of the students felt less confident to take risks in class activities and chose to be passive listeners instead.

In order to mend this problem, the learners were given chances to voice out their feelings and opinions especially during group works. When they were grouped into four or five, they were assigned to different roles such as group leader, presenter, discussion member, coach, and facilitator. These roles helped them in motivating themselves to do their best in class since they have a crucial part to fulfill. However, there were instances that some of the students were not particularly focused with their roles because they felt less motivated. When things like this happened, Bernard would do the necessary interventions. Since the classes were learner-centered, he made sure that the students were the focus of education and that their needs were met.

#### **4.2.7. Assessment**

##### **4.2.7.1. Communication Skills Assessment**

Bernard used communication skills assessment in evaluating the overall English proficiency of his students, thus serving his primary and secondary objectives. In allowing his students to speak freely of their thoughts about the topics discussed, Bernard was able to identify

how they have improved their communication skills. He believed that the students being able to express the thoughts in their minds into words showed that they have a better understanding of the language.

In every group or pair presentation, Bernard would ask the students to individually give him a sheet of paper containing their names. During the presentation of the activities, Bernard carefully observed the performance of his students and list on the sheet of paper containing the student's name his comments of the presentation. He would compile all these results and by the end of the semester, review each one for assessment. Through these observations, he will be able to determine by the end of the semester the improvement of the student.

Bernard had also run a final test for his students at the end of each semester. Since he had a large group of students in his class, he would make an individual schedule of the students for the assessment. Prior to the day of the assessment, the students were given their specific topics in a form of draw lots. The students had the time to study their topics and prepare how they will be presenting it to Bernard. Each student will have a five -minute interactive discussion with him with about the given topic. Once in a while, Bernard would ask the students questions to check their comprehension and their mastery of the English language in expressing their thoughts. This final test was to evaluate the students' performance and assess their progress and improvement.

Also, during this individual assessment, Bernard would give his students sets of phrases and sentences that have cultural variations in meaning. He would allow the students to explain its meaning and connotation and let them create their own sentences using the phrases. This assessment was in line with his secondary objective, making sure that the students really had developed the ability to differentiate meanings and connotations of terms based on cultural awareness.

Bernard would perform the communication skills assessment with the following criteria:

- Fluency in pronunciation and intonation (25%)
- Content organization (25%)
- Grammar and vocabulary (20%)
- Ability to communicate (30%)

In conclusion, a communication skills assessment was the most appropriate assessment that met Bernard's primary and secondary objectives. Through the information he had taken from this assessment, he was able to carefully evaluate the learning progress of his students as regards their oral English proficiency.

#### **4.2.7.2. Classroom Performance Assessment**

Apart from assessing the communication skills of his students, Bernard also included in his grading criteria the overall classroom performance of the students, ranging from the students' cooperation in group activities, their oral recitation performance, to their speaking engagements whenever they have group discussions. Bernard did this by carefully observing the students in classroom activities. This assessment served not only Bernard's primary and secondary objectives but also his tertiary objective of developing the students' pedagogy for English language teaching.

Whenever the students are doing group discussions, Bernard would go around the classroom observing one group to another. Although this type of assessment was subjective and only comprised 25% of the final grade, he still found this very helpful in meeting his objectives. He believed that teachers could actually read their students based on the manner of how they cooperate and interact with each other. He would listen carefully of the students' conversations without letting them notice to check if they were using what they have learned from class.

Bernard had a list of per period subjective observations of his students. He would keep this data in a notebook and review it by the end of the semester. This subjective observations that Bernard kept track on had helped him gain evaluative information about the level of learning of the students and at the same time a clearer view of his students' mastery of the lessons. When he was asked about the bases of his assessment, he answered "by their performance output and behavior during group activities" (Bernard-interview-202004).

Furthermore, as regards Bernard's tertiary objective, he would assess the students through misconception check. He would present to the students common or predictable misconceptions about certain situations in a classroom, for instance, majority of the students' non-performing in class is caused by teacher's inability to deliver the lesson properly, and would ask them whether they agree or disagree and then let them explain why.

The evaluation of these two assessments enabled Bernard to rate the students' final subject grade. The grading metrics comprise the following:

- Communication skills assessment (75%)
- Classroom performance assessment (25%)

Bernard emphasized that the purpose of this careful evaluation of the students' performance in class is not only to determine the students' skill levels; rather this is also one way of holding them accountable of their progress and encouraging them to keep working for them to achieve proficiency of the English language.

#### **4.2.8. MOI**

The main language used by Bernard in his classes was English. When he was asked about his internal classroom rule, whether it was pure English or mixed with Chinese, he said, "Only English" (Bernard-interview-202004). Bernard believed that speaking only English would help

the students begin to speak the language which would eventually aid in their mastery of the English language. He also wanted to immerse his students in the English language environment; hence, he picked hot topics for discussions in order for the students to have their individual contribution in the discussion. Furthermore, Bernard presumed that oral English should be taught using solely English.

#### **4.2.9. Grammar Teaching**

Although Bernard's main focus in teaching his students was in the communication skills, he still briefly included discussions about grammar whenever necessary. For instance, if the student was doing a presentation in front of the class and Bernard noticed that the student repeatedly made the same grammar errors, he would intervene and insert a brief discussion about the correct structures and form of the grammar errors. His grammar teaching was done implicitly and explicitly. He also used learning discussions found in the *New Inside Out* textbook such as the basic grammar rules and structures.

Bernard's students had already studied the English language for ten years, and they have acquired CET-4 certificate in English language; however, he still needed to give them grammar instructions and feedbacks such that they continue to learn and not forget the grammar lessons they learned before.

#### **4.3. Students' Experience**

As previously mentioned, six of Bernard's students were chosen for this study, two from each level (high, medium, and low English level). All of the interviewees were sophomore students and have been studying English for ten years.

*Table 35: Information of the interviewed students from Bernard's class*

	Gender	Year of study	Level	Teacher	English level	Past English Education Experience	Years of English study
Student 1: T4A1	Female	Sophomore	A	T4	CET4	10 years in Bozhou, Anhui Province	10
Student 2: T4A2	Female	Sophomore	A	T4	CET4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	10
Student 3: T4B1	Male	Sophomore	B	T4	CET4	10 years in Huainan, Anhui Province	10
Student 4: T4B2	Female	Sophomore	B	T4	CET4	10 years in Hefei, Anhui Province	10
Student 5: T4C1	Female	Sophomore	C	T4	CET4	10 years in Huainan, Anhui Province	10
Student 6: T4C2	Female	Sophomore	C	T4	CET4	10 years in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province	10

Data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The following sub-sections report the students' experience in learning English in terms of their perceptions of learning objectives, materials, activities and assessment.

#### **4.3.1. Objectives of Learning**

One of the reasons why the students were doing their best in Bernard's class was because they wanted to improve their fluency in the English language and at the same time develop their communication skills and cultural awareness. One of the students listed his learning objectives saying, "... Because the parts of oral English are interesting and appealing. What's more, we can acquire the knowledge about foreign country, such as economics, history, custom, and so on, besides the oral English expression" (T4C1-interview-202004). They thought that learning about the background culture of the English language was necessary in their education. Another student further said, "...because we can learn more and happily through this way, and something like table manners is necessary for us" (T4A1-interview-202004).

The students' learning objectives are in line with Bernard's teaching objectives – improving English proficiency and raising cultural awareness. However, this does not stand true to all students. There are still a number of students, although very few, who find themselves passive learners and only did what they were asked to do for the sake of passing the subject.

#### **4.3.2. Students' Perceptions of the Teaching Materials**

Bernard's classes were usually made up of 30–35 students, and these students have different oral English levels. Advantageously, two-thirds of Bernard's students per class belonged to the high oral English achievement level.

Generally speaking, the students were satisfied with the teaching materials that Bernard used during the speaking activities and group discussions. They liked the presentations and debates they contributed to and thought that the materials were appropriate. A student said, "... because from the presentations, I can learn many new words and the skill of speaking. What's more is it can improve my oral English ability" (T4B2-interview-202004).

Apart from the presentations, debates, and group discussions that Bernard used in his classes, he also used textbooks, where he got ideas for classroom activities and other topics about oral English, such as linguistics rules and English structures. The students appreciated the concepts of the activities, but they were not that interested with normal discussions of other topics. One of the students said, "Sometimes I think more discussions about different topics from the textbooks are not appropriate. Rather than going through a series of discussions, we can learn by ourselves or on online. What we need are more activities to improve our oral English. However, since our teacher teaches some other materials from the Internet that is useful for us, I think there are various ways to acquire the knowledge" (T4C1-interview-202004). Another

student confirmed by saying, “I prefer oral speaking, because it can promote our oral speaking ability and let us be more confident” (T4C2-interview-202004).

When the students were asked about the appropriateness of the teaching materials, all of them thought that Bernard’s teaching materials were appropriate and fitted the learning objectives. However, they would prefer the presentations and discussions because they found it more stimulating for developing their oral English skills.

Surprisingly, when the students with medium and low oral English levels were asked about the materials, they did not mention encountering any difficulties in comprehending the topics. On the contrary, they said that they were fine with the materials. In fact, the materials had helped them in understanding better the lessons.

#### **4.3.3. Students’ Perception of the Teaching Activities**

When the students were interviewed, it was found out that the students with high oral English levels liked the lesson contents and activities provided to them because they believed that these activities were promoting their oral speaking ability and were making them more confident speakers. This made the students participate actively in group discussions and presentations. When one of the students was asked about his preferences, he said, “I prefer oral speaking, because it can promote our oral speaking ability and let us be more confident” (T4C2-interview-202004).

Another reason why majority of the students were interested in the lessons was because they realized that topics related to real-life situations made the information processing easier for them. They also added that when they have a lot of things to say about the topic, they could easily put their ideas into words and express these ideas to the class. The same goes with the regular assignments given to them by Bernard. Since learning cultural differences answered the

confusion they have encountered while learning the English language, they got the encouragement to discover more. Hence, the students in Bernard's class had positive feedback with regard to the activities and assignments he had provided them.

On the other hand, the students further explained that they liked having group works and presentations rather than merely listening to discussions. A student explained, "Because mere discussions weren't attractive enough for me to learn more about the lessons" (T4A2-interview-202004).

However, for the rest of the students belonging to medium and low level, they had different perceptions of the classroom activities unlike their comments with the materials. They were observed to lack the enthusiasm and interests to participate in group works. They often remained passive listeners. It was found out that some of the factors that caused this behavior include their lack of confidence, their doubts of their own capabilities, and their fear of being criticized. Although the activities were intended to cater each of the student's needs, due to their differences in English levels, their perceptions of the activities also varied.

