

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion based on the results obtained from the current study. The chapter consisted of four sections. The first section discusses the level of language mindset and foreign language speaking mindset of Thai undergraduate students. The second section discusses the factors related to foreign language speaking mindset. The third section discusses the relationship between and among mindsets and speaking performance. The last section discusses the change in foreign language speaking mindset over time.

5.1 The Language Mindset and Foreign Language Speaking Mindset of Thai Undergraduate Students

The findings from the survey revealed that Thai undergraduate students generally hold a moderate growth language mindset and a weak growth foreign language speaking mindset. The adoption of growth language mindset among Thai undergraduate students may reflect the influence of Thailand's language education policies and the broader impact of globalization. Students in this study believed that they could improve their language intelligence, change their language aptitude, and enhance their ability to learn languages regardless of age. This belief may be reinforced by Thailand's basic core education curriculum which designates English as a compulsory subject and by university language programs that emphasize communicative competence to prepare students for future careers (Choomthong, 2014; Kaewkunha & Sukying, 2021). Moreover, data from the semi-structured interview in Stage 3 triangulated this finding as students acknowledged the perceived social and professional value of English in Thai society. The language mindset level observed in this study aligns with Mercer and Ryan's (2009) and Lou and Noels' (2019a) conceptualizations of language mindset. In addition, the growth-oriented language mindset among students in this study corresponds with findings from previous research conducted in similar Thai EFL contexts (Chuanon et al., 2021; Janudom, 2023; Wilang, 2022; Wilang, 2024).

The findings related to foreign language speaking mindset indicated that the belief patterns of Thai undergraduate students also reflected growth-oriented characteristics. Although it appears comparatively weaker than language mindset. This discrepancy

may come from the specific demands of speaking tasks which require real-time language processing, spontaneous output, and social interaction (Aizawa et al., 2023; Chema et al., 2023). Data from both the Q-methodology and the semi-structured interview triangulated these findings. Students frequently emphasized difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and highlighted individual differences in their ability to easily express or regulate negative emotions.

Students valued effort, maintained adaptive attitudes toward mistakes, and employed active self-regulatory tendencies in their learning of foreign language speaking. These findings align with the growth subsystem concept within Lou and Noels' (2019a) framework of the language mindset meaning-making system. However, notable differences were observed in students' perspectives on attribution, achievement goals, and emotional tendencies. These patterns might be influenced by the cultural context and language learning environment in Thailand.

Students' attribution tendencies presented a mixed pattern between growth and fixed beliefs. Although many students attributed language learning success to effort, a considerable number also emphasized the role of innate talent. This dual attribution pattern reflects previous findings by Dörnyei (2003) and Erten and Burden (2014), which noted that learners with lower perceived proficiency often attribute performance to external or uncontrollable factors. Participants' early experiences with punitive feedback during primary and secondary education may have contributed to the persistence of talent-based attribution.

Students' achievement goals revealed a combination of mastery and performance orientations. While some students set goals focused on improving their language speaking skills, others indicated during their journal writing that their primary motivation was to pass assessments or avoid criticism. This dual orientation can be linked to the exam-driven nature of the Thai education system (Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021) and cultural expectations related to the preservation of face (Young, 2021).

Students' emotional experiences in foreign language speaking tasks were influenced by their learning backgrounds and classroom environments. Despite endorsing growth-oriented beliefs, many students reported experiencing anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and discomfort during speaking activities. Exposure to grammar-translation approaches during secondary education and the transition to communicative methods at university level contributed to emotional vulnerability (Horwitz, 1988; Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021).

An important characteristic identified among Thai undergraduate students was the prevalence of short-term effort investment. Students recognized the value of effort in

achieving success; however, their effort tended to focus on immediate academic outcomes rather than long-term skill development. The emphasis on short-term results is consistent with the educational environment and societal expectations in Thailand, where frequent assessments demand quick preparation and performance (Salsarola, 2023; Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021). This short-term orientation may hinder students' ability to develop sustained speaking proficiency over time. These connections are illustrated in Figure 5.1. It presents a concept map of how Thai undergraduate students' language mindset and foreign language speaking mindset are shaped.

