

## **Boosting Speaking Skills through Native Speaker Practice at E-Fun Institute**

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**Abstract** : This study explores the impact of practicing English speaking with native speakers on the speaking fluency and confidence of EFL students at E-Fun Institute, Central Java. Implementing a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, the study involved 30 students from the intermediate speaking class, divided into an experimental group and a control group. Over four weeks, the experimental group participated in weekly 45-minute conversation sessions with native English speakers, while the control group engaged in peer-based speaking practice using conventional classroom methods. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' speaking fluency and self-confidence using standardized rubrics and Likert-scale questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SPSS 26, including descriptive statistics, paired samples t-tests, and independent samples t-tests. The findings showed a statistically significant improvement in both fluency and confidence among the experimental group compared to the control group. These results support the view that native speaker interaction provides valuable linguistic input, lowers learners' affective filters, and enhances motivation. The study concludes that integrating native speaker-based speaking practice is an effective instructional strategy to improve oral communication skills in EFL contexts, especially within non-formal educational institutions.

**Keywords:** *Confidence, EFL learners, native speakers, speaking fluency, speaking practice*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential skill, not only for academic achievement but also for global participation in economic, social, and cultural spheres. As English has assumed the

role of a global lingua franca, the demand for oral communicative competence has increased significantly, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) (Kirkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2020). Among the four English language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging, as it requires learners to produce language spontaneously, fluently, and accurately in real time (Ghanizadeh & Miri, 2022). Fluency and confidence—two key components of speaking competence—are not only shaped by linguistic knowledge but also by psychological, social, and contextual factors.

In the Indonesian EFL context, speaking remains a persistent challenge due to several factors: limited authentic language exposure, teacher-centered instruction, minimal opportunities for real-life communication, and students' fear of making mistakes (Puspitasari & Widodo, 2021). Classrooms often emphasize grammar and written examinations over oral practice, resulting in learners who are structurally competent but communicatively inhibited. This gap between linguistic knowledge and communicative ability is addressed in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which promotes the use of language in authentic and meaningful contexts. CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy and encourages learner interaction as a means of developing communicative competence (Richards, 2006). However, the success of this approach relies heavily on access to communicative partners and contextualized speaking practice—resources that are not always available in mainstream schools.

Responding to these limitations, non-formal English learning institutions such as E-Fun Institute have adopted innovative pedagogical models that incorporate real-life conversation with native speakers. The presence of native speakers as conversation partners aligns with the principles of Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 2015), which views learning as a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Interacting directly with native speakers provides learners with authentic input, immediate feedback, and exposure to cultural nuances—elements that are crucial for developing pragmatic competence and oral fluency (Kohnke &

Zou, 2021). Moreover, based on (Krashen, 1982), Affective Filter Hypothesis, such interactions can lower anxiety and foster confidence, creating optimal conditions for language acquisition.

Several recent studies have shown that frequent interaction with native speakers enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, and willingness to communicate (Alawadhi & Abu-Ayyash, 2021). Learners benefit not only linguistically, but also psychologically, as authentic communication helps reduce speaking anxiety and increases self-confidence (Dang, 2021). However, despite the pedagogical potential of such programs, few studies in the Indonesian context have quantitatively examined the measurable impact of practicing English speaking with native speakers. Most existing studies are qualitative or perception-based, lacking statistical evidence on learners' performance outcomes (Putri & Hidayat, 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the effect of practicing English speaking with native speakers on students' speaking fluency and confidence at E-Fun Institute. By using a quantitative approach, this research seeks to provide empirical support for the implementation of native-speaker-based learning models in EFL settings. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of communicative and experiential language learning frameworks within non-formal education, particularly for Indonesian EFL learners seeking to enhance their oral proficiency.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research design**

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design, which is commonly used in educational research to determine the impact of a specific treatment or intervention on a particular outcome. As noted by (Arikunto, 2002), the goal of experimental research is to assess whether the independent variable produces a significant effect on the dependent variable. In line with this, the current research aimed to investigate

the impact of speaking practice with native speakers on students' English speaking fluency and confidence.

