



The impact of a short-term language course abroad on Thai students' language skills and affective factors

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 12 May 2020

Revised 19 July 2020

Accepted 29 July 2020

Available online 31 July 2021

Keywords:

affective factors,
language skills,
short course abroad,
university students

Abstract

A short-term language course abroad in a native speaking country has become popular in Thailand. There is a dearth of studies on the impact of a course like this on Thai students. This research aims to investigate whether a short course abroad is crucial for Thai students' language learning. The participants in this study were eighteen university students who participated in a one-month language course abroad. Before and after the trip, an English language test, a questionnaire and semi-structured interview were conducted. The pre-test/post-test scores were statistically analysed by *t*-test at $p < .05$. To supplement the test results, the questionnaire and the interview on attitude, motivation and anxiety were arranged. The results revealed that pre-test/post-test scores were significantly different for every component. The greatest improvement was shown in participants' speaking scores; with most subjects' speaking scores increasing by 10 to 30 points. From the questionnaire and interview, a lower level of anxiety after the trip was exhibited, whereas positive attitude and motivation before and after the trip were constantly at a high level. The better test scores on speaking skills seemed to relate to the level of anxiety. The experience abroad is likely to help Thai students with language performance.

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Introduction

English is studied widely as a second or foreign language. Nowadays, universities in Thailand offer international programs to initiate an English language classroom atmosphere for students. The students will be familiar with English language usage, the main medium for the Asian Economic Community (AEC), in their daily

lives. For language learners, affective factors relate to their performance. Students with different levels of attitudes, motivation and anxiety can show distinct performance in their language learning process. If the learners have positive attitudes and motivation, they tend to be successful in their foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994; Eshghinejad, 2016; Lennartsson, 2008). Nevertheless, the foreign language learners might be aware of their performance and feel that they cannot reach their goals when they compare themselves with, or are compared to, native speakers (Rubio, 2007). They may feel discomfort and insecurities, which causes anxiety. The

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high level of anxiety may entail negative effects on language learning. This can happen to every level of foreign language learner, even the advanced (Tóth, 2008). A less stressful atmosphere could decrease learners' anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). For Thai students who learn English as a foreign language (Thai EFL students), they experience a high level of anxiety both inside and outside the classroom (Chinpakdee, 2015). Therefore, a learning environment solely in Thailand may not be challenging enough to decrease their anxiety and improve their performance. Real-life context in a native speaking country could better motivate students to comprehend and utilize their English skills (Handley & Wang, 2018). English language communication in a native country can strengthen language learning (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

Language for careers international program (LCI) is a program in which English is used as the medium of teaching and learning. All subjects are taught in English except for one Thai language course. The program focuses on enabling students to communicate in English at an international level, as well as acquire knowledge and skills in business and hospitality. Therefore, it needs to provide international context for the students, not only in the classroom, but also experience abroad. The program encourages students to participate in a short-term language course abroad. They have a chance to improve their English in a real-life context and practice life-long learning skills within cross-cultural communication. However, there has never been a research study on students' performance after the trip. Considering the rise of popularity of studying a short course abroad, it is essential to have solid outcomes for the students in the program and any short language trips abroad regarding Thai students. This study investigated the impact of the short language trip abroad on students' language skills and affective factors that possibly play an important role for foreign language learners. The results could help plan suitable courses and determine whether a short course abroad is needed for Thai students in the future.

Literature Review

Three important variables in learning perspective are attitude, motivation and anxiety (Ren & Yu, 2013). Attitude and motivation are essential factors in foreign language learning. According to the dictionary definition (Oxford, n.d.), attitude is the way you think, feel and behave towards something and someone. Ellis (1994) mentioned that positive attitudes towards second language learning could

enhance learning performance and help achieve goals, while negative ones obstruct the learners. Learners with positive attitudes and high motivation were likely to achieve higher language proficiency than those with negative attitudes and low motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Lennartsson, 2008). Previous studies revealed that students who had high level of motivation and positive attitude had stronger intentions and overcome any obstacles when they are faced with difficulties in their learning, due to their enthusiasm, hard work ethic and higher motivation (Bong, 2002; Eshghinejad, 2016).