#### **4.3.4. Students' Perceptions of Assessment**

The students expressed that they enjoyed the activities provided to them by their teacher. They found the assessment process challenging and at the same time motivating. They saw in it an opportunity to improve their speaking skills. A student said, "I prefer the oral speaking assignments. Not only can I practice my oral English, but I can also cooperate with my partners to practice our favorite topic" (T4C1-interview-202004). Another student added saying, "I prefer oral speaking, because I am not good at it; I want to improve my ability in this part" (T4B1-interview-202004). They found group discussion a good opportunity to assess themselves and compare their performance with that of their peers.

However, even though the students gave more interests in oral activities, they still expressed their appreciation of the regular assignments given to them. When asked about the assignment given by Bernard about cultural differences, one student said, “There were many things I learned about culture that interest me, so the assignments became a bit easier for me” (T4A2-interview-202004).

Although there were instances that the students became a bit hesitant in expressing themselves since their teacher followed an English-only policy in their class, they just thought of it as a positive challenge rather than allowing it to demotivate them.

#### **4.4. Discussion**

##### **4.4.1. Bernard’s Teaching Approach**

When comparing the teaching approach adopted by Bernard with the features of teaching approaches from Table 1 in Chapter 2, it was found out that the characteristics of a CA were dominant in his teaching strategies. He claimed to be aware of the CA and that he particularly chose to implement some of its features in his oral English classes. A match between the features of CA and the teaching approach adopted by Bernard is summarized in Table 36.

Table 36 analyzed how Bernard implemented his teaching approach. It was found out that most of the features he had used correspond to the features of a CA.

Bernard believed that the features he had adopted were beneficial considering that he was teaching oral English classes and that his main objective was to develop the proficiency of his students in the English language.

Table 36 further reveals that the classroom activities, content, and materials Bernard implemented are predominantly in line with the attributes of a CA. He provided the students the opportunities to interact with each other using the target language in situations that were distinct

and natural. He would further give the students activities that would exercise their abilities to explore things to come up with possible solutions to certain problematic situations.

*Table 36: Analysis of Bernard's teaching approach*

Components	Bernard's case	Analysis
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve speaking fluency</li> <li>-Raise cultural awareness</li> <li>-Introducing interesting topics to come up with interactive discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Giving priority to the enhancement of students' speaking abilities</li> <li>-Students' learning needs were addressed</li> <li>-Improving effective use of the target language</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Group discussions and presentations</li> <li>-Hot topics related to real-world experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Topics led to interactive discussions therefore improving students' communication skills</li> <li>-Contents met the learning needs of the students</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Textbook: <i>New Inside Out Intermediate</i> by Sue Kay and Vaughan Jones</li> <li>-Textbook: <i>A Guide to English Speech and Debate</i> by Zheng, Qiuyan (2011)</li> <li>-Teacher's presentations</li> <li>-Students' presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Textbook topics on real-life speech using authentic expressions related to the target language</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Class presentations</li> <li>-Debates</li> <li>-Group works</li> <li>-Written reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Class discussions are interactive and learner-centered</li> <li>-Activities promote meaningful interactions among students</li> <li>-Functional communicative activities were introduced</li> </ul>
Teacher's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Needs assessor</li> <li>-Resources developer</li> <li>-Facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assessed the learning conditions of students and developed resources according to their needs</li> </ul>

Components	Bernard's case	Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Motivator</li> <li>-Monitor</li> <li>-Adviser</li> </ul>	-Provided assistance to students' queries
Learners' role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learners' center (information receiver, follower, and responders)</li> <li>-Initiator</li> <li>-Participant</li> <li>-Cooperator</li> <li>-Monitor</li> <li>-Risk taker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learners were leader and doer of the activities</li> <li>-Required participation in activities and assigned to different roles</li> <li>-Learners were engaged in communicative activities</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communicative assessment</li> <li>-Classroom performance assessment</li> <li>-Regular assignments</li> </ul>	-Learner's proficiency of the target language was determined through communicative performances
Grammar teaching	Explicit and implicit approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Situational scenes prompted new knowledge in relation to grammar</li> <li>-Instructions on grammar structures inserted</li> <li>-Activities mainly on explicit approach</li> </ul>

Concerning grammar, Bernard chose to mainly teach it explicitly. He did not introduce grammar lessons to the students; rather, he would only give discussions about grammar when he noticed grammatical errors in his students' presentations. He believed that with this he can directly address specific areas in grammar that the students still need to learn about. With regard to the assessment, Bernard used communication skills assessment, classroom performance assessment, and regular assignments. This way of evaluation has shown to correspond to a CA. Concerning the role of Bernard's students, they played different roles that strongly matched with CA in many aspects. They were participants and leaders, discussion members, presenters,

cooperators, partners, assessors, and risk-takers. Moreover, Bernard's ELT classes were student-centered. His students were directly involved in the class discussions and could make decisions in the education process. He accompanied them and played the role of needs assessor, facilitator, resource developer, motivator, and monitor. In terms of the MOI, Bernard believed that his student should be fully immersed in an English environment; thus, he solely used English in classroom instructions.

All in all, Bernard's teaching approach is made up of the adopted features of a CA.

#### **4.4.2. Students' Perceptions**

Bernard's students had a positive outlook on his teaching approaches. Majority of them showed favorable attitude toward the classroom activities and created an encouraging education atmosphere. The teacher-student relationship was also well established.

The students' perceptions may have varied due to the fact that they have different oral English levels; however, it was evident that most of the students were satisfied with the classroom activities. Specifically, the students with high oral English level made it clear that they enjoyed learning English. Even in the classroom observation, the lessons were vivid and the students participated actively, especially during group discussions. The students were motivated to discuss with their team mates the activities they were required to do. Although there were a few students who had shown reluctance to give their full participation in the activities, this problem was properly addressed by Bernard by reaching out to them individually as much as possible. The reason behind this behavior manifested by the students was their low level of oral English achievement and their poor foundation of the English language.

Nonetheless, students' evaluations of the classroom activities were positive, and this can be ascribed to the motivating and interesting learning environment in Bernard's classes. When the

students were asked about the reason behind their participation and what motivated them, they said the activities were fun and the topics were very interesting. They even added that the discussions were very interesting and beneficial to the development of their speaking skills. Hence, in Bernard's class, the learning process was fruitful.

The students expressed their satisfaction about their relationships with their teacher. As one of the students commented, "Maybe it is not difficult for me to fit with the educational atmosphere. So, I think I can fit with the educational atmosphere over ninety percent" (T4A1-interview-202004). Because of the interesting activities Bernard gave his students, they became hopeful that learning the English language was not as hard as they thought it to be. Another student said, "Whether the educational atmosphere is suitable and helpful or not, we should try our best to learn. In my opinion, we should create an appropriate atmosphere to learn English. Furthermore, I will practice with my partners. On the one hand, we can monitor our learning progress. On the other hand, it will motivate us to learn more" (T4C1-interview-202004).

To sum this up, the students had good relationships with their teacher and with their peers which made the classroom vivid and full of positive interactions.

#### **4.4.3. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Teaching Approaches in Teaching Oral English**

In this section, the analysis on the main factors that affected Bernard's implementation of his teaching approach for oral English classes at University B are discussed. There were two main factors involved – enhancing and constraining factors – which have three subcategories, namely, teacher factors, student factors, and contextual factors.

##### **4.4.3.1. Enhancing Factors**

###### **A. Teacher Factors**

- a. Teacher's enthusiasm to teach the students** – Inside the classroom, Bernard was an enthusiastic teacher. He built relationships with his students for them to be more open with their ideas regarding the topics being discussed. It was further realized that this particular characteristic of Bernard had instilled greater interests among his students which resulted into greater efforts exerted by them in learning the lessons.
- b. Teacher's fluency in the English language** – It is generally assumed that different teachers have different levels of language competencies. In particular, Bernard believed that a teacher who has good English communication skills is more likely to have students who would in turn speak English as well. Bernard's one-year training on corpus linguistics in Foreign Studies University opened his understanding to the relevance of language in real life. This experience motivated him to self-study further on languages, particularly the English language. Through this, Bernard gained high proficiency in the English language. This, in return, partially encouraged his students to strive harder and improve their performances, too.

## **B. Student Factors**

- a. Students' appreciation of the subject** – Majority of the students in Bernard's class showed enthusiasm in learning the subject matter. This is being fueled by their motivation to develop their English language proficiency and prepare themselves for real-life situations. Despite some difficulties with the more technical aspects of English, the students had developed the determination to focus on their own objective, which is to be a proficient speaker of the English language.
- b. Purpose to improve their communication skills in English** – The main goal of English majors why they wanted to learn how to speak the English language was for them to be able to communicate with foreigners. Thus, they took the initiative to learn as much as they could. In school, they wanted to have more opportunities to practice their oral English with their peers and the teacher. This enabled them to adapt and participate in communication-oriented activities and be more interactive in meaningful discussions.

## **C. Contextual Factors**

### **C.1. The macro-context**

- a. Low-risk classroom environment** – The environment wherein teaching and learning take place has specific contextual influences to both the teacher and the students. During Bernard's teaching orientation, the university mentioned that one of the responsibilities of teachers is to create a classroom environment that offers patience, mutual respect, and reflective listening. This mirrors the cultural values that need to be employed in all forms of learning environment. This motivated Bernard to provide his students the comfort inside the classroom and to help them maximize their individual abilities. This further guided him in molding his students' confidence to speak and participate for he believed that freeing them

from self-consciousness and uncertainties inside the classroom was necessary for the students to grow.

- b. Parents' positive feedback** – Another social system that correlates to emotional dimension is the value teachers give to the relationship they share with different members of the overall learning experience which includes the students, other school members, and even the parents. Bernard had always believed that when his students' parents were happy with their children's academic growth, he was properly doing his role as a teacher. In Bernard's years of teaching, there were several instances that he had gained recognition from his students' parents. The parents expressed their gratitude for they have seen improvement in their children's English communication skills. This had greatly motivated him to be more goal-oriented and to do better with his teaching performance.