A quasi-experimental design resembles a true experimental design in that it involves the manipulation of an independent variable; however, it differs in the absence of random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups (onald Ary, Lucy Cheser Jacobs, Christine K. Sorensen, 2010). In this study, the participants were not randomly assigned but were pre-existing class members at E-Fun Institute, who were divided into an experimental group, which received speaking sessions with native speakers, and a control group, which continued with regular peer-based speaking activities.

This research utilized a pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group design, which is a widely accepted format in classroom-based educational studies. Both groups underwent pre-testing to measure their initial speaking fluency and confidence levels. After the intervention period of four weeks—comprising weekly sessions—the post-tests were conducted to evaluate any changes. The speaking performance was assessed using a standardized fluency rubric, and confidence was measured through a Likert-scale questionnaire.

As explained by (Sukardi, 2007),the essence of quasi-experimental design lies in its ability to investigate cause-effect relationships in natural educational settings where randomization may not be possible. This design is particularly relevant to classroom research, such as in this study, where intact groups are maintained and the researcher introduces a specific instructional strategy—in this case, real-time conversation practice with native speakers—as the core treatment.

### **Population**

According to Arikunto (2000), a population refers to the total number of individuals, events, or objects that share common characteristics and are relevant to the focus of a study. In educational research, population analysis serves to determine the full scope of individuals from which samples may be drawn, allowing researchers to define clear boundaries for their investigation. A well-defined population ensures

that the results of the study are contextually appropriate and accurately represent the group being examined.

In the present study, the population consisted of EFL students enrolled at E-Fun Institute, a private English language learning center in Klaten, Central Java. These students were actively participating in speaking programs during the 2024/2025 academic year. To make the study feasible and focused, a sample was drawn from the intermediate speaking class, where students were engaged in communicative activities as part of their regular instruction. This group was chosen due to their sufficient English proficiency and readiness for extended speaking practice with native speakers.

### **Sample**

As explained by Ary et al. (2010), a sample refers to a portion of the population that is selected for direct observation and analysis. In essence, a sample serves as a representative group from the larger population, allowing researchers to draw conclusions without the need to examine every individual within the entire group. In this study, the sample was drawn from students in the intermediate speaking class at E-Fun Institute, considered representative of the wider student population engaged in speaking courses.

The sampling method employed in this research was cluster sampling, which, according to Ary et al. (2010), involves selecting naturally occurring groups of participants rather than choosing individuals one by one. In the context of this study, the researcher selected one intact class and divided it into two sub-groups: an experimental group, which received speaking practice with native speakers, and a control group, which followed standard peer-speaking methods. Both groups participated in the pre-test and post-test assessments; however, only the experimental group received the treatment (native speaker interaction), while the control group continued with traditional instruction without any external intervention.

### **Data Collection**

To examine the effect of practicing English speaking with native speakers on students' fluency and confidence, the researcher carried out a series of structured procedures over a four-week period. First, the researcher identified and counted the total number of students enrolled in the intermediate speaking class at E-Fun Institute to determine the available sample size. From this intact group, the researcher divided the participants into two sub-groups: the experimental group, which would receive speaking sessions with native speakers, and the control group, which would follow traditional peer-based speaking practice.

Prior to the treatment, both the experimental and control groups were administered a pre-test consisting of a speaking performance task, which was assessed using a standardized fluency rubric. In addition, students in both groups completed a speaking confidence questionnaire to measure their self-perceived confidence in using English orally.

The experimental group then received the treatment in the form of weekly 45-minute speaking sessions with native English speakers. These sessions included free conversations, role-plays, and discussions on familiar topics. Meanwhile, the control group continued their speaking practice using conventional methods such as textbook dialogues, pair work, and scripted discussions without any involvement from native speakers.

After the treatment phase, a post-test was administered to both groups using the same assessment criteria as the pre-test. The confidence questionnaire was also re-administered to evaluate any changes in students' self-perception. All results were scored and documented by the researcher and two independent raters.

