INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE CREAM PROGRAM ON EFL STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

In the English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking context, several studies have demonstrated that Taiwanese university students have difficulty learning to speak English. To improve their English speaking performance, EFL students need a thorough teaching program for effective learning. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the impact of the CREAM (creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation) program on English speaking performance for EFL students. To achieve the purpose, 80 college students were recruited and divided into two groups; one was a control group (CG) with the traditional English instruction, and the other was an experimental group (EG) with the CREAM program. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in the present study by employing an independent sample *t*-test and a semi-structured interview technique. The major findings of this study indicated that the EG not only significantly outperformed the CG in the overall English speaking scores but also showed more positive responses to their English speaking performance than the CG after the CREAM program. Moreover, the EG showed positive responses to the five dimensions of the CREAM program. Based on the research results, it is suggested that English teachers should incorporate the CREAM program with regular English speaking curriculum; moreover, teachers should encourage EFL students to bravely speak English out loud in class, in order to improve their English speaking.

Keywords: EFL students; English speaking; English instruction; CREAM program

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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE CREAM PROGRAM ON EFL STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

調查 CREAM 教學方案對 EFL 學生英語口說表現之影響

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摘要

在英語為外語(EFL)口說環境下，許多研究顯示台灣大學生普遍在英語口說方面遇到諸多困難。為提升英語口說表現，EFL 學生需要一套完備的教學方案以進行有效的學習。因此，本研究旨在調查 CREAM 教學方案(創造力、反省力、學習效能、主動性以及學習動機)對 EFL 學生英語口說表現之影響。為達到此研究目的，研究者將參與研究的 80 位大學生分為控制組(40 人)及實驗組(40 人)，控制組以傳統方式進行英語教學，而實驗組則以 CREAM 教學方案進行英語教學。在本研究中，研究者同時採用質化及量化之研究方法，分別為獨立樣本 T 檢定及半結構式訪談法。主要研究發現，實驗組不僅在整體英語口說分數上顯著優於控制組，同時在英語口說表現之看法上實驗組較控制組抱持正面回應。此外，實驗組對於 CREAM 教學方案的五大面向均有正面的看法。根據研究結果，研究者建議英語教師能將 CREAM 教學方案融入常規之英語口說課程，以及鼓勵 EFL 學生在課堂上勇於練習說英語，以提升 EFL 學生之英語口說表現。

關鍵詞: EFL 學生；英語口說；英語教學；CREAM 教學方案

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of globalization, English has been used as an essential instrument for EFL (English as a foreign language) university students to communicate and pursue an ideal job in the future. For successful oral communication, good speaking skills provide speakers with an optimal channel to communicate with listeners. When speakers have good speaking performance, they may exchange ideas with one another, sustaining the discussion by giving and reflecting on reasons (Dawes, 2008). Therefore, they are able to articulate their thoughts and have a good command of speaking performance for successful oral communication.

However, English speaking has been considered the most challenging language skill for EFL students. In mutually oral communication, Thornbury (2005) claimed that "the demands of producing speech in real-time with minimal planning opportunities places considerable constraints on the kind of complexity of utterances that speakers can achieve" (p. 20). It can be inferred that EFL students often speak English with inappropriate silences and excessive pauses because they lack sufficient time to formulate their ideas, select proper vocabulary, and compose an utterance in English. As a matter of fact, several researchers discovered that EFL university students had difficulties learning to speak English. Chuang (2010) claimed that Taiwanese university students felt excessively uncomfortable when they were asked to speak English in public. Due to a lack of self-confidence, they were worried about making mistakes when they were speaking English. Similarly, Talley (2013) proclaimed that Taiwanese university students had difficulty speaking English because they were aware of their "insufficient ability of English language to engage in meaningful spoken communication from EFL students" (p. 86). They considered that their lack of English language ability hampered meaningful conversation and interactive participation in the classroom. Therefore, Taiwanese university students tend to keep reticent and not engage themselves in the classroom discussions and activities.

To enhance the study skills of EFL students in their learning process, Cottrell (2008) proposed the CREAM (creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation) program which refers to a multi-faceted teaching program in five dimensions, including creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation. In the CREAM program,

students were expected to develop their creative thinking, profound reflection, learning effectiveness, active participation, and high learning motivation. In fact, previous studies proved that the CREAM program could assist EFL students to learn effectively in many aspects, such as enhancing academic performance, boosting learning interests of reading and writing, and increasing active participation (Chi, 2013; Truc, 2010). Nevertheless, research on the CREAM program on English speaking was scarcely found. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the impact of the CREAM program on EFL students' English speaking performance.

In the present study, three research questions are proposed as follows:

1. Is there any significant difference between the CG's and the EG's English speaking scores before and after the English instruction?
2. Is there any significant difference between the CG's and the EG's responses to English speaking performance after the English instruction?
3. What are the EG's responses to creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation after the CREAM program?

2. Literature Review

The literature review was to provide a thorough foundation for this study on the impact of the CREAM program on English speaking for EFL university students in Taiwan. The literature review is twofold. The first section elaborates on insights into speaking instruction. The second section explores the impact of the CREAM program for EFL students, attempting to provide a theoretical justification for each of the five dimensions, in terms of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation.

