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FEAR OF JUDGMENT AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING ANXIETY: A CASE STUDY AMONG THAI EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Speaking English in a foreign-language context is often shaped by learners' concerns about how their performance will be evaluated by others. While prior research has documented speaking anxiety and its contributing factors among Thai EFL learners, the specific relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Thai high school students has received limited empirical attention. This study examined the relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Grade 10 Thai EFL students using a quantitative correlational design. A two-section questionnaire measuring both constructs on a five-point Likert scale was completed by 22 students. Both scales demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .877 for fear of judgment and .927 for English speaking anxiety). Descriptive results indicated variation in fear of judgment scores (M = 26.00, range 10–46) and English-speaking anxiety scores (M = 27.05, range 10–47). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation across all 22 students revealed a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety ($r = .707$, $p < .001$), indicating that students who reported greater concern about being judged also tended to report higher levels of speaking anxiety. A supplementary analysis using actual speaking-test performance scores, available for a subset of 10 students, found no significant relationship between the questionnaire measures and speaking test scores ($r = -.057$, $p = .875$ for fear of judgment; $r = .103$, $p = .776$ for speaking anxiety), suggesting that self-reported anxiety and observed speaking performance may not align directly in this sample. The study underscores the importance of building low threat, supportive speaking environments to reduce students' fear of judgment in EFL classrooms, while highlighting the need for further research on the relationship between self-reported anxiety and actual oral performance.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important part of English learning because students need to communicate ideas, respond to questions, and interact with others through spoken English (Marlia et al., 2023). In EFL classrooms, however, speaking can become challenging when students have to use English in front of teachers or classmates (Elisathusilawani, 2023). Students may know what they want to say but hesitate when they become aware of possible mistakes or reactions from others. Situations such as answering questions, giving presentations, or speaking individually can

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therefore create pressure that affects students' participation in oral activities. This makes students' emotional experiences an important consideration when examining English speaking in EFL classrooms. What lies beneath much of this pressure, however, is not the act of speaking itself, but the fact that students speak while being watched and, potentially, judged.

This sense of being watched and evaluated is what Watson and Friend (1969) captured decades ago in their concept of Fear of Negative Evaluation, describing the apprehension individuals feel about being judged unfavorably by others. When this concern is carried into the English classroom, it becomes something more specific: students begin to worry not just about speaking, but about what their pronunciation, grammar, or word choice might reveal to the people listening. It is this concern that the present study refers to as fear of judgment students' concern and worry about being negatively evaluated, criticized, or judged by others when they speak English in front of teachers or classmates.

Once a student starts worrying about being judged, that worry rarely stays as a quiet thought in the back of their mind it tends to surface physically the moment they are actually asked to speak, in the form of a racing heart, a shaky voice, or a mind that suddenly goes blank. Horwitz, and Cope (1986) described this experience through the concept of foreign language classroom anxiety, a situation specific form of anxiety involving feelings of tension, nervousness, apprehension, and worry when learners use a foreign language. Within this framework, communication apprehension refers specifically to the fear or discomfort individuals feel when required to communicate with others (Horwitz et al., 1986) a feeling that becomes very real for EFL students the moment they are called on to speak, as concerns about pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary translate into visible nervousness. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) added that this anxiety does not stop at emotional discomfort; it can also interfere with learners' cognitive processing while they are learning the language. In this study, therefore, English speaking anxiety refers to the feelings of tension, nervousness, apprehension, and worry that students experience when they are required to speak

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English.

Seen together, these two experiences the fear of being judged and the anxiety felt while speaking appear to describe two sides of the same coin. The problem becomes evident when students are afraid of being judged by others when speaking English: those who worry about their classmates' opinions may hesitate to answer questions, become nervous when speaking, avoid volunteering, or focus more on their mistakes than on expressing their ideas. This has been observed among Thai EFL students in particular. Esteban and Pratumtone (2024) found that fear of being laughed at or judged by classmates could lead Thai students to avoid speaking situations, while Qin and Poopatwiboon (2023) found that Thai EFL undergraduate students experienced English speaking anxiety, with low self-confidence identified as one of its dominant types. These findings show that students' concerns about others' judgments and their anxiety when speaking English are closely intertwined problems in speaking activities yet whether fear of judgment is actually, statistically, related to students' overall level of English-speaking anxiety is a question that remains unanswered. Examining this relationship among Thai EFL students is therefore the focus of the present study.

