

# An Investigation into Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English in the Classroom: A Study of Thai EFL Students in the Thai and International Programs

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## Abstract

*Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is among the concepts that has received considerable attention in EFL/ESL research in recent years as it brings together a myriad of factors that explain why L2 learners do or do not engage in L2 communication. An EFL classroom provides an environment that promotes use of the target language, yet Thai learners are often reluctant to communicate in English in the classroom. The present study aimed to investigate the possible factors that influence Thai learners' WTC in the EFL classroom context. Participants included Thai students in both the Thai and International Engineering programs at a public university in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as both Thai and foreign instructors. The assumption underlying the investigation was that WTC in English in the classroom of Thai students in both Thai and international programs was influenced by variables other than their English proficiency. Likert-type WTC questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, and a quantitative descriptive approach was employed. Content analysis was also used to analyze qualitative data and provide more in-depth answers to the research questions. Statistically significant differences in WTC between Thai EFL learners in the Thai and international programs were found both in degrees of willingness and reported factors influencing the WTC. The results have been used to develop evidence-based guidelines for English instructors in the implementation of classroom activities and teaching methods to promote Thai learners' WTC in the classroom.*

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## INTRODUCTION

English is a requisite course in both Thai and international programs at the public university where this study was conducted. Based on the researcher's observations, while Thai students in the international program generally possess higher English proficiency than those in the Thai program, both groups of students tend to communicate in Thai while engaging in group discussions and other classroom tasks, and are often reluctant to speak or volunteer answers



in English in class. It is often the case that, while most Thai students would cite the lack of opportunity to speak English as their greatest handicap in learning the language, given the opportunity to practice together in the classroom, many simply refuse to make the effort. Since the ability to produce the target language is an important factor contributing to success in language acquisition (Swain & Lapkin, 1995), communication is an integral part of L2 acquisition, and since the main reason for language learning is to be able to use the language to communicate (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), the present study aimed to investigate the levels of both groups of Thai students' WTC in English and the factors that influenced their willingness in the context of the EFL classroom. Although research on willingness to communicate (WTC) has been previously carried out on Thai students (Pattapong, 2010, 2011, 2015; Reinders & Wattana, 2015; Tan & Phairot, 2018; Ma, Wannaruk & Lei, 2019), none has focused on Thai learners in the dual contexts of Thai and international programs. This study was based on the assumption that, as the two groups came from different educational backgrounds, possessed different levels of proficiency in English, and were enrolled in different programs, one of which was taught entirely in English in all subjects, the findings from the investigation would shed light onto the factors that affect Thai learners' WTC in English in the classroom, particularly whether or not Thai students in the two programs were influenced by the same factors. It is believed that this will most likely help teachers find ways to help students feel motivated to practice English with their peers and teacher in the classroom, which should ultimately lead to higher achievement in students' English learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) *What are the levels of WTC in English in the classrooms of Thai EFL students in the Thai and international programs?*
- 2) *What are the factors that affect WTC in English in the classrooms of Thai EFL students in both programs?*

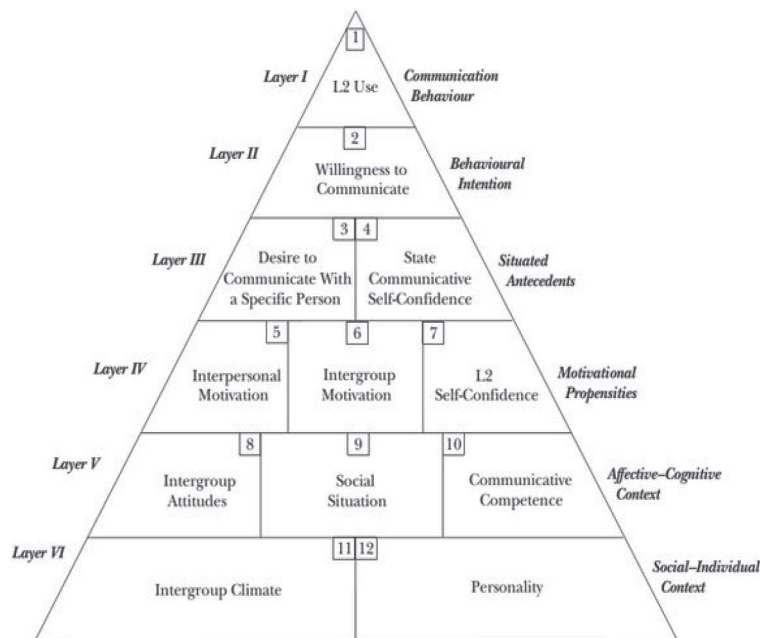
## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Willingness to communicate (WTC)

When given an opportunity to use a foreign/second language in class, some students speak up while others remain silent. This can be explained in part by the role of individual differences (IDs), or characteristics that differentiate individuals from each other in L2 acquisition. Andreou, Andreou, and Vlachos (2006) posit that the way individuals learn and succeed in language learning is influenced by individual differences-one of which is their willingness to communicate. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is defined as the intention to initiate communication, given the opportunity (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). For L2 learners, WTC refers to "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 547). WTC is considered a good predictor of frequency of communication, and previous research has found a positive relationship between WTC and success in second language learning (Yashima, 2002; Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Baghaei, Dourakhshan, & Salavati, 2012; Mahmoodia & Moazam, 2014). With more use

of L2, there is greater likelihood that one's proficiency will develop. WTC is also considered an influential factor in proficiency levels in L2 production (Kang, 2005) since language learners who are more active with L2 use have greater potential to develop language proficiency based on having more opportunities to use L2 to communicate with others (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Conrad, 2001). WTC is believed to lead to improved communicative skills and, ultimately, L2 fluency acquisition (Derwing, Munro, & Thompson, 2008).

Studies have been conducted to identify the factors that affect WTC. A heuristic model of WTC in L2 was constructed by MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) in which factors believed to affect WTC were proposed in a form of pyramid. The variables were both situational and individual, comprising psychological, social, affective, and cognitive perspectives which account for L2 learners' WTC (See Figure 1)



**Figure 1:** model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998)

## Foreign language anxiety (FLA) and communication apprehension

Foreign language anxiety has received a great deal of interest in EFL research as it can be debilitating and result in negative consequences on L2 learning process and the performance of foreign and second language learners (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Foreign language anxiety refers to worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language (Young, 1991) and is considered to be one of the most influential elements of lack of WTC. According to Aubrey (2011), L2 anxiety often stems from a fear of exposure or risk of being judged by peers who may notice imperfections.



