



## The Effects of Activities Facilitated by Proficient English Speakers on Thai EFL Students' Communicative Competence

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Received: 30 June 2025 Revised: 6 July 2025 Accepted: 7 July 2025

### Abstract

This research consisted of purposes which were 1. to Investigate the effects of proficient English speaker-facilitated activities on students' perceived development in listening skills 2. to Examine the effects of proficient English speaker-facilitated activities on students' perceived development in speaking skills and 3. Assess their satisfaction towards the activity after the 12-week session. A mixed-methods design was employed, including questionnaires, focus group interviews, and observation notes. Participants ( $n = 50$ ) engaged in weekly communicative tasks with five proficient English speakers (both native and non-native). Then the data was analyzed using statistics consisting of means, standard deviations and frequency distributions for quantitative data, while qualitative data from interviews and observation notes were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights. The research results found excellent perceived improvement in listening skills ( $\bar{x} = 4.23$ ) and good development in speaking skills ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ), with the greatest gains in vocabulary recognition and willingness to communicate. The participants were satisfied with the program ( $\bar{x} = 4.55$ ), especially in relation to the facilitators' friendliness and the value of participation. The focus group interview revealed increased confidence, enhanced cultural awareness, and active peer collaboration. However, challenges remained in grammar accuracy and vocabulary range.

**Keywords:** Communication Skills, Proficient English Speakers, Thai EFL Learners

### Introduction

To date, daily communication in English remains an obstacle for learners in the EFL context even though they can easily access to the English language on various online social media platforms. Therefore, developing communicative competence in English is of importance as it forms the strong foundation of daily



communication. However, despite over a decade of formal instruction, many learners achieve a proficiency level of only A2 on the CEFR scale (Piamsai, 2023). Research indicates that this limited proficiency derives primarily from two obstacles: a lack of opportunities for authentic English practice and a pedagogical focus on grammar-translation methods within the classroom (Punyaporn and Soontornwipast, 2022). For the former issue, since Thailand is a country where English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL), learners encounter English input almost only within the classroom; outside of it, Thai is the primary language of communication (Darasawang, 2007). For the latter, the teaching approach in many areas, as mentioned earlier, still relies on grammar-translation methods, where teachers read English words or sentences and provide direct Thai translations, leaving students with scarce opportunities to use English for actual communication (Noom-ura, 2013). Consequently, students frequently exhibit issues with grammatical accuracy, a limited vocabulary range, and a lack of speaking confidence (Chansanam et al., 2024), which limits their ability to communicate effectively in an era where English is important for regional participation in areas such as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

In fact, based on our classroom observations, as university English lecturers with over 10 years of experience, the major difficulties in students' listening and speaking competency are rooted in psychological barriers, rather than linguistic competence itself (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and so on). Beyond linguistic deficits, the core difficulties are often rooted in psychological barriers. Research consistently identifies that many, if not all, Thai learners exhibit high communication apprehension, a fear of making mistakes, and classroom shyness as significant factors that inhibit their willingness to speak (Akkakoson, 2016; Tien, 2017). Therefore, this study asserts that an effective pedagogical intervention must focus not only on linguistic knowledge but also on these critical affective factors.

To address the issues vis-a-vis communicative competence mentioned above, Krashen's Monitor Model (1982) has been emphasized, specifically the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. It is believed that second language learners acquired a target language most effectively only when they understood the message or by receiving "comprehensible input". If the learners cannot understand the content of the communication, no acquisition will occur. Research has shown that tailoring content to be appropriate for the learners' level can develop English proficiency across all language skills, including listening and speaking (see Kaewthammanukul, 2022; Pangua et al., 2023) and reading and writing (see Yodsawai, 2022; Watanasin, 2014).

However, comprehensible input alone may not be enough for L2 learners to acquire the second language if the 'affective filter', a metaphorical concept referring to factors such as motivation, attitude, self-confidence, and anxiety, prevents that input from being processed (Gass et al., 2013). Therefore, designing a classroom that



is sensitive to learners' emotional states is very important because it can create a safe and supportive space that reduces students' anxiety and builds motivation can lower this affective filter, which results in a greater confidence and higher learning efficacy (Li and Zhou, 2023).

