Development of Speaking Confidence in English Using Output-Based Language Teaching for B.Ed. Second Year Students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were: 1) to study the speaking confidence of B.Ed. second-year students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University through Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT), 2) to develop speaking confidence in these students using OBLT, and 3) to evaluate student satisfaction with the OBLT lessons for enhancing speaking confidence. The participants were 15 second-year B.Ed. students selected from a class of 30 based on an initial confidence survey. The study employed a one-group pretest–posttest design. Research instruments included a speaking performance pretest and posttest, a speaking confidence self-assessment survey, classroom observation checklists, and a student satisfaction questionnaire. Data were analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results showed that students' speaking confidence improved markedly after the OBLT intervention: the average pretest score of 40% (indicating a low confidence level) increased to 82.67% in the posttest, reflecting a good confidence level. In addition, students reported a very high satisfaction with the OBLT lessons (89.47% satisfaction, with a mean score of 4.47 out of 5 and SD = 0.58). These findings indicate that Output-Based Language Teaching effectively enhanced the students' speaking confidence, leading to notable gains in fluency and pronunciation clarity, as well as a reduction in speaking anxiety.

Keywords: Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT); speaking confidence; self-efficacy; English speaking; teacher education

Introduction

Mastery of the English language is crucial for academic success and professional development in today's globalized society. English serves as a primary medium for accessing scientific knowledge and international communication. According to Halim (1999:1), English is used in over 85% of scientific reference books, underscoring its dominant role in disseminating knowledge. In Thailand, English has long been a compulsory subject from primary school through university, yet Thai students consistently struggle with oral English proficiency and confidence. This challenge is often attributed to traditional teaching methodologies that dominate the classroom. Thai English instruction has historically been teacher-centered, relying heavily on grammar-translation methods and rote memorization. While such approaches build grammatical knowledge, they provide limited opportunities for authentic speaking practice. Research suggests that these methods do not foster communicative competence; for example, students get few chances to engage in spontaneous English conversation, which stifles the development of fluency. As a result, many Thai university students feel hesitant and anxious when speaking English, fearing grammatical mistakes or embarrassment. Studies on Thai EFL learners have found high levels of speaking anxiety (often rated in the upper ranges of Likert scales), which in turn lowers their willingness to communicate in the language. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) describe this foreign language classroom anxiety as a distinct phenomenon that can severely hinder oral performance. Overemphasis on accuracy over fluency in traditional classrooms tends to exacerbate this anxiety, as students are afraid to speak up due to potential errors. In response to these issues, more communicative approaches to language teaching have been explored in Thailand. One promising approach is Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT), which emphasizes active language production (speaking and writing) as a driver of learning. This approach aligns with modern communicative and task-based methodologies that seek to engage learners in using the language meaningfully. According to Brown (2001), multiple approaches can be employed in language teaching – beyond grammar-focused methods, approaches like the Direct

Method and Communicative Language Teaching encourage extensive oral communication and authentic language use. OBLT builds on this idea by specifically highlighting the role of learner output. Unlike input-heavy methods (such as pure lecture or reading-focused instruction), OBLT requires students to construct sentences, speak frequently, and interact in English, thereby "pushing" them to use what they have learned. Prior comparative studies have suggested that output-focused activities can significantly enhance speaking confidence and proficiency. When students actively produce language, they engage in deeper cognitive processing – they must retrieve vocabulary, apply grammar in real time, and manage pronunciation – which helps consolidate their learning. Moreover, speaking tasks often come with immediate feedback (from teachers or peers), allowing learners to correct mistakes and refine their skills. Empirical evidence indicates that students who participate in structured speaking tasks show higher motivation and greater confidence than those who only receive input passively. In the Thai context, one study found that university students felt more comfortable and less anxious when they had guided speaking practice (such as role-plays or planned presentations) compared to unstructured open discussions, which often caused stress. This suggests that a structured output-oriented approach might be especially beneficial for Thai learners who are shy or anxious about speaking. For Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students, improving English speaking confidence is particularly critical. As future English teachers, B.Ed. students are expected to serve as language role models in their classrooms. If they themselves lack confidence in speaking English, it may impair their teaching effectiveness and reduce their ability to inspire pupils to communicate in English. Education majors in Thailand have been observed to sometimes experience even higher language anxiety than peers in other majors, due to the pressure of having to eventually teach the language. If newly graduated teachers are not comfortable speaking English, they may avoid using English in their teaching or resort back to Thai language instruction and rote methods, perpetuating the cycle of low proficiency. Thus, enhancing the speaking confidence of B.Ed. students has a multiplier effect: not only does it benefit the students in their own academic and professional lives, but it also has implications for the quality of English education they will provide in Thai schools. Confident, fluent English teachers can create more interactive, English-rich classroom environments, which, in the long run, could raise the overall English proficiency of Thai students. Recognizing this, Thai educational policymakers have emphasized improving teacher training in English communication as part of national reforms. For instance, recent curriculum guidelines encourage teaching practicum students to conduct more classroom activities in English. However, without addressing the root issue of the student-teachers' own confidence and skill, such policy intentions may not fully materialize. In summary, the persistent problem of low speaking confidence and high anxiety among Thai EFL learners – especially those training to be teachers – calls for innovative pedagogical solutions. Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT) offers a potential solution by actively involving students in the process of speaking and by normalizing regular speech practice in the classroom. By creating a learning environment focused on output, OBLT may reduce students' fear of making mistakes (since mistakes are treated as natural learning opportunities) and improve their fluency through practice. This study, therefore, attempts to apply OBLT to a group of second-year B.Ed. students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and examine its effectiveness in developing their English speaking confidence. The introduction of OBLT in this context is expected to not only improve measurable speaking performance but also positively affect affective factors such as anxiety and self-assurance when speaking English. The following sections detail the objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, results, and implications of this research.