The concept of L2 anxiety has also been discussed using the phrase “communication apprehension.” It has been noted that, in an EFL classroom setting, communication apprehension, introversion, reticence, and shyness have adverse influences on students’ WTC (McCroskey, 1992). According to McCroskey, communication apprehension refers to one’s fear or anxiety that is associated with either real or anticipated communication that takes place with another individual or individuals. It is a psychological response to evaluation.

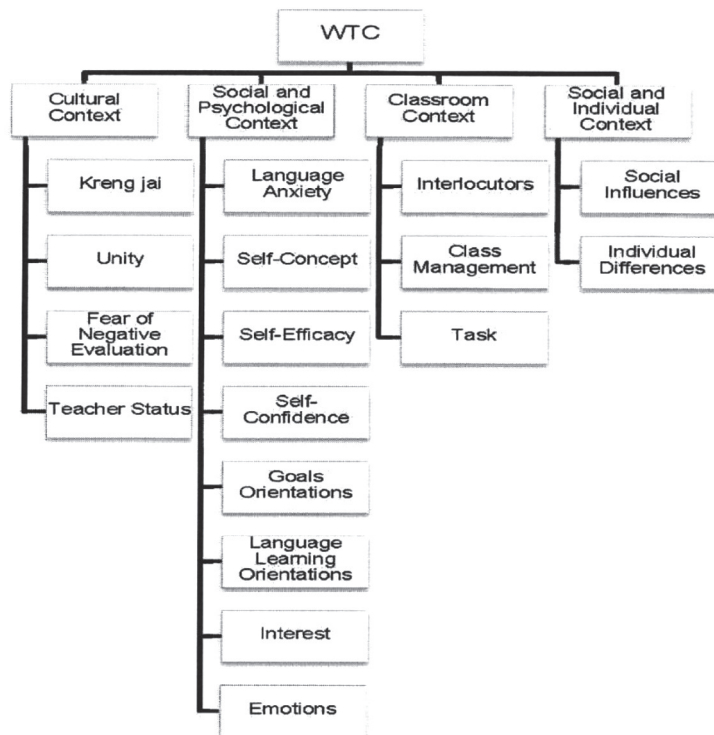
Kang (2005) also identifies security or anxiety, excitement, and a sense of responsibility as variables influencing WTC. Further, these three variables are, in turn, affected by other factors such as topic, interlocutor, and conversational context. Learners are believed to feel less secure and less willing to communicate when they are not familiar with the interlocutors, which, in the classroom context, refers to other students and the teacher, or when they have low self-efficacy and perceive others to be more fluent than themselves.

Many studies have investigated learners’ foreign language speaking anxiety. For instance, Young (1990) has discovered that speaking in the target language is the most anxiety-producing experience for L2 learners. Several studies have confirmed that speaking is the most intimidating aspect of foreign language learning since a variety of skills are required for a learner to speak sufficiently well (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1990). Clearly, this may affect WTC (Wu & Lin, 2014). In addition, a study conducted by Price (1991) has shown that learners feel anxious about making mistakes in pronunciation, while Kock and Terrell (1991) have reported that activities that most provoke learners’ anxiety are oral presentations, role-playing, and defining words. Finally, another study by Ay (2010) has revealed that learners’ anxiety occurs most often when they are required to speak without the opportunity to prepare in advance.

## Cultural influences

Cultural context plays a significant role in WTC. A study by Wen and Clément (2003) analyzed the Chinese culture and posited that culture is an influential factor on WTC in L2 for Chinese EFL learners. Two factors, namely ‘other-directed self’ and ‘submissive way of learning’, were found to restrain the Chinese EFL learners’ WTC. Wen and Clément distinguish between learners’ desire to communicate and their WTC. Specifically, although learners may have a desire to communicate, they may or may not do so in class due to the influence of cultural-oriented factors, namely social context, personality, motivation, and affective perception. Peng (2007) has explored factors that contribute to WTC among Chinese university students and also found cultural-oriented factors to WTC in her study. The findings have identified eight factors of WTC in L2 in two main contexts: individual and social. The individual context comprises four factors, namely communicative competence, language anxiety, risk-taking, and the learner’s belief in the usefulness of language achievement in the classroom. The factors in the social context are group cohesiveness, teacher support, classroom climate, and classroom organization. Additionally, a study on East Asian countries with Confucian Heritage Cultures including China, Japan, and Korea shows that learners could appear to lack autonomy, be unwilling to stand out from their peers by being too successful, or be afraid of losing face by making mistakes, owing to the concept of collectivism or social harmony (Griffiths et al., 2014).

In Thailand, in particular, students are often reluctant to use English to communicate in the classroom due to certain cultural influences that form their attitudes in interacting with others. Pattapong (2010, 2011 & 2015) has analyzed Thai value systems believed to contribute to Thai students' WTC and found that, within the classroom context, students' WTC is governed by two factors: teachers' control of the communication patterns in class (or teaching practices), and the interlocutors or classmates they interact with in class. Pattapong has also categorized the WTC in English of Thai learners into four contexts: cultural, social and psychological, classroom, and social and individual (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Variables contributing to L2 learners' WTC (Pattapong, 2015)

## English Medium Instruction (EMI)

International study programs have gained increasing popularity in recent years, with more and more universities starting to offer courses in which English is the medium of instruction in order to achieve internationalization—attracting students from overseas as well as providing local students with international-standard education. English Medium Instruction (EMI) is defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where English is not the first language (L1) of the majority of the population (Dearden, 2014). EMI is a global phenomenon, and it has attracted the interest of researchers in the field of English language teaching, especially when used for teaching EAP (English for Academic Purposes) or ESP (English for Specific Purpose). A study by Moratinos-Johnston, (2018) investigating the effects of EMI in



higher education on students' perceived English proficiency level and self-confidence in EFL found that the students' initial lack of self-confidence diminished once they became accustomed to using English in their content classes. Their English proficiency level also increased, implying that the more EMI courses taken, the greater the self-confidence and perceived self-efficacy in English the students would feel. This linguistic self-confidence, in turn, influenced the students' WTC in the foreign language classroom (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). As a number of studies conducted in Asia have indicated that individual factors such as self-confidence play an important role in classroom situations that demand interaction in activities such as group tasks (Shao & Gao, 2016; Yashima, 2002), it would appear that more exposure to English as medium of instruction should lead to a higher level of confidence and WTC in English among learners.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was mixed-method research that aimed to investigate the willingness to communicate in English in the classroom among Thai Engineering students in both Thai and international programs who were enrolled in the same ESP course.

