English Speaking Anxiety of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students:

Dominant Type, Level, and Coping Strategies

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Abstract

This current study aimed to investigate the dominant type and level of speaking anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. In addition, this study explored their strategies to cope with speaking anxiety. Fifty-six first-year English major students participated in the study. The research instruments included a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) questionnaire was used to examine the dominant type and level of speaking anxiety. After the questionnaire, six students participated in a semi-structured interview to explore their coping strategies with speaking anxiety. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interview.

The results showed that low self-confidence is the dominant type of speaking anxiety, Moreover, the study found that most of the participants experienced moderate levels of speaking anxiety. Finally, the results also found that the participants used various coping strategies to reduce speaking anxiety, namely focusing their attention on other things, asking for help, preparing in advance, positive thinking, or using helpful tools. Other research methodologies and implications for future studies are also suggested.

Keywords: English speaking anxiety, Thai EFL undergraduate students, dominant type, level, coping strategies

1. Introduction

It is widely known that there are four skills in English learning. The skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. (Asysyifa et al., 2019). Efrizal (2012) expresses that Speaking is of great significance to the interaction between people. Because among the four skills, speaking is the main way of exchanging information between people. Furthermore, Hornby (1995) defines speaking becomes the skill that is mostly used in communication. Speaking is the most convenient and fast way of communication. Speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. Parmawati (2018) also states that speaking has been the most important skill in English language learning. Speaking is one of the essential skills that play a fundamental part in any language is speaking, particularly in English. Speaking is necessary for communication as we communicate with others, express our ideas, and exchange information through speaking (Quershi, 2010).

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has long been regarded as an important aspect of second/foreign language (SL/FL) learning (Horwitz & Cope,1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994 a; Liu, 2016). Ellis (1994) states "Foreign language anxiety is a kind of situational anxiety, which is related to learning a second language and trying to communicate in a second language. Speaking anxiety is one of the most serious problems in FLA (Basic, 2011). Wilson (2006) defines foreign language speaking anxiety as the feeling of fear that occurs when using the language orally. Speaking anxiety influences the students' self-confidence because it often makes them experience failure when unable to speak and express their knowledge.

Previous studies in the EFL context have investigated English-speaking anxiety in SLA (Faulin & Soefendi, 2013; Marzuki et al., 2016; Chiu et al., 2016; Bastida Jr. & Yapo, 2019; Netta et al.,2020; Taqwa et al.,2022)

They found that foreign language speaking anxiety is common in EFL classrooms, teachers do not always identify anxious students, and often attribute their unwillingness to participate in speaking tasks to factors such as lack of motivation or low performance (Areti, 2009). In recent years, a considerable number of studies have emerged on foreign language anxiety among Thai EFL learners (e.g., Rungruangthum, 2011; Kittima, 2016; Porkaew & Fongpaiboon, 2018; Somchob & Sucaromana, 2022), little is known about English speaking anxiety, especially in Thai EFL students. Previous research focuses on second language anxiety among students of different majors (e.g., Kitttigosin, 2015; Nadarajan, 2008; Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005), but few attempts to explore English major students. However. studies on speaking anxiety with regards to dominant type, level, and coping strategies among Thai EFL students remain rare, especially at the tertiary level. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the dominant type and level of speaking anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, and explored their strategies for coping with speaking anxiety. The results of this study may help teachers in designing the process of English speaking classes and minimize English speaking anxiety to encourage students to enhance their English speaking ability and also provide broader pedagogical implications for EFL instructors.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Previous Studies on Types of English-speaking Anxiety

Several studies have examined the types of speaking anxiety in EFL contexts around the world. Khaoula (2012) explored the types of foreign language speech anxiety in third-year students at Mohammed Khider Biskra University, and the effects of this anxiety on their speaking performance. The study used a questionnaire and found that most foreign language students tend to be anxious in speaking situations more than in other situations, such as listening, reading, and writing. Melouah (2013) also investigated the nature of the speaking anxiety experienced by first-year students of English at Saad Dahlab University of Blida. Through the use of quantitative methods, this study used Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to measure the level of speaking anxiety exhibited by the participants. The findings suggested that foreign language speaking anxiety was pervasive among first-year LMD students and appeared to mostly stem from fear of interaction, error correction, language proficiency, low self-confidence, and self-esteem. Ozturk & Gurbuz (2014) investigated the major type of foreign language speaking anxiety in pre-intermediate students of an English preparatory program at a state Turkish university. The results demonstrated that most of the students perceive speaking as an anxiety-provoking type. It was also found that pronunciation, immediate questions, fears of making mistakes, and negative evaluation are the major types of EFL speaking anxiety. It was proposed that foreign language speaking anxiety is a separate phenomenon with its sources, aspects, variables, and effects on learners. Mobarak (2020) investigated the types of English Language Speaking Anxiety from Bangladeshi university students' perspectives. The FLSAS was used to measure the types of English speaking anxiety. The results from the study showed that all of the types presented in the questionnaire were responsible for the learners' English speaking anxiety. Additionally, the findings of the study revealed that fear of negative evaluation received the highest average followed by fear of the perception of others, fear of communication, low self-esteem, and language proficiency types. Yildiz (2021) used semi-structured one-on-one interviews and e-mail interviews to identify the types of English speaking anxiety in non-English major students. The results revealed that the situations that provoke speaking anxiety among non-English major academics can be grouped under five main themes: academics' English proficiency, academics' self-evaluation, learner behaviors, learner inadequacies, and cultural differences. To summarize, there are many types of EFL learners' speaking anxiety, including individual, environmental, and educational types, as well as internal and external variables. The main types of speaking anxiety are individual types, such as proficiency, self-confidence, fear of grammar mistakes, fear of pronunciation mistakes, and attitudes toward English.

