

## WEEKLY PAIRED CONVERSATION PRACTICE IN A 4-SKILL INTEGRATED ENGLISH COURSE

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper reports a pilot study aimed to investigate the effects of weekly paired conversation practice on 20 sophomore university students' conversation performance and foreign language anxiety. The results of the study indicated that the participating students benefited from their weekly conversation practice, and they made significant improvement in their conversation performance at the end of the study although their foreign language anxiety did not decrease significantly. Also, their conversation performance significantly and negatively correlated with their foreign language anxiety, which means the students with less foreign language anxiety performed better in their English conversations. Based on the findings of the study, suggestions for output performance instruction, dealing with foreign language anxiety, and future research will be made.*

**KEYWORDS:** EFL, Output, Conversation Practice, Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

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### INTRODUCTION

Students in Taiwan start to learn English in elementary school, and by the time they start going to university, they have already studied English for ten years. However, many students study English merely for the purpose of getting high scores on tests in school or national standardized exams, which results in the fact that many Taiwanese students are able to read, write, and listen to English for the purpose of passing a test but not conversing in English for authentic communication. This is one major reason why some Taiwanese students with high scores on international proficiency tests such as TOEFL and IELTS have difficulty expressing their opinions or participating in class discussions when they pursue a higher education in an English-speaking country. In addition, as EFL students in Taiwan, most Taiwanese students do not have chance to use or speak English after leaving the classroom, and this further adds to Taiwanese students' inability, or unwillingness, to speak English. Due to the two factors mentioned above as well as affective factors such as introvert personality and peer pressure, many Taiwanese students are generally weak in their speaking ability and they tend to have anxiety when they are required to perform speaking tasks.

In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), researchers have different beliefs, or theories, with regard to how ESL/EFL students can build their output skills, namely speaking