### Participants

All 315 second-year Engineering Thai students aged 19-21 who were enrolled in Communication and Presentation Skills (CPS) course in the first semester of academic year 2019, as well as three Thai teachers and eight native English-speaking teachers, with between one and ten years of teaching experience of the course, were invited to participate in the study. Of these 315 students, 224 (seven sections) were in the Thai program and 91 students (four sections) were in the international program. However, a small number of students who were not Thai (Eight exchange students and six full-time students from other Asian countries) were excluded from the study.

**Table 1**  
**Information about student backgrounds**

| Program       | No. of students | English proficiency* | Self-perceived speaking ability |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
|               |                 | <i>M</i><br>(SD)     | <i>M</i><br>(SD)                |
| Thai          | 165             | 63.91<br>(16.03)     | 2.88<br>(.82)                   |
| International | 75              | 87.89<br>(8.25)      | 3.55<br>(.72)                   |

\*Students' English proficiency test scores at admission

## Course information

CPS is an ESP course designed specifically for second-year students in the Faculty of Engineering who must have completed two foundation English courses in their first year. It is designed to improve students' speaking and presentation skills in English with an emphasis on oral communication for future employment. The focus is on the practice of English for social communication and oral presentation and discussion of engineering-related topics. By the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to communicate socially in English in professional settings, prepare for job interviews, participate in professional meetings, as well as give an effective presentation on topics related to their field of study. Instructors apply communicative approaches with in-class and outside of class activities, leading to the promotion of collaborative work as well as improvement of English communication and presentation skills. The course was chosen for this study due to its nature, which provides the students with ample opportunities to use English in the classroom as they participate in numerous group work activities in class, outside of class, and during assessments. The Thai and international Engineering programs share the same curriculum with two differences. In the international program, English is the medium of instruction in all courses and some classes may comprise foreign students as well as Thai. This particular course was chosen for this study because it focuses on communicative skills and the teachers employ communicative approaches in their teaching, which means that, prior to completing the study survey questionnaire, the students had had ample opportunities to communicate in English in the classroom.

## Research instruments

Research instruments consisted of the student willingness to communicate questionnaires, semi-structured interview questions for the students, and semi-structured interview questions for the Thai and native English-speaker instructors.

The student WTC questionnaire was adapted from the questionnaires by MacIntyre et al. (2001) and Pattapong (2010). The paper-based questionnaire consisted of 46 items divided into two sections. Section 1 aimed to gather information about the participants' background (16 items), and Section 2 comprised 30 questions to elicit the participants' WTC in English in the context of a classroom and what the students saw as factors that affected their WTC. Among these 30 items in Section 2, 25 items were measured using a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 = definitely not willing, 2 = probably not willing, 3 = probably willing, and 4 = definitely willing. The remaining five items were questions to which participants could rank or give details about factors they felt influenced their WTC in English in the classroom. In order to ensure that the students participating in the study could understand the questions and answer clearly, all questionnaires for students were provided in both Thai and English languages (bi-lingual). Students could choose to answer the open-ended questions in either Thai or English in order to help them to express their ideas clearly. Overall, the items in the questionnaire covered situations of classroom interactions involving different interlocutors (teacher and classmates) and activities which might incur different degrees of anxiety. For example, "Ask your teacher in English for the meaning of an English word you don't know" and "Ask a classmate in English the meaning of an English word you don't know" were situations involving different interlocutors, while "Do a role-play in English at your desk/seat" and "Give a presentation on an academic topic in front of the class in English" were situations that might incur different degrees of anxiety.





The semi-structured interview questions for the students were adapted from the WTC interview questions of Cao and Philip (2006) and Pattapong (2010). The students were asked about their WTC in English while being engaged in different classroom tasks and to give reasons why they were willing, or reluctant, to communicate in English with their classmates and teacher in class. The interview questions for the teachers were also adapted from the interview questions of Pattapong (2010). The teachers were asked to evaluate their students' WTC in English in the classroom based on their observations and talk about the factors they believed affected it. They were also asked about the teaching approaches and classroom activities they used. Both the student questionnaire and interview questions for students and teachers were validated by three Thai English instructors to ensure content validity and language appropriateness. In addition, all research instruments were approved by the University's Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects before they were used to collect data in this study.

## Data collection

The WTC questionnaires were distributed to all Thai students enrolled in the CPS course during class time, after the first half of semester 1 in academic year 2019, when they had already had some experience with the instructor's teaching approach as well as classroom tasks and activities. Before distributing the questionnaires, the students were given an information sheet notifying them of the details of the research rationale and objectives. They were informed that they had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time without having to state the reason, and that the withdrawal would in no way negatively affect them in their learning, assessment results, or course grade in any way. They were also assured that the research findings would be presented as a whole picture with no information to identify them as individuals. The students then signed an informed consent form to indicate their willingness to take part in the study. It took the students approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

As for the in-depth semi-structured interviews, 12 participants (six from each program) were randomly selected, and all of the teachers, both Thai and native speakers of English, gave the interviews.

## Data analysis

The data on the background information of the participants gathered from the survey questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS version 22, using descriptive statistics to calculate percentages, means, standard errors, and standard deviations. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the differences in the levels of WTC between Thai students in the Thai program and those in the international program and the results were interpreted based on a significance level of .05. Content analysis was also utilized to analyze the qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews with the students, Thai teachers, and native English-speaker teachers, and categorization was employed with the themes that emerged from the interview data.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Levels of WTC

To answer the first research question: “What are the levels of WTC in English in the classrooms of Thai students in the Thai and international programs?,” the independent t-test was conducted and the results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**t-test results comparing levels of WTC in English in the classroom of Thai students in the Thai and international programs**

| WTC levels | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |                 |                       |
|------------|---|------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|            | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error difference |
| Total      | .298                                    | .586 | 3.420                        | 238     | .001            | .21280          | .06223                |
|            |   |      | 3.527                        | 154.486 | .001            | .21280          | 0.6034                |

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was performed, and equal variances were assumed ( $F(1, 238) = .298, p = .586$ ). The results of this test indicated that there was a statistical significance in WTC between the students in the Thai and international programs ( $t(298) = 3.42, p = .001$ ). These results suggest that students in the international program show greater WTC ( $M = 3.14, SD = .42$ ) than those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.93, SD = .46$ ). The size of this effect ( $d = .47$ ), as indexed by Cohen's (1988) coefficient  $d$ , was found to be within the convention for a medium effect size.