2.1 Speaking Instruction

Speaking instruction is of great importance because it not only helps engage students in the classroom activities to practice speaking but also assists them to develop their overall speaking performance. According to Nunan (2003), speaking instruction aims at teaching students to (a) produce the speech sounds and patterns, (b) use word and sentence stress, the rhythm, and intonation patterns, (c) select proper words and sentences based on the appropriate situations, audience, and subject matter, (d) organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence, (e) use the language as a channel for expressing

judgments, and (f) use the language fluently with few unnatural pauses. To develop an effective speaking instruction, Nunan (1999) and Oprandy (1994) considered four factors including (a) integration, (b) reflection, (c) interaction, and (d) practice. To be specific, the macro-skills of English speaking should be integrated with the micro-skills in speaking instruction as a whole rather than the parts. Next, speaking instruction should enable students to reflect on their own learning processes and strategies in an active way. After that, there should be ample opportunities for students to practice speaking English for interacting in different situations. Finally, students should have opportunities to apply both linguistic and communicative competences to practice English speaking. In addition, in order to motivate students to learn effectively, teachers should apply many classroom activities to not only attract students' interests and attention but also facilitate their learning process in speaking instruction. Smaldino, Lowther, Mims, and Russell (2015) defined classroom activities as teaching-related activities which were required for students to achieve meaningful understanding, retention, application, and practice with feedback. Through the use of classroom activities, students could acquire the language in more natural contexts, and they were motivated to speak the target language. Thus, classroom activities need to be authentic, applicable, and practical for students.

As speaking instruction is implemented, however, teachers may encounter several problems in an EFL classroom. In a survey of EFL teachers, Nunan (1993) attributed the biggest challenges in the EFL classroom to the lack of motivation, students' willingness to speak, and the use of the first language. Moreover, Ur (1991) also identified four main problems that hindered EFL students from speaking English in speaking instruction, including (a) inhibition, (b) nothing to say, (c) low or uneven participation, and (d) first-language use. First of all, since speaking instruction requires some real-time exposure to an interlocutor, students are often inhibited about saying things in a foreign language in the classroom due to their anxiety about making mistakes or fear of losing face. The second problem is that students have nothing to say in the classroom. Baker and Westrup (2003) and Harmer (2007) attributed this problem to the unsuitable topics used in speaking instruction because EFL students have little topical knowledge. Moreover, students may not have enough vocabulary knowledge or be unfamiliar with the grammatical structures required for the speaking instruction. The third problem that students encounter in the classroom is low or uneven participation. Due to the time

constraint of a class, not all the students have the equivalent time to practice speaking English. Last but not least, first-language use of students is the obstacle for learning to speak English. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) claimed that interference of students' first language could cause errors in the production of the second language because of their natural tendency to relate structures of their own native language to the target language. Accordingly, given the uniformity of the first-language background, EFL students tend to resort to their first language in English speaking instruction.

2.2 The CREAM Program

In order to improve English speaking performance, EFL students need a thorough teaching program for meaningful learning. Cottrell (2008) proposed the CREAM program, including the development of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation. To shed light on the CREAM program, the five dimensions of the CREAM program (creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation) were discussed as follows.

2.2.1 Creativity

Creativity is the ability to create and reformulate new ideas. According to Kanematsu and Barry (2016), creativity refers to the ability to produce original work and new ideas, which need to combine many existing work, objects, and ideas in different ways for new purposes. Thus, creativity may adopt old ideas or transfer them into new or different ideas. Guilford (1950) proposed four components for developing divergent thinking in creativity including (a) originality, (b) flexibility, (c) fluency, and (d) elaboration. To illustrate, originality refers to the ability to produce new, original ideas. It is essential for students to develop their own ideas of thinking outside the box. In addition, flexibility refers to the ability to simultaneously propose a variety of strategies to a specific problem. Students must learn to brainstorm the ideas and then associate them with many relevant ideas through mind mapping with five senses. Moreover, fluency is the ability to produce great number of ideas or problem solutions in a short period of time and get easily adapted to new ideas. Fluency is closely related to quick thinking and represents the speed and quantity of divergent thinking. The last component of creativity, elaboration, refers to the ability to systematize and organize the details of an idea in a head and carry it out. To illuminate the new ideas, students must learn to elaborate them precisely and concisely.

Creativity can foster students' original thinking, increase their engagement in the learning process, and trigger their learning motivation. Chang (2005) investigated the effects of the creative drama project on English instruction for 74 high school students in an EFL context. During the twelve-week project of the creative drama, each group was required to choose two topics in accordance to the lessons, to create two scripts, and to perform their own plays. After the study, Chang found that after the creative drama project, students could significantly improve their English speaking performance, enhance their learning motivation and interests, and develop their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Likewise, Avila (2015) introduced a pedagogical intervention including nine creative activities designed to improve the oral and written production of 11 EFL students in the classroom, especially those who have shown a lack of interest or attention. After the study, Avila found that all the EFL students responded to the methods positively and were motivated to participate in different oral and written activities. Therefore, creativity not only helps EFL students develop their fluency in both oral and written production but also improves their understanding of English grammar and structure.