Previous studies on Thai EFL students' speaking anxiety have approached the issue from several angles without directly testing this connection. Qin and Poopatwiboon (2023) focused on the dominant types, levels, and coping strategies of speaking anxiety among Thai undergraduates, treating speaking anxiety as a single, self-contained variable rather than examining what predicts it. Bhattarachaiyakorn and Phettakua (2023) took a more detailed approach, breaking speaking anxiety down into six internal components including fear of negative evaluation itself, which they found to be a moderate level component, nested within the broader construct of speaking anxiety. Yet even here, fear of negative evaluation was treated as one piece of the anxiety construct being described, not as a separate variable whose relationship with overall speaking anxiety was statistically tested. This is precisely where the present study departs from both: rather than treating fear of judgment as an internal component of speaking anxiety, it is examined here as a conceptually distinct variable, and its relationship

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with students' overall level of English-speaking anxiety is tested directly a relationship that, to date, has not been specifically measured in the Thai EFL context. Before this relationship can be examined empirically, however, it is necessary to first establish what fear of judgment actually is and how it is theoretically grounded a discussion taken up in the following section.

The present study aims to examine whether there is a significant relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Thai EFL students. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence about the relationship between these two variables and contribute to a better understanding of affective factors in EFL speaking. The findings may also be useful for English teachers in recognizing the psychological pressure students may experience during speaking activities. This understanding can support teachers in creating speaking activities and classroom interactions that provide a more supportive environment, reduce students' concerns about being judged, and encourage them to participate more confidently in English communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fear of Judgment

To understand where students' fear of judgment actually comes from, it helps to go back to Watson and Friend (1969), who first gave this feeling a name: Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), a concern about receiving negative evaluation from others and worry about how one's behavior or performance may be viewed. Leary (1983) later picked up this idea and sharpened it, emphasizing that what people fear is not evaluation in general, but the possibility of being evaluated negatively, particularly in social situations. These two early perspectives already tell us something important: fear of judgment is not the same as anxiety in general it is anchored specifically in concern about how other people will judge us. Carried into an English-speaking classroom, this concern takes a very concrete shape: a student worries that their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or overall speaking performance will be seen as poor by the teacher or by classmates sitting nearby.

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But does a person need to actually be criticized before this fear kicks in? Rapee and Heimberg (1997) suggest not. Looking at social evaluative anxiety from a cognitive angle, they argued that this fear is driven largely by expectation by what a person believes others will think, regardless of whether that judgment has actually been expressed. This distinction matters a great deal for the present study, because it suggests that a Thai EFL student does not need to hear a classmate laugh or see a teacher frown to feel judged; the mere expectation that this might happen is often enough to trigger the fear. In other words, fear of judgment can begin well before, or even without, any actual negative response from others.

This anticipatory quality is what gives fear of judgment its particular shape, and it can be unpacked into three characteristics that run through the literature above. The first is heightened sensitivity to others' reactions a tendency to closely monitor how listeners respond, often assuming a more critical reaction than what is actually happening. The second, following Rapee and Heimberg (1997), is the expectation that mistakes will be noticed and judged negatively, even before any judgment is actually voiced; a grammar slip is not treated as a normal part of learning, but as something that will be caught and remembered. The third is avoidance because evaluative situations feel threatening, the instinct is to withdraw from them, whether by staying silent instead of raising a hand, giving shorter answers than intended, or avoiding speaking activities altogether. Recent empirical work supports this picture: Zhang et al. (2023) found that individuals with higher fear of negative evaluation showed stronger responses to negative social evaluative feedback, while Macovei et al. (2023) found that fear of negative evaluation was associated with social interaction anxiety. Together, these three characteristics sensitivity, anticipation, and avoidance are what the present study refers to as fear of judgment, understood not as an independently theorized construct, but as these same characteristics of Fear of Negative Evaluation made specific to the classroom situation where students must speak English in front of teachers and classmates.