2.2 Previous Studies on Levels of English Speaking Anxiety

Previous studies in the EFL context have investigated levels of English speaking anxiety. Minying (2013) investigate the level of anxiety students in the 4th and 6th grades of elementary school feel while speaking. A modified version of the FLCAS study developed by Horowitz was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions to measure the students' anxiety when speaking English. The questionnaire results were analyzed using a statistical program. Students do suffer from anxiety when speaking in English. However, the level of anxiety differs based on previous or extra-curricular English studies. Another important type that influences anxiety levels is the motivation the students have to learn English. Ewelina (2014) investigated the level of foreign language speaking anxiety among Polish EFL learners from the senior secondary school in Bochnia. foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) was measured to provide quantitative data. The results showed that the level of foreign language speaking anxiety of the majority of the total sample was low. Keong &

Jawad (2015) examined the level of 20 Iraqi EFL Master students' speaking anxiety. The participants were studying at the English Language Studies Programme, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of a Malaysian university. The findings indicated that the majority of EFL postgraduate students experienced moderate anxiety speaking in English specifically in academic settings. Gürsoy & Korkmaz (2018) investigated the speaking anxiety levels of freshmen and prospective ELT teachers at a state university in Turkey. Designed as sequential mixed method research. The quantitative data was collected via a questionnaire from 117 participants, 10 of which were interviewed afterward. The results showed that prospective ELT teachers had a moderate level of speaking anxiety, and freshmen had a higher level of anxiety. There were significant differences between female and male prospective teachers as well as the type of high schools prospective teachers graduated from. It was also found that proficiency levels had a significant effect on the level of speaking anxiety and there was a negative correlation between them. Taqwa et al., (2022) investigated the students' speaking anxiety levels. This study involved 62 students in the second semester of the English Education Department, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. The results showed that there were 8 students categorized with a very anxious level, 29 students with an anxious level, 23 students with a mildly anxious level, and 2 students with a relaxed level. Students with mildly anxious levels and very anxious levels were interviewed to probe for richer data.

Regarding the studies above, it can conclude that the level of speaking anxiety among students is relatively moderate even though it is presented in different languages and different situations. Therefore, it shows that speaking anxiety is not an unusual phenomenon that occurs in a foreign language and is inevitable in the context of a foreign language classroom.

2.3 Previous Studies on English Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategies

Genc et al., (2016) investigated the strategies used by Turkish EFL students using the Anxiety Coping Strategies Scale. The findings revealed that the majority of Turkish EFL learners, experienced foreign language speaking anxiety to various degrees and many also applied particular strategies to overcome their foreign language speaking anxiety, including resignation, preparation, peer seeking, relaxation, and positive thinking. Widhayanti (2018) investigated the types that provoke students' speaking anxiety and their coping strategies to overcome speaking anxiety. This study found that some situations lead to students' speaking anxiety such as classroom procedures, student's beliefs, teacher's beliefs, self-perceptions, social environment, errors in society, topic understanding, and cultural differences. Students used memory and cognitive strategies to overcome their anxiety. Hidayoza et al., (2019) aimed at measuring and identifying coping strategies and examining the correlation between the level of speaking anxiety and the use of coping strategies. The participants were English department debaters at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing. The results showed that English department debaters experience a moderate level of speaking anxiety and peer seeking was the dominant coping strategy used to deal with anxiety. Netta et al., (2020) also found that students applied several strategies to deal with their speech anxiety, including having adequate preparation and practice and using hand and body movements when delivering a speech. This study recommends that teachers promote such strategies to other EFL students so that they can overcome their fear of public speaking. Maharani & Roslaini (2021) investigated the coping strategies that most students use to overcome speaking anxiety during online learning. Based on responses on closed- and open-ended questionnaires, it was found that the respondents mostly used the strategies of preparation, positive thinking, and peer seeking to cope with speaking anxiety in the context of online learning. Finally, Ramayani et al., (2022) found that most students were mildly anxious (58% of respondents) and test anxiety was the dominant type of anxiety experienced by the students (67% of respondents). The strategy used the most by students to overcome their anxiety in speaking was relaxation, followed by praying, drinking water, taking a deep breath, squeezing hands, imagining idols, and trying to calm down. However, some students do not use active strategies and instead practice avoidance strategies to cope with their speaking anxiety (i.e., 'non-active strategy'; Lizuka, 2010; Spielmann & Randofsky, 2001). Students adopt this strategy due to their fear of committing mistakes and a tendency to have received negative feedback and assessment from others (Pappamihiel, 2002). Students using these non-active strategies tend to escape, avoid, withdraw, and inhibit speaking interactions.