Upon a closer look, it was found that there were 12 items in which the participants in the international program showed a higher level of WTC than those in the Thai program in a statistically significant manner, as can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**t-test results comparing levels of WTC in English in the classroom of Thai students in the Thai and international programs by item**

| How willing are you to do the following in English in the classroom? | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |                 |                       |
|--|---|------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|  | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error difference |
| 1. Give a short speech in English about yourself with notes          | .262                                    | .610 | .38                          | 238    | .701            | .042            | .111                  |
|  |   |      | .39                          | 148.74 | .697            | .042            | .109                  |
| 2. Give a short speech in English about yourself without notes       | .017                                    | .895 | .62                          | 238    | .536            | .069            | .111                  |
|  |   |      | .62                          | 142.80 | .537            | .069            | .112                  |
| 3. Greet your teacher in English                                     | 52.930                                  | .000 | 3.81                         | 238    | .000            | .296            | .078                  |
|  |   |      | 4.48                         | 212.97 | .000            | .296            | .066                  |



| How willing are you to do the following in English in the classroom?                                   | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances |        | t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |                 |                       |
|--|---|--------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|  | F                                       | Sig.   | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error difference |
| 4. Greet your classmates in English  | .152                                    | .697   | .36                          | 238    | .719            | .048            | .134                  |
|  |   |        | .36                          | 144.47 | .718            | .048            | .134                  |
| 5. Thank a classmate in English when s/he lends you something  | 1.659                                   | .199   | .39                          | 238    | .694            | .052            | .132                  |
|  |   |        | .41                          | 155.52 | .684            | .052            | .128                  |
| 6. Ask your teacher in English how to pronounce an English word  | .817                                    | .367   | 1.52                         | 238    | .129            | .161            | .106                  |
|  |   |        | 1.53                         | 145.74 | .127            | .161            | .105                  |
| 7. Ask a classmate in English how to pronounce an English word   | 3.317                                   | .070   | 2.09                         | 238    | .038            | .262            | .126                  |
|  |   |        | 2.11                         | 147.01 | .037            | .262            | .124                  |
| 8. Ask your teacher in English how to say something in English   | .771                                    | .381   | 3.64                         | 238    | .000            | .396            | .109                  |
|  |   |        | 3.71                         | 149.36 | .000            | .396            | .107                  |
| 9. Ask a classmate in English how to say something in English  | 1.002                                   | .318   | 2.61                         | 238    | .010            | .312            | .119                  |
|  |   |        | 2.67                         | 150.42 | .009            | .312            | .117                  |
| 10. Ask your teacher in English for the meaning of an English word you don't know                      | 2.323                                   | .129   | 4.15                         | 238    | .000            | .448            | .108                  |
|  | 4.56                                    | 181.24 | .000                         | .448   | .098            |                 |                       |
| 11. Ask a classmate in English for the meaning of an English word you don't know                       | .192                                    | .661   | 2.26                         | 238    | .025            | .273            | .121                  |
|  | 2.28                                    | 146.16 | .024                         | .273   | .120            |                 |                       |
| 12. Ask your teacher in English to repeat what s/he just said in English because you didn't understand | .737                                    | .392   | 1.48                         | 238    | .141            | .162            | .110                  |
|  | 1.55                                    | 161.46 | .123                         | .162   | .105            |                 |                       |
| 13. Ask a classmate in English to repeat what s/he just said in English because you didn't understand  | 3.627                                   | .058   | 2.80                         | 238    | .005            | .347            | .124                  |
|  |   |        | 2.96                         | 163.95 | .004            | .347            | .117                  |
| 14. Volunteer an answer in English when the teacher asks a question in class                           | .130                                    | .719   | 3.75                         | 238    | .000            | .472            | .126                  |
|  | 3.78                                    | 146.09 | .000                         | .472   | .125            |                 |                       |
| 15. Answer a question in English when you are called upon by the teacher                               | .660                                    | .417   | 4.04                         | 238    | .000            | .459            | .114                  |
|  |   |        | 4.44                         | 181.79 | .000            | .459            | .103                  |
| 16. Do a role-play in English at your desk/seat  | .965                                    | .327   | .09                          | 238    | .928            | .012            | .134                  |
|  |   |        | .09                          | 134.06 | .930            | .012            | .138                  |
| 17. Do a brainstorming activity with your classmates in English  | 1.944                                   | .165   | .84                          | 238    | .400            | .097            | .115                  |
|  |   |        | .85                          | 144.17 | .399            | .097            | .115                  |
| 18. Do a role-play in English standing in front of the class   | .817                                    | .367   | .70                          | 238    | .487            | .096            | .137                  |
|  |   |        | .71                          | 150.08 | .479            | .096            | .135                  |
| 19. Have a discussion and express your opinion with your teacher in English                            | 2.616                                   | .107   | 3.21                         | 238    | .002            | .360            | .112                  |
|  |   |        | 3.48                         | 174.54 | .001            | .360            | .104                  |
| 20. Have a discussion and express your opinion with your classmates in English                         | .482                                    | .488   | 2.22                         | 238    | .027            | .240            | .108                  |
|  | 2.22                                    | 142.51 | .028                         | .240   | .108            |                 |                       |
| 21. Interview your teacher in English asking questions from the textbook                               | .021                                    | .885   | 1.49                         | 238    | .137            | .176            | .118                  |
|  |   |        | 1.54                         | 155.55 | .125            | .176            | .114                  |
| 22. Interview a classmate in English asking the questions from the textbook                            | .244                                    | .622   | 1.37                         | 238    | .172            | .160            | .117                  |
|  | 1.38                                    | 144.88 | .171                         | .160   | .116            |                 |                       |
| 23. Interview your teacher in English asking your own original questions                               | .012                                    | .913   | .827                         | 238    | .409            | .103            | .125                  |
|  |   |        | .837                         | 147.42 | .404            | .103            | .123                  |
| 24. Interview a classmate in English asking your own original question                                 | .043                                    | .837   | .830                         | 238    | .407            | .098            | .118                  |
|  |   |        | .832                         | 143.98 | .407            | .098            | .118                  |
| 25. Give a presentation on an academic topic in front of the class in English                          | 11.425                                  | .001   | 3.122                        | 238    | .002            | .394            | .126                  |
|  |   |        | 3.318                        | 166.72 | .001            | .394            | .119                  |