Complementing Krashen's Input and Affective Filter hypotheses, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis explains that L2 learners learn a language when they engage in conversations with other people. In other words, learners tend to learn new words and vocabulary from interlocutors and attempt to communicate to get the message across, which is under a process known as 'negotiation for meaning'. (Long, 1996; Gass and Selinker, 2008). This interaction can occur between a non-proficient and another non-proficient speaker, a non-proficient and a proficient speaker, or even two proficient speakers. Alberth (2023) indicated that participants who interacted with a native speaker of English ended up having increased confidence in their English after the sessions. According to a recent study conducted in Vietnam by Tran and colleagues (2022), students who participated in online sessions with proficient English speakers improved their speaking and listening skills as well as their engagement levels in learning English. This shows that, be it formal or informal interactions, talking with fluent English speakers helps improve their learning and confidence in learning English.

According to the issues regarding Thai learners' communicative competence discussed above, this research intended to improve a group of Thai undergraduate students in Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University by using the English speaking and listening skills training led by fluent speakers of English as facilitators to help students overcome affective domain, e.g., shyness, a fear of making mistakes, speaking anxiety, etc. With the incorporation of comprehensible input and affective filter, together with the interaction hypotheses, it is worth exploring to see whether the grounded activity can improve the low-to-intermediate proficient Thai EFL students.

### The Purposes

1. To investigate the effects of proficient English speaker-facilitated activities on students' perceived development in listening skills.
2. To examine the effects of proficient English speaker-facilitated activities on students' perceived development in speaking skills.
3. To assess students' satisfaction with and attitudes towards the proficient English speaker-facilitated communication activities.

## Literature Review

### 1. The Monitor Model

One of the most influential concepts in SLA is of Steven Krashen. In the 1970s, Krashen proposed the Monitor Model consisting of 5 hypotheses about how language is acquired. Firstly, based on the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, language can be either subconsciously acquired or consciously learned similar to how infants acquire their first language. This acquisition process directly impacts the communicative competence and meaning-making aspects. On the other hand, learning is the process that occurs consciously, mostly through formal education. The focus of learning is to master grammar and vocabulary, thereby creating knowledge of form (structure of a language) rather than natural communication (Krashen, 1982).

The Monitor Hypothesis, one of Stephen Krashen's ideas about how we learn languages, explains how two parts of the brain work differently during learning. The acquired system handles such natural speech as when you are speaking without overthinking. But the learned knowledge serves as a "monitor" or editor that learners can use to check and correct their language output, but only under specific conditions: when learners have sufficient time, are focused on form, and know the relevant rules (Sheng, 2017). The Natural Order Hypothesis explains that humans tend to pick up grammar rules in a certain pattern when learning a new language. Some rules come early, almost without effort, while others take longer to sink in. It is not a random phenomenon. For example, someone might start using "he's playing" or "they're talking" before they get the hang of adding -s to verbs like "she runs."

Krashen's Input Hypothesis is a foundational concept in language learning and for this study, asserting that second language learners acquire language only when they understand the message. If the content being listened to or read is beyond the learner's current capabilities, no comprehension or acquisition can occur (Krashen, 1982, 1985). Therefore, for learning to take place, the input must be comprehensible. Krashen famously proposed that the optimal level of input should be just one step beyond the learner's current stage of linguistic competence. This is the origin of his well-known formula,  $i+1$ , where 'i' represents the learner's current language level, and '+1' signifies content that is just one level more advanced (Krashen, 1985; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Another concept crucial for language acquisition is the Affective Filter Hypothesis. This hypothesis describes the relationship between emotional (or 'affective') factors and the process of second language acquisition. It explains that affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence play a significant role in language learning and that acquisition is better facilitated in environments with low anxiety (Krashen, 1982). Whenever a learner is in a defensive state with high anxiety or low self-confidence, the affective filter "rises,"



acting as a barrier that prevents comprehensible input from being processed for acquisition. In contrast, if a learner is in a supportive environment conducive to language learning, the filter is "lowered," which makes the learner more receptive to the input and allows for more effective acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Gass et al., 2013).