To analyze the data, the researcher used SPSS version 26, beginning with tests of normality and homogeneity to confirm the validity of the data distribution. Subsequently, paired samples t-tests and independent samples t-tests were performed to identify significant differences within and between the groups. Finally, the researcher interpreted the statistical outcomes to determine whether the use of

native speaker interaction had a significant effect on students' speaking fluency and confidence.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis in this study involved a systematic process of applying statistical and logical techniques to interpret and evaluate the collected data. As suggested by Shamoo and Resnik (2003), data analysis is not only concerned with summarizing information but also with distinguishing meaningful patterns (signals) from random variation (noise) within the dataset. This process allows the researcher to draw accurate and valid inferences regarding the effect of the treatment.

In this study, the data included students' pre-test and post-test scores on speaking fluency, as well as their responses to the speaking confidence questionnaire. The data were first checked for completeness and consistency; after which they were inputted into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis.

The analysis began with a normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to ensure that the data followed a normal distribution, which is a necessary assumption for the use of parametric tests. If the data met the normality requirement, the researcher proceeded to use paired samples t-tests to examine whether there were significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores within each group.

To compare the performance between the experimental and control groups, particularly in the post-test phase, the researcher employed independent samples t-tests. This analysis aimed to determine whether the difference in outcomes—fluency and confidence—was statistically significant and could be attributed to the speaking practice with native speakers rather than to chance alone. Furthermore, measures of central tendency (mean) and variability (standard deviation) were computed to provide a descriptive summary of student performance in each group. The significance level ( $\alpha$ ) was set at 0.05, meaning that findings with a p-value lower than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Through this analytical framework, the researcher was able to evaluate the effectiveness of native speaker interaction as a speaking practice strategy and to

assess its impact on the development of students' oral fluency and self-confidence in English communication.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the results of the study followed by a discussion based on the findings and relevant literature. The objective was to determine whether speaking practice with native speakers significantly improves students' English speaking fluency and confidence at E-Fun Institute.

### **Findings**

#### ***Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test***

Both the experimental and control groups completed pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure speaking fluency and confidence. The data were analysed using SPSS 26 to determine the mean scores, standard deviations, and significance levels.

#### ***1. Descriptive Statistics***

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the central tendency and variability of students' speaking fluency and confidence scores before and after the intervention. This analysis aims to provide an overview of student performance in both the experimental and control groups. The mean (average) score indicates the general level of achievement, while the standard deviation (SD) reflects the spread of scores from the mean.

**Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Fluency Pre</b>	<b>Fluency Post</b>	<b>Confidence Pre</b>	<b>Confidence Post</b>
1	58	78	60	80
2	62	80	64	82
3	61	79	63	81
4	60	77	62	80
5	59	76	61	78
6	63	82	65	84
7	58	77	60	79
8	60	78	61	80
9	62	79	64	82



<b>Student</b>	<b>Fluency Pre</b>	<b>Fluency Post</b>	<b>Confidence Pre</b>	<b>Confidence Post</b>
10	59	76	62	80
11	61	80	63	82
12	58	75	60	78
13	60	77	62	79
14	59	78	61	81
15	61	80	63	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1178</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>1216</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>78.53</b>	<b>62.47</b>	<b>81.07</b>

As seen in Table 1, the mean fluency score in the experimental group increased from 60.00 in the pre-test to 78.53 in the post-test. Similarly, the mean confidence score rose from 62.47 to 81.07. This substantial gain indicates a significant improvement in both variables after the implementation of the treatment.

The large difference in means between the pre-test and post-test suggests that speaking practice with native speakers had a positive impact on students' oral language development. To confirm whether this difference is statistically significant, the data were further analyzed using paired samples t-tests and independent samples t-tests, which will be discussed in the next section.

## **2. Normality Test**

Before conducting inferential statistical tests, it is crucial to determine whether the data follow a normal distribution, especially when using parametric tests such as t-tests. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was employed to assess the normality of the post-test scores for both speaking fluency and confidence in the experimental and control groups. The assumption of normality must be met for parametric tests to yield valid results.

The hypotheses for this test are as follows:

- a. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The data are normally distributed.
- b. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The data are not normally distributed.