This pattern is not merely theoretical: it shows up consistently among

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language learners, and especially among Thai students. Akkakoson (2016) found that fear of negative evaluation was one of the important anxiety components experienced by Thai university students in English conversation classrooms. A similar pattern appeared among Indonesian learners: Wardhani (2019) found that university students could become unwilling to participate in speaking activities simply because they assumed others might judge them negatively an assumption, not necessarily a fact, echoing Rapee and Heimberg's (1997) point about anticipation. Back in the Thai context, Esteban and Pratumtone (2024) reported that students experienced communication apprehension when speaking English, particularly when answering teachers or speaking in front of the class, with some students specifically concerned about being laughed at or judged by classmates when making mistakes. What these studies have in common, however, is that they treat fear of negative evaluation as one component nested within a broader picture of language or communication anxiety, rather than examining it as a variable in its own right. The present study takes a more specific position, treating fear of judgment as the independent variable and examining its relationship with English speaking anxiety among Thai EFL students directly.

English Speaking Anxiety

If fear of judgment describes the worry a student carries about how others will perceive them, English speaking anxiety describes what tends to happen once that student is actually put on the spot. This experience is grounded in the broader concept of foreign language anxiety proposed by Horwitz, and Cope (1986), who described it as a situation-specific form of anxiety tied to learning and using a foreign language, surfacing as tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry. Their framework identified communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as components feeding into this broader classroom anxiety which is itself a clue that fear of judgment and speaking anxiety, while distinct, are not strangers to each other. Importantly, Horwitz et al. (1986) were careful to argue that this is not simply anxiety that students carry into the classroom from elsewhere: the language classroom itself creates the specific conditions that produce it. Aida (1994) later observed this pattern among students learning

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Japanese, finding that anxiety varied according to classroom context, and Young (1991) similarly showed that classroom interaction and learning conditions shape how much anxiety students experience. Taken together, these perspectives support understanding English speaking anxiety as a specific form of language anxiety tied to the moment students must use English orally the tension, nervousness, apprehension, and worry that surface specifically when speaking is required, which is exactly how the present study defines it.

This anxiety, however, does more than simply feel uncomfortable it can quietly interfere with how students actually process language while speaking. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) argued that language anxiety can influence different stages of second language processing, from input to processing to output. Under this view, a student who freezes mid-sentence may not lack the vocabulary or grammar needed; the anxiety itself may be disrupting their ability to recall words, organize thoughts, or produce an answer in real time. This is a meaningful distinction, because it means English speaking anxiety cannot simply be explained away as a proficiency problem language difficulty may contribute to anxiety, but anxiety can just as easily interfere with performance independent of ability.Young (1991) reinforced this point by showing that classroom environment and teacher-student interaction shape language anxiety, suggesting that anxiety develops through the interaction between the learner and the speaking situation itself, not from the learner alone.

Among Thai EFL learners specifically, this anxiety has been documented at varying levels and traced to different sources. Akkakoson (2016) found moderate speaking in class anxiety among Thai university students, identifying fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety as important performance-related components a finding that already hints at the overlap between the two variables this study examines. Qin and Poopatwiboon (2023) similarly reported moderate English-speaking anxiety among Thai EFL students in Grade 10, with low self-confidence as a dominant type, while Bhattarachaiyakorn and Phettakua (2023) found high overall levels of speaking anxiety across six components, with grammar, vocabulary, and English oral proficiency identified as the most significant

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contributing factors. Poolperm and Boonmoh (2024) added yet another layer, showing that speaking anxiety could differ across onsite and online learning contexts. What these findings collectively suggest is that English speaking anxiety has no single source it can stem from confidence, language ability, or the conditions under which speaking takes place. Yet even where fear of negative evaluation has been identified as one internal component of this anxiety, none of these studies has isolated fear of judgment as an independent variable and tested its statistical relationship with English speaking anxiety as a whole. It is precisely this empirical basis the demonstrated relevance of judgment related concern, alongside the absence of a direct test of its relationship with overall speaking anxiety.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Grade 10 Thai EFL students. The study did not involve experimental treatment or manipulation of variables. Fear of judgment was treated as the independent variable (X), while English speaking anxiety was treated as the dependent variable (Y). The research was conducted at private Islamic school, Thailand, during the researcher's International Community Service Program (KKN Internasional). Data collection was conducted on 13 August 2026 for the questionnaire and on 17 August 2026 for the speaking test.

The participants were Grade 10 students from classes M.4/1 and M.4/2 who were available and willing to participate. A total of 22 students completed the questionnaire. Because of the limited number of students available at the research site, all eligible students who were available during data collection were included. In addition, 10 students participated in an individual speaking test as supporting data. The speaking-test participants were selected based on their willingness and availability. The speaking-test scores were not treated as a third variable and were not included in the Pearson correlation analysis.