2.2.2 Reflectivity

Reflectivity is the ability to self-evaluate feeling, decision, and understanding of making progress on learning. According to Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), reflection would make learners mentally revisit their experiences, realize the event, and evaluate what they have learnt. Learners can concentrate and actively participate in their learning development through reflection. Davis and Linn (2000) indicated that the process of reflection on ideas could inspire students to revisit, test, and reformulate the links and connections among their ideas. Thus, reflection can help facilitate students' learning processes, monitor their learning progress, and re-evaluate their original ideas. In order to improve their learning, EFL students must reflect on their perceptions in the learning process in which they can gain awareness of their learning and control over their learning progress. Similarly, in developing metacognitive reflection, students who gradually understand their learning roles during the reflection time can have a profound insight into their thinking process in terms of their characteristics, attitudes, and responsibilities (Campbell, Campbell, & Dickinson, 2002). Due to the ability to self-reflect on ideas, students can raise their metacognitive awareness of learning, so as to possess a sense of responsibility throughout their learning process.

2.2.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to effective learning that EFL students learn to take advantage of the study techniques to accelerate their learning process. Frye, McKinney, and Trimble (2007) proclaimed that it is necessary for students to learn to allocate limited time adaptively to learn English since learning involves spending considerable time and energy. Thus, EFL students should wisely arrange and manage their available time such as prioritizing the tasks or writing the to-do list on the calendar in order to learn English effectively. Moreover, Watkins, Carnell, and Lodge (2007) indicated that effective learning has four features, including (a) more available information, (b) the lifelong ability to learn and adapt because of constant changes, (c) the ability to enhance knowledge and to operate collaboratively, and (d) learning in different settings and with different relationships. To illustrate, EFL students need to utilize resources at hand, such as information technology tools, to find and select relevant information. Next, EFL students should be flexible to adapt to constant changes when they are learning. Thus, it is beneficial for EFL students to not only arrange their schedule and set their priority but also adjust their routines and study habits if necessary. Then EFL students need to enhance and transfer their knowledge, and construct meaningful information through collaborative discussions and interactions. Last, learning is increasingly taking place in different settings and relationships. In other words, EFL students need to figure out both the place where they are engrossed in studies and the people who they can learn better from.

2.2.4 Activeness

Activeness is a constant active participation and involvement into the learning process with great interests. Prince (2004) proposed two elements of active learning, including (a) introducing activities into the traditional lecture and (b) promoting student engagement. Through activities, students have many opportunities to keep themselves engaged. Abdullah, Bakar, and Mahbob (2012) suggested that active students were willing to participate in classroom activities to absorb and apply the skills and knowledge by sharing ideas and discussing issues cooperatively. By actively asking questions, giving their perspectives, and answering questions posed by the instructor or their fellow students, students can gain and construct a lot of information they need.

In fact, active learning methods include group projects with class participation, where the lecture material is taught through hands-on activities or demonstrations in

which the students participate directly and actively (Kvam, 2000). To achieve the purpose of active learning, students need to not only participate in a learning context but also cooperate with classmates. Johnson and Johnson (1975) suggested that students actively question and comment on concepts through cooperative learning because it helps create a dynamic learning environment. In other words, cooperative learning can be a form of active learning in which EFL students acquire knowledge through group interaction. In their study, Yoder and Hochevar (2005) examined the effect of active learning methods for 120 undergraduate students. After the study, Yoder and Hochevar found that all the students' learning outcomes were significantly better than those who received traditional lectures. Thus, the classroom activities must be designed to promote active learning and encourage thoughtful engagement for students.

2.2.5 Motivation

Motivation is the composite of efforts, desires for achievement, and positive attitude toward sustainable learning. Oxford and Shearin (1994) stated, "Motivation determines the extent of active, personal involvement in second language learning" (p.12). Likewise, Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) revealed that motivation was a pivotal factor for learners to be autonomous, so teachers endeavor to ensure students' motivation before teaching. Once EFL students' motivation to learn English is triggered, they will start to develop their independent learning skills and cultivate learner autonomy. Therefore, they are willing to persistently learn new information in their learning processes. In their study, Toni and Rostami (2012) investigated the relationship between motivation and English speaking performance for 59 EFL university students. After the study, they found that all the participants' performance in speaking English was significantly correlated with their level of motivation. Therefore, the higher learning motivation they have, the better they perform English speaking interests in the target language.

2.2.6. Research on the CREAM program

To improve EFL students' academic performance, it is vital to implement the CREAM program including creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation. As far as the CREAM program is concerned, Cottrell (2008) claimed that many EFL learners tended to show confidence to use their individual skills and apply their learning styles in their learning process. They are able to apply their imaginations to enrich their learning process when they are able to think creatively. In terms of profound

reflection, EFL learners are able to attend to their learning experiences, analyze, and evaluate their learning processes. Next, EFL learners are more likely to accommodate their priorities, state of mind, and resources to reach the maximum benefit through effective learning. To participate actively, EFL learners are likely to be engaged in a learning environment by doing the task for cultivating their English abilities. Last but not least, EFL learners tend to be aware of their own desired outcomes as well as keeping track of their learning goals in English performance.