## **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Giving teachers a voice** – Bernard deemed it necessary for their suggestions as teachers to be heard by the university especially when it comes to the welfare of the students. He believed that being given the voice to express their ideas and opinion was an opportunity for them to grow. Fortunately, the university allowed its teachers to be hands-on in decision-making concerning the students' learning and progress. This had encouraged Bernard to be more focused in developing his students' skills and abilities.
- b. Presence of peer models** – Another factor that helped Bernard in enhancing his students' communicative skills was the presence of peer models. This was a common factor to all four teachers of this study, but it was Bernard who had given more focus to this factor. The students in his classes vary in vocabulary skills. There were those with high vocabulary skills, while there were those who need significant improvement. Since students were assigned for

group works, these students with varied skills had the opportunities to work together. When the students with low vocabulary skills heard the manner of speaking of the student with high vocabulary skills, this increased their own understanding of how the English language works. This was also one way of allowing the students to learn by being exposed to the target language.

#### **4.4.3.2. Constraining Factors**

Basing on the students' feedback and progress, it can be said that Bernard was doing good in his teaching strategies. However, there are still factors that constrained the implementation of his teaching approaches.

##### **A. Teacher Factors**

- a. Lack of in-service professional development** – As mentioned earlier although Bernard had been teaching English for 11 years, he only had one-year training of corpus linguistics in Foreign Studies University, Beijing, from the time of his graduation in college. Although this training had opened his eyes to the value of language, he had to continuously self-study in order to improve his English proficiency since no further training was given to him. Also, this one-year training did not specifically address teaching strategies which further did not necessarily improve his teaching professionalism. As for him, the university never gave him the chance to improve his teaching methods.
- b. Lack of overseas experience** – After his graduation, Bernard did not get the chance to experience teaching abroad. This lack of overseas experience and lack of teaching experience with other universities highly affected Bernard's teaching methods and limited his contact with teachers from other universities. In addition, Bernard never experienced teaching in a non-Chinese context, and the university deprived him of self-development opportunities.

## B. Student Factors

- a. Learners' diversity** – Students have different backgrounds, experiences, cultural contexts, and world views. This becomes a challenge to the teacher who delivers the lessons. In Bernard's classes, his students came from different socio-economic backgrounds and had different learning abilities. There were a few of them who grew up with supervisions from English tutors and showed confidence in performing the activities, while there were also those who were still discovering their skills. Bernard found it very important to be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the students. It is crucial for him that the students should not feel like they do not belong to the class. Perceptions like this may lead to decreased participation in classroom activities.
- b. Avoiding risk-taking** – The same with the rest of the teachers' cases, in Bernard's classes, the students were also afraid of being judged by their peers. Hence, this had become one of the major reasons why they were hesitant to speak in public. They were anxious to commit mistakes and be judged which as a result hindered their study and limited their opportunities to practice the language and get feedbacks. Avoiding risk taking was a barrier for these students during group discussions and public speech activities (especially with low English level students).

*Table 37: Comparison between the students' factors affecting students of different English achievement levels*

Achievement level	Learning purpose (Positive factor)	Avoiding risk taking (Negative factor)
Low	+	---
Medium	+	N/A
High	+	-

Again, with Bernard's students, when comparing the students' factors, it was found out that all the students shared the same purpose of learning the English language. Their main

objective was to improve their competence in English communication, and this fueled their motivation to perform better in class. On the other hand, avoiding risk taking was an inhibition factor for the students with low English achievement level in contrast to students with high English achievement level. This made a clear distinction between the two levels (students with high and low English achievement levels).

### **C. Contextual Factors**

#### **C.1. The macro-context**

The macro-contextual factor that greatly affected Bernard's teaching approaches was the lack of English-speaking environment to practice oral English. Although Bernard gave the students activities involving real-life situations using the English language, the students and him made it clear that there was no enough environment to practice English outside the university context. There were only rare opportunities for students to practice English in their daily life basis. This had highly affected the students' activity in the classroom and even hindered some of the students' progress.

#### **C.2. The micro-context**

- a. Lack of university support** – One of the many things a teacher needs in order to deliver a good teaching experience is the support coming from the school or university he or she is working for. Unfortunately, in Bernard's case, the same with Tracy, he did not find the necessary support from the university in terms of curriculum design and teaching resources. In order to provide his students quality education, he had to adopt teaching materials found in textbooks. He would make these textbooks his reference in planning for his teaching styles. Furthermore, there were no customized teaching resources offered by the university;

therefore, he has to be innovative in planning for class activities and patient in finding any available resources.

- b. **Large number of students** – The same with the other teachers in this study, Bernard had to use group discussions in order to maximize the time given for the subject period considering the large number of class size. The students in his classes were between 25 and 35 students per class. He could not always give the students individual opportunity to practice English face to face with him since they were only given 90 minutes once a week. Unfortunately, the large class created a challenge in maximizing the learning opportunities for all the students. This was the reason why he adopted group discussions and group works. In this case, even if he could not have individual communication with the students every period, they could still practice their speaking skills with the rest of the class.
- c. **Limited time per period to individually address students' struggles** – Bernard, even with the properly scheduled periods for ELT, faced issues in correcting the students' English errors accumulated starting from their previous education experience. Although the university had provided a timetable for this course, due to students' individual struggle of the target language, there were insufficient class periods to work on student problems such as pronunciation issues and speaking fluency. Even if he often gave feedbacks to the students, he could not address all the errors. He admitted that in some cases he just ignored minor errors in pronunciations since giving feedback to these errors individually would only add up to the problem of time constraint.

Table 38 shows the factors that both enhanced and constrained Bernard's teaching approaches. It can be seen that the number of constraining factors is almost the same as the

number of enhancing factors. This simply means that Bernard's teaching experiences were not always smooth-sailing.

*Table 38: Summary of factors affecting the implementation of teaching approaches in teaching oral English*

Domain	Enhancing factors	Constraining factors
<b>Teacher factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's enthusiasm to teach the students</li> <li>• Teacher's fluency in the English language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of in-service professional development</li> <li>• Lack of overseas experience</li> </ul>
<b>Student factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' appreciation of the subject</li> <li>• Purpose to improve their communication skills in English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners' diversity</li> <li>• Avoiding risk taking</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Low-risk classroom environment</li> <li>➢ Parents' positive feedback</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Giving teachers a voice</li> <li>➢ Presence of peer models</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The macro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Lack of English-speaking environment to practice oral English</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The micro-context               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Lack of university support</li> <li>➢ Large number of students</li> <li>➢ Limited time per period to individually address students' struggles</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 4.5. Summary of Bernard's Case

The data gathered in Bernard's case suggest that he had implemented features of a CA in his teaching strategies. Although Bernard did not mention any awareness of this approach, the analysis shows that most of the strategies he used in class were in line with the characteristics of a CA.

With regard to the students' perception of Bernard's teaching approach, their responses varied. Although majority of them had positive feedbacks on the components of Bernard's

approach, there were some of them, around three to five, who were not consistent in participating in class. Sometimes, they had shown full participation in activities, but there were also instances that they remained to be passive learners. However, Bernard was able to address these concerns and still managed to encourage the students to participate. Hence, the overall perception of the students is positive.

Furthermore, Bernard's implementation of his teaching approach was enhanced by some factors. Since he lacked in-service professional development and overseas experience, he would read books and watch recent videos regarding teaching approaches and styles for him to still be updated. He also solved the problems on learners' diversity by talking to the students and planning for class activities that would encourage all of them to participate. Although Bernard considered this factor as the most challenging, he was glad to see some improvements. His high level of English fluency also helped him in giving his students quality oral English teaching. Bernard also succeeded in engaging his students into collaborative learning.

Unfortunately, Bernard's implementation of his oral English teaching approach in University B was also met by several constraining factors that greatly affected his teaching. This includes the lack of opportunity for professional development, the diversity of the students, the lack of speaking environment to speak the language, and the lack of university support, among others.

Nonetheless, Bernard exerted effort to meet the individual needs of the students, sticking to his strategy of creating a learner-centered classroom. Although he did not use videos of different speeches for his students to follow, he allowed them to talk about interesting topics and encouraged them to speak their thoughts freely. He believed that with his support, the students were able to further develop their English speaking skills.

## **Chapter 5: Discussions and Conclusions**

This study has described the different teaching approaches in teaching oral English in China's fourth-tier cities. The perceptions of the students to the teaching approach implemented by their teachers were also collected and analyzed. This chapter discusses and summarizes all the findings from the four cases, and conclusions are also drawn.

### **5.1. Discussions**

This study examined the different teaching approaches implemented by the teachers of selected China universities of fourth-tier cities in teaching oral English with a case study method. The research was conducted through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with sampled students and teachers as respondents together with classroom observations and analysis of course-related documents. Three fundamental questions framed this research. In this chapter, the findings of this study were analyzed and divided into three sections, responding to each of the research questions.

#### **5.1.1. The Approach(es) Implemented by the Teachers in Teaching Oral English to English Majors in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities**

As mentioned in the earlier part of this thesis (Chapter 2, the Literature Review), it is important that teachers would adopt the appropriate teaching approaches in order for them to enhance their quality of teaching (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, & Brown, 2012). All four teachers who were involved in this case study used CA as their main teaching approach for their oral English classes. The other three approaches (TBA, GTM, and ALM) were not apparent in the findings of teachers' practices.

According to Belchamber (2007), a CA creates a real-life interactive environment that allows the learners to openly and properly communicate with each other. As observed, each of the teacher participants followed specific features from the CA which ranged from exposing students to authentic language forms, developing learners' communicative skills, and providing opportunities for social interaction activities. Each class was carefully observed focusing on details such as the flow of the lesson observed, the students' responses, the course-related documents and the teaching strategies. The comparison of all four cases was done through checking the features of the teaching approaches applied in all the classes observed and specifying the details throughout the teaching processes.

The differences and commonalities among the four cases were determined through a cross-case comparison. It was observed that two of the teacher participants, Lucy and Tracy, were aware of the CA. They intended to adopt the CA in their teaching because they believed that this is conducive to nurturing students' oral English ability. On the other hand, Sarah and Bernard did not mention about CA, but when asked about the features they used in their strategies, their answers correspond to the features of CA. The data for each component were carefully compared and analyzed. The features of CA were categorized into nine components, namely, objectives, content, materials, activities, teacher's roles, students' roles, assessment, medium of instruction, and grammar teaching. Further, according to the observation data and document analysis, the CA was found to be prominently used by the teachers in teaching oral English.