Attitude relates to language learning as a component of motivation. It could be the combination of effort and desire to understand the goal of learning the language (Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei (1994) outlines relevant levels of classroom motivation: language level, learner level and learning situation level. The motivation at language level refers to the attitudes of learners towards culture and the success of oneself in the target language. The learners' level depends on the success and confidence of the target language use. The language learning context creates motivation at the learning situation level. Motivation could be considered as integrative and instrumental motivation which are not at the opposite ends of a continuum (Dörnyei, 2001). When language learners aspire to achieve their future goals, this aspiration consolidates with integrative and instrumental motivation (Cherry, 2015; Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1959). Integrative motivation urges the learners to utilize foreign language in their communication. The instrumental motivation encourages the learners to use the foreign language as a tool to pursue their dream jobs and income. For Thai students, Kitjaroonchai and Kitjaroonchai, (2012) revealed that instrumental and integrative motivational level were rather close, but instrumental motivation was higher than integrative motivation. The students were aware of the usefulness of English, and its benefits for their future. This finding was similar to the study of Thai students' attitudes towards success in fundamental English (Piriyasilpa, 2016) and Thai political science undergraduate students (Assavanadda & Tangkiengsirisin, 2018).

One of the predictors of success or failure in second language learning is fear and anxiety (MacIntyre, 2017). Learners with different levels of language proficiency can show distinct degrees of anxiety. Higher levels of language anxiety can correlate with lower levels of language achievement (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Foreign language anxiety (FLA) might be associated with test anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). Oral communication in a

foreign language learning context may provoke learners' anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Learners might feel limited in expressing themselves. They cannot express themselves in a new language as fluently as their native language. The ability to speak may cease to improve if they feel discomfort (Rubio, 2007). More anxious students could have less proficiency in speaking foreign languages (Gardner, Symthe, Clément, & Glicksman, 1976). More advanced learners could feel more aware of their identity and image so that they can communicate in the new language (Horwitz et.al, 1986). For Thai students, one main factor affecting their anxiety is taking an exam, and their high level of anxiety occurs either inside or outside the classroom (Chinpakdee, 2015). It is found that Thai students in a Japanese language course who had an opportunity to use Japanese and travel in Japan had lower anxiety than those without it (Chanprasert & Wichadee, 2015). If the context is supportive, the students might attempt to communicate. The opportunity to use a foreign language might help them to lower their anxiety. For foreign language learners, previous experience in an authentic target language context can overcome their language anxiety and facilitate positive outcomes for language learning.

Studying abroad has become popular in Thailand. Given a global perspective, the proficiency of Thai university students in English language needs to be enhanced. The students feel that interaction with foreigners could help them improve their communicative skills (Piriyasilpa, 2016). Language learners can benefit from a trip abroad even for a short-term, such as three to four weeks (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). They may not get the results directly in linguistic gains, but they can experience cultural and affective gains extensively (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012).

There is a dearth of research studies on the impact of the short language course on Thai students. Therefore, it is important to investigate the outcomes on language performance and related learning factors. The research question is whether studying a short language course abroad has an impact on Thai students' language skills and the affective factors. These could help provide an effective language course and activity for Thai EFL student language learning achievement.

Methodology

Participants

The students who applied for the project were selected to get a partial grant in order to participate in a one-month

English language course abroad. The participants were eighteen students, including 16 females and 2 males. The age range was between 18–20 years old. The course was scheduled with learning English language in the morning and cultural study in the afternoon.

Instrument

Language skills

The test included reading, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking. This test was applied from the standard English test for pre-intermediate level with the structure as follows:

1. 100 multiple-choice items were arranged for reading, listening and grammar.
2. 50-word essay writing and three-minute speaking presentation on the topic "my dream". The rubric for writing was 70 percent on content and 30 percent on grammar. The rubric for speaking was 70 percent on content, 20 percent on body language and 10 percent on grammar.