Only a few researchers have implemented the CREAM program in the recent decade. In her study, Milad (2017) investigated the effect of the 18-week CREAM program on teaching performance for 19 tutors at Arab Open University. After the study, Milad found that the majority of the tutors had outstanding teaching performance in five dimensions of the CREAM program. Truc (2010) implemented a one-semester CREAM program for 48 university students in Vietnam. Truc uncovered that students' performance was enhanced after they carried out the classroom activities, such as making study plans, going on field trips, exchanging letters with peers, and self-evaluating their progress. In her study, Chi (2013) implemented the CREAM program in the course, The History of English Literature, for 120 university students in Vietnam. Chi found that all the students were highly engaged in the lesson and felt interested in English reading and writing by taking part in the classroom activities. Therefore, it was proved that the CREAM program helped EFL students participate in the classroom activities, increased their learning interests in English reading and writing, and improved their learning performance.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the CREAM program on English speaking for non-English majors in a university in southern Taiwan. First, the background of the subjects in this study are described. Second, the instruments are introduced. Third, the process of study procedure design and data collection is illustrated. Finally, both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods are explained.

3.1 Subjects

In this study, 80 non-English-major sophomores from I-Shou University were recruited. In order to compare the study result for students with or without treatments,

one class of 40 students was assigned as the experimental group (EG), and the other class with 40 students was assigned as the control group (CG). All the 80 subjects were from the two same intact classes, Oral-Aural Training in English, taught in their sophomore year. Due to experimental needs, all the 80 subjects with the basic level of English proficiency were divided into two classes. All the subjects were also taught by the same English teacher as the researcher in this study. Thus, the teacher bias can be avoided.

3.2 Instrumentation

To investigate the impact of the CREAM program on English speaking for non-English majors in a university in southern Taiwan, four instruments were employed before, during, and after the CREAM program including the English speaking test, two lesson plans, a questionnaire on the student responses to English speaking, and an interview form.

3.2.1 The English speaking test

Each subject's score of English speaking in the pretest and the post-test was measured and compared via the English speaking mock test of The General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) to assess the impact of the CREAM program on his or her English speaking. Thus, the test result of GEPT is valid and reliable so that it can authentically reflect and evaluate the general English proficiency of the test-takers. In addition, a pretest of English speaking was given to the students before the English instruction, and a post-test given after the CREAM program. In this study, the six-band scale adopted from the assessment criteria for English intermediate-level speaking test of GEPT was employed. The band score ranged from 0 to 5, depending on several indicators such as pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, grammar knowledge, speech rare, and intelligibility of communication. To obtain the total score, the researcher multiplied the band score by 20. Therefore, the full score is 100 points. Moreover, the length of the English speaking test is approximately 15 minutes. Fourteen questions of the English speaking test were divided into three types consisting of (a) reading aloud, (b) giving responses, and (c) picture description. To illustrate, students need to read a short paragraph, orally answer the questions, and then orally describe the pictures in English.

3.2.2 Two lesson plans

In order to compare the result for students with or without treatments, two lesson plans were implemented for the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG). For

the CG, the teacher introduced and clarified new vocabulary via first language translation in order to help the CG understand the meaning of the unknown words. Then the English speaking skills were taught and demonstrated. After that, the teacher taught the CG not only how to pronounce English words accurately but also how to speak English sentences fluently. Then he guided the CG to practice speaking English sentences by using different types of drills. Then the CG was asked to translate a spoken conversation between English and Chinese. The CG also needed to either practice various vowel and consonant sounds by pronouncing English words or practice different intonation and stress by speaking English sentences. Finally, the teacher had the CG work in pairs to discuss and compare their answers with their classmates'. After the discussion, the teacher elicited the CG's answers, reviewed the answers with the entire class, and displayed the correct answers on the blackboard. The CG needed to produce oral messages accurately by applying English grammatical rules. Then the teacher reviewed the lesson and checked for the CG' understanding by implementing the follow-up activities in the textbook.

As for the EG, on the other hand, a lesson plan was designed on the basis of the CREAM program. Specifically, the teacher taught them based on the five dimensions, and the CREAM program was implemented throughout each lesson. First, regarding creativity, the teacher encouraged the EG to create their own dialogue based on different situations. He introduced new English vocabulary by using visual aids to improve the EG's creative thinking. The EG was asked to brainstorm and creatively answer the open-ended questions in spoken English. Then he instructed the EG to rephrase the dialogue to develop their creative thinking. Second, concerning reflectivity, the teacher encouraged the EG to keep a learning journal for reflective evaluation. The EG was required to fill out the online self-assessment questionnaire after each lesson for profound reflection. After that, the EG needed to orally convey their learning experiences for reflection. Third, with regard to effectiveness, the teacher had the EG make a study schedule for effective learning in the first week of the semester. Then he used instructional tools such as mobile games to facilitate the EG's speaking process for effective learning. As for activeness, he encouraged group discussion for the EG's active participation. The EG worked in a pair on dialogue exercises to actively practice speaking English. After that, the teacher had the EG role-play the conversation to the class. Finally, for motivation, the teacher used various game-based activities to motivate the EG to speak in public confidently. Also, he

used a scoreboard to motivate the EG to actively answer open-ended questions. Last but not least, the teacher told the EG the importance of learning to speak English in order to increase their intrinsic motivation for effective learning.

3.2.3 A questionnaire

To examine the EG's and the CG's responses to English speaking performance before and after the study, a questionnaire on the student responses to English speaking was designed. The questionnaire was comprised of 11 items. Each item based on the five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree" to "strongly disagree" was designed to examine subjects' responses to English speaking.

3.2.4 An interview form

An interview form was applied to collect more in-depth information about the EG subjects' responses to the CREAM program. The interview form is composed of six questions. The first question concerns the EG's preference of the CREAM program. The other five questions seek to get insights into the EG subjects' responses to the five dimensions of the CREAM program including creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation. All of the subjects' responses were recorded by a digital voice recorder and then transcribed into electronic files by the researcher. After transcribing, the researcher sampled some salient responses for further data analysis.