Research Objectives

1. To study the initial speaking confidence level of second-year B.Ed. students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University through an Output-Based Language Teaching approach.
2. To develop and enhance these students' speaking confidence by implementing Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT) activities in their English course.
3. To evaluate the students' satisfaction with the OBLT lessons designed to improve their speaking confidence.

Literature Review

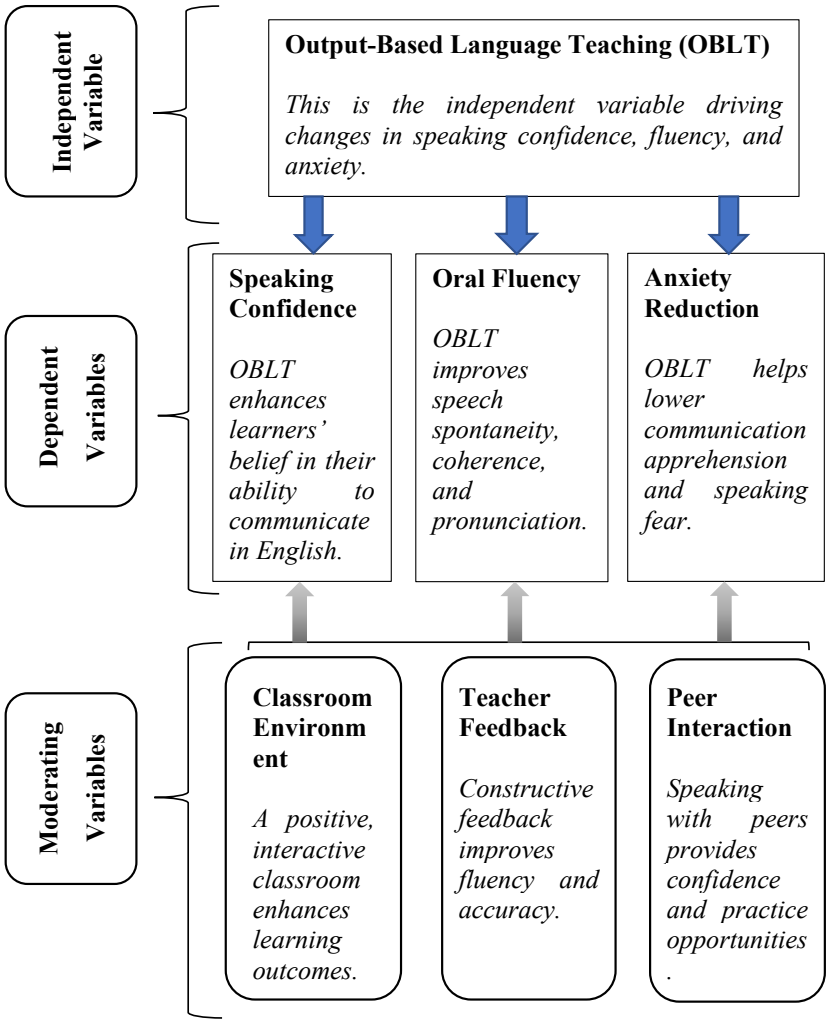
Output-Based Language Teaching and the Output Hypothesis: Output-Based Language Teaching (OBLT) is grounded in the principle that language production (speaking and writing) plays a central role in language acquisition. This principle was famously articulated by Merrill Swain in her Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985). Swain argued that comprehensible input (as emphasized by Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985)) is necessary but not sufficient for mastering

a second language. Learners must also produce output in the target language to fully develop their linguistic abilities. The act of producing language prompts learners to notice gaps in their knowledge and pushes them to formulate and reformulate their utterances, leading to deeper processing of language forms. For example, when a student tries to speak and realizes they lack a word or the correct grammatical structure, this awareness ("noticing the gap") can drive them to learn that missing element. Moreover, speaking allows learners to receive feedback from others, which can help correct errors and refine pronunciation. Swain and Lapkin (1995) provided empirical support for the Output Hypothesis in their studies of French immersion students – those who had ample opportunities for output demonstrated improved grammatical accuracy and speaking confidence compared to those who only received input. OBLT builds on this hypothesis by systematically incorporating speaking tasks into lessons. Rather than the teacher doing most of the talking or students only listening/reading, OBLT lesson plans are designed to maximize students' talk time through presentations, dialogues, role plays, discussions, and other productive exercises. By doing so, students practice using new vocabulary and structures in context, which helps consolidate their learning and builds automaticity in speaking. Over time, frequent output practice is expected to improve fluency (the ability to speak smoothly at a reasonable pace) and accuracy (using correct grammar and word choice). It also accustoms students to speaking under real conditions, which can reduce anxiety. Speaking Confidence and Self-Efficacy: Speaking confidence in a foreign language context refers to learners' self-assurance or belief in their ability to speak effectively. It encompasses several interrelated components. One key component is fluency, the ease and flow with which a learner can express ideas in speech. Another is pronunciation clarity, which involves speaking with understandable pronunciation and appropriate intonation, so that listeners can comprehend easily. A third crucial component is the affective aspect – particularly low anxiety and high self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Albert Bandura (1997), refers to an individual's belief in their capability to perform a specific task. In language learning, a student's speaking self-efficacy influences how confidently they approach speaking tasks (Bandura, 1997). If a student believes "I can speak English well enough," they are more likely to initiate conversation, persist in communication when facing difficulties, and recover from mistakes without undue embarrassment. On the other hand, low self-efficacy (believing one is poor at speaking) can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to avoidance of speaking opportunities and heightened nervousness. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1986) explains that self-efficacy is built through mastery experiences (successful performances that boost one's belief in one's abilities), vicarious experiences (seeing peers succeed, which can be motivating), verbal persuasion (encouragement from others), and management of physiological/emotional states (reducing anxiety reactions). In classroom practice, OBLT can provide many mastery experiences – each time students successfully communicate an idea in English during an output activity, it reinforces their belief that "I was able to do it," thereby strengthening their confidence for next time. Indeed, recent studies in language education psychology highlight that improvements in self-efficacy often parallel improvements in actual speaking performance (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007). In our context, OBLT's frequent speaking tasks and immediate feedback serve as mastery experiences that can gradually elevate students' self-efficacy for speaking English. Another factor closely related to speaking confidence is communication anxiety. Foreign language speaking anxiety has been widely documented; Horwitz et al. (1986) define it as a situation-specific anxiety arising from the unique experience of speaking in a non-native tongue. High anxiety can manifest as nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, or even panic in speaking situations. This negatively impacts performance – anxious learners might freeze up or struggle to recall even known words, and over time they may develop an avoidance of speaking. The literature suggests that structured practice and supportive classroom environments are effective in reducing speaking anxiety (Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1991). When learners feel comfortable that mistakes will not be harshly judged, and when they have repeated low-stakes opportunities to speak, their anxiety tends to diminish. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) is relevant here: with proper scaffolding from teachers or peers, learners can perform slightly beyond their current ability in a low-pressure setting, which helps them gradually internalize skills. In an OBLT classroom, scaffolding might include the teacher modeling a speaking task, providing useful phrases, or students practicing in pairs before presenting to the whole class. Such scaffolds align with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development. Learning to speak a language happens first between people (through conversations, feedback, and collaborative tasks) and then within the individual (as internalized competence). By encouraging peer interaction and communication-focused activities, OBLT leverages the power of social learning. Students not only practice speaking but also learn from each other, gain confidence by working together, and normalize speaking English as a part of their classroom culture. Vygotsky's theory highlights techniques like scaffolding and collaborative learning, both of which are integral to output-focused lessons. For