Affective factors

Three learning factors as attitude, motivation and anxiety were studied to supplement the test results. The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were designed.

1. There were fifteen items in the questionnaire. The items were adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985, 2004). The word choice in each item was also selected to help design the questions based on their lexical meanings. The word "like" appeared in the items for attitude, "want to/would like to" or "important for" for motivation and "anxious/worried" for anxiety. In the questionnaire, these fifteen items were all mixed: attitude (item 1, 3, 7, 12, 15), motivation (item 2, 5, 8, 10, 14) and anxiety (item 4, 6, 9, 11, 13). A five-point Likert Scale, ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" (on a scale of 1–5, ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5) was used in the study.

2. The semi-structured interview was arranged with three open-ended questions: (1) "How do you feel about the English language?", (2) "Why do you study English?" and (3) "How do you feel when you have to communicate in English?". The intent of the interview was to gather additional information on their attitude, motivation and anxiety respectively.

Data Collection

This study was focused on language performance and the possible learning factors that related to the results.

Therefore, before and after the trip, the participants had to (1) take the test to evaluate their language performance, (2) fill out the questionnaire and participate in a semi-structured interview. The interview was approximately 5 minutes per student. It was recorded and later transcribed for linguistic analysis to supplement the test results.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed for language performance and supplementary data as follows:

Language skills

The difference between pre-test and post-test scores for each part was statistically analyzed by *t*-test at $p < .05$. The minimum and maximum scores between pre- and post-test were also analyzed.

Affective factors

1. The data from the questionnaire were grouped according to the items for attitude, motivation and anxiety. The scales as 1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neutral”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree” were calculated. Then the data were analyzed in terms of mean values and standard deviation (*SD*) to indicate the level of each variable. The range of values was interpreted based on the following criteria:

Mean range

3.68–5.00

2.34–3.67

1.00–2.33

Interpretation

High level of attitude, motivation and anxiety

Moderate level of attitude, motivation and anxiety

Low level of attitude, motivation and anxiety

2. For the interview, the language data were grouped and analysed in terms of meaning that conveys attitude motivation, or anxiety. The words that showed their beliefs, likes or dislikes were categorized as attitude, the words with desire, hope, expectation, dream, or future goals as motivation, and the words that indicated their fear and nervousness for anxiety. The data were compared before and after the trip.

Results and Discussion

Language Skills

Most participants had higher post-scores. According to the results from statistical analysis by *t*-test at $p < .05$, the pre-test scores were significantly different from the post-test scores for every skill (Table 1). The highest difference between pre-test and post-test was in the speaking part. All but one participant improved by more than ten points in this part; that participant improved by 5 points (no.12).

Table 1 Pre-test and post-test scores for each part

LCI NO.	Reading		Writing		Grammar		Listening		Speaking	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	60	75	50	75	75	80	75	85	50	70
2	90	90	80	82.5	65	80	85	95	70	80
3	60	75	70	75	75	85	75	85	50	75
4	70	75	60	70	60	70	70	80	55	70
5	80	82.5	75	77.5	80	85	70	85	60	75
6	60	70	55	62.5	70	75	75	85	65	75
7	65	75	80	80	75	80	75	75	60	80
8	65	75	75	72.5	75	80	80	80	55	70
9	50	60	85	82.5	75	85	95	95	50	80
10	75	80	87.5	92.5	95	100	85	85	50	85
11	60	65	60	65	75	80	90	85	60	75
12	75	77.5	80	85	80	85	80	92.5	65	70
13	80	85	75	85	85	85	75	80	55	80
14	60	65	50	65	65	70	70	75	60	70
15	60	70	60	62.5	75	75	65	72.5	50	75
16	75	80	75	75	90	90	70	75	60	75
17	70	80	75	70	80	85	75	90	65	80
18	70	80	70	75	75	75	70	85	60	80
Mean	68.06	75.56	70.14	75.14	76.11	81.39	76.67	83.61	57.78	75.83
SD	97.47	56.29	134.17	71.67	72.22	52.37	61.76	45.75	38.89	21.32
<i>t</i> -Value	7.57*		2.61*		5.58*		4.88*		9.95*	

Note: * $p < .05$.