The primary instrument was a 20-item questionnaire consisting of two

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sections: Q1–Q10 measured fear of judgment, while Q11–Q20 measured English speaking anxiety. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The fear-of-judgment items addressed concerns about being judged, criticized, laughed at, embarrassed, or negatively evaluated when speaking English. The English-speaking anxiety items addressed nervousness, worry, tension, lack of confidence, and anxiety when speaking English. Q20, "I feel relaxed when speaking English," was reverse-coded before the anxiety scores were calculated. Since the participants were Thai EFL students, the questionnaire was provided in English and Thai using translation and back-translation procedures to maintain the intended meaning of the items.

As supporting data, 10 students completed a short individual English-speaking task involving self-introduction, including basic personal information such as name, age, favorite color, and hobbies. Each student was given approximately two minutes to prepare before performing. The performances were video-recorded with the participants' permission and assessed using a structured rubric covering pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility. Each aspect was scored from 0 to 2, with a maximum total score of 10. The speaking-test results were analyzed descriptively and were used only to provide additional information about the participants' speaking performance.

Before data collection, permission was obtained from the school, and the participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation was voluntary, and the data were used for research purposes. The questionnaire data were coded and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, were calculated for both variables. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to examine data normality because the questionnaire sample consisted of 22 participants. Pearson Product-Moment correlation was then conducted to determine the relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety at a significance level of 0.05. The hypotheses were H_0: there is no significant relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Grade 10 Thai EFL students; and H_1: there is

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a significant relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Grade 10 Thai EFL students.

To support instrument quality, the questionnaire was reviewed for relevance to the two constructs, and its internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's Alpha. The translation and back-translation procedures were used to maintain conceptual equivalence between the English and Thai versions. For the speaking test, the same structured rubric and five assessment criteria were applied to all 10 participants to ensure consistency of scoring.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire Validity

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items completed by 22 Grade 10 students from M.4/1 and M.4/2 at Nida Suksasat School, Thailand. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely Fear of Judgment (Q1–Q10) and English-Speaking Anxiety (Q11–Q20). The corrected item-total correlation was used to examine whether each item adequately represented the overall questionnaire construct. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Validity Results

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Decision
Q1	.642	Valid
Q2	.619	Valid
Q3	.415	Invalid
Q4	.599	Valid
Q5	.643	Valid
Q6	.620	Valid
Q7	.446	Valid
Q8	.801	Valid
Q9	.652	Valid
Q10	.649	Valid
Q11	.815	Valid
Q12	.695	Valid
Q13	.747	Valid
Q14	.822	Valid
Q15	.776	Valid
Q16	.679	Valid
Q17	.729	Valid
Q18	.575	Valid
Q19	.650	Valid
Q20	-.599	Invalid

The results show that 18 of the 20 questionnaire items met the validity

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criterion, while two items, Q3 and Q20, were classified as invalid. Most items demonstrated adequate corrected item-total correlation values, indicating that they had a sufficient relationship with the overall questionnaire score. Q14 obtained the highest corrected item-total correlation value (.822), followed by Q11 (.815) and Q8 (.801). These results indicate that these items contributed strongly to the measurement of the intended constructs. In contrast, Q3 obtained a value of .415, which was below the required criterion.

Q20 requires particular attention because it produced a negative corrected item-total correlation value (-.599). The item was positively worded, namely "I feel relaxed when speaking English," whereas the other English Speaking Anxiety items were oriented toward anxiety-related experiences. Therefore, the difference in scoring direction should be considered when interpreting the validity result. The item should be reverse-coded when the intended scoring direction is that higher scores represent higher English-Speaking Anxiety.

Questionnaire Reliability

Table 2. Questionnaire Reliability Results

Item Set	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Fear of Judgment	10	.877	Good
English Speaking Anxiety	10	.871	Good
Overall Questionnaire	20	.921	Excellent

The results show that the Fear of Judgment scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .877, while the English-Speaking Anxiety scale obtained a coefficient of .871. The overall 20-item questionnaire produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .921. These results indicate that the questionnaire demonstrated high internal consistency. The items within each variable were generally consistent in measuring the intended construct. The overall reliability coefficient also indicates that the questionnaire provided a consistent measurement across the two variables. However, the reliability result should be interpreted together with the validity findings. Although the overall questionnaire showed high internal consistency, Q3 and Q20 did not meet the validity criterion. Therefore, these items may require revision or further examination in subsequent research.