Previous studies have argued that teachers who acknowledge student anxiety and attempt to ease this anxiety facilitate the opportunity for teacher-student transactions. Indeed, once students are comfortable, they are at ease and less bothered by their anxiety. As such, a supportive environment can facilitate the learning process and educators should therefore base their instructional decisions on their students' physiological reactions and experiences.

3. Conceptual Framework

According to some scholars (Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Abdalaziz M. Toubot & Goh Hock, 2018), speaking anxiety is a hindrance to successful language learning as it curbs the English speaking learning process. Also, based on the related literature on speaking anxiety, a learner can be more anxious when making a formal speech although he or she has self-confidence in his or her capabilities since he or she has experience handling similar cases whereby the situation is informal. From the perspective of the previous studies on foreign language speaking anxiety and related theories, the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) questionnaire which was adopted from Ozturk and Gurbus (2014) is not divided into types. Therefore, Toubot et al., (2018) conducted an Exploratory Type Analysis (ETA) to identify speaking anxiety types. The ETA examines speaking anxiety comprises communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence, which forms around the speaking component in an English speaking class (Toubot et al., 2018).

Based on the ETA framework, the study adopted the research methods which was conducted in Toubot's study. This approach is typified by the researcher putting forward a theory exemplified within a specific hypothesis.

4. Research Objectives

Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the dominant type and level of speaking anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, and explored their coping strategies for coping with this anxiety. The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

(1) What is the dominant type of the participants' anxiety in speaking English?

(2) What is the level of speaking anxiety of the participants?

(3) What coping strategies do the participants use to manage their English-speaking anxiety?

5. Method

5.1 Participants and Setting

The current study was conducted at a public university in the Northeast part of Thailand. Participants were selected via purposeful sampling. First-year students were selected for this study. The participants were studying in an English program and taking a course titled English Listening and Speaking for Communication (ELSC). The course aimed to help students master the listening and speaking skills necessary for effective communication. All the participants volunteered to take part in the study and the participants were informed of the purpose of the study.

5.1.1 Participants' Information in the Questionnaire Section

Fifty-six students participated in the questionnaire, with 40 female students (71.43%) and 16 male students (28.57%). The age range of the participants was 18-19 years old. Most of the participants were 19 years old (75.34%), and some were 18 years old (24.66%). These participants generally had fewer chances to speak English in their daily life.

5.1.2 Participants' Information in the Semi-structured Interview Section

After the FLSAS questionnaire section, six first-year English-major participants with high, moderate, and low speaking anxiety levels (based on FLSAS scores were purposively analyzed to participate in the semi-structured interview).

5.2 Research Instruments

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used in this study. Two research instruments were used in this study to investigate the dominant type and level of participants' English speaking anxiety and explored their coping strategies with speaking anxiety. These instruments were described in detail below.

5.2.1 Questionnaire (Q1+Q2)

The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) questionnaire which was adopted from Ozturk and Gurbus (2014) was used to investigate the dominant type and level of Thai EFL undergraduate students' anxiety in English speaking. The questionnaire items were also validated based on the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), and three experts were asked to assess the items. Each item was rated on a 3-point scale: +1=congruent, 0=not sure, and -1=Incongruent. The FLSAS includes 18 items, and all the items are based on three constructs: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly

agree'). The FLSAS questionnaire was given to all participants to complete.

5.2.2 Semi-structured Interview (Q3)

A semi-structured interview was used to explore the participants' coping strategies when they face speaking anxiety. Each interviewee was asked to answer three questions about speaking anxiety and their coping strategies. After completing the FLSAS questionnaire, the total scores were calculated. Based on these scores, a score of 72 or higher reflected a high level of speaking anxiety, whereas a score ranging from 54-72 reflected a moderate level of speaking anxiety, and a score less than 54 indicated a low level of foreign language speaking anxiety (Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2014). Two students from each level were selected for the semi-structured interview. Finally, 6 students were selected to participate in the semi-structured interview.