instance, group discussions or problem-solving tasks in English allow stronger students to support those who are struggling, benefiting both in the process and creating a sense of community that can lower anxiety. Related Studies: Numerous studies have explored methods to improve speaking skills and confidence in EFL contexts. Research on task-based and communicative language teaching shows that when students are given meaningful tasks that require communication (such as information-gap activities, role-plays, or content-based discussions), their language performance and confidence improve over time. For example, Wuthisawangwong (2016) and Srichaiwong & Maneekul (2017) found that Thai students who engaged in content-based communicative activities demonstrated better grammar usage and were more willing to speak in class compared to those in traditional lecture-based classes. Additionally, studies focusing specifically on output-based practice have shown positive outcomes. Bygate (2018) noted that structured speaking practice led to gains in both fluency and complexity of student speech, indicating that learners benefit from the chance to produce extended output. In the context of confidence, a study by MacIntyre et al. (1998) on willingness to communicate in a second language indicated that as students' self-confidence increased (through proficiency gains and anxiety reduction), they volunteered to speak more in class, creating a virtuous cycle of more practice and further confidence gains. These findings align with the theoretical foundations: when instruction provides ample output opportunities and a supportive atmosphere, students practice more and become less fearful of speaking. Given this body of literature, Output-Based Language Teaching can be seen as an effective convergence of these ideas: it embraces Swain's emphasis on the necessity of output for language development, Bandura's insights into how confidence (self-efficacy) can be built through successful practice, and Vygotsky's principle that social interaction and scaffolding are key to advancing learners' abilities. This study's conceptualization and design were informed by all these perspectives, aiming to create a learning intervention that addresses not only the linguistic aspects of speaking (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) but also the psychological aspects (confidence, anxiety, motivation) in an integrated way.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study links the Output-Based Language Teaching intervention with expected improvements in students' speaking confidence. At its core, the framework posits that structured output activities (independent variable) will lead to an increase in speaking confidence (dependent variable) among the participants. Speaking confidence, as described earlier, is reflected through improved fluency, clearer pronunciation, and reduced anxiety in speaking English. The OBLT intervention was designed with these specific outcomes in mind. Figure 1 (conceptual model) illustrates the relationship: by engaging students in a series of output-focused lessons, we anticipate positive changes in their self-reported confidence and objectively measured speaking performance from pretest to posttest. Several theoretical underpinnings support this framework. Swain's Output Hypothesis provides the rationale that pushing students to produce language helps consolidate their knowledge and reveal areas for improvement, thereby gradually enhancing competence. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that as students experience mastery in speaking tasks (for example, successfully giving a short presentation or handling an English conversation role-play), their belief in their speaking ability will grow, which is a key part of "confidence." Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory contributes the idea that interactive support (scaffolding) during these output tasks – such as guidance from the instructor or collaboration with peers – will enable students to perform beyond their initial level, facilitating development that leads to independent confident speaking. In summary, the conceptual framework can be seen as a synergy of these ideas: Output-Based activities (like dialogues, presentations, group discussions in English) are implemented in a supportive, scaffolded classroom environment, leading to improved speaking performance (posttest scores higher than pretest) and heightened speaking confidence (students feel more capable and less anxious). Additionally, the framework recognizes a feedback loop: as students become more confident, they may participate more actively in further output activities, which in turn leads to further improvement – a reinforcing cycle. The study also includes an element of student satisfaction: it is expected that if the OBLT approach is engaging and effective, students will express high satisfaction, which is an important practical consideration for continued implementation. The satisfaction is considered an outcome in its own right, but also an indicator that the learning process was positive for learners, potentially contributing to their willingness to communicate. All these relationships were taken into account when designing the research, and they form the basis for the research questions and hypotheses.



(Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework: OBLT Intervention ⟶ Increased Fluency, Clearer Pronunciation, Lower Anxiety ⟶ Higher Speaking Confidence. The process is supported by Output Hypothesis, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Sociocultural Theory.)