3.3 Study Procedure

The researcher used triangulation to collect the data, including the English speaking test, a questionnaire, and a semi-structured oral interview. During the process of quantitative data collection, the English speaking test was used before and after the CREAM program to measure the subjects' English speaking scores. Then a questionnaire was applied to investigate the EG's and the CG's responses to English speaking performance before and after the English instruction. After collecting the quantitative data, a semi-structured interview technique was administered to examine the subjects' in-depth perspectives on the five dimensions of the CREAM program in terms of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation.

In terms of the similar instruction, the EG and the CG were required to take the pretest of English speaking as well as to answer the questionnaire before the study. In the first week, the teacher introduced the schedule, requirement, and scoring criteria about

the course to both groups of students. However, with an emphasis of the five dimensions including creativeness, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation, the EG was informed that they received the CREAM program on English speaking, but the CG received traditional instruction such as grammar translation method and audiolingual method. At the end of the study, the EG and the CG were requested to not only take the post-test in English speaking but also fill out the questionnaire, and then 25 of the EG were randomly chosen to be interviewed.

In the study procedure for the CG, English speaking was instructed with a focus on the linguistic components such as vocabulary and grammatical rules for English speaking. The teacher introduced new English vocabulary via first language translation at first. The teacher taught and demonstrated English speaking skills. Then the CG was required to practice pronouncing words and speaking sentences through various drills. After that, the CG was asked to read the dialogue aloud and role-play the conversation, and the CG was required to produce English messages by using short-answer questions. Finally, the CG was instructed to review the lessons and check for their understanding of the lessons.

Moreover, as for the study procedure for the EG, the CREAM program was employed in the present study. To make the EG's learning more effective, they were required to make a study schedule in the first class in which they needed to set a clear goal, prioritize the weekly routines, and arrange an effective schedule. Therefore, the study syllabus enabled students to not only pursue what they were eager to learn but also set their own goals aimed at their improvement of English speaking. Moreover, visual aids were used to teach new English vocabulary, and the EG was asked to brainstorm at the beginning of each lesson for creative thinking. Then the teacher encouraged group discussion in English for active participation in which the EG creatively rephrased the dialogue and practice speaking in class. In addition, the teacher used mobile games to motivate students' English speaking for effective learning outcome. Also, a scoreboard was used to motivate students to actively answer English speaking questions. Furthermore, an online self-assessment questionnaire was provided at the end of each lesson. Students had more opportunities to reflect what they have already learned and what kind of goals they have already achieved anywhere and anytime. Thus, they can take advantage of their available time to respond due to convenient access to digital devices.

3.4 Data analysis

The collected data for this study were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative analysis, the EG and the CG subjects' English speaking performance on the GEPT tests and their responses to the questionnaires were computed by SPSS 20. To begin with, the independent sample *t*-test was applied to compare the EG and CG subjects' English speaking scores before and after the English instruction. In addition, the independent sample *t*-test was employed to compare the EG and CG subjects' responses to English speaking performance after the English instruction. On the other hand, as for the qualitative analysis, the EG subjects' responses to the five dimensions of the CREAM program were collected. Based on the EG subjects' responses, the researcher sampled, compared, and analyzed the qualitative data for content analysis so as to support the quantitative data analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

The collected data were scrutinized and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. To begin with, the CG's and the EG's English speaking scores before and after the English instruction were computed and analyzed. Next, the CG's and the EG's responses to their English speaking performance after the English instruction were compared. Finally, the EG's responses to the five dimensions of the CREAM program were discussed.

4.1 Comparison of the CG's and the EG's English Speaking Scores

To compare the English speaking scores between the CG and the EG before and after the English instruction, an independent sample *t*-test was administered. The statistical results of comparison of the CG's and EG's English speaking scores before and after the English instruction are presented in Table 1.

As indicated in Table 1, the finding from the independent sample *t*-test shows that there is no significant difference between the English speaking scores of the CG and the EG's subjects before the English instruction. To be specific, the result of an independent sample *t*-test reveals that the overall English speaking scores of the CG is equivalent to that of the EG before the English instruction because the p-value is more than .05 (t = -

1.11, p = .27 > .05), indicating that the CG and the EG subjects have similar English speaking scores before the English instruction.

Table 1 *Comparison of the CG's and the EG's English Speaking Scores before and after the English Instruction*

Test	Group	N	M	SD	*t*	*p*
Pretest	CG	40	66.13	6.04	-1.11	.27
	EG	40	67.75	6.98		
Post-test	CG	40	69.38	6.62	-6.23	.00*
	EG	40	77.88	5.53		

Note. *p < .05, N = Number, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

In contrast, there is a significant difference between the CG and the EG's post-test scores of English speaking because the p-value is less than .05 (t = -6.23, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG's post-test is higher than that of the CG's post-test (77.88 > 69.38), suggesting that the EG outperformed the CG in the overall English speaking scores after the CREAM program. From the statistical result above, it is evident that the EG who were taught to speak English in the CREAM program had better performance in English speaking than the CG. Furthermore, the results support Truc's (2010) study finding, indicating that students had better performance because the CREAM program assisted them to develop their creative thinking to speak English, arouse their reflection to keep track of their speaking progress, promote effective learning to speak English, enhance their active participation in the speaking class, and trigger their learning motivation to speak English. Therefore, the application of the CREAM program was corroborated to be more effective for the EG subjects' improvement in English speaking performance than the English instruction for the CG's improvement.