The semi-structured interview was conducted face-to-face and the Thai language was used to ensure the participants felt comfortable expressing their opinions and were able to clearly express their views. A Thai native speaker conducted the semi-structured interview, who was a master's student in the ELT program at Mahasarakham University. During the interview, each interviewee answered three questions. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. All the transcripts were returned to the respondents for verification. All contents of the interview were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

5.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection began after testing the reliability and validity of the research instruments. The data collection procedure was conducted face-to-face, including the FLSAS questionnaire and the semi-structured interview section. First, the researcher obtained permission from the instructor of the Listening and Speaking for Communication (ELSC) course before coming to her/his class to distribute a questionnaire during recess time. Second, the researcher explained the purposes of the study and the FLSAS questionnaire details to the participants in the class. The questionnaire together with the instructions and consent forms was distributed to the participants. And the participants completed the FLSAS questionnaire. Finally, the total scores from the FLSAS were calculated and the data were analyzed by SPSS. Six participants with high, moderate, and low speaking anxiety levels (based on FLSAS scores) participated in a semi-structured interview.

5.4 Data Analysis

For the first research question which pertained to the type of speaking anxiety, the frequencies and percentages of responses to each item were obtained and they formed the basis of the analysis. According to Exploratory Type Analysis (Toubot et al., 2018), after deleting from the original 9 items, there were 7 items related to the CA type left for data analysis. As for the second research question, the total score based on the answers to each item given by each respondent on the Likert scale was tabulated. Five Likert scales were used to measure students' level of speaking anxiety. For the third research question, responses from the semi-structured interview were analyzed using content analysis, to present the coping strategies of students' English speaking anxiety through the qualitative data.

6. Results

6.1 Research Question 1

The first research question of the present study investigated the dominant type of Thai EFL undergraduate students' anxiety in speaking English. Three types of speaking anxiety were assessed including communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence (Toubot et al., 2018).

6.1.1 The Average of the Strongly Agree and Agree to Alternatives for the Three Types

From the quantitative data, it can be found that many types lead to speaking anxiety of the participants, namely: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence. Table 1 showed the dominant type of speaking anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. It can be seen from the table that the dominant type that leads to Thai EFL students' speaking anxiety is low self-confidence.

Table 1. The average of the strongly agree and agree alternatives for the three types

No.	Types	Average (%)
1	Low self-confidence	33.5
2	Communication apprehension	32.43
3	Fear of negative evaluation	32.4

Table 1 was arranged in descending order which illustrated that the highest average is LSC with 33.5, followed by CA type with an average of 32.43. The lowest average is FNE type which is 32.4. The results indicate that the majority of the students 33.5 experience low self-confidence. Also, the results refer that low self-confidence as the dominant type of speaking anxiety among 56 first-year English major undergraduate students.

6.1.2 Low Self-confidence

The first part of the questionnaire focuses on low self-confidence and its contribution to speaking anxiety. Self-confidence is one of the personality types that highly correlates with speaking anxiety (Park & Lee, 2005). Figure 1 presents the percentage of students who chose 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' on the four items related to self-confidence.
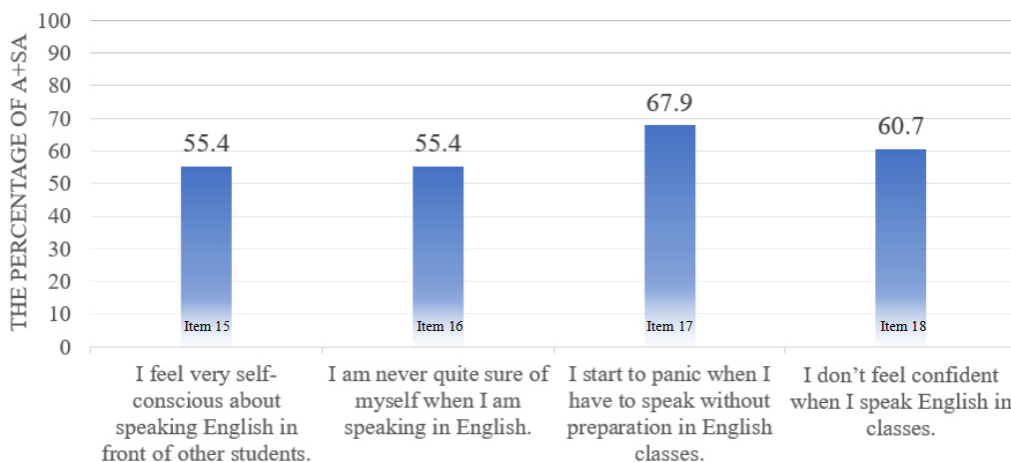

Figure 1. Percentage of A+SA for Low Self-confidence Items

Figure 1 illustrates that participants feel anxious and experience speaking anxiety due to their lack of self-confidence. More specifically, 55.4% of the participants feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students (item 15). Similarly, 55.4% of the participants agreed that they are never quite sure of themselves when they speak English (item 16). More than half of the participants (67.9%) reported that they start to panic when they have to speak without preparation in English classes. This item scored the highest, indicating that it is a leading type of speaking anxiety due to low self-confidence. Moreover, 60.7% of the participants did not feel confident when they speak English in classes.