The 12 items that showed statistical significance in WTC levels between the two groups were items 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, and 25. For item 3 'greeting the teacher in English', Thai students in the international program ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = .39$ ) showed greater WTC than those in the Thai program ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = .62$ );  $t(238) = 3.81$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 'asking a classmate in English how to pronounce an English word' (item 7) in which international program participants ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = .89$ ) outperformed those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = .91$ );  $t(238) = 2.09$ ,  $p = .038$ ; 'asking the teacher in English how to say something in English' (item 8) where international program participants ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) showed more WTC than those in the Thai program ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = .79$ );  $t(238) = 3.64$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 'asking a classmate in English how to say something in English' (item 9) in which international program students ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) outperformed those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = .87$ );  $t(238) = 2.61$ ,  $p = .010$ ; 'asking the teacher in English for the meaning of an English word you don't know' (item 10) where international program students ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) showed higher WTC than the students in the Thai program ( $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = .83$ );  $t(238) = 4.15$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 'asking a classmate in English the meaning of an English word you don't know' (item 11) where Thai students in the international program ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = .85$ ) scored higher than those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = .87$ );  $t(238) = 2.26$ ,  $p = .025$ ; 'asking a classmate in English to repeat what (s) he just said in English because you didn't understand' (item 13) where international program participants ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = .80$ ) exhibited higher WTC than the Thai counterparts ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = .93$ );  $t(238) = 2.80$ ,  $p = .005$ ; 'volunteering an answer in English when the teacher asks a question in class' (item 14) where the participants in the international program ( $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = .89$ ) outperformed those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = .91$ );  $t(238) = 3.45$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 'answering a question in English when being called upon by the teacher' (item 15) in which international program participants ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) showed more willingness than those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = .87$ );  $t(241) = 4.04$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 'having a discussion and expressing opinion with the teacher in English' (item 19) where international program participants ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) outperformed the Thai counterpart ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = .85$ );  $t(238) = 3.21$ ,  $p = .002$ ; 'having a discussion and expressing opinion with classmates in English' (item 20) where international program participants ( $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) showed more WTC than those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = .78$ );  $t(238) = 2.22$ ,  $p = .027$ ; and 'giving a presentation on an academic topic in front of the class in English' (item 25) where the participants in the international program ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = .81$ ) outperformed those in the Thai program ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = .95$ );  $t(238) = 3.42$ ,  $p = .002$ . The rest of the data did not show statistically significant differences in WTC between the two groups of participants.

The finding did not come as a surprise as approximately two-thirds of the participants in the international program (66.7%) had graduated from international (secondary) school or studied in an English program in high school, and thus had higher English proficiency. This group of participants had also studied in an international program in which English was the medium of instruction for nearly three semesters, and had more exposure to English and more opportunity to use the language than the participants in the Thai program. It could be speculated that greater confidence in their speaking ability and more extensive experience and exposure to using English in classes taught by foreign teachers gave them more familiarity with the language used in the classroom and made them feel more willing to use English to greet the teacher, ask for help from the teacher and classmates, volunteer answers, and answer questions when



being called upon. On the other hand, Thai students in the Thai program, having had less exposure and fewer opportunities to use English outside of their English class, were not as willing to do so when given the opportunity in the CPS course.

The participants were also asked to rank five types of classroom tasks based on their WTC in English, from 1 to 5, with 1 being the task they felt most comfortable doing and 5 being one they felt least comfortable doing. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Students' WTC in five classroom task types**

| Task types  | Percent | Ranking |
|---|---------|---------|
| <b>Thai program</b>   |         |         |
| Role-playing/ having a conversation with a classmate in pairs | 23.70   | 1       |
| Speaking in small groups                                      | 23.18   | 2       |
| Speaking with the teacher one-on-one                          | 22.97   | 3       |
| Speaking during an assessment                                 | 16.60   | 4       |
| Speaking in front of the class                                | 13.55   | 5       |
| <b>International program</b>                                  |         |         |
| Speaking with the teacher one-on-one                          | 24.25   | 1       |
| Speaking in small groups                                      | 23.67   | 2       |
| Role-playing/ having a conversation with a classmate in pairs | 22.51   | 3       |
| Speaking during an assessment                                 | 15.85   | 4       |
| Speaking in front of the class                                | 13.72   | 5       |

As shown in Table 4, the participants in the Thai program reported feeling most comfortable using English when role-playing/having a conversation with a classmate in pairs (23.70%), followed by speaking in small groups (23.18%), speaking with the teacher one-on-one (22.97%), speaking during an assessment (16.60%), and speaking in front of the class (13.55%). Participants in the international program, on the other hand, reported feeling most comfortable using English to communicate when speaking with the teacher one-on-one (24.25%), followed by speaking in small groups (23.67%), role-playing/having a conversation with a classmate in pairs (22.51%), speaking during an assessment (15.85%), and speaking in front of the class (13.72%), respectively. Therefore, it was found that both groups of participants' top three factors affecting their WTC in English in the classroom are similar; that is, they felt most willing to speak English when role-playing in pairs, speaking in small groups, and speaking with the teacher one-on-one. Both groups also felt least willing to communicate when speaking in front of the class. During the interview, there were a number of interesting comments from students:

*"I'm always very nervous when I have to speak in front of a class. My English grammar and pronunciation are not good and I'm afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by my classmates. I feel I'm being judged."* (S2, TP)

*"I'm anxious when it comes to public speaking."* (S.12, IP)

\*S= student, TP = Thai program, IP = international program

Regarding the use of English with classmates, the participants in both programs expressed different feelings:

*"I feel relaxed when talking to my friends. We can help each other. It's more fun."*  
(S1, TP)

*"When I spoke to my friends in English during a brainstorming session they asked me 'what do you do that for?', so I stopped doing that."* (S.4. TP)

*"I don't feel confident speaking English to my classmates because I don't want to be mocked when I make mistakes."* (S5, TP)

*"I feel awkward when speaking to my classmates in English. It doesn't feel natural somehow. I'd rather talk to the teacher because he's a native speaker and if I make mistakes, he will give me feedback."* (S11, IP)

These results are in line with the study by Pattapong (2015) with regard to factors underlying Thai EFL learners' WTC in English, in which most Thai students at the tertiary level were found to have intermediate to low level use of English in their EFL classrooms despite the implementation of communicative approaches and use of English as medium of instruction in class. It could be seen that Thai university students' WTC was influenced by social and psychological contexts, such as language anxiety, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and interest, followed by the social and individual contexts, the Thai cultural context such as unity—the need to be like others and not to stand out, and fear of negative evaluation—by peers as well as the teacher—as it would lead to face loss, and, finally, by the classroom context. The findings also paralleled the study by Fu, Wang, and Wang (2012) on factors affecting Chinese students' WTC and their class participation, which revealed that Chinese EFL students' WTC was influenced by their motivation, personality factors (extroverted versus introverted characters), confidence, interest, and traditional culture—all of which played crucial roles in students' WTC in class participation.