4.2 Comparison of the CG's and the EG's Responses to English Speaking

To compare the differences between the CG's and the EG's responses to English speaking performance after the English instruction, the independent sample t-test was applied. The statistical results are presented in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, there are 11

significant differences in the CG's and the EG's responses to Items 1 to 11 because the p-values of these items are lower than .05.

Table 2 *Comparison of the CG's and the EG's Responses to English Speaking Performance after the English Instruction*

Item	Group	N	M	SD	*t*	*p*
1. I like to speak English chatting with others on the Internet.	CG	40	2.70	.88	-3.52	.00*
	EG	40	3.33	.69		
2. I like to speak English chatting with others face-to-face without the Internet.	CG	40	2.58	.87	-4.18	.00*
	EG	40	3.28	.60		
3. When I speak English, I can use different intonations.	CG	40	2.98	1.03	-3.78	.00*
	EG	40	3.70	.65		
4. When I speak English, I can use different wordings based on various situations.	CG	40	2.78	1.03	-4.47	.00*
	EG	40	3.63	.63		
5. When I speak English, I can use discourse markers such as oh, uh, well, and OK based on various situations.	CG	40	3.30	1.04	-3.15	.00*
	EG	40	3.95	.78		
6. When I speak English, I can speak with using elisions such as speaking 'wanna' instead of 'want to.'	CG	40	2.58	.90	-6.44	.00*
	EG	40	3.73	.68		
7. When I speak English, I can speak with connected speech such as speaking 'bla-coffee' instead of 'black coffee.'	CG	40	2.68	.89	-5.73	.00*
	EG	40	3.68	.66		
8. When I speak English, I can fluently express my opinions.	CG	40	2.58	.87	-5.23	.00*
	EG	40	3.45	.60		

9. When I speak English, I can use appropriate vocabulary.	CG	40	2.93	.94	-4.07	.00*
	EG	40	3.63	.54		
10. When I speak English, I can use complex sentence structures such as phrases or relative clauses.	CG	40	2.73	1.18	-2.82	.00*
	EG	40	3.33	.66		
11. When I speak English, I can summarize the main ideas of previous utterance.	CG	40	3.00	1.04	-2.42	.02*
	EG	40	3.45	.55		

Note. *p < .05, N = Number, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

To be specific, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 1 because the p-value is less than .05 (t = -3.52, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG responses to Item 1 is higher than that of the CG (3.33 > 2.70), which indicates that the EG hold more positive interests toward English speaking performance and are more inclined to speak English chatting with others on the internet more than the CG after the CREAM program. In addition, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 2 because the p-value is less than .05 (t = -4.18, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 2 is higher than that of the CG (3.28 > 2.58), which reveals that the EG shows more interests and are more willing to speak English face-to-face than the CG. This result supports Mirsane and Khabiri's (2016) study finding that EFL students showed more willingness to speak English for communication after the English instruction.

Moreover, the quantitative study findings can be approved by the qualitative excerpts of the student responses to their overall English speaking performance. These excerpts were translated from Chinese into English as follows:

> *I was willing to speak English and was glad to participate in class because the CREAM program provided me with multifaceted creative and interesting classroom activities.* (EG Student 4)

> *I think that the CREAM program effectively helped improve my English speaking performance because I was instructed to learn to speak English based on different intriguing tools and materials for learning.* (EG Student 10)

As a result, the EG students significantly outperformed the CG students. It is possible to conclude that the EG's significant improvement resulted from the CREAM program which helped pique the EG students' interests and motivation to learn to speak English.

In addition, regarding the CG and the EG responses to their English speaking performance in Items 3 to 11, the EG shows significant differences in student responses to all nine items against the CG. To be specific, there is a significant difference in the student responses between the CG and the EG to Item 3 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -3.78, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG responses to Item 3 is higher than that of the CG (3.70 > 2.98), showing that the EG are more likely to speak English with different intonations than the CG. This result confirms James's (1979) finding that students who received the English instruction were able to speak English with different intonations in discourse. Similarly, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 4 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -4.47, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG responses to Item 4 is higher than that of the CG (3.63 > 2.78), implying that the EG students are more likely to speak English with different wordings based on various situations than the CG. In addition, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 5 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -3.15, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 5 is higher than that of the CG (3.95 > 3.30), indicating that the EG is more prone to speaking English with various discourse markers based on different situations than the CG students. The finding supports Asl and Moradinejad's (2016) study finding that students who received the English instruction had better English speaking performance in terms of appropriate and frequent use of English discourse markers. Therefore, these findings suggest that the English instruction can help students acquire the use of English discourse markers and thus improve their English speaking performance.

Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 6 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -6.44, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 6 is higher than that of the CG (3.73 > 2.58), showing

that the EG is more able to speak English with the use of elisions than the CG students. In addition, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 7 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -5.73, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the responses of the EG to Item 7 is higher than that of the CG (3.68 > 2.68), suggesting that the EG is more likely to speak English with connected speech than the CG. The study results also correspond to Underwood and Wallace's (2012) discovery that the English instruction can render opportunities to develop students' English speaking and help facilitate their micro-skills of English speaking, such as using elision and connected speech. Thus, the English instruction can help improve students' English speaking fluency.