6.1.3 Communication Apprehension

The second part of the questionnaire investigated the dominant type of speaking anxiety, with a focus on the communication apprehension aspect (Toubot et al., 2018). An ETA was conducted to identify speaking anxiety types. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Figure 2 presents the percentage of the participants who responded 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' on the seven items related to communication apprehension.
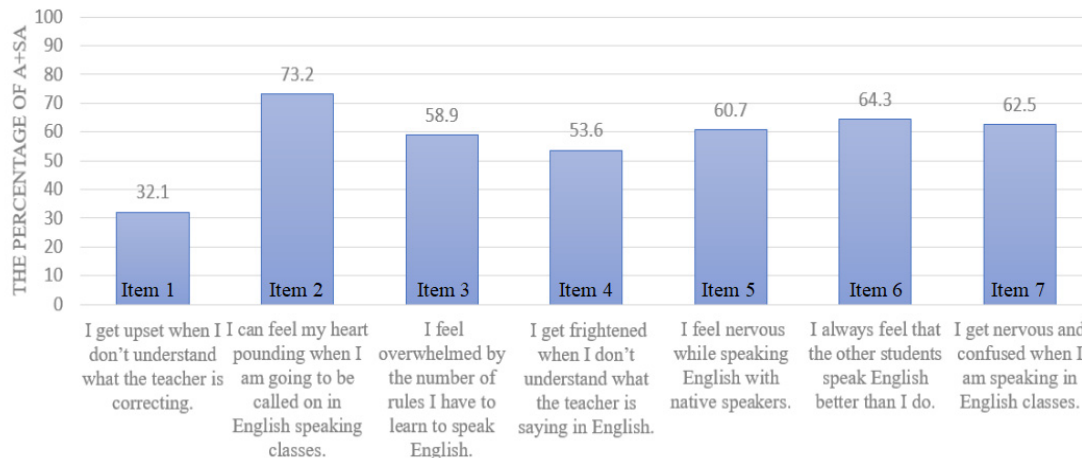

Figure 2. Percentage of A+SA for Communication Apprehension Items

The responses obtained from the first-year English major students demonstrate that 32.1% of the participants agreed that they are upset when they don't understand what the teacher is correcting (item 1) and 73.2% of participants felt their hearts pounding in English speaking classes (item 2), which scored the highest level of agreement. More than half of the participants (58.9%) felt overwhelmed by the number of rules they have to learn to speak English (item 3). This was noticed when the participants' responses to items 5, 7, and 4 with a percentage of 60.7%, 62.5%, and 53.6%. Most of the students felt nervous and confused when speaking English with foreigners or in English speaking classes (60.7%) and also felt frightened when they don't understand what the teacher is saying in English (62.5%). The results also showed that two-thirds of the students were pressured by their peers when faced with speaking anxiety and that they always feel that the other students speak English better than them (64.3%).

6.1.4 Fear of Negative Evaluation

The third part of the questionnaire aimed to examine the extent to which fear of negative evaluation (FNE) contributes to speaking anxiety. Figure 3 shows the percentage of students who chose 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' on the five items related to FNE.
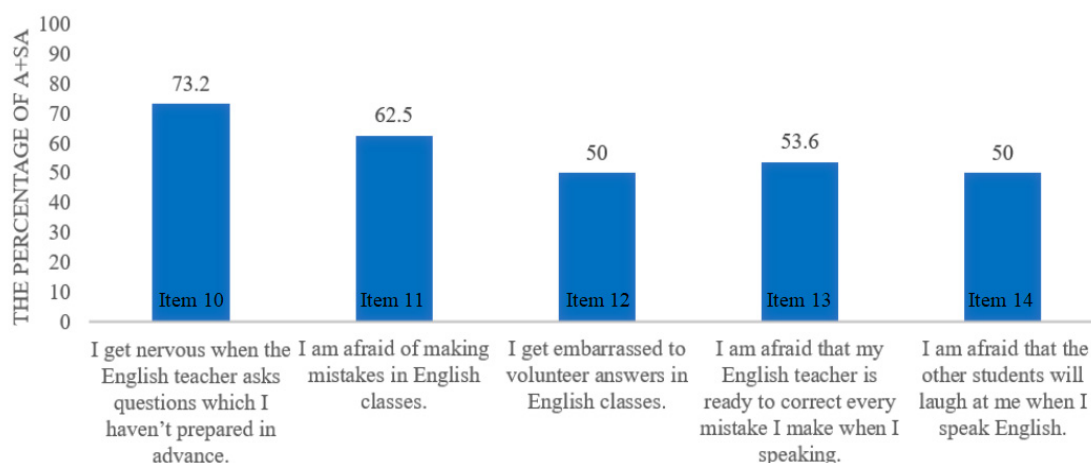

Figure 3. Percentage of A+SA for Fear of Negative Evaluation Items

As shown in Figure 3, 73.2% of participants experienced nervousness when the English teachers asks questions that they had not prepared for in advance (item 10). This item was the most prevalent anxiety-provoking type in FNE. The results also indicated that 62.5% of participants agreed that they were afraid of making mistakes in English speaking classes (item 11). Half of the participants agreed that it embarrassed them to volunteer to answer in English classes (item 12) and 53.6% of participants were afraid that their English teacher will correct every mistake they make when they speak (item 13). Finally, 50% of the participants reported being afraid that other students will laugh at them when they speak English (item 14).