Findings from the interviews with Thai and foreign teachers showed that they felt that their students' levels of proficiency ranged from pre-intermediate (Thai program) to advanced (international program), and that, although all of the teachers used communicative and task-based approaches in their teaching, students were still found to be reticent and unwilling to use English in tasks, typically using English only when they were told specifically to do so, or when being assessed formally with marks being given, as evident in the following excerpt:

*"They seldom volunteer an answer. Generally, three or four students always do, and the remaining 26+ are reluctant to ever speak up unless being 'bribed' with 'bonus points.'"*  
(NT1, TP)

\*NT= native speaker teacher, TP=Thai program, IP= international program



Furthermore, the teachers felt that the students were most willing in assessment. When asked if the students were willing to answer if called upon, the comments from teachers did not indicate high WTC from students:

*“If they have to, they generally do, but ‘calling on’ students in a class of 30 is not easy.”*  
(NT1, TP)

*“They seem willing enough, but they’d rather not! I think it’s because they lack the confidence.”* (NT3, TP)

To sum up, although the results from the questionnaires showed a higher level of WTC among participants in the international program than the Thai program, results from the interviews with the students and teachers seemed to indicate that their WTC was not apparent in the classroom, which did not support the questionnaire results.

## 2. Factors affecting WTC

To answer the second research question “What are the factors that affect the WTC in English in the classrooms of Thai EFL students in both programs?” results from the student questionnaires presenting the top five and lowest two factors are shown in Tables 5 and 6. The rest of the items did not show statistically significant results and were not included in the tables.

**Table 5**  
**Factors affecting WTC of Thai students in the Thai program**

| Rank | Statement   | Percent |
|------|---|---------|
| 1    | Experience in communication in English            | 12.20   |
| 2    | Familiarity with & interest in the topic          | 11.19   |
| 3    | Anxiety   | 10.83   |
| 4    | The person/people you speak to                    | 9.52    |
| 5    | Self-perceived English competence                 | 8.99    |
| 12   | Teacher’s feedback                                | 3.51    |
| 13   | The language used by the teacher in the classroom | 3.10    |

Data identified the top five variables that Thai students in the Thai program felt affected their WTC as follows: experience of communication in English (12.20%), familiarity with and interest in the topic (11.19%), anxiety (10.83%), the interlocutor(s) (9.52%), and self-perceived English competence (8.99%), respectively. These results could arise from the fact that this group of students had little or no experience of communication in English in the previous English courses in which the focus was on form rather than production. Thai students in secondary schools study in order to pass examination for entry into university, and, despite attempts by teachers to get students involved in the learning process through communication, class time must be allocated to intensive tutorials on grammatical rules and reading for comprehension to prepare the students for the national test (Darasawang, 2007). The test items are in a multiple-choice

format so that the exam can be graded easily; thus, communication is neglected, resulting in the lack of experience of communication in English. As for the familiarity and interest in the topic, as sophomores, the students might not yet be familiar with nor interested in the topics being taught, which focus on situations and tasks engineers have to handle at work. The anxiety they reported feeling could have resulted from a variety of factors. Price (1991) has found that personality types, especially neuroticism, contributes to language anxiety. Other contributors to anxiety may include lack of confidence, shyness, or fear of being judged, as well as students' rather low self-perceived English competence.

The results from the first part of the questionnaires showed that none of the students in the Thai program rated their English-speaking skill as excellent, while 20% rated their speaking skill as good; 53.9% rated their English speaking skill as average, and 25.5% as very poor and below average. The findings aligned with De Léger and Storch (2009) who have reported that learners' WTC is affected by their perceived oral abilities. The study by Hashimoto (2002) on Japanese ESL students in the classroom context has shown that motivation and WTC affect frequency of L2 communication and perceived competence and L2 anxiety are causes of WTC. And while WTC leads to more frequent use of L2, anxiety negatively affects perceived competence. Besides this, an investigation by Manipuspika (2018) into the relationship between foreign language anxiety and WTC among Indonesian learners has also suggested strong positive correlation between learners' foreign language classroom anxiety and their WTC. Fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension were found to negatively affect the language learning process and students' desire to speak. The following are excerpts from the student responses:

*"I'm not good at English and I always feel very nervous when I have to use English. I usually try to memorize what I have to say for an assessment, but I would get so nervous and forget everything I want to say." (S.3, TP)*

*"I like to speak English when other classmates are speaking it too. And I feel less shy when I do it (a task) as a group." (S.4, TP)*

On the other hand, those in the international program felt that personality (12.70%) was the strongest determinant of whether or not they were willing to communicate in English in the classroom, followed by the interlocutors (11.27%), familiarity with and interest in the topic (9.84%), motivation to learn English (9.05%), and experience of communication in English (8.57%), respectively. These findings are in accordance, in part, with the study by Triwittayayon and Sarobol (2018) which has found personality and exposure to the language to be the most influential factors contributing to Thai students' speaking in English. A study conducted on Japanese students has also reported topic relevancy, group cohesiveness, anxiety, and level of activity difficulty to be contributing factors to WTC (Aubrey, 2010). The following are some excerpts from students' responses:

*"I'm a bit of an introvert and don't like public speaking. I can feel my classmates' eyes on me and I always feel nervous talking in front of a lot of people regardless of the language used." (S.10, IP)*





*It feels weird to talk to Thai friends in English when we do tasks in class. It feels natural when I speak to the teacher who's a native speaker though—and I'm not afraid of making mistakes when I talk to him, and I don't feel embarrassed because I know he won't judge me. He understands we're not native speakers of English.” (S. 7, IP)*

*“I don't see a point in using English when speaking with my friends as they are Thai and understand Thai. I don't mind using English though if everyone is doing it, but they don't, and the teacher doesn't say we have to, so we don't.” (S9, IP)*

*“In this course we have to role-play as working engineers and the tasks are all related to workplace situations. The tasks don't really motivate me—I'm not at that place yet. And I hate acting and role-playing.” (S10, IP)*

This was in line with Dörnyei (2005) who has found that competence in the L2 alone might not be enough to stimulate willingness to communicate and having a high level of communicative competence did not guarantee learners' performance and frequency of communication in L2. Some L2 learners with high levels of linguistic competence have been found to remain reticent L2 speakers, while others with limited linguistic competence seemed to be at ease to speak (Baghaei, Dourakhshan, & Salavati, 2012).