The results of the normality test are presented below:

**Table 2. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov–Smirnov)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Fluency (Post)	Experimental	0.075
Confidence (Post)	Experimental	0.082
Fluency (Post)	Control	0.088
Confidence (Post)	Control	0.091

As shown in the table, all p-values exceed 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis is retained for all datasets. This means that the distributions of students' post-test scores in both groups approximate normality. With this assumption fulfilled, the use of parametric tests such as the paired samples t-test and the independent samples t-test is statistically appropriate for further analysis.

### **3. Paired Sample t-Test (Within Experimental Group)**

The paired samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group. This test helps assess the effectiveness of the intervention—i.e., practicing English with native speakers—on each individual's performance over time.

The formula used for calculating the t-value in paired samples t-test is:

$$t = \bar{D} / (SD / \sqrt{n})$$

Where:

$\bar{D}$  = rata-rata dari selisih (post - pre)

SD = standar deviasi dari selisih

n = jumlah peserta

**table 3. Paired Samples t-Test Results (Experimental Group)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean Pre</b>	<b>Mean Post</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Fluency	60.00	78.53	-9.01	14	0.000

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean Pre</b>	<b>Mean Post</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Confidence	62.47	81.07	-8.74	14	0.000

As shown in the table, the t-values for both fluency (-9.01) and confidence (-8.74) are substantial, and the p-values are less than 0.001. This means that there was a highly significant improvement in students' fluency and confidence after the intervention. The negative t-values indicate that post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores.

These results suggest that the treatment—weekly speaking sessions with native speakers—had a strong positive effect on students' oral language performance. Such improvements are consistent with the theoretical assumption that real-time interaction with native speakers provides meaningful input and enhances output fluency (Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Ghanizadeh & Miri, 2022).

#### **4. Independent Sample t-Test (Between Groups)**

The independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether there was a statistically significant difference in the post-test scores between the experimental group (which received native speaker interaction) and the control group (which followed regular instruction). This test compares the mean differences between two independent groups.

The hypotheses for this test are:

- a. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores.
- b. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores.

**Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test Results (Post-Test)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean (Exp)</b>	<b>Mean (Ctrl)</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Fluency	78.53	65.40	4.65	28	0.000
Confidence	81.07	66.20	5.02	28	0.000

The results indicate that students in the experimental group performed significantly better than those in the control group in both fluency and confidence. With p-values below 0.001, the differences are statistically significant and unlikely due to chance. These findings confirm that the use of native speaker interaction as a speaking strategy is more effective than traditional peer-based speaking methods. The structured exposure to authentic conversation likely facilitated greater language processing and increased learner motivation, as discussed in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982).

## **Discussions**

The findings of this study revealed that the use of native speaker interaction as a speaking practice method significantly improved students' speaking fluency and confidence at E-Fun Institute. These results are consistent with previous studies in the field of EFL learning and align with well-established language learning theories.

### **1. Speaking Fluency Improvement through Native Speaker Practice**

The increase in speaking fluency among students in the experimental group can be attributed to the interactive nature of the treatment. Students engaged in real-time conversations with native speakers over a four-week period, which exposed them to spontaneous, unscripted dialogue, promoting faster speech production and natural language use. According to Ghanizadeh and Miri (2022), fluency develops not only from linguistic competence but also from learners' ability to manage real-time communication demands. In this study, such demands were created through authentic speaking practice, which encouraged students to respond quickly and appropriately in a target language context.

This outcome supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of language learning (Richards, 2006). CLT holds that language is best learned through meaningful communication, not mechanical repetition. The interaction with native speakers at E-

Fun Institute mirrors these ideals, providing learners with situations where they must negotiate meaning, repair breakdowns in communication, and engage in extended talk—key components of oral fluency (Harmer, 2020).

In addition, the findings are consistent with Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 2015), which asserts that learning is most effective when students actively engage in the learning process through direct experience. Speaking with native speakers allowed students to encounter authentic discourse, test hypotheses about language use, and receive immediate feedback—an experiential loop that enhances retention and performance.