Drawing on the findings of the cross-case analysis, two of the common purposes of CA found among the four cases are the teachers' focus on improving the learners' speaking fluency and accuracy and the use of materials reflecting real-life situations. This supports the claim of Harmer (2007) that CA is an instrument of communication that gives description as to how

language and communication are related in building communicative competence which also gives motivation for a person to exchange ideas in real-life situations in a more natural and purposeful way. As evident in the findings of this study, handling students with diverse backgrounds and with different levels of English achievement was quite challenging especially in dealing with subjects like oral English. The choice of a teaching approach which may cater for students' needs is important. As suggested by Orlich et al. (2012), "strategic teaching approaches content must be clearly charted so that teachers can view devise, prepare earlier tangible chronological methods to teach each part of the lesson with intense focus and accurate activities to engage."

*Table 39: Strategies implemented by the four teachers and their comparison with CA features*

Component	CA features	Observed implementation among the four cases	Lucy	Sarah	Tracy	Bernard
Objective	Enhancing the ability to communicate in the target language	Enhancing the students' abilities to speak publicly	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Giving students opportunities to recite	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Developing students' abilities to express their arguments through debates	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Introducing students to real-life topics in relation to communication	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓
	Prioritizing the functional usage of language over language forms	Allowing students to act out real-life scenarios to achieve better understanding of the target language	✓	✓	✓	Ø
		Encouraging students to interactively share their ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Giving focus on improving the students' oral communication skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Introducing the students to the cultural background of the English language	Ø	Ø	✓	✓
Content	Exposing learners to authentic language and structures including sentences, words, and vocabulary to develop the learners' fluency	Public speaking strategies	✓	Ø	Ø	Ø
		Real-life communicative language forms	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Hot topics related to real-world experiences	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓

Component	CA features	Observed implementation among the four cases	Lucy	Sarah	Tracy	Bernard
Materials	Textbook, realia, and authentic materials like signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, and pictures	Textbooks with speech activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
		FLTRP Cup videos	✓	✓	Ø	Ø
		Students' personal presentations	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Interesting topics about real-life contents	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓
		Selected online videos about developing English speaking skills	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø
Activities	Functional communicative activities	Role-plays on scenarios that break language barriers	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Real-life conversation scenarios	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Conversations with English for everyday use	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Social interaction activities	Presentations that raise awareness to understand meaning and connotations by understanding cultural differences	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓
		Presentations that focus on words and expressions	✓	Ø	Ø	Ø
		Vocabulary enhancement activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teacher's roles	The teacher assesses, organizes, facilitates, and monitors every classroom activity.	Needs assessor	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Facilitator	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Organizer and process manager	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Monitor	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Language advisor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learners' roles	Learners engage in meaningful communicative activities with their peers and teacher	Interactors/negotiators	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Group participants	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Cooperators	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Monitors	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Assessors	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Risk takers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment	Communicative assessment to evaluate the students' communicative performance and progress	Communication skills assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Classroom performance assessment	Ø	✓	✓	✓
		Regular assignments (reading, making presentation)	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø
Medium of instruction	Using the target language as the medium of classroom activities	Mixed (Chinese and English)	✓	Ø	Ø	Ø
		English only (rarely uses Chinese)	Ø	✓	Ø	✓
		Mainly English (occasionally uses Chinese when needed)	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø

A comparison of the data from the four cases suggests that most of the classroom activities and exercises were intended to develop chiefly the English communicative proficiency of the

students. Lucy, Sarah, Tracy, and Bernard shared several similarities in their application of the features of CA. The four teachers made use of various activities that focused on improving communicative competence of the students. For example, all four of them had given their students activities that involved role-playing and public speaking. These activities mostly included topics of real-life situations that would expose the learners to authentic language and structures.

#### **a. Teaching Objectives and Choice of Activities**

Despite the commonalities, each teacher had their own methods of meeting their objectives as can be seen on how they designed their lesson activities. Lucy specifically intended to provide her students plenty of opportunities to interact and develop their fluency in speaking the language. Sarah had the same objective, but she used strategies on improving her students' understanding of the second language which she thought was necessary in developing their language fluency. Further, Bernard and Sarah focused on providing their students activities that mirror real-life scenarios believing that it would be easier for students to develop their oral English skills if they were introduced to situations they could relate to.

In developing their students' confidence in speaking and in performing in public, Lucy and Sarah, being both from University A, used the FLTRP Cup videos to serve as the students' guide. These videos had proven to be helpful in awakening the students' interests to do the activities assigned to them. Conversely, Tracy and Bernard, who were both teaching in University B, did not adopt these videos in their teaching (although Tracy had some videos taken online as added materials); instead, they both introduced their students to the cultural background of the English language to give them an overview of how native speakers use the target language in their daily life.



Their secondary objectives, however, varied from each other. Teachers from University A, Lucy and Sarah, aimed at introducing their students to various oral English teaching strategies considering that many of their students will become future English teachers. On the other hand, University B teachers, Tracy and Bernard, gave emphasis in engaging their students in learning the cultural background of the English language and in identifying cultural differences. Nonetheless, even these teachers have adopted different strategies in teaching oral English, they were trying to achieve the same outcome – making their students proficient speakers of the English language, which is the very core of the CA.

Although teacher participants' primary objectives shared similarities with each other, some differences were observed, especially as regards their teaching contents. Lucy was very succinct with her choice of teaching contents. In meeting her teaching objectives, she focused her contents mainly on words, expression and rhetorical devices, and speeches for special occasions, while she also introduced some learning and teaching strategies for oral English classes since her students were English majors. Lucy insisted that in order to support students' development of their speaking skills, they must be introduced to contents that make up the foundation of effective communication. Lucy's choice of content is in line with Larsen-Freeman's (2000) conclusion that in a CA, the learners must be provided with learning contents that would develop their fluency and would allow them to produce meaningful and effective sentences.

On the other hand, Sarah and Bernard had adopted similar content which was communication skills. They both believed that teaching about the different skills in communication, such as improving listening abilities, enhancing the clarity of voices, and being concise with delivering statements, would be conducive to the development of their students' ability to speak English. They taught the students that communication does not equate to merely

expressing themselves but that there are other factors such as the ones mentioned previously that need to be considered.

Lastly, Tracy, who, the same with Bernard, has a secondary objective of exposing her students to the cultural background of English, added in her teaching content culture-specific concepts in language. Tracy was explicit with her examples related to the cultural background of the English language and would encourage her students to reflect on the differences in culture in order to build better understanding of the use of the language. This is in line with the claims of Stern (1992) that learners can achieve better understanding of the native speakers' perspective of the target language through learning about culture. Further, teaching culture allows the learners to use the second language culturally appropriate for them to be able to communicate efficiently with native speakers (Johnston, 2007).

#### **b. Teaching Approaches Adopted by the Teachers**

The teaching approaches adopted by the teachers in this study aligned with the features of a CA, sharing objectives of developing their students' proficiency in oral English.

All four teachers adopted in their teachings some features of a CA. With regard to their focus in fluency and accuracy, they adopted public speaking, individual oral recitation, and debates to allow their students to practice communication skills. However, it was noticeable that Lucy, Sarah, and Tracy used role-playing to enhance students' fluency of the English language while Bernard did not. Rather, he particularly incorporated in his teaching the use of open interactive discussions on real-life topics. As mentioned under the discussion of Bernard's case, he would give topics to his students that were relatable to them in order to engage them into a meaningful conversation. He also preferred giving activities to his students like singing songs and chants to boost their engagement to the target language. Also, Lucy and Tracy added story-

telling in their activities. They believed that this will develop the students' ability to involve the use of emotions in their delivery which is also very helpful in gaining fluency and accuracy.

Furthermore, the teachers also used materials that would reflect different situations in real life. While Lucy and Sarah used videos of speech competitions, Bernard and Tracy opted to focus more on providing their students interesting real-life topics and other selected videos found online, respectively. All four of them also had the objectives of effective communication. They particularly provided their students the opportunities for interactive group discussions which focused mainly on developing their communication skills. However, it was only observed in classes taught by Tracy and Bernard the inclusion of teaching contents related to the cultural background of the English language.

With regard to the activities implemented in class, all of them adopted similar strategies, namely, breaking language barriers, providing real-life conversation scenarios, and introducing English for everyday use. It was also observed that they gave importance to developing their students' vocabulary which is very crucial in building a good foundation in communication skills. These lessons align with the characteristics of a CA.

These teachers had integrated only the skills on speaking and reading in their teaching. Although writing is also an important feature of a CA, when they were interviewed, they explained that since their subject was oral English, they tend to make use of their teaching periods in developing their students' skills in oral communication. None of the four teachers added writing to their objectives because even if students write their speeches, they were assessed based on their performance in class.

Moreover, the four teachers in this study also performed classroom activities that were not in line with CA. For instance, in Lucy's case, since she was mixing both Chinese and English in her classes to maintain continuous interaction with her students, in rare occasions she was observed to be doing some translation activities with the students especially if she wanted to familiarize them with a phrase or a word. Richards (2002) categorized activities like this under GTM wherein students could learn a foreign language through translation. Sarah, on the other hand, was observed to insert some activities that she believed would improve the students' pronunciation. She would say certain phrases or sentences and let the students repeat what she had said. She would then assess whether the students have properly followed the pronunciation of the words. These exercises last for only two-three mins. Harmer (2007) supported that this type of exercise which could fall under stimulus-response-reinforcement model is a good habit in language learning.

In Tracy's case, there was an instance that she had given her students a task wherein they had to analyze a recorded speech. First, she let them hear the complete speech, asked them to discuss with their group the content of the speech, and later on present in class their own analysis of the speech. Lastly, Bernard, given that he always used interesting topics to let his students be engaged in the lessons, was observed to give his students tasks that were related to realistic scenarios. For instance, he would give a problematic situation to his students, e.g., lost in a foreign land. He would then let his students figure out possible solutions to this problem and act out in front of the class the answers they have come up with.

This goes to show that the teachers in all four cases implemented different teaching strategies in their oral English classes. However, the activities and strategies adopted predominately match the features of CA.



### c. Grammar Teaching as a Component of CA

Grammar is crucial in learning a language because it enhances accuracy, and grammar sets the foundation for effective communication. Grammar teaching is being analyzed because it was observed that grammar also plays a key role in order to achieve a higher level of English communication. The teachers of this study, except for Tracy, were observed to have not given much focus to grammar teaching. Lessons on grammar were only given when they noticed that the students commit repetitive grammatical errors in order to correct their practice. Since their students already had 12 years of learning the structures of the English grammar, three of the teacher participants of this study believed that these learners no longer need grammar lessons unless for occasional times as stated previously.