Research Methodology

This study was conducted as a one-group quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design. There was no separate control group; instead, the 15 participants served as their own controls, with their pre-intervention performance compared to their post-intervention performance. The focus was on measuring the improvement in speaking confidence after the introduction of Output-Based Language Teaching activities. Participants: The participants were 15 second-year B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand. These students were all enrolled in an English course as part of their teacher education program. Initially, 30 students in the cohort were surveyed for their self-confidence in English speaking. Based on the survey results, 15 students who showed relatively low to moderate speaking confidence (and were willing to participate) were selected for this intensive intervention. The rationale for selecting the less confident students was to observe how much improvement could be achieved through OBLT in those who needed it most. The group included both male and female students (primarily Thai nationals, with an average age around 20 years). All participants had studied English formally for at least 6-8 years, but none had extensive experience living in English-speaking environments. Before the experiment, they were informed about the study's purpose and procedures, and their consent was obtained. Intervention (OBLT Lessons): The treatment consisted of a 3-week Output-Based Language Teaching program integrated into their regular English course. There were 12 OBLT lessons in total, conducted 4 days per week over three weeks (approximately 1–2 hours per session). The lessons were specifically

designed to encourage maximum student speaking. Topics for the speaking activities were related to the students' curriculum and interests (for example, giving self-introductions, talking about everyday routines, discussing short readings, describing pictures, and mini-debates on simple topics). Each lesson typically involved a warm-up (often a brief conversation or Q&A in English), introduction of target phrases or vocabulary, a structured output task (individual, pair, or group activity where students had to speak or present), and a feedback session. Importantly, the instructor (researcher) minimized lecturing and used English as the medium of instruction to immerse students in the language. Students were encouraged to speak without fear of mistakes; errors were gently corrected through recasts or prompts rather than interruption or criticism. This environment aimed to reduce the anxiety of speaking and build a habit of active participation. Research Instruments: Four main instruments were used to collect data:

Speaking Performance Test (Pretest and Posttest): An oral test was developed to objectively assess students' speaking skills and confidence level before and after the intervention. The same test was used for both pretest and posttest to allow direct comparison. It consisted of four tasks: (a) a self-introduction (students talked about themselves for one minute), (b) reading a short passage aloud (to assess pronunciation and fluency), (c) describing a picture or visual prompt (to assess spontaneous speaking ability and vocabulary use), and (d) responding to an open-ended question (to assess ability to formulate and express ideas). Students' performances were scored by the researcher using a rubric covering aspects of fluency (smoothness of speech), pronunciation & clarity, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and overall coherence. The rubric also indirectly captured confidence indicators (for example, a student pausing excessively or speaking in an extremely low voice might score lower on fluency/coherence). The maximum score was converted to 100%, and each student's percentage score was recorded. To ensure scoring reliability, the researcher used a well-defined rubric; additionally, an external English teacher was asked to co-rate a subset of recordings, and the scores were found to be consistent (inter-rater agreement was high). The pretest was administered on Day 1 of the study (before any OBLT lessons), and the posttest on the final day after all lessons.

Speaking Confidence Survey (Pre-survey and Post-survey): This was a self-report questionnaire asking students about their confidence in various speaking situations and aspects. It included Likert-scale items (rated 1 to 5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree) such as "I feel confident introducing myself in English," "I am worried about making mistakes when speaking English" (anxiety-related, reverse-scored), "I can speak English fluently on familiar topics," and "I am confident in my pronunciation when speaking English." There were 12 items in total, grouped into three sections reflecting the components of speaking confidence: Fluency, Pronunciation Clarity, and Speaking Anxiety. The survey was administered twice – once as a pre-survey on Day 1 (just before the pretest) to gauge baseline self-confidence, and once as a post-survey on Day 14 (just before the posttest) to see how students' perceptions changed. The survey had been validated by a panel of experts for content validity (IOC – Item Objective Congruence indices were all acceptable, ≥0.67) and showed reliable internal consistency in a pilot test (Cronbach's alpha ~0.80).

Classroom Observation Checklist: During each OBLT lesson, the researcher used an observation form to note qualitative aspects of student engagement and confidence. This included observing behaviors such as willingness to volunteer for speaking, body language (e.g., eye contact, posture), signs of nervousness (e.g., fidgeting, long hesitations), use of English versus reverting to Thai, and interactions among students. These observations helped provide context to the quantitative data. For instance, an increase in volunteering or more enthusiastic participation over the weeks would indicate growing confidence. The observation data were summarized after each session and then analyzed collectively to identify trends or changes throughout the intervention.

Student Satisfaction Questionnaire: After the completion of all OBLT lessons and the posttest, students were given a satisfaction survey. This instrument measured how satisfied they were with the content and delivery of the OBLT lessons. It covered areas such as the usefulness of the activities, enjoyment, perceived improvement, and whether they would like more such speaking-focused activities. It used a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied). The overall satisfaction percentage was calculated from this (the number of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses). The questionnaire also had an open-ended section where students could comment on what they liked or suggestions for improvement, which provided qualitative feedback.

Data Collection Procedure: On Day 1, prior to any intervention, the speaking confidence pre-survey was administered, followed immediately by the speaking pretest for all 15 participants (each student was tested individually in a quiet room, with their responses recorded). Over the next three weeks, the OBLT lessons were implemented as described. The researcher ensured consistency in delivering the lesson plans and maintained a reflective journal to note