**Table 6**  
**Factors affecting WTC of Thai students in the international program**

| Rank | Statement   | Percent |
|------|---|---------|
| 1    | Your personality                                  | 12.70   |
| 2    | The person/people you speak to                    | 11.27   |
| 3    | Familiarity with & interest in the topic          | 9.84    |
| 4    | Your motivation to learn English                  | 9.05    |
| 5    | Experience of communication in English            | 8.57    |
| 12   | Teacher's feedback                                | 4.29    |
| 13   | The language used by the teacher in the classroom | 3.97    |

It is not surprising to see that students in the Thai program, but not those in the international program, felt self-perceived English competence affected their WTC. This can be explained by the high English scores required in order to get accepted into the international program. Data from the questionnaire also showed that 8% of international program students rated their speaking skill as excellent, 44% as good, 42.7% as average, 5.3% as below average, and none as very poor. And although 'experience of communication in English' still ranked among the top five factors, it did not affect their WTC as much as it did the students in the Thai program. It would seem that, with a certain degree of confidence in their English speaking skill, this group of students attributed their WTC to other factors, namely personality, interlocutors, topic familiarity, and motivation to learn English. This is in accordance with a study by Oz (2014) who has identified five personality traits—extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience—as significant predictors of L2 WTC. Familiarity with

interlocutor(s) and familiarity with topics under discussion are also perceived by learners to influence WTC behavior in class (Cao & Philp, 2006). This was also supported by MacIntyre et al. (2001), whose study has shown the importance of friends in language learning, saying that desire and confidence to speak to a particular person contribute to WTC. Moreover, results from Dörnyei has Kormos (2000) has provided evidence that motivational variables have a significant impact on learners' task engagement and language output. Motivation has also been found to have strong positive correlation with WTC in Thai EFL learners (Ma, Wannaruk, & Lei, 2019).

Lowest on the lists of factors perceived by both groups of participants to affect their WTC in English in the classroom were teacher's feedback and the language used by the teacher in the classroom. Only 3.51% of the participants in the Thai program and 4.29% of those in the international program felt the teacher's feedback affected their WTC in English in the classroom. The language used by the teacher in the classroom ranked last, with 3.10% of the participants in the Thai program and 3.97% in the international program reporting that they felt it affected their WTC in English in the classroom.

When asked what language they used in brainstorming or group discussion, 51.2% in the Thai program and 42.7% in the international program preferred to communicate in Thai, and 48.8% and 54.7% in the Thai and international programs, respectively, preferred using both English and Thai. None in the Thai program preferred using English, and only 2.7% in the international program preferred using English to communicate in the classroom, as illustrated below:

*"It takes less time to do it in Thai. We can brainstorm in Thai and then translate to English."* (S.1, TP)

*"No one forces us to use English when we do group discussion. The teacher doesn't say we have to use English. The atmosphere is not serious so we don't take it seriously."* (S. 6, TP)

*"I try to use English, but if the task is hard and there isn't much time I'd just use Thai. I would use English if the teacher told me to though."* (S.8, IP)

In the interviews with the teachers, all of them stated that, although they encouraged their students to use English during class activities, they did not specifically instruct the students to use English or mind it when the students used Thai when brainstorming or participating in group presentation preparation. Also, although most of the teachers felt that there was a relationship between the students' speaking ability and their willingness to speak, the rest did not attribute proficiency in English to WTC as there were some highly proficient students who kept quiet in class and performed in English only when being assessed, as they described:

*"I feel that those with a weaker level of English are a little less confident with using it to communicate, and it can be easier for them to rely on stronger students to speak. The more confident the student is with their English, the more willing they are to use it in class."* (NT3, IP)



*"Some students are not interested to but can speak English well. It only came out at assessment." (NT2, IP)*

*"Some speak more due to having a higher ability, but some students speak more simply as their personality is more extrovert." (NT5, TP)*

*"Students who want to speak in English take pride in it as an achievement. They work at it and look forward to every opportunity to practice and—to a degree—show off. For most others it is a torture because they feel inadequate to the task of expressing themselves in English and they feel embarrassed at their lack of ability." (NT7, TP)*

The teachers were asked for their thoughts on why students were not willing to communicate in English in class, and if they minded if the students spoke Thai during brainstorming or group preparation sessions. Most of them felt it was necessary for the students, especially weak ones, to use Thai in order to work on unfamiliar concepts in professional settings. Furthermore, the teachers didn't mind the use of Thai during brainstorming as long as the goal was met. The following are some excerpts from the teachers:

*"I don't mind at all in Thai classes. They often don't have the language that they'd need to come up with quality ideas for professional settings. Allowing them to use Thai gives them time to actually reflect on what they need to say and to come up with more intelligent answers than they might be able to in English. In international classes I encourage them to use English because they're actually capable of functioning in English at a university level." (NT6, IP)*

*"Thai is more familiar and despite having a decent level of English, it's easier for them to communicate ideas—especially complex academic ones often encountered on the course—in Thai." (NT2, IP)*

*"...shyness, lack of motivation. Often they don't see how what's being taught is relevant to their course of study (Engineering). Also, honestly, fatigue. They're so overworked in their other classes that asking them to focus on fairly dry, adult skills like running a proper business meeting is a bit much for many of them at 2:00 pm." (NT1, TP)*

*"Speaking Thai during group work is essential for the weaker students to gain an understanding of the conceptual information in the class as they simply can't understand what I'm teaching using only English. Small group work becomes a small-group tutorial where either the stronger student re-teaches the lesson from class, or the students collectively work through their limited understanding to develop an understanding of the class lesson. Often, the only questions students volunteer to ask come from these small group sessions when they realize that none of them understands one or more points from the lesson. From this standpoint, I not only don't discourage students from speaking Thai in small group sessions, I see it as a positive in the Thai program. The international program has less need for students to speak in Thai and the practice is much closer to 50/50 between Thai and English in group work." (NT7, TP & IP)*