Even though the scores in other parts exhibited a slight difference between pre-test and post-test, the pre-test maximum scores reached between 90 and 95 points, which is already relatively high. For writing, the pre-test/post-test indicated three participants with a 2.5 (no.8 and 9) and 5-point decrease (no.17).

The speaking part had the greatest difference between pre-test and post-test. The minimum scores rose from 50 at pre-test to 70 points at post-test (Figure 1). The reading shows a minimum score at a pre-test of 50 and a maximum of 90. The reading post-test had a minimum scores at 60 and an unchanged maximum at 90. The gap between minimum and maximum scores at pre-test and post-test in reading part was 10 points less. Meanwhile, the minimum scores of pre-test in grammar and listening parts were at 60 and 65 points, with both maximum scores at 95. No changes for maximum scores were found in listening post-test. It remained at 95, whereas scores reached the maximum at 100 points for grammar. The minimum scores between pre-test and post-test also moved up from 60 to 70 points in grammar and 65 to 72.5 for listening. In addition, the score range on the writing component for pre-test was between 50–87.5 points and 62.5–92.5 for post-test. The minimum scores in writing pre-test/post-test were 12.5 points higher and the maximum with 5 points more. There were three participants with lower post-test scores in

writing (No. 8, 9 and 17). However, their post-test scores were not at the minimum level for writing part (72.5, 82.5 and 80 respectively). The gap between minimum and maximum scores on pre-test and post-test in this part also decreased from 37.5 to 30.5.

In addition, the mean values showed a low standard deviation in speaking part ($SD = 38.89$ in pre-test and $SD = 21.32$ in post-test) whereas the writing part exhibited the highest standard deviation of pre-test ($SD = 134.17$) and post-test scores ($SD = 71.67$). This could indicate that the participants had similar speaking skills but they might have different degrees of writing skills. In general, the standard deviation which exhibited the spreading out of data was lower in post-test scores for every skill. All participants were likely to improve their language performance in the same way after the trip. The difference in pre-test/post-test scores, mean values and standard deviation revealed individual and overall language development in this study.

Affective Factors

The questionnaire and the semi-structured interview showed positive results for attitude, motivation and anxiety. The participants had positive attitude and motivation towards English language before and after the trip. Their anxiety was likely to decrease after the experience abroad.