6.2 Research Question 2

The second research question of the present study examined the level of speaking anxiety that Thai first-year English major undergraduate students experience. The results from the FLSAS questionnaire on the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by the participants are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' levels of speaking anxiety

Level of speaking anxiety	Number of respondents	Percentage
Low (Total score of less than 54)	9	16%
Moderate (Total score between 54 and 72)	28	50%
High (Total score of more than 72)	19	34%
Total	56	100%

The results presented in Table 2 revealed that most of the first-year English major undergraduate students experienced a moderate level of speaking anxiety, with half of the students experiencing a moderate level of speaking anxiety.

6.3 Research Question 3

The third question of the current study explored students' strategies for coping with speaking anxiety. To get in-depth information to see the Thai EFL undergraduate students' coping strategies when they face speaking anxiety, six interviewees participated in the interview section. In the current study, half of the interviewees reported that they reduced speaking anxiety by focusing their attention on other things. Two of the interviewees said that they ask for help from their teachers or classmates and two prepared the content of the class in advance or used positive thinking to reduce speaking anxiety. One of the interviewees also used helpful tools to reduce speaking anxiety. These themes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

6.3.1 Focus their Attention on Other Things

The first coping strategy used by half of the Thai EFL undergraduate students to deal with English speaking anxiety was focusing their attention on other things. Students reported that they feel relaxed when they focus their attention on other things as illustrated in the statements below:

Participants	Excerpts
Brooklyn	Interview Excerpt 1
	"When I feel anxious about speaking, I don't pay too much attention to my feelings. I can turn my attention to other things, and I will become more confident. For example, when I am anxious about speaking, I will drink water, take a deep breath, and try to calm myself down. As long as I maintain this state, I will have the confidence and strength to speak English."
Sutina	Interview Except 2
	"When I experience speaking anxiety, I usually do not focus all my attention on what I wanted to say, not to think about the English classroom. I usually think about other things which are not related to the English speaking class."
Nicola	Interview Excerpt 3
	"When I am in English speaking anxiety, I will think about something relaxed. I start imagining myself in a white landscape like a forest or beach, or by recalling a warm scene…, this will reduce my speaking anxiety."

6.3.2 Asking for Help

The second most common reply was "Asking for help". That is, when a student encounters English speaking anxiety, they will seek help from others to reduce their speaking anxiety. One-third of the students reported using this strategy. The statements below from Kanyalak and Oved indicate that, when they encounter speaking anxiety, they will seek help from different people, which may be teachers, friends, or classmates.

Participants	Excerpts
Kanyalak	Interview Excerpt 1
	"When I feel anxious about speaking, I will ask my classmates or friends for help, and ask them to give me advice to reduce speaking anxiety. My English teacher gave me a lot of suggestions to help me avoid unnecessary anxiety and depression"
Oved	Interview Except 2
	"When I experience speaking anxiety, I will communicate with my group members about speaking anxiety. Especially, I usually ask students who are good at speaking about some effective ways to overcome speaking anxiety, it helps me a lot."

6.3.3 Preparing in Advance

One-third of the students also identified "Preparing in advance" as a coping strategy to deal with English speaking anxiety. Preparing in advance provides the students with the opportunity to compose their outline of

what to say and how to deliver their message. Two students cited preparing in advance beforehand for English speaking class to reduce their English speaking anxiety:

Participants	Excerpts
Chan chai	Interview Excerpt 1 "I will prepare the content of the English class in advance, I usually practice it as much as possible before the presentation, after practicing this many times, I will feel more and more proficient, so I will not feel anxious about English speaking ."
Sutina	Interview Except 2 "I also preview what the teacher will say in class. When I need to answer a question, I often rehearse it myself many times. This will not only allow me to form a good habit, but also improve myself, so I will not feel anxious about speaking."

6.3.4 Positive Thinking

Another strategy that the EFL learners adopted to deal with English-speaking anxiety was "positive thinking", which was reported as being greatly beneficial. Positive thinking includes students expressing themselves in classes, establishing a good learning motivation, being self-confident, and encouraging themselves. Students reported that, when using this strategy, they do not avoid the problem of speaking anxiety but rather face the problem directly and positively. The following statements illustrate the use of positive thinking as a coping strategy:

Participants	Excerpts
Brooklyn	Interview Excerpt 1 "When I face English speaking anxiety, … keep calm and believe in myself, and I try to encourage myself to speak more and more..., it is a very useful strategy for me to overcome speaking anxiety".
Nicola	Interview Except 2 "I am looking forward to every English speaking class, if I want to reduce anxiety faster, I need to try to express myself in the classroom."

So positive thinking is also a useful strategy in speaking English class to reduce speaking anxiety. This showed that when students encounter speaking anxiety, they do not avoid the problem, but face the problem directly and positively.