During the lesson observations of the classroom activities, the three teachers (except for Tracy) were observed to only monitor the grammatical structures of the statements of their students. They did not allocate specific time for each period to teach grammar lessons.

Table 40 shows that Tracy made sure to partly incorporate in her classes lessons related to the grammatical structures of the English language, like the use of pronouns and adverbs. This goes to show that she had a weak form of CA in grammar teaching since she gave focus on this component. Tracy believed that grammar also plays a significant role in building the communication skills of the students. She supposed that it was only right to include grammar in the foreground in second language teaching because the knowledge of the language was the foundation of better understanding its uses. Therefore, even in oral English classes, Tracy would still add discussions about grammar. This practice is related to the idea that grammar is not language but is an aspect of language that adds to language learning (Grammar, 1996).

Lastly, since the teacher participants of this study focused on developing their students' skills in speaking English by creating a real-life interactive environment that enabled the learners to communicate effectively, which correspond predominantly to a CA, the rest of the approaches (ALM, GTM, and TBA) were not apparent in the findings. Although selected activities observed may match some characteristics of these three approaches, e.g., designing tasks for students, the teachers did not have the intention to adopt these approaches in their teaching.

*Table 40: Comparison of grammar teaching practices of the four cases*

Grammar Teaching	Teachers			
	Lucy	Sarah	Tracy	Bernard
Give grammar lessons regularly	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø
Grammar interventions happen during presentations but with no specific sessions	✓	Ø	✓	✓
Rarely do grammar interventions, only when necessary	Ø	✓	Ø	Ø
Provide grammar review related to every topic	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø
Provide grammar review only when grammar mistakes are noticed during presentations	✓	✓	Ø	✓
Regularly include teachings on grammar structures and vocabulary	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø

### **5.1.2. The Students' Perceptions of the Approaches for Teaching Oral English**

This section reports the analysis of the perceptions of the students of their oral English course by grouping them into three different levels of English achievements, namely, high, medium, and low levels. It is essential to know the differences in students' perceptions in order to come up with solutions or ways to enhance students' learning. According to Kumaravadivelu (cited in Johnston, 2007), when learners are investing in a target language, they are also investing

in their own identity which is in a constant change. Furthermore, Barkhuizen (1998) added that students and teachers have different perceptions regarding the classroom aims and activities. Therefore, the needs of these students with different levels of English achievement can be better addressed if learning and teaching are also seen in their perspectives. By analyzing their perceptions, issues regarding the teachers' teaching and students' interpretation will be addressed.

#### **a. Students with High Level of English Achievement**

The students with high level of English achievement found the approaches used by their teachers to be challenging yet interesting. They also exhibited enthusiasm toward the overall oral English course. Since most of the activities required them to interact with each other, they took these as a challenge to prove their own abilities. Students with this level of English achievement felt confident working in groups making use of all the opportunities to discuss with each other the topics given to them. It was found out that the ideas they generated from each other led to a more detailed and accurate comprehension of the given topics. Furthermore, whenever the students had group activities, their main aim is to properly understand each other in order for them to come up with correct interpretations and meanings of the ideas shared to them. This is similar to the claim of Larsen-Freeman that learners have to work to understand each other to express their own meaning (2000).

Regarding teachers' choice of teaching materials, the students expressed that their teachers were providing them with the appropriate materials to learn oral English. Particularly, the students of Lucy and Sarah had positive feedbacks on the FLTRP videos adopted by the two teachers. They said that it helped them a lot in identifying the different factors that are essential in delivering a speech or when performing in public. For the students of Tracy and Bernard, they were also appreciative that their teachers provided them lessons about the background culture of

the English language. They said that this somehow made them understand more why native speakers use different words and phrases but carried the same meaning.

As regards the assessment used by their teachers, the students with high English level were aware that since they were enrolled in an oral communication class they would be assessed through their communication skills. These students also set goals for themselves in order to meet the teachers' expectations. One of the students' goals was to develop their communication skills in order to achieve proficiency in speaking the English language. For instance, in the cases of Sarah and Tracy, their students voiced out that they wanted to be proficient English speakers after completion of the subject. They were determined to improve their English speaking skills and that they would give their best in meeting the requirements of the assignments provided to them.

#### **b. Students with Medium Level of English Achievement**

There were students in all four cases who showed improvement in class but not as frequent and as immediate as those students who have high level of English achievement. Sometimes these students would also show lack of motivation in completing the activities but they were not as difficult to encourage as those with low level of English achievement. These students were categorized by the teachers to have medium level of English achievement.

Commonly, there were only around five to seven students in every class that fell under the medium level of achievement category. These students were not particularly falling behind the class but were not progressing as well as those having high level of English achievement in general. When asked about their perceptions of the teachers' teaching strategies, they expressed that there were instances that they feel motivated to fulfill the activities especially when they know they could complete the activities with ease. However, there were also instances that they

found the lessons difficult and too challenging which made them decide to just remain silent and passive.

It was further found out in this study that since most of the activities required the students to speak, those who were struggling with their speaking skills were sometimes reluctant to participate in fear of being criticized or laughed at. The classroom activities somehow posed a challenge for the students. However, since the teachers were individually tracking the improvements of their students, they were able to find ways to address the struggles faced by students with medium level of English achievement. Fortunately, for students at this level, since they were not totally struggling with the lessons, it was easier for them to be encouraged in joining the class activities. There were even instances that they perform almost equally well as those students with high level of English achievement.

### **c. Students with Low Level of English Achievement**

The number of students with low level of English achievement is relatively small in all four cases, in each case approximately this group constituted normally only one-fifth of the class population. These students experienced various difficulties which ranged from their inability to express their thoughts because of poor English foundation, their limited knowledge in English vocabulary, and their constant pronunciation errors. These types of behavior could possibly be rooted from the students' lack of opportunities to practice the English language in their previous years of study. According to the study of Snell (1999), in China, a lot of students lacked interactions inside the classroom since most classes were teacher-centered. These students were not given the chances to ask questions, give feedbacks, or comments. Unfortunately, these students' level of achievement greatly affected their perceptions of the overall oral English

course. Again, however, this does not stand true to all because other students who have had the same experience were able to perform well in class because of their motivation to learn.

While most students showed enthusiasm and interests in fulfilling the duties in each class activity given to them by their teachers, students at the low level of English achievement found it difficult and perplexing. Their lack of confidence and fear of being criticized were the major factors that hindered their ability to perform better in class. The findings echoed the arguments in the study of Ngo, Spooner-Lane, and Mergler (2015) which suggested that English major students were more intrinsically motivated compared to non-English majors; however, it was their lack of confidence and fear of being criticized that hindered them from seeking opportunities to practice the target language. Furthermore, Qian (2012) added that Chinese students are generally shy and anxious when it comes to speaking in public. They have the fear of being ridiculed and judged by their teacher and classmates. This, together with their lack of practice in speaking the language with native speakers, had caused these students to fall greatly behind with their English language speaking skills (Qian, 2012).

During the observations and interviews, these students were found to be aware of their weaknesses. They openly admitted during the interviews that it was their inability to properly express themselves using the English language that affected their participation. They further stated that they were aware that they would be graded through their development in their communication skills. However, when they were already put in a situation where they have to talk, they could not find the confidence and strength to do so.

The teachers were also aware of these struggles, and as observed in the all four cases, they had made interventions to meet the learning needs of the students, that is, grouping their students with the presence of peer models in order for those with low English achievement level to also

learn from those with high English achievement level and allotting time outside the subject period to personally ask the students of their struggles and discuss with them possible solutions to the problem. Lucy and Sarah scheduled outside timetabled hours for the course to meet with the students to know more about their struggles, while Tracy opted to always give feedbacks to students for them to keep track of their learning progress. Also, Bernard made use of peer models by grouping his students in order for those with low oral English levels to learn from those with high oral English levels. In sum, the students' perceptions of the teachers' implementation of teaching approaches and of the oral English course as a whole was related to their level of English language proficiency. Addressing the students' diverse learning needs is very important, and teachers should realize the struggles of students with low achievement level in English.

### **5.1.3. The Factors Affecting Teachers' Implementation of the Approaches for Teaching Oral English in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities**

There are several factors involved in enhancing and constraining the implementation of the CA in all four cases. The discussion below summarized the dominant factors that affected the teachers. The discussion for each individual factor is elaborated in the discussion of each case, and this chapter focuses only on the common factors observed through the cross-case comparison.

#### **a. Enhancing Factors**

In teaching oral English, it is important that teachers recognize the factors that enhance their teaching skills. In this study, several factors have been found to positively affect the teachers' implementation of their selected teaching strategies. The common factors found among all four cases are discussed as follows.

Table 41: Cross-comparison of teachers' enhancing factors

<b>Common Enhancing Factors</b>		The common enhancing factors observed in all four cases include the teachers' high English proficiency level, their continuous development through self-study, and the recognition they get from their students. The factors include the following:				
<b>Cases</b>			<b>Lucy</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Tracy</b>	<b>Bernard</b>
<b>Enhancing Factors</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	High English proficiency level	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Rich pedagogical knowledge	✓	✓	Ø	Ø
		Development through self-study	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Teacher's creativity in instructional method	Ø	✓	Ø	Ø
		Teacher's passion toward teaching	Ø	✓	Ø	✓
		Maintaining good relationship with students	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Teacher's willingness to administer feedback	Ø	Ø	✓	Ø
	<b>Students</b>	Students' positive attitudes and motivation to improve	✓	✓	Ø	Ø
		Students' recognition of teacher's effort	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Students' harmonious relationship with their teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Students' appreciation of the subject	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓
	<b>Contextual</b>	Extensive teaching materials and facilities provided by the university	✓	✓	Ø	Ø
		Acknowledgement from co-teachers	Ø	✓	✓	Ø
		Giving teachers a voice	✓	Ø	Ø	✓
		Parents' positive feedback	Ø	Ø	Ø	✓

Table 41 shows some of the enhancing factors shared among the four cases that affected the implementation of the teachers' teaching approaches. As can be seen, all four teachers exhibited high English proficiency level and had continued to develop their knowledge and skills through self-study. As for the enhancing factors drawn based on the students, the teachers were greatly motivated by the recognition they received from their students. During the interview, Lucy mentioned that these recognitions were her motivation to continue striving and doing her

best. Lucy's and Sarah's implementations were also enhanced by the extensive teaching material and facilities being available to them.