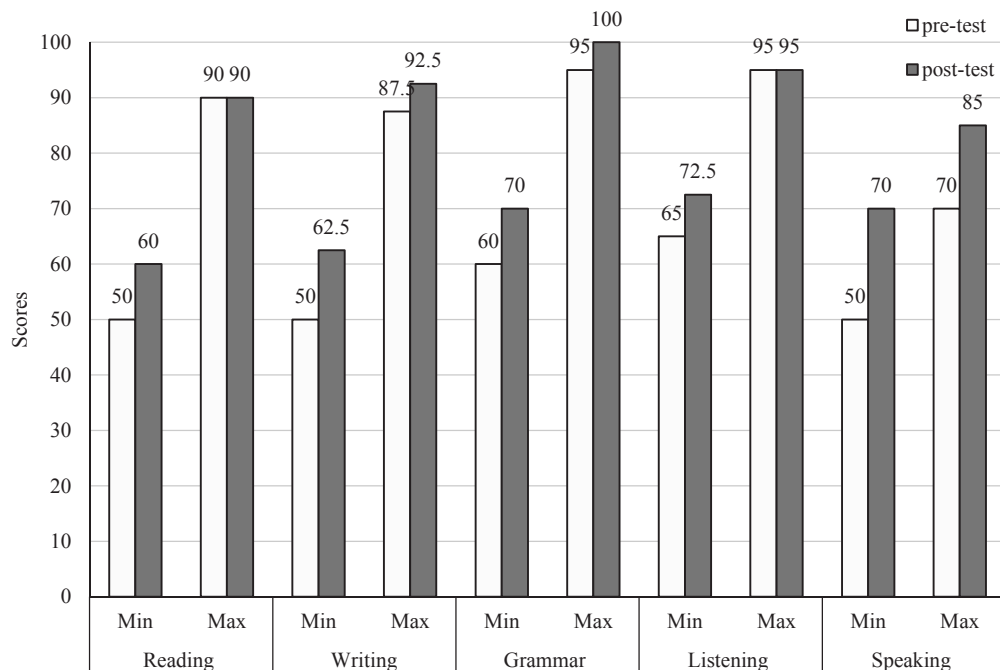


Figure 1 Minimum and maximum values on Pre-test and Post-test scores

Attitude and motivation

The results revealed that the mean values for attitude and motivation were higher than those before the trip (Table 2). The attitude towards English was better after experience abroad. The mean values were higher after the trip (from $\bar{x} = 4.32$ to 4.77). The item with the highest mean values was “English is an important language” (from $\bar{x} = 4.67$ to 4.94), followed by “I love all English accents” ($\bar{x} = 4.22$ to 4.89). Standard deviation of the highest mean-value item also showed the least spreading out of the data ($SD = 0.24$), which reflected the similarity of the responses. The participants strongly believed that English was an important language. In addition, the standard deviation of mean values after the trip also showed the lesser spreading out of the data after the trip (from SD of 0.75 to 0.42). It was exhibited that the participants shared the same opinions after their experience abroad.

The mean values for motivation after the trip showed the higher values (from $\bar{x} = 4.69$ to 4.90) with the lower standard deviation (from SD of 0.63 to 0.30). The highest mean values were from the same two items before and after

the trip as “Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job” and “Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English”. Before the trip, the mean values were at 4.94 and 4.83 respectively and both were at 5.00 after the trip with the standard deviation of zero ($SD = 0$). All participants agreed that English is important for their futures.

Anxiety

Among the three affective factors, anxiety seemed to change more than the other factors. The responses in the after-trip questionnaire showed a decrease of anxiety from moderate to low level. The mean values before trip ($\bar{x} = 2.57$) were higher than those after the trip ($\bar{x} = 1.82$). The highest mean values were the item, “I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.” before ($\bar{x} = 3.22$) and after the trip ($\bar{x} = 2.28$). This showed that classroom may not support the learning context for foreign language learners and could provoke learning anxiety. The standard deviation in anxiety reflected the

Table 2 Mean values of the questionnaire

Factor	Question	\bar{x}		SD		Level	
		Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Attitude	I have a favorable attitude towards the English language	4.56	4.83	0.62	0.38	High	High
	English is an important language.	4.67	4.94	0.59	0.24	High	High
	I enjoy all English language activities.	4.00	4.56	0.59	0.51	High	High
	The more I get to know native English speakers, the more I like them.	4.17	4.61	0.71	0.61	High	High
	I love all English accents.	4.22	4.89	1.00	0.32	High	High
	Attitude	4.32	4.77	0.75	0.42	High	High
Motivation	I have a strong desire to do well on English exams	4.17	4.61	0.92	0.50	High	High
	Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	4.78	4.94	0.55	0.24	High	High
	Learning English is important for travelling abroad.	4.72	4.94	0.57	0.24	High	High
	Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English	4.83	5.00	0.38	0.00	High	High
	Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	4.94	5.00	0.24	0.00	High	High
	Motivation	4.69	4.90	0.63	0.30	High	High
Anxiety	I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	3.22	2.28	1.40	1.53	Moderate	Low
	Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried.	2.37	1.72	0.92	0.96	Moderate	Low
	I would get nervous if I had to speak English to a tourist.	2.36	1.78	1.37	1.11	Moderate	Low
	I would feel uncomfortable speaking English anywhere outside the classroom.	2.48	1.61	1.27	1.04	Moderate	Low
	I feel anxious if someone asks me something in English.	2.44	1.72	1.38	0.96	Moderate	Low
	Anxiety	2.57	1.82	1.31	1.14	Moderate	Low