Research showed that designing lesson plans based on the comprehensible input (i+1) principle can enhance students' comprehension and also increase learners' confidence, motivation, and so on, as it lower the affective filter while studying. For example, Namaziandost et al. (2019) conducted a three-month experimental study with learners who participated in reading activities based on the i+1 principle. The study found that participants in the experimental group performed better in reading comprehension and most importantly with higher motivation. Similarly, Keshmirshekan (2019) investigated the effects of Krashen's Input Hypothesis effects on reading comprehension and reading motivation by comparing i+1 versus i-1 groups. The results showed that learners who received reading passages slightly above their current level showed superior reading comprehension performance and higher motivation toward reading in English.

## 2. The Interaction Hypothesis

According to Michael Long, who developed the Interaction hypothesis in 1981, learners acquire language most effectively not just through exposure to comprehensible input, but through active engagement in face-to-face communication where misunderstandings are resolved collaboratively. In other words, when problems in communication occur, speakers (and listeners) change their input and output so they can better understand each other; this creates the best conditions for language learning. This process of negotiation also provides learners with focused language input and an opportunity to test their developing language system.

Lesson plans or activities should be developed to improve learners' English communicative competence by encouraging them to practice interactive task within the class instead of listening one-sidedly to the teacher without any interaction. Huang, Lu, and Ou (2024) proposed that teachers should facilitate authentic interactions (both peer-to-peer and teacher-student) to optimize language input and output.

## 3. Factors Affecting Thai Students Learning English

Thai students learning English face particular challenges connected to language, psychology and environment. Akkakoson (2016) in her research identified the following problems: classroom management problems, few opportunities to use the language, fear of making mistakes, and negative attitudes to English as the main factors restricting speaking skill development. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) identified these factors into three areas; Language factors (Vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar), Psychological factors (anxiety, shyness,



motivation, fear of mistakes) and Environmental factors (feedback from teachers, reactions from peers, speaking topics).

The research examining specifically Thai contexts identifies continuing patterns of communication fear and limited real language exposure. For example, Noom-ura (2013) states that Thai students often lacked confidence in their English abilities because they did not get enough practice opportunities, and the teachers focused too much on grammatical accuracy, rather than the fluency of communication. This is consistent with wider findings that suggest that traditional teaching approaches in Thailand continue to preference form over meaning, leading to students just knowing all the theory, but do not have any ability to practice.

#### **4. Proficient English Speakers in Language Learning**

When it comes to the term 'proficient', the researchers have reviewed literature regarding the oral proficiency and found that it refers to those, whether it is native English speakers or non-native English speakers, who possess high fluency in speaking can be regarded as a proficiency speaker of English (Fahlström, 2022). Not just that, Ellis (1997 as cited in Azkiyah et al., 2023) argues that proficient speakers need linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic knowledge to be considered as someone with overall proficiency in a language. It can be concluded that proficient speakers of English are someone who can use English language accurately, fluently, and appropriately regardless of where they are from.

The role of proficient English speakers in helping language learning has received more attention in recent research. Studies comparing the effectiveness of native speakers versus highly proficient non-native English speakers in language teaching show interesting findings. Ghane and Razmi (2023) found that students taught by native English speakers showed better fluency and word complexity, while those taught by highly proficient non-native speakers showed greater accuracy in grammar use. This suggests that both native and proficient non-native speakers offer different advantages for different aspects of language development.

Research on social interaction with proficient English speakers shows multiple benefits for language learning. Wang (2014) found that such interactions not only encourage learners to engage with the target language but also develop language skills, communication abilities, and interest in language learning. Online conversation projects pairing students with volunteer proficient English speakers have shown particular promise, improving not only speaking and listening skills but also motivation and confidence in English use (Tran et al., 2024)

#### **5. Willingness to Communicate**

The Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model was developed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) with a belief that WTC refers to learners' readiness for commerce communication when chance presents itself. The WTC model



is a complex phenomenon and is influenced by the learners' learning experience (i.e. language confidence, communication anxiety, motivation) among a range of other factors. Recent studies have indicated the effectiveness of technology based oral tasks to promote WTC in a virtual classroom environment (Chaisiri, 2023) and the relationship between how beginner and proficient English speaker interact is key when we are talking about Thai learners who have often high levels of communication anxiety. The practice will enable learners to communicate with proficient speakers in either a supportive or non-judged manner a reduce emotional barriers while experiencing language models that can foster WTC when they are presented in usefulness for these experiences in a supportive non-judgmental way that led learners to the new world of language use without educational or emotional barriers.

### Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to evaluate students' perceived development in communication skills and satisfaction levels of the intervention after a 12-week session.

**1. Population and Participants:** The population of this study are 490 English major students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University across all academic levels, from first year to fourth year. A group of 50 students who voluntarily participated in the 12-week English communication skills development program was chosen as the sample. Most of the sample were female ( $n = 35$ ), while the remaining participants were male or chose not to identify their gender. The majority of the participants were in their third year ( $n = 22$ ), with 8 students in the first year, 6 in the second year, and 14 in the fourth year. The reason for the greatest number of third-year students was likely due to their focus on preparing for future employment in the local workforce. Most of the respondents ( $n = 40$ , 80%) had prior experience interacting with proficient English speakers, which suggests a higher level of motivation to improve their communication skills. The remaining 10 participants had no such prior experience, thereby contributing to participant variation in the study. Following the 12-week session, 5 participants were purposively selected for post-intervention focus group interviews to gain in-depth insights into their experiences.

The 12-week Activities Facilitated by Proficient English Speakers The intervention of this study led by five proficient English speakers two native speakers (L1) from the United States and three highly proficient non-native (L2) speakers from the Philippines served as activity facilitators. All facilitators held TESOL certifications or equivalent experience.

The activities consisted of a 12-week program organized by the English Program, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, to help English major students develop their communicative competence through the authentic



communication with proficient English speakers. Prior to the first week of the intervention, the information about the program had been announced to all English-major students to participate regardless of year level or English proficiency.

The intervention lasted 12 weeks within the second semester of the academic year, with each session lasting 60 to 90 minutes. The session occurred on-site once a week at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University. The weekly themes progressed from very basic conversational topics, e.g. greetings and self-introductions, to more linguistically demanding ones, e.g., argument-based discussions. All the materials and tasks were designed to be slightly above the learners' current proficiency based on Krashen's Comprehensible Input (i+1).

The proficient English-speaking facilitators were actively involved in every activity throughout the session in a week. The students were encouraged to participate in guided conversations, games, role-plays, and group activities. To support interaction, tasks were communicative in nature where students were asked to answer questions, performed dialogues, and expressed thoughts in small-group discussions. To maintain a low affective filter, as suggested by Krashen, all activities employed implicit feedback rather than overt error correction. This approach was designed to prevent learner embarrassment and minimize speaking anxiety.

The role of the first author was to observe the interactions between the facilitators and the students and to provide support when needed.

**2. Research Instruments:** To answer the three research questions of this study, the researchers employ both quantitative and qualitative tools as follows

**2.1 Questionnaire:** The questionnaire was developed to assess students' self-perceived improvement in listening and speaking skills, as well as their satisfaction with the proficient English speaker-facilitated activities. It consisted of five parts: (1) Demographic information (6 items), (2) Self-assessment of listening skills (10 items, 5-point Likert scale), (3) Self-assessment of speaking skills (10 items, 5-point Likert scale), (4) Satisfaction with the intervention program (15 items, 5-point Likert scale), and (5) Open-ended questions for comments, suggestions, or reflections. The questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in English Language Teaching field to determine the content validity by using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), where each item ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, indicating strong alignment with the study's objectives. Before real use, the questionnaire was piloted with 30 students who did not participate in the main study. The internal consistency was confirmed ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ) as it indicated a high level of reliability. All statements were translated into Thai before being distributed to the participants to ensure that they could fully understand each item.

**2.2 Focus group interview:** To triangulate the results collected from the questionnaire, a focus group interview was employed to gain in-depth insights from participants regarding their experiences, perceived



challenges, confidence development, and suggestions for future activities. Following the final week of the intervention, five participants were invited to join a focus group interview. The interview was conducted in Thai to ensure the students' comfort and openness, with responses subsequently translated and transcribed for content analysis.