In addition, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 8 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -5.23, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 8 is higher than that of the CG (3.45 > 2.58), revealing that the EG students are more likely to express their opinions in English than the CG students. The result also corresponds to Fajariyah's (2009) study finding that after the English instruction, students could improve their English speaking proficiency in terms of the ability to orally answer the teacher's questions and to orally express their thoughts in English clearly. Moreover, the findings can be approved by the qualitative excerpts of the student responses to their overall English speaking performance:

> *My English speaking performance was improved because I had many opportunities to practice speaking English and use English speaking to express my thoughts clearly in the classroom*. (EG Student 2)

> *The CREAM program enhanced my English speaking performance because I could produce English messages accurately and answer several open-ended questions fluently in spoken English.* (EG Student 8)

This result confirms Tahir's (2015) finding that the English instruction helped enhance students' learning interests and improved their speaking fluency. Thus, the EG students spoke English expressively and bravely without unnatural pauses and deliberate halting.

Additionally, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 9 because the *p*-value is lower than .05 (t = -4.07, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score

of the EG responses to Item 9 is higher than that of the CG (3.63 > 2.93), indicating that the EG students find it easier to speak English with the use of accurate and appropriate vocabulary. The result corresponds to Jatmiko's (2017) finding that students could improve their speaking ability in terms of fluency, vocabulary, and content, after the treatment of the English instruction. In addition, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 10 because the *p*-value is less than .05 (t = -2.82, p = .00 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 10 is higher than that of the CG (3.33 > 2.73), which reveals that the EG students are more inclined to speak English with using complex sentence structures such as relative clauses than the CG students. The result also corresponds to Moncada's (2007) notion that the English instruction could help students build complex utterances and apply speaking strategies to make communication flow. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 11 because the *p*-value is lower than .05 (t = - 2.42, p = .02 < .05). Moreover, the mean score of the EG student responses to Item 11 is higher than that of the CG (3.45 > 3.00), indicating that the EG students find it easy to not only organize the previous utterances but also speak English to summarize the main ideas than the CG students. Accordingly, all nine results prove that the EG significantly outperformed the CG, implying that after the CREAM program, the EG students not only have more learning interests in speaking English but also have better English speaking performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, and speech production than the CG students.

4.3 The EG's Responses to the CREAM Program

To examine the EG's responses to the CREAM program in terms of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation, an interview was applied.

4.3.1 The EG's responses to creativity

Twenty out of 25 (80%) participants expressed that they could feel about the development of creativity in their learning in the CREAM program because they were able to exert their creativity to produce several English oral messages fluently. To demonstrate more explicitly, participant #1 expressed that "…we were required to creatively think over some open-ended questions and orally answer the questions in English." Also, participant #11 described that "… in the classroom, we were trained to creatively rephrase the dialogue and role-play the conversation in pairs or groups."

Moreover, participant #19 expressed that "… the CREAM program was effective for learning to speak English because we were instructed to use different vocabulary to reformulate an English spoken utterance in the classroom." Based on the excerpts above, the result confirmed Chang's (2005) findings that by creative teaching, students could improve their English speaking performance, enhance their learning motivation and interests, and develop their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Consequently, it can be concluded that creativity could foster EFL students' original thinking, increase their engagement in the learning process, and trigger their learning motivation.

4.3.2 The EG's responses to reflectivity

Twenty-one out of 25 (84%) participants claimed that the CREAM program was helpful because it enabled them to autonomously monitor, reflect, and evaluate their learning process. To be specific, participant #7 mentioned that "… I was able to not only reflect on the important points of each lesson again by filling out the online self-assessment questionnaire but also review the contents again while discovering the part that I was not acquainted with." Moreover, participant #17 described that "… after class, I often re-examined my strength and weakness in the English speaking class, and then I would endeavor to improve my English speaking performance." According to the excerpts above, the result supported Boud, Keogh, and Walker's (1985) notion that reflection would make learners revisit, associate their experiences with what they have learned, and evaluate it. In other words, reflection could help facilitate EFL students' learning processes, monitor their learning progress, and re-evaluate their ideas. Accordingly, EFL students were able to keep track of their learning process and outcomes, and thus they would learn to speak English spontaneously.

4.3.3 The EG's responses to effectiveness

All participants acknowledged that the implementation of the CREAM program helped increase the effectiveness of their learning in the English speaking class because they could arrange for their schedules in order and utilize many tools to learn to speak English effectively. To illustrate, participant #4 responded that "… I was able to arrange my study time wisely and prioritize the tasks in the CREAM program, so I could spend my available time learning to speak English effectively." Also, participant #15 expressed that "… through the CREAM program, I took advantage of some e-learning tools to facilitate my thinking process, and then I could orally answer questions in English in class.

Thus, I could effectively improve my English speaking performance." Furthermore, participant #24 described that "… the CREAM program enhanced my learning effectiveness because mobile games and applications with educational purposes were used to motivate my English speaking process for effective learning outcome." Based on the excerpts above, the research results conformed to Frye, McKinney, and Trimble's (2007) notion that it is necessary for students to learn to allocate limited time adaptively to learn English since learning involves spending considerable time and energy. Thus, EFL students could wisely arrange and manage their available time such as prioritizing the tasks or writing the to-do list on the calendar for effective learning.