highest spread of data before (*SD* of 1.31) and after the trip (*SD* of 1.14). Overall, the results suggested that their individual factors may be different but the participants had low level of anxiety after the trip.

Their attitude, motivation and anxiety were expressed through their answers for each question in the semi-structured interview. The lexical items before and after the trip were slightly similar for attitude and motivation but different in anxiety (Table 3). The words: happy, great, fantastic, wonderful, good, and terrific appeared in the participants' responses to the question, "How do you feel about the English language?". This reflected their positive attitude towards English. All of them mentioned that they liked the English language and they thought English was the most important language.

For the question, "Why do you study English?", the participants conveyed their thoughts with lexical items such as: desire, hope, dream, would like to and want to. They study English as their tool to successfully continue their higher education and profession. For the anxiety question, "How do you feel when you have to communicate in English?", the word choice indicated differences before and after the trip. Some lexical items disappeared after the trip. The participants used fewer words that related to "fear". There were also words that could be defined as "self-confidence" such as "dare", "brave" and "confident" in the after-trip interview (Table 3). The word choice was changed for anxiety response. After the trip, the students' anxiety seemed to decrease whereas their self-confidence increased.

The results revealed that Thai EFL learners could improve language performance after a short language course. The speaking part indicated the highest improvement among other skills. For affective factors, all three exhibited the positive results. Due to the low level of anxiety and test results after the trip, the anxiety seemed to be the important factor for foreign language learners' speaking skills. The outside classroom context as studying abroad could help decrease learning anxiety and benefit foreign language learning.

Students' English skills had improved after the trip. The pre-test scores were significantly different from the post-test ones in every skill. Their performance could be positively provoked by a studying abroad context. Even a short trip can benefit foreign language learners (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). The impact of the trip on students' self-efficiency was found in previous studies (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012; Sağlamel & Doğan, 2016). The context provided a less stressful situation for the students, which helped foreign language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986) and affected learning motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). The students realized their potential in language learning and had a chance to utilize their English in a real-life situation. It obviously helped them to enjoy their language learning and triggered the positive outcomes. In addition, the smaller gap between minimum and maximum post-test scores also indicated an advantage of studying abroad for students' overall performance and higher individual development.

The highest mean-value difference between pre-test/post-test scores was found in the speaking part, whereas it had a slight difference in other parts. It is possible that the participants were already good at reading, listening, writing and grammar. The mean values for these skills were not lower than 60 in the pre-test, except for the speaking skills. Therefore, a great difference could not be obviously seen after the trip. According to the results, better speaking skills were revealed with lower levels of anxiety after the trip. Learning anxiety really could predict the failure or success of language learning (McIntyre, 2017). Even though oral communication in a foreign language learning context may provoke learners' anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991), supportive context could decrease anxiety and contribute to the students with the speaking skills. For the students, classroom context was the important factor that caused anxiety. It was reflected from the highest mean values for "I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class". The outside classroom context as studying abroad could help students with their anxiety and improve their language

Table 3 Examples of word choice from the interview

Factor	Before the trip	After the trip
Attitude	happy, great, fantastic, wonderful, good, terrific	happy, fun, enjoy, wonderful, great, terrific
Motivation	want, would like, hope, desire, look forward to	want, would like, hope, desire, look forward to
Anxiety	afraid of, fear, panic, worry, scare, frighten, terrify, shy, anxious, horrify, nervous, hesitate	fear, worry, anxious, nervous, confident, dare, brave

skills. The anxiety relatively played the main factor towards language performance in this study. From their after-trip interviews, two students confirmed that their highest improvement in speaking skills with lower anxiety was caused by outside classroom context (Table 4).