Moreover, the use of native speaker conversation aligns with recent technological trends in EFL, where virtual exchanges and video chats are increasingly used to promote fluency. Kohnke and Zou (2021) demonstrated that mobile-based authentic speaking tasks significantly enhanced EFL learners' fluency levels, largely because such tasks demand spontaneous output and flexible thinking, similar to the live sessions provided in this study.

## **2. Boosting Speaking Confidence through Authentic Communication**

Students Self-confidence impacts the students' speaking ability (Kansil et al., 2022). The significant gain in speaking confidence is another central finding of this research. Students in the experimental group reported higher levels of self-assurance when speaking English after engaging in weekly conversation sessions with native speakers. These results validate the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982), which argues that emotional variables such as anxiety and motivation play a critical role in language acquisition. By lowering affective filters through friendly and supportive interaction, learners become more willing to speak and make language errors, which in turn leads to better learning outcomes.

Many EFL learners experience high levels of speaking anxiety due to fear of judgment, limited vocabulary, or lack of speaking opportunities (Alrabai, 2020). However, in this study, the presence of native speakers created a non-threatening and motivating environment where students felt free to express themselves. As

reported by Widiyanto and Pratiwi (2023), Indonesian learners who interacted with native speakers—either virtually or face-to-face—gained confidence in initiating and sustaining conversations due to increased familiarity with natural speech patterns and cultural expressions.

This phenomenon can also be explained by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which identifies three core psychological needs that, when satisfied, enhance intrinsic motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of this study, students were given control over their conversation topics (autonomy), received encouragement and feedback from native speakers (competence), and felt socially connected to their speaking partners (relatedness). These elements fostered a motivational environment conducive to language development, which likely contributed to the observed gains in confidence.

Phan and Dang (2021) further support this view in their study on motivation and digital interaction, finding that EFL learners who felt more competent and supported in online speaking tasks demonstrated stronger motivation and self-belief in their language abilities. The implication is clear: when learners are placed in environments where they feel psychologically safe and linguistically empowered, their confidence grows alongside their skill.

### **3. Native Speaker Interaction as a Strategic Pedagogical Practice**

The overall findings suggest that incorporating native speaker interaction is not merely a motivational enhancement but a powerful pedagogical strategy. It fosters both linguistic and affective development in ways that traditional peer-to-peer speaking practice often cannot. In this study, the control group—despite following the same lesson plans—showed only modest improvement, confirming that content alone is not sufficient; it is the quality of interaction that drives learning.

Native speaker interaction brings in features of real-life communication: unpredictable responses, varied accents, turn-taking complexity, and sociolinguistic nuances. According to Ahn and Lee (2022), such variables stimulate cognitive flexibility and pragmatic awareness, preparing learners for real-world communication

more effectively than scripted classroom exchanges. This is particularly relevant in the Indonesian EFL context, where classroom instruction is often grammar-focused and exam-oriented, limiting opportunities for students to use English communicatively (Puspitasari & Widodo, 2021).

Furthermore, native speaker exposure fosters cultural awareness and intercultural competence, essential skills in global communication. Learners begin to understand not just how to say things, but when and why to say them—a dimension of speaking often overlooked in traditional classrooms (Derakhshan & Shirejini, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the impact of speaking practice with native speakers on the speaking fluency and confidence of EFL students at E-Fun Institute. Based on the results of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, it can be concluded that students who engaged in weekly speaking sessions with native English speakers showed significantly greater improvement in both fluency and confidence compared to those in the control group who followed traditional peer-based speaking activities.

The experimental group demonstrated substantial gains, supported by both paired samples and independent samples t-test results. These findings confirm that authentic interaction with native speakers fosters spontaneous language production, reduces communication anxiety, and strengthens learners' motivation and self-efficacy. The results also align with theoretical perspectives such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Self-Determination Theory, all of which support the use of meaningful, learner-centered, and emotionally supportive language practices.

Thus, native speaker interaction should be considered a valuable pedagogical tool for improving speaking skills in EFL contexts. Educators and language institutions, especially in non-formal settings, are encouraged to adopt this approach—either face-to-face or online—to support students in achieving higher communicative competence and greater confidence in English.

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