“I think they use Thai out of laziness – it’s easier to speak Thai. Also, shyness – they don’t want to embarrass themselves. In this faculty, quite a lot are pretty shy in any case. Another reason is lack of confidence – they think their English skills are poor/are afraid of making mistakes and looking ‘silly’.” (NT3, TP)

These findings are in line with a study by Aubrey (2010) that has revealed factors contributing to learners’ WTC, including topic relevancy, group cohesiveness, anxiety, perception of teacher participation, and level of activity difficulty. Čepón (2016) has also found that ESP students attributed their speaking anxiety to insufficient knowledge of the content of a specific academic discipline, while the teachers stated that oral tests, lack of fluency and concern about being looked down upon by their classmates for making mistakes affected the students’ speaking.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study have indicated that students exhibit different degrees of WTC even when they are in the same program or working on the same task and there are a number of factors that influence students’ WTC in class. Kang (2005) recommends that teachers should provide students with the factors that facilitate WTC as much as possible, and not focus on one factor at the expense of others. Given that the findings have shown experience of communication in English, personality, anxiety, familiarity with and interest in the topic, self-perceived English competence, and motivation to be the top factors influencing WTC in English in the classroom, teachers should focus on not just one, but all of the aforementioned factors. As students in both programs were reluctant to use English with their peers, the teacher should specifically instruct them to do so, at least for tasks that are low-anxiety, in order to give them opportunities to use English as much as possible in class. In addition, it was found in this study that peer pressure and fear of losing face are among the main obstacles preventing students from using English in class. As suggested by Wong (2010), this could be overcome by creating an ‘English only’ environment in the English classroom and strictly enforcing the classroom language policy in hope that students would enjoy the English-rich environment and thus using more English with their classmates during their tasks, with an expectation that enhanced confidence in their English speaking skill would also follow as a result. As Ilegbusi (2013) has pointed out, giving reward and punishment can motivate students to be more willing to be involved in EMI programs. Hence, teachers should try to make students use more English, possibly by enforcing an ‘English only’ rule in class, to give them more experience with the language, and in so doing simultaneously lowering their speaking anxiety and increasing their self-confidence. Moreover, given that some participants reported lack of confidence and low self-perceived English-speaking proficiency, leading to foreign language anxiety, teachers could adjust their approaches to limit the amount of forced exposure imparted on a student when eliciting student participation, allowing them time to answer. This may decrease students’ perceived lack of proficiency, which will most likely increase their WTC (Aubrey, 2011). If the conceptual information presented in the class seems too complex or unfamiliar to the students, the teacher could, instead of allowing the students to use Thai in class during group work, assign the task ahead of time to give the students time to research



information and thus be more prepared, more confident, and thus more willing to communicate in English during the brainstorming and class discussion. Familiarity with the topic, claimed MacIntyre et al. (1998), significantly affected the ease of using language and such knowledge will increase one's linguistic self-confidence. Lack of the knowledge of the topic under discussion, on the other hand, hinders communication. It might also be a good idea to let the students work in small groups of mixed ability in which students have a chance to work with, and learn from, classmates who are better at English. Success, albeit as a group, will most likely help raise learners' self-perceived proficiency, and this will likely put them more at ease with the use of English, increasing their WTC. De Léger and Storch (2009) found that learners' WTC was affected by their perceived oral ability and that WTC in class increased once the learners gained more self-confidence in their L2. Finally, as Thai students are influenced by culturally-oriented factors such as fear of negative evaluation, face loss and group cohesiveness, teachers should use culturally appropriate classroom management that promotes WTC.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Some limitations of the present study must be addressed. First, the present study gathered information about the students' English proficiency levels based on the scores they received from the English proficiency test they took upon admission into university, grades they received from the previous foundation English course, and their own and the teacher's perception of their English efficacy. No formal English proficiency test was used to assess the students' actual speaking ability. And while students' self-report WTC and teacher reporting was the approach used in this study, in-class observation of teachers and learners would have revealed the students' actual WTC in English in the classroom. Finally, the data was gathered from students enrolled in an ESP course offered to both Thai and international program students in the faculty of Engineering, and the findings may not apply more generally to EFL learners at large.

## **RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As the data for this research came from student questionnaires, student interviews, and teacher interviews only, further investigation through classroom observation could be used to confirm the students' WTC in English in the classroom, as well as the teachers' teaching methodology and classroom management. Teaching methods that the teachers in this study stated as being useful in enhancing their students' WTC such as Think-Pair-Share and teacher immediacy should also be tested.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study sought to investigate the WTC in English in the classroom among Thai university students in both Thai and international programs in order to find out whether the two groups of students exhibit different or similar levels of WTC in English in the classroom, as well as to

explore the factors affecting both groups of students' WTC in English in the classroom. Due to observation that Thai students in both Thai and international programs tended to use Thai during the brainstorming and group work, the underlying assumption had been that both groups of students' WTC was determined by factors other than their English proficiency. However, the findings revealed that the WTC in English in the classroom was statistically and significantly higher among the Thai students in the international program, with the top-ranking factors identified being personality, experience of communication in English, familiarity with and interest in the topic, anxiety, interlocutors, self-perceived English competence, and motivation to learn English. And although their proficiency can explain to an extent why students in the two programs expressed different WTC for different class tasks, cultural, sociopsychological, and individual contexts such as fear of negative evaluation, anxiety, interest, interlocutors, and personality were also stated as factors affecting their WTC in English in the classroom. Also, although results from the questionnaires showed WTC in English in the classroom to be greater among students in the international program, their answers in the semi-structured interviews were very similar to the answers of their Thai program counterparts—that is, they preferred to use Thai during the brainstorming and group work with their Thai peers. It would appear that the international program students felt more willing to communicate in English in the classroom, yet they did not actually act accordingly, suggesting that there are other factors apart from their proficiency at play here. Most stated that it is easier and faster to get things done using Thai and they saw no point in using English during the brainstorming with their peers. In addition, those who perceived their proficiency as low did not want to be judged or laughed at when making mistakes. Those who were willing to use English also often did not, stating that they did not want to be seen as different, and, therefore, would use Thai when having a group discussion with their classmates unless being told specifically to use English by the teacher, or when they were being assessed. Based on such findings, it could be assumed that WTC of Thai students is probably governed to a large extent by how they believe their peers perceive them, group cohesiveness or unity, as well as fear of being evaluated or judged by others. In summary, the findings of the present study have shed light on different factors contributing to WTC, or a lack of it, that instructors of English should take into consideration so as to find ways to promote WTC among their students, which, in turn, would lead to oral skill development and a higher level of English speaking proficiency

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