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Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Responses

The descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the participants' responses to Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Responses

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Fear of Judgment	22	26.00	8.51	10.00	46.00
English Speaking Anxiety	22	28.68	8.89	14.00	47.00

Fear of Judgment obtained a mean score of 26.00 with a standard deviation of 8.51. The scores ranged from 10.00 to 46.00. English Speaking Anxiety obtained a higher mean score of 28.68 with a standard deviation of 8.89, with scores ranging from 14.00 to 47.00. The results indicate that both variables were present in the participants' English-speaking experiences. Fear of Judgment reflects students' concerns about being evaluated by others when using English. Such concerns may involve making mistakes, receiving criticism, producing incorrect pronunciation or grammar, or creating a negative impression when speaking English.

English Speaking Anxiety represents students' emotional responses during English-speaking situations. These responses may include nervousness, worry, tension, or discomfort when students are required to communicate in English. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) explain that foreign language anxiety involves situation-specific feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and worry in foreign-language learning situations. The difference between the two mean scores also provides an initial description of the participants' responses. However, the mean scores alone cannot establish whether Fear of Judgment is related to English Speaking Anxiety. Therefore, a correlation analysis was conducted to address the main purpose of the study. Fear of Judgment obtained a mean score of 26.00 with a standard deviation of 8.51. The scores ranged from 10.00 to 46.00. English Speaking Anxiety obtained a higher mean score of 28.68 with a standard deviation of 8.89, with scores ranging from 14.00 to 47.00.

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Relationship between Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety

The main analysis of this study was conducted to examine the relationship between Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used because the study employed a quantitative correlational design and aimed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the two variables.

Table 4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety

Variables	N	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Fear of Judgment and English Speaking Anxiety	22	.703	.0003

The analysis produced a Pearson correlation coefficient of .703 with a significance value of .0003. The result indicates a positive relationship between Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety among the participants. The positive direction means that higher Fear of Judgment scores tended to occur together with higher English-Speaking Anxiety scores. Students who reported greater concerns about being judged by others also tended to report greater

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anxiety when speaking English.

This finding can be understood through the social-evaluative nature of speaking activities. When students speak English in front of teachers or classmates, their language performance becomes directly observable. As a result, students may become concerned about mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or their general ability to communicate. Such concerns may be accompanied by nervousness or anxiety.

The finding is consistent with the conceptual relationship between fear of negative evaluation and anxiety in socially evaluative situations. Watson and Friend (1969) describe fear of negative evaluation as concern about being evaluated negatively by others, while Leary (1983) explains that concerns about evaluation can occur in social situations. In the context of English speaking, these concerns may become particularly relevant because students are required to produce language while being observed. Nevertheless, the correlation coefficient should be interpreted as an association rather than a causal relationship. The result does not demonstrate that Fear of Judgment directly causes English Speaking Anxiety. Instead, it indicates that the two variables were positively associated among the 22 participants included in this study.

Speaking Test Results

In addition to the questionnaire, 10 students participated in an individual "Introduce Myself" speaking test. Each student performed the task individually, and the performance was recorded in video. The speaking performance was assessed using five aspects: Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Fluency, and Comprehensibility.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Test Performance

Speaking Aspect	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Pronunciation	10	7.10	1.20	5.00	10.00
Vocabulary	10	6.90	1.37	5.00	10.00
Grammar	10	6.80	1.40	5.00	9.00
Fluency	10	7.00	1.33	5.00	10.00
Comprehensibility	10	7.20	1.25	5.00	10.00
Overall Speaking Score	10	7.00	1.41	5.00	10.00

The speaking-test results show that Comprehensibility obtained the highest mean score (M = 7.20, SD = 1.25), followed by Pronunciation (M = 7.10, SD =

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1.20), Fluency (M = 7.00, SD = 1.33), Vocabulary (M = 6.90, SD = 1.37), and Grammar (M = 6.80, SD = 1.40).

The relatively high comprehensibility score indicates that the students were generally able to make their spoken messages understandable during the "Introduce Myself" task. Pronunciation also obtained a relatively high mean, suggesting that the students' production of English sounds generally supported the understandability of their speech.