6.3.5 Using Helpful Tools

Another coping strategy for English speaking anxiety is "Using helpful tools", such as books, dictionaries, or online resources. For example, one participant stated the following:

Participants	Excerpt
Oved	Interview Excerpt 1 "I use an English dictionary to reduce speaking anxiety because sometimes I can't understand the grammar or vocabulary. When I get the answers from the dictionary, I know how to answer the teacher's questions, so I don't feel anxiety about speaking."

7. Discussion

7.1 Dominant Type of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students' Speaking Anxiety

The quantitative data of the current study showed that there were many types of English speaking anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, including communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence. The results refer that low self-confidence as the dominant type of speaking anxiety among 56 first-year English major undergraduate students.

7.1.1 Low Self-confidence

The results showed that students felt anxious and experienced speaking anxiety due to their lack of self-confidence. Indeed, low self-confidence was the dominant type of speaking anxiety of the participants in the current study, which is consistent with Park and Lee (2005) who claimed that low self-confidence is one of the personality types that highly correlate with speaking anxiety, because some students do not want to speak or say more, in the single training, the teacher always lets a student alone in front of other students and teachers for language practice, so that the student in the eyes of the public, which further increases their tension, for a long time, their English speaking anxiety will slowly breed. Eventually form a habitual English speaking anxiety, which leads to a lack of self-confidence. Many different conditions lead students to have low self-confidence when speaking English. For example, during the semi-structured interviews, three interviewees reported that a lack of grammar and vocabulary, communicating with strangers, and not preparing in advance will lead them to experience low self-confidence. The excerpts below support this claim:

*"*I don't feel confident because when the teacher asks me to answer questions in class. I often feel low self-confidence because of my lack of vocabulary and grammatical mistakes" (Oved).

"Every time I talk to a stranger, I feel like I'm going to blush and my heart beats faster. Because I can't speak to strangers confidently" (Brooklyn).

"I think it is very important for me to prepare what I need to say in advance. When I prepare what I need to say in my presentation in advance, I will feel confident.   Otherwise, I would be so anxious that I would not know what to say" (Chan Chai).

Several other studies have also found that low self-confidence is one of the important types of English learners' speaking anxiety (Maclntyre & Gardner, 1991; Brown, 2001; Park & Lee, 2005; Du, 2009; Riasati, 2011; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). That is, influenced by their personality, students are reluctant to open their mouths and communicate in English. On the one hand, she was afraid to speak out and raise her hand to answer the teacher's questions. On the other hand, she was afraid to communicate in English in group discussions. Therefore, consistent with previous studies, the current results demonstrated that students feel anxious and experience speaking anxiety due to their lack of self-confidence while speaking English because English speaking requires learners to have higher self-confidence and be able to communicate easily in every situation (Tsiplakides et al., 2009; Wen Huang, 2014; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017; Rajith & Alamel, 2020; Suparlan, 2021). These results are consistent with earlier findings that self-confidence is the dominant type of English-speaking anxiety (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002; Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2014; Mecroskey, 2015; Akdemir, 2016; Aydin, 2016; Toubot et al., 2018). This indicates that low self-confidence is the dominant type of English speaking, which provides further help for good communication during English speaking.

On the contrary, previous studies (Mas, 2016; Mohamad et al., 2018) found that the intrinsic motivation of English majors to improve their English speaking is stronger than that of other majors. Especially in top universities, some students are demanding too much, and the goal is not in line with the actual English level and difficult to reach in a short time, thus generating a high level of anxiety, which is consistent with Krashen's affective filtering hypothesis holds that excessive anxiety acts as an emotional filter and will harm language acquisition.

In summary, self-confidence is the dominant type of Thai EFL English learners in English and communication, and it is often greater than other subjective and objective factors. Self-confidence is the most important promotion mechanism for English speaking. Moreover, current findings suggest that the more confident the learner, the more proficient they become in learning the target language.

7.2 Level of Speaking Anxiety among Thai EFL Undergraduate Students

The quantitative data of the current study showed that most of the participants experienced a moderate level of speaking anxiety, with half of the students experiencing moderate speaking anxiety. The reason why most students are a moderate level of speaking anxiety may be that they have few opportunities to speak English, have not learned English for a long time, are not fluent in English, or are not confident in speaking English. (Young, 1991; Melouah, 2013). Two interviewees, who experienced a moderate level of speaking anxiety, stated that they feel fear when experiencing speaking anxiety, and one interviewee reported feeling dizzy.

Previous studies have also found that most learners experience a moderate level of speaking anxiety (Horwitz & Peplau, 1989; Melouah; 2013; Azizifar et al., 2014; Toubot et al., 2018; Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). That is, in-class group discussion, the teacher asks the students to discuss in English, and the students will spontaneously discuss in their mother tongue (L1), aiming to temporarily translate the discussion results before the group report,

and then read according to the text, rather than integrate the discussion content in English. Also, under the influence of long-term bad learning habits, students ignore the opportunity for speaking practice, coupled with their inertia, and lack of enough practice, and speaking level is difficult to improve. Therefore, consistent with previous studies, the current results demonstrate that most Thai EFL undergraduate students experienced moderate levels of speaking anxiety. This study provides empirical evidence to support previous studies that English speaking anxiety is the most important for students to enhance their English speaking (Toubot et al., 2018; Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021).