According to Chen and Goh (2014), the teacher's learning experience plays a significant role in implementing oral English teaching approaches. They further added that teachers need to be equipped with sufficient knowledge in English in order to compete with the increasing standards set by the rapid advancement caused by globalization. The teachers of this study had dedicated more than a decade to teaching English; their experience was a factor that had greatly helped them in strategizing for ways to develop their students' fluency of the target language. This also explains why they have provided their students with optimal learning opportunities in mastering the English language.

Findings of this study further show that all four teachers exhibited passion and dedication in their teaching. Indeed, although all of them did not go through additional professional training after they have finished their bachelor's degree, they all exhibited interest in learning continuously through self-study. Observations show that they were able to successfully manage their classes. The practices and strategies they have applied in their classes were mostly developed from their years of experience in teaching. Because they have been exposed to different classroom situations and diverse students, they were able to learn from what they have gone through and strategize over time. As mentioned by Borg and Liu (2013), with the efforts put up by the teachers in professional development, the students will eventually benefit from this and would likewise improve their learning prowess.

Another prominent enhancing factor in the four cases is the students' recognition of their teachers' hard work. This greatly added to the teachers' motivation to work harder for their teaching objectives and for their students. Whenever they receive such recognitions, they feel

that they have met what was expected from them and that the students were able to see the commitment and effort they have put up in teaching. According to Downey (2008), the teachers' positive interactions with their students can make a big difference for the students, and once the student-teacher relationship is established, the flow of teaching and learning inside the classroom also becomes smooth. Further, Weimer (2009) had indicated that feedbacks from the students can be humbling and motivating for the teachers.

Majority of the students in the four cases have also shown determination in improving their English speaking skills. The study of Li, Zhao, and Cao (2016) indicates that there is a gap as only little is known about the academic motivation of the students and their engagement to college English course. However, in this study, it was found that what motivates students to participate in class includes a range of reasons such as teacher's teaching style, the manner in which topics were presented, the engagement between teachers and students, and interactions among students themselves. In an oral English class, students' level of motivation is very crucial because the key to achieving language proficiency is the students' willingness to learn. This had greatly helped the teachers in delivering their lessons.

## **b. Constraining Factors**

Challenges in teaching oral English are inevitable especially in this case study wherein teachers have to deal with students with different levels of English achievement. There were several constraining factors that the teachers of this research have met as reflected in the data collected in this study. These factors range from teachers, students, and contextual factors.

Table 42 shows that the most common limiting factors that Lucy, Sarah, Tracy, and Bernard had experienced in teaching oral English were their lack of professional trainings to further their knowledge in delivering the subject and the lack of overseas experience. Institutions

were encouraged to strengthen their teachers' abilities through trainings and by promoting effective cooperation among teachers in conducting teaching research to enhance their quality of teaching.

*Table 42: Cross-comparison of teachers' constraining factors*

<b>Common Constraining Factors</b>		The common constraining factors observed in all four cases include the teachers' lack of professional development and overseas experience, the students' limited background in English and the learners' diversity, the lack of English speaking environment, the teacher-student ratio, and the limited time per period. The factors include the following:				
<b>Cases</b>			<b>Lucy</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Tracy</b>	<b>Bernard</b>
<b>Constraining Factors</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	Lack of continuous professional development	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Lack of overseas experience	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Students</b>	Students' limited background in English	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Students' low motivation	Ø	✓	Ø	Ø
		Avoiding risk taking	✓	Ø	✓	Ø
		Learners' diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Students' passive attitude toward the lessons and levels of English ability	Ø	Ø	✓	✓
	<b>Contextual</b>	Lack of English-speaking environment after class	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Insufficient time for communicative activities	Ø	✓	✓	Ø
		High teacher-student ratio	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Lack of university support	Ø	Ø	✓	✓
		Limited time per period to address individual student's struggles	✓	✓	✓	✓

According to Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus (1971), professionalism and teaching make fundamental differences in the learning process of the students. Unfortunately, these teachers were not given a chance to professionally enhance their knowledge in teaching oral English. They all agreed that they could have improved a lot and that they could have offered the students

more advanced ways of learning the second language if only they were given chances to be trained abroad and to attend seminar and trainings related to teaching English as a second language. Although they have succeeded in conducting the lessons, this lack of professional training deprived the teachers' opportunities to experience or learn updates related to the teaching of oral English.

The learners' diversity was another factor that caused a significant challenge to the teachers. In order to meet the objectives that they have set for the class, the teachers needed to make sure that they were able to individually meet the needs of their students. Unfortunately, the students' needs varied depending on their level of English achievement. Some students required less individual support because they have high achievement level of the target language. However, there were also a few students who fell behind the class because of their low achievement level of the target language, and they faced more challenges in their learning comparatively due to their low foundation of the English language and their personal weaknesses in their communication skills. According to He (2001), another reason why students have low foundation of the English language is the lack of an appropriate environment to practice the English language. He further added that Chinese students are learning English as a subject or knowledge rather than a tool.

Based on the observation of the cases in this study, the problem of meeting the students' needs amidst diversity could have been solved by providing individual intervention. However, this was also hindered due to other factors such as time constraint and large class size. Each oral English class was only allotted 90 minutes of meeting per week. As much as the teachers wanted to cater for the students' individual learning needs, due to limited class hours and the number of students per class, the teachers had opted to conduct group activities most of the time and



feedbacks were also mostly given by group. The purpose of group works was good; however, this could also lessen the time allowed for one-on-one interactions between the students and teachers.

In addition, only the teachers from University A, Lucy and Sarah, were provided by the university with sufficient teaching materials such as textbooks to use in their classes. Unfortunately, for Tracy and Bernard, they have to look for available resources online in order to provide authentic and quality activities to their students. This lack of support from the university also added to the challenges they encountered in teaching the oral English course.

All in all, the identification of these constraining factors will help the universities to realize the areas which require immediate response or support. The teachers believed that successfully addressing these factors would also mean meeting the needs of the students and bridging the gaps between learning and the teaching approaches. Furthermore, the teachers were able to successfully implement the features of CA in their teaching. Although some difficulties were encountered due to the students' different perceptions of the teaching and their diverse ability levels, the teaching objectives were met in general.

Previous studies (Cheng & Cheng, 2012) conducted in China have raised our awareness of the problems faced by students in acquiring English as a second language. Speaking ability was a concern and the term “dumb English” was used. As regards teaching English major and non-English major students, literature in higher education students does not give concrete examples on whether being an English major equates to more interests in learning oral English in a wider degree compared to those who are non-English majors (Ngo et al., 2015). However, little is known about the teaching of oral English in China universities. This study adds to the literature by providing a detailed portrait of the teaching of oral English among English major students. As

the study context is universities of fourth-tier cities in China, the findings may inform the literature about teaching oral English in less well-resourced contexts.

Finally, the findings of this study suggested that the student's level of oral English achievement affects how they perceive the overall learning experience and their struggles in learning English. This study calls for more attention from researchers to investigate the learning and support for students, especially those with low English achievement levels, in learning oral English.

Drawing on the findings, a number of recommendations and implications could be drawn and will be discussed in the next section.

## **5.2. Conclusions of the Study**

After carefully examining all the data gathered, this study made significant findings on the teaching approaches implemented by the four teacher participants and the perceptions of the students toward these approaches. Also, the factors that both enhanced and constricted the teachers' implementation of these strategies were identified.

The following sections conclude the major findings of this study.

### **5.2.1. Adopting a CA in the Oral English Classes**

Findings show that the teaching approach adopted by Lucy, Sarah, Tracy, and Bernard aligned with the features of a CA. Their main objective was to develop their students' proficiency in speaking the English language, and according to Rai (2003), the activities and exercises based on a CA are intended to develop communicative proficiency among learners. The features that they commonly used include the focus on fluency and accuracy, the use of authentic materials to reflect real-life situations, establishing effective communication among their students, the



application of learning the target language by using it to communicate, the focus on meaning and appropriate usage.

The teachers' application of the CA in this study was categorized into nine different components which were classified as objectives, contents, materials, activities and classroom organizations, teacher's role, learner's role, assessment, medium of instruction, and grammar teaching.

Lucy and Tracy had intentionally adopted the use of a CA for their oral English classes. Both of them felt comfortable using this approach because they were already familiar with its attributes and the method of its implementation. On the other hand, Sarah and Bernard did not particularly mention that they were aware of the CA. However, when they were asked about the teaching strategies they used in their classes, the features they mentioned matched with the features of a CA. This goes to show that both of them know of different strategies to handle oral English classes only that they were not aware that these strategies fall under CA. Furthermore, given that their students would be future English teachers, all four teacher participants, particularly Lucy and Tracy since they were both aware of CA, felt that the use of these features was relevant as these gave emphasis on using real-life situations and scenarios. This is supported by the claims of Belchamber (2007) that CA creates an environment that mirrors real-life events and that enables the students to interactively communicate with each other.

Furthermore, in order to address the concerns on the diversity of learners such as about students with low level of oral English lacking the enthusiasm and determination to perform in class, the teachers had made interventions, such as , meeting the students individually after class, in order to meet their learning needs. Through these interventions, the students were given the assurance that the struggles they were experiencing with their oral English skills could be

overcome with the help of their teachers and with more perseverance. These interventions, on the other hand, also gave the teachers opportunities to discover more strategies to handle diverse learners and to fully understand their strengths and weaknesses.

### **5.2.2. Perceptions of Students with Different English Achievement Levels toward the Teaching Approaches**

In all four cases, the students were categorized to have high, medium, and low level of English achievement. The students from various levels have varied perceptions of the teaching approach implemented by their teachers. The reason for these differences in perceptions is the students' different levels of oral English achievement. For students with high level of English achievements, they found the activities and lessons to be both interesting and rewarding, especially that they were aware that these activities and lessons would be the foundation of their improvement through time. They also believed that allowing them to speak in front of a lot of people and being able to openly express themselves had helped them boost their confidence which is very essential when they will be out in the real world.

On the other hand, students with medium level of English achievement have different experiences during their oral English course. There were instances that the activities and lessons seemed easy for them to accomplish, but there were also instances that they found themselves struggling. One of the reasons why they found it difficult to perform was when they were asked to present in front of their classmates. Their lack of confidence was their major hindrance. This echoed the argument in He (2001) that the lack of practice to speak using the English language had caused great impact on the students' confidence and competence. Fortunately, for students at this level, they were still motivated to improve their performances and they were willing to learn. Although oral English seemed to be a challenge to them, they still managed to perform.