**2.3 Observation notes:** Throughout the 12-week intervention, the observation notes were used to capture real-time activity dynamics that might not be found in the questionnaire or focus group interviews, especially those related to affective factors such as anxiety, confidence, and so on. The benefit of these notes was to complement the data collected quantitatively and qualitatively through questionnaire and the focus group interview.

**3. Data collection procedures:** At the outset of the program, the researchers informed all participants about the purpose and duration of the intervention. After the 12-week program was completed, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to all 50 participants via Google Forms. Throughout the 12-week period, the researcher also conducted observations during the sessions and took field notes on any noteworthy behaviors or interactions relevant to later analysis. Upon completion of data collection, five participants were purposively selected for a focus group interview based on their level of engagement and availability.

**4. Data Analysis:** Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative data collected from the focus group interview were first transcribed and reviewed multiple times to identify the meaningful data. The researchers employed content analysis by carefully examining the data, coding, and grouping the data into categories. These categories later became into themes such as perceived improvement in communication, affective development, interaction challenges, and suggestions for future activities. The responses from the questionnaire and notes from the observations were added to the analysis to triangulate the data.

**5. Statistics Analysis:** This present study adopted descriptive statistics, e.g. mean and standard deviation (SD), to describe the results from questionnaires.

## Results

After the 12-week activities, the participants were asked to reflect on their perceived development of listening skills, which is one of the essential domains in communication.

**Table 1** Self-Perceived Listening Skills Development (n = 50)

Rank	Listening Skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1	Recognition of daily conversation vocabulary	4.38	0.77	Excellent
2	Understanding English at various speeds	4.38	0.80	Excellent
3	Comprehending specific details in content	4.35	0.72	Excellent
4	Understanding various accents and differences	4.32	0.76	Excellent
5	Comprehending diverse English accents	4.29	0.71	Excellent
6	Understanding implicit meanings and details	4.29	0.75	Excellent
7	Learning and understanding vocabulary meanings	4.26	0.78	Excellent
8	Understanding tone variations in speech	4.26	0.82	Excellent
9	Recognizing expressions used in daily conversation	4.26	0.92	Excellent
10	Improved grammatical accuracy in comprehension	3.91	0.89	Good
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

The results from the questionnaire revealed substantial perceived improvement, with an overall mean score of 4.23 (S.D.= 0.79), indicating an "excellent" level according to the established interpretation criteria. The area in which students believed they had improved the most was recognition of daily conversation vocabulary ( $\bar{x} = 4.38$ , SD = 0.77), followed by understanding English at various speeds ( $\bar{x} = 4.38$ , SD = 0.80). Meanwhile, the area in which students perceived the least improvement was grammatical accuracy ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ , SD = 0.89), suggesting that grammar development requires additional focused instruction and extended practice time. When it comes to the participants' perceived development of speaking skills, the results revealed the overall mean score of 4.10 (S.D.= 0.83), indicating "good" level development across all measured competencies.

**Table 2** Self-Reported Speaking Skills Development (n = 50)

Rank	Speaking Skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1	Increased willingness to speak with proficient speakers	4.32	0.76	Excellent
2	Using gestures and facial expressions effectively	4.18	0.75	Good
3	Varying speaking speed according to context	4.18	0.82	Good
4	Improved pronunciation accuracy	4.12	0.93	Good
5	Using new vocabulary and expressions	4.12	0.87	Good
6	Selecting appropriate vocabulary for context	4.09	0.92	Good
7	Using clearer vocal tones	4.06	0.84	Good

8	Employing volume and emphasis effectively	4.03	0.75	Good
9	Speaking English fluently and naturally	3.97	0.86	Good
10	Reducing use of filler words ("um," "uh")	3.94	0.84	Good
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>Good</b>

This finding supports the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) theory and demonstrates the program's success in reducing affective barriers to communication. However, when examining the item-level means, it was found that most scores were at the 'good' level ( $\bar{x} = 3.41-4.20$ ), with only the willingness to communicate with proficient English speakers reaching the Excellent level.