Grammar obtained the lowest mean among the five speaking aspects. This finding suggests that grammatical accuracy represented one area in which the participants showed comparatively lower performance during the speaking task. However, the result should be interpreted in relation to the limited nature of the task because students' grammatical performance may vary according to the complexity and type of speaking activity. The speaking-test results also showed variation among participants. Grammar had the largest standard deviation (SD = 1.40), whereas Pronunciation had a standard deviation of 1.20. This indicates that individual differences were present in students' speaking performance.

The speaking test was included as supporting descriptive data and was not used as the primary measure in the Pearson correlation analysis. Therefore, the speaking-test results should not be interpreted as evidence of a relationship between speaking performance and Fear of Judgment or English-Speaking Anxiety.

The findings demonstrate that the English-speaking experiences of the Thai EFL students involved both affective and performance-related dimensions. The questionnaire showed that participants experienced Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety, while the correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between the two variables. The relationship between Fear of Judgment and English-Speaking Anxiety was represented by a Pearson correlation coefficient of .703 with a significance value of .0003. This finding indicates that students who reported greater concerns about being judged also tended to report greater anxiety when speaking English. The result supports the importance of considering social evaluation when examining students' emotional experiences in foreign-language

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speaking situations.

The findings are relevant to the concept of foreign language anxiety proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986). Speaking in a foreign language can require students to produce language immediately while being observed by others. Consequently, concerns about mistakes and evaluation may become part of students' speaking experiences.The speaking-test results provide another perspective on the participants' English-speaking abilities. Comprehensibility obtained the highest mean, while Grammar obtained the lowest mean among the five assessed aspects. This difference shows that students' oral performance cannot be represented by a single aspect. Speaking requires the coordination of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility.

The questionnaire and speaking-test results also represent different types of information. The questionnaire measures students reported psychological experiences, whereas the speaking test provides direct information about observable speaking performance. Therefore, a student may demonstrate understandable speech while still experiencing fear of judgment or anxiety during the speaking process. From an English language teaching perspective, the findings suggest that speaking instruction needs to consider both linguistic development and students' emotional experiences. Teachers can provide gradual speaking activities, opportunities for repeated practice, supportive feedback, and classroom interaction that allows students to use English without excessive concern about making mistakes. The findings should nevertheless be interpreted within the limitations of the study. The questionnaire involved 22 students, while the speaking test involved 10 students. The speaking test also used one "Introduce Myself" task, so the results may not represent students' performance in other speaking contexts. In addition, two questionnaire items did not meet the validity criterion and should be reviewed in future revisions of the instrument.

Future research could involve a larger sample of Thai EFL students and employ additional speaking tasks to obtain a broader representation of speaking performance. Future studies could also revise and re-test the questionnaire items, particularly items that demonstrate weak item-total relationships. Further research

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may examine other factors that are potentially associated with English Speaking Anxiety, such as self-confidence, communication apprehension, motivation, or classroom environment on of the relationship between fear of judgment and speaking anxiety.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety among Grade 10 Thai EFL students at Nida Suksasat School. The findings showed that both fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety were experienced by the participants. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis involving 22 students revealed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between fear of judgment and English-speaking anxiety ($r = .703$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that students who reported greater concern about being negatively judged by teachers or classmates also tended to report higher levels of anxiety when speaking English. Therefore, the findings provide empirical evidence that fear of judgment is associated with English speaking anxiety in this group of Thai EFL students. However, the correlational result should not be interpreted as evidence of a causal relationship between the two variables.

The supplementary speaking-test results from 10 students showed variation across pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehensibility. Comprehensibility obtained the highest mean score, while grammar obtained the lowest mean score. These results provide additional information about students' observable speaking performance but were not included in the main correlation analysis. The difference between the questionnaire findings and speaking-test information also indicates that students' self-reported emotional experiences cannot necessarily be represented directly by their observable speaking performance.

The findings suggest that English speaking instruction should consider not only students' linguistic abilities but also their concerns about social evaluation. Creating supportive speaking activities, providing constructive feedback, and

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allowing students to practice speaking gradually may help reduce excessive concern about making mistakes or being judged by others. Nevertheless, the study was limited by its small sample of 22 students from one school and the use of only one speaking task with 10 participants. In addition, two questionnaire items did not meet the validity criterion and require further review. Future research should involve larger samples from several schools, refine and revalidate the questionnaire, and use multiple speaking tasks or longitudinal designs to further examine the relationship between fear of judgment, English speaking anxiety, and actual speaking performance.

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