4.3.4 The EG's responses to activeness

Eighteen out of 25 (72%) participants responded that they could enhance their activeness on their learning in the CREAM program because they were willing to actively answer questions, talk to the teacher, and preview the textbook in advance. To exemplify, participant #9 expressed that "… in the CREAM program, I concentrated on the English dialogue carefully and actively answer the questions in English, which was conducive to my English speaking performance as well as critical thinking." Moreover, participant #20 responded that "… the majority of the EFL students were too shy to speak English in class. I found that the CREAM program was helpful because it encouraged me to actively express my thoughts while speaking English." Furthermore, participant #25 expressed that "… in the CREAM program, I was allowed to speak English out loud in order to exchange my ideas with my classmates in class, so I could get a chance to exercise my English speaking skills and actively participate in class discussions." According to the excerpts above, the results conformed to Abdullah, Bakar, and Mahbob's (2012) notion that when students were able to actively engage themselves in English learning, they would participate in class activities to absorb, seek, and apply the skill and knowledge by sharing ideas and discussing issues cooperatively in the classroom. Therefore, EFL students could take the initiative in learning English, and thus they would learn to speak English actively in their daily life.

4.3.4 The EG's responses to motivation

Twenty-four out of 25 (96%) participants proclaimed that the CREAM program was effective for learning because it could boost their learning motivation to speak English in the classroom. To instantiate, participant #7 described that "… in the CREAM program,

I was able to realize the importance and usefulness of English speaking performance to my future career, so I endeavored to improve my ability to speak English." Likewise, participant #12 mentioned that "… I had participated in several classroom activities to hone my English speaking such as using English to introduce myself in the mock interview, and then I realized that I had to study English hard in order to apply for my dream job." Moreover, participant #18 expressed that "… I was more interested in learning to speak English than before because I was able to earn extra points for individual participation and achieve a good grade in class." Furthermore, participant #23 mentioned that "… in the CREAM program, I kept on learning to speak because I felt a sense of joy and achievement in the learning process." Based on the excerpts above, the research result corresponded to Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan's (2002) notion that motivation was a pivotal factor for learners to be autonomous. In other words, once EFL students' motivation to learn English is triggered, they will start to develop their independent learning skills as well as cultivating learner autonomy. As a consequence, EFL students would persist in learning English ceaselessly in the long run.

5. Conclusion

Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, the major findings of the present study in accordance with three research questions are summarized as follows. To begin with, there is a significant difference between the CG's and the EG's English speaking scores after the English instruction. This result suggests that students taught with the CREAM program performed better than those taught with traditional English instruction. Accordingly, it is inferred that the CREAM program has the potential to promote students' English speaking performance. Second, there are 11 significant differences in the CG's and the EG's responses to English speaking performance after the English instruction. The results show that most of the EG students perceived that they had better improvement in overall English speaking performance than the CG students after the CREAM program. Finally, there are many EG's positive responses to the five dimensions of the CREAM program in terms of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation. To begin with, after the CREAM program, most of the EG could not only exert their creativity to produce several English oral messages fluently but also think about several possible solutions to the problems. Moreover, in terms of reflectivity, most of the EG

could examine their problems when they made any mistakes in their learning process. In addition, pertaining to effectiveness, the majority of the EG could write their to-do lists on their calendar to make a thorough plan and arrange for their schedules in order. Besides, concerning activeness, most of the EG could actively answer questions, talk to teachers in class, and record what they had learned in class for further review. Last, regarding motivation, most of the EG could study hard in order to find a good job in the future, seek for scholarship, get more points for class participation for a higher ranking in class.

Based on the study results, three pedagogical implications are provided. First, EFL teachers can incorporate the five dimensions of the CREAM program in terms of creativity, reflectivity, effectiveness, activeness, and motivation, into the English speaking program in universities. From the study findings, the English speaking performance of the EG was superior to that of the CG after the CREAM program. As a consequence, EFL teachers who aim at reinforcing English teaching in their regular English speaking curriculum can apply the CREAM program. Second, EFL teachers should help students produce fluent speech in English. On the one hand, teachers can help students learn how to produce chunks of language and encourage students to orally express their ideas in English. On the other hand, teachers can help students familiarize with English phonetic variation by teaching how words are reduced in spontaneous speech. Finally, publishers should use a lot of enticing video clips or sitcoms in students' English speaking materials. Accordingly, the publisher should choose appealing themes with authentic audiovisual materials so that students can be motivated to speak English.

On the basis of the research findings from the present study, three suggestions for the further study are made. First, researchers can recruit students from different backgrounds to participate in the CREAM program. The subjects in the study were recruited from a private university in southern Taiwan, so the sample size in this study may not be large enough to reach the generalizability. Second, relevant research on the impact of the CREAM program on English speaking in Taiwan is scarcely found. It is suggested that researchers can incorporate the CREAM program with English speaking instruction in different universities in Taiwan. Last, since the present study aimed to explore the CG's and EG's overall English speaking performance, researchers can analyze the progress of the students' English speaking performance in terms of macro-skills such as interaction management skills and micro-skills such as producing stress patterns,

rhythmic structure, and intonation. The results can provide paramount evidence not only for students' English speaking improvements but also for the teachers' objective assessment of students' English speaking performance.

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