any deviations or noteworthy incidents (e.g., a particular student overcoming a fear, or a particular activity that was highly engaging). Throughout the intervention, observation data were collected unobtrusively. On Day 14 (the final day of the program), the students filled out the post-intervention confidence survey, then took the speaking posttest (with the same tasks as the pretest). In the week following the intervention, the satisfaction survey was administered and collected. Data Analysis: Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The pretest and posttest speaking scores were compared to evaluate improvement. Given the one-group design, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the mean scores to determine if the improvement from pretest to posttest was statistically significant. The significance level was set at 0.05. A substantial increase in the mean score, if statistically significant, would support the hypothesis that OBLT improved speaking performance. For the confidence survey, each student's total score (and sub-scores for Fluency, Pronunciation, Anxiety sections) were computed for pre and post. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for the group were calculated pre and post. The change in mean for each section was examined to see in which aspect the students gained the most. In addition, the distribution of confidence levels was noted (e.g., how many students rated themselves in high confidence category after vs. before). The satisfaction questionnaire results were summarized as a percentage of overall satisfaction, and the mean satisfaction score was reported (out of 5). Qualitative data (observation notes and open-ended responses) were analyzed by identifying common themes or notable comments. These were used in the discussion to illuminate how the OBLT lessons affected student behavior and attitudes. All quantitative data were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS (for the t-test). By using multiple instruments, the methodology triangulates the findings – for example, an increase in objective test scores coupled with improved self-ratings and positive observations provides robust evidence of true improvement. Ethical considerations were observed: students' identities were kept confidential in reporting, their participation was voluntary, and they were assured that their course grades would not be affected by the study results (the tests and surveys were for research, not for grading). The instructor provided support and encouragement to all students throughout, so even as research was conducted, the participants benefited from additional practice and personalized feedback.

Research Results

The results of this study indicate that content-based instruction (CBI) was effective in enhancing students' English language performance. The findings are organized and presented in the following sections.

Development of Lesson Plans for Content-Based Instruction

Lesson plans for the content-based instruction course were developed by adapting a regular Communication Skills course to include a dual focus on subject matter and English language learning. The researcher designed 13 content-based lessons covering key communication topics, ensuring each lesson addressed both communication content and English language skills. The topics selected for the lessons included:

1. Overview of communication
2. Internal and external communication
3. Definition of communication
4. Communication process
5. Types of communication
6. Verbal and nonverbal communication
7. Factors affecting communication
8. Communication styles
9. Communication skills
10. Listening skills
11. Reading skills
12. Speaking skills
13. Writing skills

All topics were sequenced according to the course syllabus. The sheltered content-based instruction approach was adopted, meaning the researcher acted in a dual role as both subject matter instructor (for Communication Skills content) and language teacher, delivering all course content in English. Students were encouraged to take an active role in learning the subject content and practicing English simultaneously. The course spanned 15 sessions (including an introduction, 13 topic lessons, and assessments), and existing slides/handouts were updated and

translated into English. Each lesson plan was structured with standard components—learning objectives, content knowledge, learning activities, teaching aids, and assessment—all aligned to ensure consistency throughout the course.

Before implementing these lesson plans, their applicability was evaluated by experts to ensure they were suitable for use in an English-medium context. Table 1 shows the mean ratings of various components of the lesson plans (on a 5-point scale) and their interpretations. All components were rated High or Very High in applicability, indicating that the lesson plans strongly emphasized English usage and were appropriate for the course content.

Table 1. Applicability of the Content-Based Instruction Lesson Plans (Pre-Implementation)

Component	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Learning Objectives			
1. Emphasize developing English competencies	4.00	0.00	High
2. Emphasize opportunities to use English	5.00	0.00	Very High
Content Knowledge			
3. Content in English is comprehensible	4.00	0.00	High
4. Content in English is related to the course	4.33	0.58	High
Learning Activities			
5. Activities are varied	4.33	0.58	High
6. Activities are interesting	4.00	0.00	High
7. English is used in activities	4.67	0.58	Very High
Teaching Aids			
8. Teaching aids are varied	4.33	0.58	High
9. Teaching aids are in English	4.67	0.58	Very High
Assessment			
10. Assessment is clear and consistent	4.33	0.58	High
11. Assessment informs on language improvement	4.67	0.58	Very High
Accordance of All Components			
12. All components align in lesson plans	5.00	0.00	Very High
Overall Applicability	**4.50**	**0.29**	**High**

Note: $\bar{x}$ = mean score; S.D. = standard deviation. (Ratings are on a 5-point scale.)

As shown in Table 1, every aspect of the developed lesson plans was rated highly. In particular, the lesson objectives and activities were praised for creating many opportunities to use English in class (Mean = 5.00, “Very High”). Teaching aids and the use of English in materials were also rated “Very High”, indicating that the course materials were well-prepared in English. Overall, the lesson plans were deemed very suitable for content-based English instruction, with all components consistently aligned.

Students’ Perceptions of Content-Based Instruction Effectiveness

After participating in the course, students were asked to rate the effectiveness of the content-based instruction approach. Their perceptions were measured in two dimensions: (1) the effectiveness of CBI as an instructional methodology, and (2) CBI as an aid in creating opportunities to use English. Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of students’ perception scores for various statements, along with their interpretations.

Table 2. Students’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Content-Based Instruction

Aspect of Perception	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Effective Instructional Methodology			
1. CBI enhances English language performance	4.16	0.60	High
2. English used in instruction is comprehensible	4.42	0.51	High
3. The instructor communicates in English (throughout)	4.53	0.51	Very High
4. Classroom English use is meaningful	4.11	0.46	High
5. Learning strategies are effective and systematic	4.53	0.70	Very High

6. Assessment is done systematically	3.79	0.71	High
7. English is used as the medium in the classroom	4.42	0.61	High
Opportunities to Use English (CBI as an Aid)			
8. Many opportunities to use English were provided	4.16	0.69	High
9. Students were given opportunities to speak English	4.21	0.71	High
10. English use is encouraged at all times	4.37	0.60	High
Overall Perceived Effectiveness	**4.27**	**0.38**	**High**

Note: $\bar{x}$ = mean perception score (5-point scale); S.D. = standard deviation.