Lastly, the students with low level of English achievement were the ones who least appreciated the oral English course. For them, the activities and lessons seemed to be quite difficult, and they always found themselves in a situation wherein they felt scared and conscious. They had admitted, though, that their teachers made the necessary interventions, but since their foundation of the English language were not as sturdy as those with high levels, they could not help but feel demotivated to perform in class activities. For them, although the entire course had taught them many things, the application of their learnings was still a struggle that they have to face. Similar findings were also observed in the study of Ngo et al. (2015) that the students who lacked the confidence to speak were most of the time the students who also lacked the oral skills. As a result, this hindered them to seek for opportunities to speak the English language.

There were positive responses from students, especially those with high oral English levels; however, students with low level of oral English achievement did not find such activities to be stimulating because they lacked the confidence to express themselves. These findings show that the level of students' oral English achievement plays a vital role in their perception of the entire oral English course. Even if the teacher had well-thought-out teaching plans and strategies, the students' individual struggles could still affect greatly in the overall learning outcome.

### **5.2.3. Factors Affecting the Teachers' Implementation of Their Teaching Approach**

There were several factors that significantly affected the teachers' implementation of their teaching approaches for their oral English classes. These factors were classified into two types – enhancing and constraining factors.

Findings show that the teachers involved in this study had encountered challenges in implementing their teaching approaches for the oral English course. However, the teachers were still able to manage the situation inside the classroom due to some enhancing factors.

The common enhancing factors among the teachers include their high level of English proficiency and their rich pedagogical knowledge, their continuous development through self-study, and the recognition they received from their students. These factors became the teachers' motivation to do better with their teaching performances and to be committed in improving their students' oral English ability. As regards the teachers' high level of English proficiency, Cortazzi and Jin (1998) emphasized that this attribute is expected from teachers in order to meet the students' highly growing need to use English for practical purposes. Other supporting factors such as the teacher's creativity, their ability to maintain good relationship with their students, their good relationships with their colleagues, and the students' view of the subjects were also identified.

On the other hand, the common constraining factors observed in the four cases include the teachers' lack of continuous professional development and overseas English learning experience, the students' limited background in English, the learners' diversity, the lack of English-speaking environment, the teacher-student ratio, and the limited time per period to address the students' struggles in learning the target language.

These constraining factors had considerably affected the teachers' teaching of the oral English course. Borg and Liu (2013) stressed that there is an urgent need for further professional developments for English teachers in China as students will in turn benefit from this because having a professionally trained English teacher will be an advantage for them to develop their English learning prowess and enhance their motivation and determination to speak fluent English. For instance, in order for the teachers to properly execute the features of a CA, they must have the appropriate knowledge and skills,. In this study, although the four teachers managed to meet their objectives, they still vocally expressed that had they been trained professionally, they could



have done better. As can be realized in all four cases, the very main challenge that the four teachers had encountered was their lack of professional development to enhance their knowledge of different teaching approaches relevant to the teaching of oral English such as TBA, GTM, and ALM.

### **5.3. Implications and Recommendations**

A number of implications and recommendations can be drawn from the findings which may enhance the teachers' teaching of oral English.

#### **5.3.1. Revisions of Existing Curriculum Guidelines**

In addition to the observations with the findings, there is a need to reconsider the curriculum for oral English in the universities where the study was conducted. For example, the provision of official directions and mandated teaching approaches may support the teachers. Chen and Goh (2011) suggest that the absence of official directions and not having uniform, systematic, and mandated teaching approaches from the MOE of China led to serious difficulties experienced by teachers to address the needs of diverse non-English speaking students.

A revision in the curriculum guidelines may include measures and courses to cater for those with low level of English achievement. For example, the curriculum revision may be coupled with measures which would help to identify those who require additional support to improve their English ability due to their weak foundation of the English language; some testing prior to determine the entry level of the students or categorizing the students according to their ability may be needed. Students with low entry level may be required to take some English enhancement course and/or be required to improve their English using self-learning materials.

Furthermore, as regards the textbooks or teaching materials, under a common curriculum framework course, teachers may collaborate or discuss among themselves the types of textbooks or teaching materials to be used in their oral English classes. Through this, they could achieve a pool of resources in their classroom materials and activities, and at the same time this may allow teachers from different universities to further collaborate and to assess whether the activities and lessons they have given the students were effective or still need improvements.

### **5.3.2. Enhancing the Teaching of Oral English in China Universities of Fourth-Tier Cities**

Findings from this study evidently show that the four teacher participants used the same approach in their oral English classes which was the CA. Drawing on the findings, there are implications for enhancing the teachers' teaching.

#### **5.3.2.1. Supporting the Implementation of CA Approach in Oral English Classes and Providing Continuous Professional Development for Teachers**

As observed in the four cases, the use of CA features in an oral English class had helped the teachers in achieving their objectives of making their students proficient speakers of the English language. However, the teachers experienced challenges especially in meeting the individual needs of the students. The use of CA features was hindered such that the teacher participants were not professionally trained to use this approach; in fact Sarah and Bernard entirely did not know that the strategies they were using were part of a CA. Hence, more in-depth consideration on how to implement the CA in teaching oral English class is highly recommended. For the teachers to effectively establish a CA, professional development activities deem essential for the teachers such that they could be trained on how to properly execute its

features. The professional development activities may take different forms. The teachers may form support groups to enhance their professional competence, conduct peer observations, and reflect on their teaching to make further improvements in their teaching or develop competence in implementing the CA. Cross-university collaboration is possible among universities in fourth-tier cities in China because they share similar issues and the teachers may form support groups to enhance their teaching.

Furthermore, it is crucial that teachers be engaged in continuous professional development. This could be in a form of trainings on different approaches in teaching oral English or these teachers can be exposed to overseas experience. This will ensure that the competence of each teacher is developed continuously and teachers have updated knowledge and skills related to the teaching of the subject. The acquisition of new skills and knowledge based on the educational need of the students and meeting the standards of the educational curriculum is essential. Also, in order to meet the constantly changing demands of quality teaching, teachers must also be adept and prepared to continually learn and relearn new and innovative pedagogies.

It was further found out in this study that the students' needs in an oral English class differed depending on their level of English achievement. Students who belonged to the medium and low level needed more individual interaction with the teachers because they were the ones who lacked the confidence to have an interactive communication with their peers. This attitude that the students possessed rooted from their poor foundation of the English language. It was their feeling of being left behind that caused them to be less active in class. This was a very important issue that the teachers must be able to address, and this could be an important theme in future teacher professional development activities for these teachers. As mentioned by Arnold

(2000), the learning and using of a second language is greatly connected to the learner's construction of self.

As can be seen in the four cases, it was evident that whenever group activities were given to the students, the objective of the teacher to have equal division of work was sometimes hindered by the students' lack of motivation to be interactive. Sometimes, most of the work was done by the students who have high level of English achievement. Knowing this diverse attitude of students inside the classroom, it is important for teachers to be more sensitive in dealing with them in order to meet their individual needs. They should bear in mind that each of the learners must be encouraged and supported in acquiring paramount access to and proficiency with the knowledge, ideas, and skills that open the doors to opportunities both from the present and the future. Future professional development programs may emphasize the design of activities which cater for the needs of students of different ability levels and offer options to motivate or engage students. As suggested by Lo (2020) in her study entitled "Professional Development of CLIL Teachers," teachers should have the expertise in making the subject contents and activities more accessible to the learners, despite their level of English proficiency, as this is essential for both content and language learning.

Knowing that their students have different levels of English achievement, teachers must be more sensitive in dealing with those with medium and low levels because they were most vulnerable to being demotivated in class, and this will only be achievable if teachers have the sufficient knowledge and skills to handle the situation. Hence, in a classroom setting and in dealing with diverse learners, continuous professional development would help teachers in providing the students quality materials, presentations, and activities that are rich in meaning for the learners of different levels.

### **5.3.2.2. Implementing Group Work and Engaging Students in Collaborative Learning**

One of the similar features of the four cases is that most of their activities were group works. The use of group activities encourages collaborative learning among students; however, it is the teacher's responsibility to monitor the progress of each group. In the study of Qian (2012), it was mentioned that in China, students tend to be inactive in class and would choose to lower their gaze when the teacher asks questions. This was also evident in the four cases during classroom observations. This is one of the reasons why the teacher participants opted to give their students group activities most of the time – for them to develop collaborative learning among each other. As mentioned in the case of Lucy, one-third of her students exhibited lesser interests in participating in group activities. Hence, it is essential that teachers would address such concerns.

To encourage the students to participate in a collaborative learning, students need to understand that taking part in group activities would also help them to improve significantly. Teachers should prepare activities that would not only develop the oral English skills of the students but also boost their confidence and self-esteem especially in dealing with their peers. The use of collaborative learning would also give the students the opportunities to teach each other by addressing confusions and clarifying misconceptions. Also, as Ellis (2018) and Nunan (2004) emphasized, by working together, the students will have a clear goal to fulfill and that they would know when and how they could achieve it.

### **5.3.2.3. Encouraging Teacher Collaboration**

As this study investigated the teaching approaches adopted by teachers in an oral English class, it was found out that all four teachers were encountering the same challenges in their

classes – the diversity of the learners. With this, it can be drawn into conclusion that collaboration among teachers would be helpful in improving their teaching strategies considering that they encounter the same difficulties. In the research conducted by Dunkel (1988), it was mentioned that students are most likely to be affected by teacher collaboration as teaching and learning are closely linked. Teacher collaboration would be helpful as teachers' sharing can result to better understanding their students, specifically their characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and performances. For instance, Lucy and Sarah could collaborate with each other in addressing their students' needs as they both teach in the same university. The same goes with Tracy and Bernard. Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) further added that if teachers collaborate more often with each other, they will be able to discuss about the teaching practices that would best fit their students.

### **5.3.3. Enhancing Support at the University Level**

One of the factors that constrained the teachers' implementation of their teaching approaches is the lack of university support. The support that teachers need from the university includes a wide variety of instructional materials and methods, educational services, or other school resources that would enhance the learning experience.

In the case of Lucy and Sarah, they were fortunate to have received a textbook from the university that served as their primary reference in preparing for their class lessons and activities. Unfortunately, for Tracy and Bernard, they had not received any support from the university, and this forced them to look for their own resources online and textbooks. Not receiving any support from their university had affected the implementation of their teaching approaches.