Regarding participant satisfaction with the intervention, the results from the questionnaire showed that participants were highly satisfied with the activities, with an overall mean score of 4.55 (S.D. = 0.35), indicating an 'excellent' level of satisfaction.

**Table 3** Activity Satisfaction (n = 50)

Rank	Satisfaction Aspect	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1	Friendliness and helpfulness of facilitators	4.68	0.47	Excellent
2	Value and benefits of participation	4.65	0.49	Excellent
3	Likelihood to recommend to others	4.65	0.55	Excellent
4	Learning about facilitators' cultures	4.62	0.55	Excellent
5	Increased confidence in English communication	4.59	0.61	Excellent
6	Familiarity with diverse English accents	4.59	0.61	Excellent
7	Conducive learning atmosphere	4.56	0.56	Excellent
8	Listening skills improvement	4.53	0.62	Excellent
9	Engaging and attractive activity format	4.50	0.66	Excellent
10	Speaking skills improvement	4.50	0.66	Excellent
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.55</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

Overall, it was evident that students recognized the importance of the program, as all aspects received scores at the Excellent level. Students expressed the highest level of satisfaction with the friendliness and helpfulness of the facilitators ( $\bar{x} = 4.68$ , SD = 0.47), followed by the value and benefits of participation ( $\bar{x} = 4.65$ , SD = 0.49).

The results from the focus group interview revealed insightful data from students' perceptions of their development in listening and speaking skills as well as affective and motivational changes after the 12-week



intervention. The key themes emerged from the qualitative instruments included Peer Interaction and Collaborative Learning, Cultural Awareness and Accent Exposure, and Confidence development.

#### Peer Interaction and Collaborative Learning

From the classroom observations conducted during the activities, it was found that students engaged in peer learning with their fellow participants. One informant said in the interview, "When I saw my classmates trying to speak, it encouraged me to speak too." In fact, many students were initially reluctant to speak English but gradually became more confident after observing their peers make the effort to speak. This was especially evident when students asked their group members questions in English, which encouraged others to respond more confidently.

#### Cultural Awareness and Accent Exposure

Students reported that interacting with both American and Filipino facilitators enhanced their awareness of how English is used in different cultural contexts. As the facilitators were American and Filipinos, students reported that they had a great opportunity to hear different voices. One informant said, "I Heard various accents from different speakers, leading to better understanding of accent diversity."

This shows that students participating in the intervention has become more familiar with accents other than the standard English accents, i.e. US and UK, as in the News and in the Hollywood movies.

#### Confidence Development

Many participants reported that they have increased their confidence in speaking English. Several students reported that, prior to the program, they lacked the courage to speak due to limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes. After participating in the activities, they became more willing to express themselves, even if their grammar was not perfect. One student noted, "I am more confident and more willing to speak," and the other student said, "I have better pronunciation and increased confidence."

This is seen as a successful achievement for the program that it can increase learners' confidence to speak English.

Students ended their comments by suggesting for even more sessions over a shorter period, minimal Thai use, more grammatical support, and session recording for later reflection. Despite this progress, there were still problems; and many students were still unsure how to use grammar and had limited vocabulary. This shows that while communicative activities can build confidence to use the language and motivate learners to speak, they need to be supported by structured language learning to address their underlying language needs.



## Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of English activities facilitated by proficient speakers on Thai EFL learners' perceived listening and speaking skills, with the broader aim of enhancing their overall communicative competence. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' self-perceived abilities. Perhaps the most critical outcome, however, was the enhancement of the students' confidence to speak English in front of others. These findings affirm that meaningful interaction with proficient speakers—combined with comprehensible input and affective support—can effectively enhance communicative competence in EFL contexts. Nevertheless, the students' continued difficulties with grammar and vocabulary underscore the need for balanced pedagogical approaches that integrate both communicative fluency and linguistic accuracy.