As shown in Table 2, students' overall perception of the content-based instruction was very positive (overall mean = 4.27, "High"). They rated CBI as an effective methodology for learning English (mean subscore = 4.28, *High*) and also agreed that it provided ample opportunities to use English in class (mean subscore = 4.25, *High*). Notably, students "Very High" agreed that the instructor's use of English and the learning strategies in CBI were effective (mean = 4.53 for both item 3 and 5). They found the course enjoyable and felt it gave them frequent practice in English, which improved their confidence and attitude toward using English. These results suggest that students perceived content-based learning to be a fun and beneficial way to develop their English skills through meaningful use of the language in class.

Effects of Content-Based Instruction on English Language Performance

To measure the impact of CBI on students' English proficiency, pre-test and post-test assessments of English language performance were conducted. The tests (validated by experts with IOC > 0.60 and high reliability, $\alpha > 0.80$) evaluated students' skills in reading, grammar (language use), listening, and speaking. Each test was administered before the course (pre-test) and after the course (post-test). A paired-samples t-test was used to compare the pre- and post-test scores and determine if any improvements were statistically significant.

Overall English Performance: Students' overall English language performance improved markedly after the implementation of content-based instruction. The mean total score (aggregate of all skills) increased from 41.26 in the pre-test to 61.16 in the post-test. This gain of nearly 20 points is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that students performed much better in English after learning through CBI. In other words, the content-based approach created a learning environment that helped students greatly improve their English abilities over the duration of the course.

By Language Skill: In particular, performance increased across all measured skills—reading, grammar (language use), listening, and speaking—after the CBI course (Table 3 presents the overall gains, and Tables 4–5 detail two of these skills as examples). Among these, the highest post-test performance was observed in listening, while speaking remained the lowest. Interestingly, the skill with the most improvement was reading, which saw the largest jump from its pre-test score. This pattern mirrors findings in other contexts – for example, Jaiyai et al. (2005) noted that many Thai 8th graders struggle most with speaking, and Anyadubalu (2010) found that students improved their reading ability more than their speaking ability when taught in English. These parallels suggest that our students found reading easier to develop under CBI, whereas speaking, though improved, is still a relative weak point. It would be beneficial to place additional emphasis on speaking practice in future implementations, while continuing to reinforce reading, writing, and listening skills.

Table 3. English Language Performance – Overall Pre-test vs Post-test

Test Occasion	**Mean Score**	**S.D.**	**Significance (p)**
Pre-test	41.26	5.05	–
Post-test	61.16	4.59	$p < 0.05$ (significant improvement)

Table 4. Reading Performance Before and After Content-Based Instruction

Reading Performance	Total Points	Pre-test $\bar{x}$ (S.D.)	Post-test $\bar{x}$ (S.D.)	t-value (df=39)	Sig. (p)*
Reading Test	15	7.58 (1.12)	13.42 (0.90)	16.19	0.00

The mean difference in reading scores is significant at the 0.05 level.

As shown in Table 4, students' reading ability improved significantly. On the reading comprehension test (15 points total), the average score rose from 7.58 (pre-test) to 13.42 (post-test). This gain was statistically significant (t = 16.19, p = 0.00), indicating that students performed much better in reading after CBI. Reading saw the greatest improvement among the skills, suggesting that the content-based lessons were especially effective for enhancing reading comprehension (possibly due to the use of English texts and materials throughout the course).

Table 5. Grammar Performance Before and After Content-Based Instruction

Grammar (Language Use) Performance	Total Points	Pre-test $\bar{x}$ (S.D.)	Post-test $\bar{x}$ (S.D.)	t-value (df=39)	Sig. (p)*
Grammar Test	20	11.79 (1.93)	16.68 (2.43)	12.12	0.00

The mean difference in grammar scores is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 shows a significant improvement in students' grammar (language use) abilities. The average grammar test score (out of 20 points) increased from 11.79 before the course to 16.68 after the course (t = 12.12, p = 0.00). This indicates that students' grasp of English grammar rules and usage improved markedly with CBI. It is noteworthy that even though grammar was the primary focus of the content-based lessons, speaking skills did not improve as much as grammar and other skills. In fact, speaking remained the lowest-scoring skill in the post-test despite its gains. This outcome reinforces the need to allocate more practice time to speaking activities, as fluency and oral skills often require more sustained effort to develop.

In summary, all results indicate that content-based learning had a strong positive effect on students' English language performance in multiple areas (reading, grammar, listening, and speaking). The students in this study achieved higher scores on all measures after learning through content-based instruction. This improvement can be attributed to the rich English-medium environment that CBI provided: English was used as the medium to teach meaningful content, and students had multiple opportunities to use English in context through interactive topics and regular assessments. By integrating language practice with subject matter learning, the CBI approach created a supportive environment for students to practice English frequently and meaningfully, leading to significant gains in performance.

Summary of Key Findings and Related Research

The key finding from this research is that content-based instruction is an effective instructional methodology for improving English skills. Students not only perceived CBI very favorably, but they also demonstrated significantly better English performance after its implementation. In other words, using content-based learning in this course proved to be a powerful way to enhance English language proficiency.

These findings are in line with several prior studies. For example, Adawiyah (2018), Stoller (2002), Corrales and Maloof (2009), Heo (2006), and Song (2006) all reported that content-based learning leads to significant improvements in language proficiency. Dupuy (2002) also noted that content-based instruction provides students with ample opportunities to interact in the target language. One of the major obstacles for language learners—especially in contexts like Myanmar or Thailand—is the lack of opportunity to use English in real situations. Punthumasen (2007) pointed out that many students lose interest in learning English when classroom teaching methods are not engaging and do not encourage active use of the language. The present study addressed this issue by making the English lessons more interesting and interactive through content-based activities, thereby increasing students' willingness to participate.

Furthermore, this study's outcome is consistent with research in Thailand that found content-based learning contributes significantly to English proficiency (Wuthisawangwong, 2016; Srichaiwong & Maneekul, 2017; Khruawan & Dennis, 2017). By situating English learning within meaningful content, students in our study were able to improve their grammar and other language skills in a natural, motivating way.