In summary, English speaking anxiety plays an important role in English learning. Once students have a moderate level of anxiety, it will inevitably weaken students learning motivation, which will lead to students not being able to better conduct second language acquisition, and even more serious in English speaking.

7.3 Coping Strategies for English Speaking Anxiety

As shown in the qualitative data, the participants use various coping strategies to reduce speaking anxiety, including focusing their attention on other things, asking for help, preparing in advance, positive thinking, or using helpful tools. Half of the students reduce speaking anxiety by focusing their attention on other things. One-third of the participants ask for help from their teachers and classmates, prepare the content of the class in advance, or try their best to express themselves to reduce speaking anxiety. One of the participants also used helpful tools to reduce speaking anxiety. The excerpts below illustrate the coping strategies that participants use to reduce speaking anxiety:

"I often prepare the content in advance before speaking, practice as much as possible. It will make me feel relaxed" (Chan Chai).

"I will tell my friends or teachers, tell them that I am frustrated and anxious in the speaking class, ask them for help, and ask them to give me advice to help me avoid unnecessary speaking anxiety and depression" (Kanyalak).

"When I face speaking anxiety, I will focus my attention on other things, such as thinking about what I ate today, thinking about the beautiful scenery, drinking more water, and so on. I will also reduce speaking anxiety by trying to express myself in class" (Nicola).

"When I have speaking anxiety, I will seek help from my classmates or use Google Translate to solve them. I will try my best to overcome speaking anxiety" (Oved).

Kondo & Young (2004) described five-dimensional coping strategies: (1) preparation, (2) relaxation, (3) positive thinking, (4) peer thinking, and (5) resignation. The use of helpful tools (e.g., books, dictionary, and internet resources) have also been reported in the literature as a strategy employed by students to overcome their speaking anxiety (Maquidato, 2021). Relaxation appears to be very helpful to most anxious ESL students and diverting their attention to other things can help them feel more relaxed. Positive thinking is also a very common strategy whereby students encourage themselves to speak in the English-speaking class and try to express their ideas to teachers and classmates, which is conducive to their motivation. Indeed, when motivation is established, self-confidence also improves. Peer thinking is another strategy that can be used to "lighten the load" or decrease the burden to complete learning tasks in L2. Students can ask their classmates for help, and there are many opportunities for students to discuss ideas and share ideas during this process. In the current study, none of the participants reported using resignation-based strategies such as sleeping or giving up (Kondo & Young, 2004).

Overall, consistent with earlier findings on English speaking anxiety, the results indicated that the participants used different coping strategies to reduce their speaking anxiety, including focusing their attention on other things, asking for help, preparing in advance, positive thinking, or using helpful tools. This study provides empirical evidence to support previous studies that different coping strategies can be used to reduce English speaking anxiety during English speaking (Tesalonika, 2013; Genc et al.,2016; Fujii, 2017; Hidayoza et al., 2019; Maquidato, 2021; Ramayani et al., 2022). That is, when anxiety appears, students can try to change their thinking, so that they do not think about those annoying current events, but think about some things and scenes that let them relax and become happy. Also, shifting their attention can relieve anxiety well. In addition, less contact with some things that make them emotional, listen to more pleasant, soothing music, and let themselves relax. Besides, to ease speaking anxiety, students prefer to make a reasonable plan and have good preparation in advance. They can be a systematic comprehensive review of knowledge points, solid grasp, improved level, can be confident to cope with speaking anxiety and other bad emotions that can be relieved naturally. Moreover, students believe that in English speaking, if conditions permit, they should try to win the care and support of family members, friends, and classmates, which is of great significance to find out the root cause of speaking

anxiety and relieve and eliminate anxiety.

To sum up, English learners adopt various forms of coping strategies to handle speaking anxiety, which indicates that in English speaking, if learners can use appropriate ways to deal with their anxiety, it will have a positive impact on the development of speaking ability and skills of English learners.

8. Recommendation

The participants in this study were homogeneous in that they shared a similar educational background, age, and level of language proficiency. In addition, they come from the same grade. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the results are limited by the small sample size and the result cannot be extended to EFL learners in other contexts. Future studies may wish to increase the number of participants and include additional geographical locations (e.g., north, east, and south Thailand). This would provide a better representation of speaking anxiety among Thai EFL learners. Second, it may be useful to conduct a similar study from the perspective of English teachers or syllabus designers. Some other issues related to speaking anxiety remain to be further studied. The relationship between English-speaking anxiety and other variables such as age, attitude, learning style, and personality type could also be examined.

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