## Discussion

This study investigated how effective structured listening and speaking activities, led by proficient English speakers, can boost Thai EFL students' self-perceived communicative competence. The researcher can discuss the research results as follows:

1. Comprehensible input and positive learning attitudes Comprehensible input was practiced in lessons that were positive associated with developing learners' listening and speaking skills and a low-stress learning environment. An example is Kaewthammanukul (2022) and Pangua et al. (2023) research which indicated that learners were most satisfied with the Natural Approach based instruction. It can be said that lesson plans or activities that incorporate comprehensible input (Krashen 1985) and provide students with opportunities to use or practice English in interaction (Long 1996) has a positive effect in developing their communicative competence.

2. Improved listening abilities from real input The most notable improvement in listening was in respect to vocabulary recognition and the ability to handle variability in speaker speeds demonstrating the value of exposure to real-life communicative input. These results are consistent with that of Mousavi and Iravani, (2012) who indicated the use authentic materials in EFL classrooms assists student listening comprehension and Hayati (2010) in respect of continued exposure to allow students to eventually manage real world levels of speaking speeds.

3. Exposure to varieties of English and cultural awareness The students' interactions with at least one American and one Filipino speaker appeared to support their ability to recognize different accents and understand cultural implications. This suggests that even a range of speaker models have the potential to prepare students for the act of communicating and positively influence motivation. This corroborates Ghane

and Razmi's (2023) conclusion that exposure to World Englishes is valuable. The experience of learning with both native and non-native speakers provided participants exposure to different English accents and English usage, which mimics the real-world landscape they will inevitably experience.

4. Speaking improvement through reduction of anxiety Speaking skills improvement was the most obvious event in participants' increased willingness to speak with proficient English speakers upholding Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). Anxiety-reducing, confidence-building benefits of the non-judgmental atmosphere created by welcoming facilitators has built a greater number of active communicators. Burden (2004) also suggests reducing student anxiety also helps to support their performance as it also has encouraged students to perform without anxiety.

5. High levels of satisfaction and remaining difficulties The high levels of satisfaction indicate that the participants viewed the intervention as enjoyable and as a benefit. This aligns with Alberth (2023) who saw that native English speakers allowed the participants to end with more confidence in their English abilities by the end of the experience. However, there were still major problems such as the uncertainty with grammar and the limited uses of vocabulary with the low proficient students; this indicates that communicative interaction alone may not, in and of itself, develop basic linguistic competencies.

#### Discoveries or new knowledge

1. The study demonstrates exposure to both a native and non-native English speaker, as well as a variety of accents and cultural contexts, helps enhance learners' ability to recognize various accents, which is especially relevant in today's internationalized world wherein Thai learners are more likely to speak with other non-native speakers than with a native speaker alone.

2. The results indicate that communicative interaction does help lessen anxiety, and improve their willingness to communicate, but this was not sufficient for improving very basic aspects of communication such as the grammatical accuracy, vocabulary development and communicative competence of students at the lower levels of proficiency.

3. The study establishes that exposure to World Englishes through diverse speaker models enhances learners' readiness to communicate in authentic global contexts, preparing them for real-world English usage beyond traditional native-speaker models.



## Suggestions

### 1. Pedagogical Implications

1.1 Schools and universities must include communication sessions with proficient English speakers into the formal curriculum as a mandatory measure, with at least one session a week to create repeated practice speaking and listening skills.

1.2 English language content and lesson plans need to be context-designed on the basis of comprehensible input, allowing learners to get more quality exposure to materials and content, which will help the learners become more motivated to learn, and effectiveness of their overall language developing.

1.3 During the communication sessions, there must be a teacher or facilitator present to support the learners as necessary, especially for learners lower in levels of English proficiency, to reduce and hopefully eliminate the potential for communication clashes.

### 2. Suggestions for Further Research

2.1 In future research, it would be ideal to include standardized English proficiency test(s) to assess speaking and listening proficiency. Thus, even if the present study used learner self-perceptions as subjective data, other studies which use measures can support whether facilitated activities have made identifiable and significant improvements.

2.2 Future research needs to consider methodologies that exclusively use subjective data, and take an objective structure that will be able to nicely measure improvement in real language ability rather than just confidence and affective states.

2.3 Building on the above limitations of the current study, future research may combine self-perception data with objective measures of proficiency to provide a more expansive overview of language learning and affective outcomes.

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