Overall, the current study provides a better understanding of content-based learning as a powerful instructional approach. It also offers practical guidelines for using CBI to create rich English learning experiences that build students' language performance. In the context of higher education in Myanmar (and similarly in middle school settings

such as the 8th-grade class studied), content-based learning can make English instruction more effective. With continued use of content-based strategies, the future of these students' English performance looks brighter, potentially enabling them to meet the growing English proficiency demands in their academic and professional lives.

Discussions

The findings of this research provide important insights into how an output-focused teaching approach can overcome some of the challenges faced by EFL learners in gaining speaking confidence. First and foremost, the significant improvement from 40% to 82.67% in speaking performance after the OBLT intervention validates the core premise of Swain's Output Hypothesis – that pushing learners to produce language output enhances language development. In this study, students who had previously been reticent and stuck at a low proficiency level made notable gains once they were required to speak regularly in meaningful tasks. Consistent with Swain and Lapkin's (1995) observations, the students in our OBLT program appeared to notice gaps in their language and address them. For example, early on, several students realized they lacked certain everyday vocabulary to express themselves; because the activities demanded communication, they quickly learned and started using those words in subsequent sessions. This active learning by doing is something that purely input-based instruction might not have achieved. Furthermore, as students engaged in dialogues and presentations, they received interactional feedback, aligning with Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) which posits that conversational interaction facilitates acquisition. When a student struggled to convey a point, the teacher or a peer often helped (e.g., providing a word or correcting a tense gently), and the student would immediately incorporate that feedback and continue – a process that sharpened their language skills on the spot. The results also strongly support the role of Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory in building speaking confidence. Over the course of the intervention, students experienced numerous mastery experiences, which Bandura (1997) identifies as the most potent source of self-efficacy. Each successful completion of a speaking task – even a small one, like correctly describing a picture in English – likely gave the students a sense of accomplishment. These repeated successes built a belief in their own ability to speak English. The dramatic drop in anxiety and the rise in self-rated confidence can be interpreted through this lens: as self-efficacy grew, the crippling fear ("I can't do it") subsided. Additionally, there was a vicarious experience element: since all students were performing tasks, they could observe peers of similar background succeed, which is encouraging ("If they can do it, maybe I can too"). The supportive feedback and encouragement from the teacher and peers acted as verbal persuasion, another source of efficacy. Students received praise for trying ("Good job, I understood you!") and constructive input on improving, which helped them believe they could improve further. By managing task difficulty progressively (starting with easier tasks, then moving to more complex speaking tasks), the intervention also ensured that physiological stress was managed – initial tasks built comfort, so later tasks were less intimidating. This aligns with pedagogical recommendations for lowering language anxiety: begin with structured, simpler speaking activities to build confidence, then gradually increase complexity. Our findings echo those of Mills et al. (2007), who found that higher self-efficacy in language learners correlates with better speaking performance and lower anxiety. In practice, we saw that correlation: as the students' confidence (self-efficacy) went up, their observable performance improved, and vice versa – feeding into each other positively. From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky), the communal aspect of learning in this study was important. The classroom atmosphere evolved into a more collaborative community of practice. By participating in group and pair work, students learned from one another and provided mutual scaffolding. For instance, in a group discussion task about a familiar topic, stronger speakers naturally took lead initially, but they also helped include quieter members by asking their opinions or translating a word for them into English. The quieter students gradually started to contribute more as they saw models to follow and realized that any contribution was welcomed. This transformation is what Vygotsky's theory would predict: social interaction enabled students to perform in their Zone of Proximal Development – they achieved communicative tasks with peer/teacher support that they couldn't have done alone initially. Over time, these tasks became internalized skills. The reduction in anxiety can also be partly attributed to the positive social dynamics: as the group undertook this journey together, speaking English became a normalized behavior in class rather than a performance to be judged. The teacher's role in creating a low-stress, encouraging environment was crucial. This resonates with findings from CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) research which emphasize that a non-threatening atmosphere is key to encouraging students to speak (Krashen, 1985; Littlewood, 2007). In our study, we deliberately avoided overly criticizing mistakes and instead treated them as natural – this likely contributed to students feeling safe to try speaking without perfection, which in turn accelerates improvement. Comparing our results with prior studies, the efficacy of output-focused interventions