Lexical items such as “confident, dare, brave” were found in the after-trip interview. Here are some examples of the interviews before and after the trip.

Before the trip: *“I think English is very important for my future. However, I am not confident with my speaking skills.”* (LCI:15)

“I would like to improve my speaking skills. I like to speak with the foreigners, but I don’t have a chance outside university. I think I will get better improvement in a native English speaking country.” (LCI:18)

After the trip: *“This trip has opened my world. I love to speak English, and I think there is nothing wrong with making mistakes. I feel confident with my speaking.”* (LCI:15)

“People are very friendly and I do not want to leave. Speaking English is so exciting. I learned new vocabulary every day. I dare to speak with everyone in English.” (LCI:18)

These highlighted their gain in self-confidence from the trip, which helped them decrease their learning anxiety and had a positive impact on speaking skills.

From the questionnaire after the trip, everyone agreed on the idea of “Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.” and “Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.” These reflected that English was an important tool for their profession and communication. They concentrated on the language achievement that could help their future careers and communication in an international community. Thai EFL students showed their instrumental motivation for English language learning. This agreed with other studies on Thai students’ motivation towards English language (Assavanadda & Tangkiengsirisin, 2018; Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012; Piriyaasilpa, 2016). Even though this study could not indicate integrative motivation since it was focused on an overall concept, it could be assumed that

students may have high levels of both motivations. Integrative and instrumental motivations are not at the opposite ends of a continuum (Dörnyei, 2001). They are positively related and both are affectively loaded goals and can produce learning.

In this study, the participants were from the same curriculum, in which most subjects were taught in English. Therefore, their determination in English language learning was relatively strong. They expressed high level of motivation and attitude towards English language before and after taking the trip. Positive attitude and motivation could encourage the learners to overcome any obstacles to achieve their learning goals (Bong, 2002; Eshghinejad, 2016). This is likely to help them to overcome the anxiety in a short period of time. Their speaking performance proved that the possible weakness of foreign language learners, who already have high levels of motivation and attitude, could be the result of anxiety. An experience abroad or outside the classroom context can help improve their learning anxiety, which benefits language skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A short course abroad has a massive impact on students’ language skills, especially speaking. Outside classroom context can benefit them on both linguistic and non-linguistic gains. Positive roles of experience abroad (EA) on linguistic areas were shown from both formal and informal study abroad programs in target language contexts such as working or travelling (Thompson & Lee, 2014). In this study, the language performance seems to relate to the level of anxiety. After the trip, they were more determined to achieve their communication in English even if they would make grammatical mistakes. Studying abroad widened their views on using English language as an important tool. It is crucial to continue the project and provide the supportive learning activities for the students. The results suggested that Thai EFL students should experience a short course abroad in native speaking countries to study their target language if possible. The outside classroom context is essential for language learning.

Table 4 Responses from the first two participants with the highest score difference in the speaking part

No.	Before-trip interview	After-trip interview
9	I am afraid of speaking especially when I have to speak in class.	I think I am still nervous but I can speak with foreigners quite ok now.
10	I am fine with writing and listening but I get nervous with an impromptu speech.	I think English is not difficult to speak. You just have to speak out.

According to the results, these participants were motivated and had positive attitudes to study English. A prominent affective factor in this study regarding their language performance tended to be anxiety. It is interesting to compare the students from different educational fields to reveal whether level of anxiety will indicate learning improvement after a short course abroad. In addition, all participants mentioned that cultural differences had an influence on their English comprehension. However, this was not included in this study. The study should be extended to the impact of a short language course abroad on acculturation towards Thai EFL learners. It may provide valuable insight toward methods in language learning and teaching plans in the future.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University for a grant (281/2561) that allowed me to complete this research.

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