Although the four teachers addressed the diverse learning needs of their students by reaching out to the students with low level of achievement in English, further interventions could

still be done to address this issue. The allocation of resources for the teaching of oral English at the university level may need to be reconsidered. It is important for the universities to be made aware that providing teachers the sufficient amount of resources they need in teaching and to be engaged in professional development activities.

#### **5.3.3.1. Lowering the Student-Teacher Ratio**

Due to the large number of students in every class, the teachers found it difficult and challenging to meet the individual needs of the students. Upon observation, since the teachers were handling more than 20 students per class, 35 being the maximum number, they could not find enough time to interact with them individually and thus monitor their learning needs. In order to come up with a better result in the implementation of specific teaching approaches in an oral English class, a classroom with less than 20 students would give the teachers more opportunities to reach out to the students individually and address their specific academic needs. This would also allow the teachers to provide more useful formative feedbacks to their students which according to He and Lin (2018) could lead to more development of both parties – the teachers and the students.

#### **5.3.3.2. Reconsidering the Time Allocation for Oral English Classes**

A 90-minute time period in teaching oral English is effective, but only if done at least twice a week can it be considered more effective. Unfortunately, in all four cases, each class only had a once-a-week meeting. Providing more time for an oral English class would enhance student learning. By giving students more opportunities to practice the English language with an increase in contact or class time, they can become proficient speakers of the language.



### 5.3.3.3. Provision of Self-Learning Materials

Providing the students other forms of learning after class hours would also be helpful in their oral English development. For instance, the students could be provided with self-learning materials that they could bring home. This would assist them in studying the target language at their own time and pace. Also, since self-learning materials are designed with self-assessment questions, the students will also be able to self-evaluate and know how they are progressing in their studies.

## 5.4. Significance of the Study

The result of this study greatly benefits the following parties:

- a) The administrators of different universities: Data will provide the administrators information on how the students-teacher ratio as well as the number of hours per class session affected the progress of the students in learning oral English. Data would further inform them the significance of sending their teachers to professional training and if possible overseas experience for them to enhance their teaching capabilities and learn more teaching techniques and strategies which are beneficial to the students in the long run.
- b) The MOE in China. Data from this study will give enlightenment to the MOE in China that the current curriculum guidelines and the systematic implementation of teaching approaches need some revisions. This would support reflections about the existing strategies by drawing on the data collected so that efforts in forming a framework that can be implemented so as to achieve the ultimate purpose of improving oral English learning, teaching, and assessment in universities in the fourth-tier cities of China may commence.

- c) Teachers. This study will provide information regarding the issues encountered by oral English teachers that may have impacted the overall teaching process significantly, hence inspire ideas on how to improve the current understanding of existing teaching practices in an oral English class in China universities of fourth-tier cities. Drawing on the findings, the teachers will understand more the perceptions of the students and be able to adjust their teaching to suit their learning needs.

### **5.5. Limitations of the Study**

The findings of this study is limited to the context of fourth-tier cities in Anhui Province which makes it difficult to generate a full picture of the teaching practices in all fourth-tier cities of China. Also, due to time constraint, sampling was circumscribed to only two target universities, and this bounded number comprises the limitation of this study. Besides, in-depth lesson observation were conducted to only four teachers, two from each university, and 24 students, six from each of the participant teachers.

Moreover, further studies in the different context of China's fourth-tier cities would also provide a more thorough understanding of the different teaching approaches used by oral English teachers in universities of fourth-tier cities in mainland China.

### **5.6. Recommendations for Further Studies**

Although this study addressed the teaching approaches implemented by four teacher participants from two universities of fourth-tier cities in Anhui, China, and the factors that affected their implementation, the topic on designing professional development programs for oral English teachers in universities of China's fourth-tier cities could be a follow-up study drawing on the findings of this research. An intervention study on the design and implementation of

teacher professional development program for teachers of oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities may be conducted. Furthermore, the characteristics of the program could take into account the implications of this study, for instance, introducing teacher collaborations in reforming the curriculum and teaching materials. The study may involve measuring the impact of the program using pre- and post-interviews and lesson observations. Other studies may identify strategies which are directed to support the learning of students of low achievement levels, or introduce to the teachers alternative teaching strategies other than CA e.g., TBA. Hence, a number of topics or focus can be used as the theme for designing professional development programs for oral English teachers and further research on ways to support the teaching of oral English in China universities of fourth-tier cities can be considered.



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## Appendix 1

### Interview Guide Questions to Teachers

Phase of the lesson or purpose	Pre-lesson observation interview	Post-lesson observation interview	Remark
Planning considerations	1. What English topic will you teach today? 2. What is your internal classroom rule in speaking, pure English or mixed Chinese and English?	11. What English topic will you teach next meeting?	
Expected learning outcome/ Student learning after the lesson	3. After this lesson, what is your expectation for students to learn and experience?	12. How would you comment on student learning in this lesson? 13. How far did the students achieve the learning outcomes you expected?	
Teaching strategy	4. How will you deliver this lesson so as students will get interested to listen and learn? (This refers to the motivation technique). 5. What are the varied materials will you use to illustrate this topic? 6. Will students be organized individually, by pair, by quartet or by group to do the classroom activities? Please explain your choice.	14. What MOI and grammar teaching strategy did you employ or utilize? 15. How would you evaluate your teaching strategy?	
Interaction with students	7. What are the activities you prepare for students to engage in this lesson? 8. What are the questions will you raise to elicit students' comprehension or understanding about the lesson?	16. How would you comment on interactions during the lesson e.g. between teacher and students and among students themselves?	

Phase of the lesson or purpose	Pre-lesson observation interview	Post-lesson observation interview	Remark
	9. Will you allow students' experience sharing to explain their understanding about the lesson?		
Assessment	10. What are your criteria in assessing students' performance, by written, recitation or activity output?	17. What type of assignment (project, written report or oral speaking) you gave your students? 18. What is your overall assessment of your teaching process and students' learning and experience?	
Teacher's confidence in teaching		19. What will you do differently when you next teach the same lesson? 20. What are the strengths/ weaknesses/ improvements etc.?	
Factors affecting the implementation of teaching approaches	21. How well do you fit with your work environment? 22. How do you evaluate the teacher-student relationship? 23. What do you think about the national teaching programs for oral English? 24. What do you think about the oral English curriculum? 25. What are the obligations of oral English teachers in your university? 26. How does the university administration affect your teaching?		

## Appendix 2

### Interview Guide Questions to Students

Phase of the lesson or purpose	Post-lesson observation interview	Remark
Lesson Planning	1.What was the lesson all about? Have you enjoyed the lesson? Which part? Why?	
Learning outcome/ Student learning after the lesson	2.What have you learned from this lesson? 3.Was the lesson taught difficult, which portion? What challenge your abilities in learning oral English? Which part of the lesson you have clearly understood? What suggestion then can you make for teacher to do to facilitate clear understanding? 4.Can you relate your lesson activities in your past experience or possibly in your future life?	
Teaching strategy	5.What teaching materials did the teacher use in the conduct of that lesson? Can you say that the materials used are appropriate? Why? 6.How were you organized by the teacher? By pair, by quartet or by group? Did you participate actively and interestingly? 7.What type of testing/assessment your teacher has given you in that lesson? Does it challenge your recall ability? 8.What kind of assignment your teacher has given you for the next meeting? Is it project, written report or oral speaking? Which do you prefer? Why? 9.Can you cite what MOI and grammar your teacher used?	
Interaction with students	10.What activities did the teacher require you to do for the lesson? Was the lesson interesting? Were you motivated to participate and learn at the same time? Why? 11.What role did you play in the group work? Did you enjoy your role? Why?	
Assessment	12.If you were to rate your overall performance or participation, what is your rating?	
Factors affecting students' learning	13. How well do you fit with the educational atmosphere? 14. How do you evaluate the teacher-student relationship?	

### Appendix 3

#### Lesson Observation Guideline

Components	Guideline	Remark
Objective	What are the learning objectives?	
Content	2. What are the contents of the topic?	
Material	3. What are the teaching materials used in the presentation or conduct of the lecture?	
Activities	5. What classroom activities do students engaged, are the same relevant to the lesson?	
Teacher's roles	4. What are the roles played by the teachers?	
Learners' roles	6. What are the roles played by the students'?	
Assessment	7. What kind of assessment was given by the teachers, oral test or written? 8. Was there an assignment given by the teacher before the class adjourned? 9. How do the teachers assess the overall reaction of the students? Did they enjoy the learning process of the day's lesson?	
MOI	10. How does teacher motivate the students to get attention/readiness for the lesson? 11. How does the teacher poise himself/herself in the delivery of his/her lessons to signal the students' his/her self-confidence, readiness and proficiency of the lesson? 12. Do teachers activate the students by asking lesson relevant questions? Or asking student to share their experiences relative to the present lesson? 13. How is question being answered or refined by the teachers for students' satisfaction and further understanding? 14. What MOI was adopted by the teachers?	
Grammar teaching	15. What method of grammar teaching was adopted by the teachers?	

## Appendix 4

### FLTRP English Public Speaking Contest

Initiated in 2002 by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP), the “FLTRP · ETIC Cup” English Public Speaking Contest has gained great attention and credit both at home and abroad. Over the years it has been regarded as one of the most prestigious English public speaking competitions with very high standards in China, attracting a large number of participants from across the country. All participants eagerly embrace the opportunity to challenge, improve and be themselves. The contest has been of great help to participants by improving their English proficiency and cultivating their communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Nationally recognized as being both authoritative and professional, the English Public Speaking Contest has been listed, since 2018, by the “The Ranking of National Innovative Talents Training and Academic Competition of Colleges and Universities” released by the China Association of Higher Education, MOE, People's Republic of China.

The 2020 “FLTRP · ETIC Cup” English Public Speaking Contest consists of an offline contest and an online contest, with winning contestants from both contests competing at the National Final.

The offline contest is composed of three parts: Preliminary, Provincial Final, and National Final. The procedure is as follows: The Preliminaries will be held by colleges and universities in each province; the winners will compete in the Provincial Finals organized by the provincial organizing committees and co-organized by local branches of FLTRP; the top 3 contestants from each province (altogether 90 nationwide) will compete at the National Final.

The online contest will be held on the official website (<http://uchallenge.unipus.cn/en/>) where applicants can sign up to participate. There will be three phases in the online contest, and the 90

top contestants will compete at the National Final. Besides, participants from overseas and those from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan will be invited to attend the National Final competing for the final Grand Prizes and other special prizes.