observed here is in line with what Bygate (2018) and others have reported: given structured practice, students not only improve linguistically but also gain confidence to use the language. A unique aspect of our study is that it targeted prospective teachers in a Thai context. The success of OBLT here suggests implications beyond just this group. It indicates that even within a culture of learning that has been traditionally passive, students can adapt to and benefit from an active output-oriented approach. Initially, there might have been resistance or shyness (as some students commented they weren't used to speaking so much in class), but the high satisfaction scores show they came to value the method. This addresses a common concern among educators that shy or low-proficiency students might not embrace communicative practices – our findings show that with careful scaffolding and support, they do embrace it and thrive. However, it is important to note limitations. This study was conducted on a relatively small sample (15 students), all from one institution and with similar backgrounds. This limits the generalizability of the findings. In future research, it would be beneficial to implement OBLT with larger groups and in different contexts (e.g. other universities or with non-education majors) to see if similar gains in confidence occur. Another limitation is the lack of a control group. We cannot entirely rule out that some improvement might have occurred simply due to increased attention or a short-term motivational boost of being in a special program. A controlled experiment (with one group receiving OBLT and another receiving traditional instruction) would provide stronger evidence of OBLT's relative effectiveness. Nonetheless, the magnitude of improvement we observed is unlikely to be explained by a mere practice effect or test familiarity, given how stagnant these students' speaking scores typically were before and how dramatic the post-intervention jump was. Additionally, we did not conduct a long-term follow-up, so it's unclear if the confidence gains are sustainable over time. It would be interesting to follow these students into their third year or teaching practicum to see if they maintain or further develop their speaking confidence. Finally, the positive student feedback implies that approaches like OBLT can be integrated more widely into the curriculum. This study's outcomes support the notion that curriculum designers and educators in Thailand (and similar EFL environments) should incorporate more productive skill activities in language courses. It is not enough for students to know about English; they must use English actively to truly gain confidence. The discussion of our results aligns with a broader shift in language education – moving from teacher-centered, form-focused instruction to learner-centered, skill-focused instruction. For B.Ed. programs specifically, training student-teachers with methods that boost their own proficiency and confidence will likely make them better instructors who can then foster communicative classrooms in their future careers. In summary, the successful enhancement of speaking confidence via OBLT in this study provides a promising direction for improving English education outcomes: by empowering students to speak more, we help them speak better – and more confidently.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that Output-Based Language Teaching is an effective approach for developing English speaking confidence among second-year B.Ed. students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. At the outset, these students exhibited low confidence and considerable anxiety in speaking English, reflecting common challenges in Thailand's traditional EFL instruction. Through a targeted intervention of 12 output-focused lessons, the students made significant progress. Their average speaking performance improved from 40% (pretest) to 82.67% (posttest), and their confidence levels rose from low to high, as evidenced by self-assessment surveys and observable behavior. The OBLT approach enabled students to practice speaking in a structured, supportive environment, leading to better fluency, clearer pronunciation, and reduced fear of making mistakes. Students not only improved objectively but also felt more confident – a critical outcome for future English teachers. They reported being very satisfied with the learning experience, highlighting that they found the activities enjoyable and beneficial. The success of this study can be attributed to aligning teaching methods with key language acquisition theories: providing plentiful opportunities for output (Swain's hypothesis), building self-efficacy through mastery experiences (Bandura's theory), and fostering social interaction and scaffolding (Vygotsky's theory). In conclusion, Output-Based Language Teaching proved to be a powerful pedagogical tool to enhance speaking confidence. The B.Ed. participants, who will go on to become English teachers, can carry forward this confidence and perhaps the approach itself into their own classrooms. Implementing OBLT or similar student-centered, communication-driven methodologies on a broader scale could help break the cycle of low oral proficiency in Thai education. With improved confidence, these future teachers are better equipped to create English-rich learning environments, ultimately raising the overall standard of English communication skills in their students. The findings from this study underline the

importance of active learning – when learners speak more, they not only learn more, they also gain the confidence to use what they have learned.

Suggestions

Based on the outcomes of this research, several recommendations can be made for educators, institutions, and future researchers: For Classroom Practice: English instructors in similar contexts (university or high-school level in EFL settings) should consider incorporating Output-Based Language Teaching techniques into their regular teaching. This could include dedicating a portion of each class to speaking activities such as role-plays, discussions, presentations, or problem-solving tasks in English. Teachers should create a classroom atmosphere that encourages speaking up and treats errors as learning opportunities. Using pair or group work can help lower the affective filter for shy students. The success seen with B.Ed. students suggests that even learners who are initially hesitant can greatly benefit from structured speaking practice. Therefore, teacher training programs should train new teachers in facilitating output-oriented activities. Workshops or modules on communicative teaching strategies, classroom speaking games, and effective feedback techniques would prepare future teachers to implement these ideas confidently. Curriculum and Policy: Educational administrators and curriculum designers should recognize the impact of speaking confidence on overall language success and ensure that curricula are not overly weighted toward passive skills (reading, listening, grammar drills) at the expense of active skills. For teacher education institutions, it is suggested that courses specifically aimed at improving oral proficiency (like public speaking in English, debate, or interactive communicative English courses) be integrated into the program. Policymakers could support initiatives such as English-speaking clubs, speech competitions, or conversation partner programs on campus to provide additional informal output practice. Since Thai students often lack real-world English communication exposure, creating simulated environments (for example, an "English Day" each week where only English is used in certain classes or events) could further bolster confidence. The positive student feedback in this study indicates that such changes would likely be welcomed by learners. Technology Integration: In the modern learning landscape, technology can be leveraged to enhance output-based learning. While not directly explored in this study, one suggestion is to use digital tools – for instance, online speaking forums or language learning apps that prompt students to record spoken responses – as supplementary practice. These can give students extra speaking time outside class and can also reduce anxiety by allowing practice in private before speaking live. Teachers might incorporate assignments like video presentations or voice blogging, which have students produce output using technology. This not only builds confidence in speaking but also prepares them for modern communication modes. Future Research: Further studies should be conducted to expand on these findings. A recommended next step is to perform a comparative study with a control group: for example, compare two classes of similar proficiency, one using OBLT and another using a traditional approach, to quantify differences in confidence gains. Additionally, research could examine the long-term effects of OBLT on confidence – do students maintain their improved confidence after six months or a year? Longitudinal studies or follow-ups (perhaps tracking these B.Ed. students into their teaching internships) would be valuable. Another avenue is to explore OBLT with different age groups or levels: would younger learners in secondary school respond as positively, and would their proficiency gains be as large? It would also be insightful to study how OBLT might improve other soft skills related to speaking, such as critical thinking and spontaneity in communication. Finally, qualitative research (e.g., interviews or reflective journals) could provide deeper understanding of students' psychological changes throughout an OBLT program – capturing in their own words how their attitude towards speaking evolves. In conclusion, this study's suggestions emphasize a shift towards more communication-centric teaching of English. Building students' confidence to speak is just as important as teaching them vocabulary or grammar. The evidence here strongly suggests that when learners are given the chance to use their voice in the classroom, they not only learn to speak – they learn to believe in themselves as speakers of English. For the Thai context and other similar EFL contexts, adopting output-based strategies and nurturing an encouraging environment can significantly improve learner outcomes and should be pursued in teaching practice and future educational reforms.

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