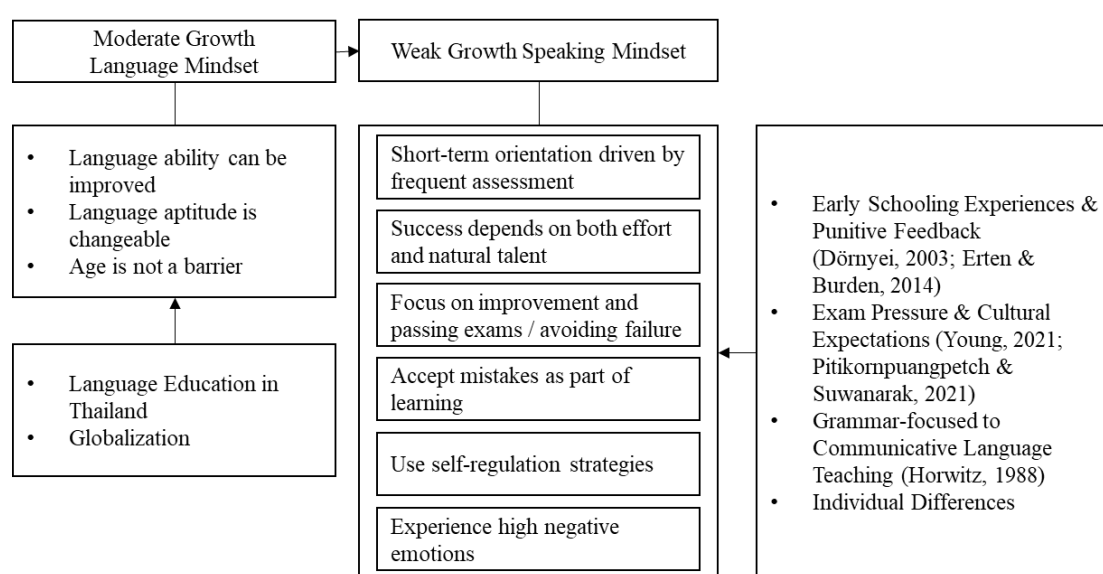


Figure 5.1 Thai Undergraduate Students' Language Mindset and Foreign Language Speaking Mindset

The findings suggest that while Thai undergraduate students demonstrate growth-oriented beliefs in both language learning and foreign language speaking, these beliefs coexist with dual attributions, performance pressures, emotional vulnerabilities, and short-term effort strategies. The interaction between personal beliefs, emotional responses, and systemic influences shapes students' overall foreign language speaking mindset and learning experiences.

The section above discussed how Thai undergraduate students adopted growth-oriented language and foreign language speaking mindset. Section 5.2 discusses the factors related to foreign language speaking mindset in detail. These factors help explain the gap between students' beliefs and their actual emotional and behavioral responses during speaking activities.

5.2 The Factors Related to Foreign Language Speaking Mindset Among Thai Undergraduate Students

This study identified three primary factors contributing to Thai undergraduate students' foreign language speaking mindset: emotional outcomes of attribution, motivational process-oriented goals, and proactive responses in failure situations.

The first factor influencing students' speaking mindset was the emotional outcomes of attribution. Negative emotions such as fear, nervousness, frustration, and shyness were commonly reported during foreign language speaking tasks. Students' perception of low language proficiency, reinforced by earlier negative learning experiences, contributed to heightened anxiety levels, consistent with the findings of Papi and Khajavy (2023). Participants expressed concerns about public speaking, especially when feedback or evaluations were framed negatively. Similar emotional patterns have been documented in Thai educational contexts, where linguistic reserve leads to foreign language learning anxiety (Bhattarachaiyakorn & Phettakua, 2023). Emotional outcomes appeared to significantly shape students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. In addition, individual differences in emotional reactivity may have played a role in students' susceptibility to language anxiety (Dewaele, 2022). Furthermore, the ability to regulate emotions has been shown to predict lower anxiety levels and greater emotional resilience in language learning settings (Botes et al., 2021).

The second factor was motivational process-oriented goals. Students demonstrated a general belief in the ability to improve speaking skills through effort and practice, showing a tendency to adopt mastery goals. However, many students lacked practical strategies for setting and monitoring their progress. Qualitative data revealed that discouraging feedback occasionally led students to display avoidance behaviors, even among those who initially endorsed growth beliefs. This observation is consistent with Li et al.'s (2024) and Waluyo and Apridayani's (2024) study, which found that avoidance mastery goals may emerge when learners seek to protect their self-efficacy. Students who maintained focus on mastery goals tended to use active learning strategies and respond positively to feedback, consistent with findings by Oxford (2011), Shih (2019), and Yao and Zhu (2024).

The third factor was proactive responses in failure situations. Students who encountered setbacks and attributed difficulties to lack of effort, rather than to innate inability, demonstrated greater resilience. These students were more likely to seek feedback, adjust their learning strategies, and persist through speaking challenges, aligning with growth-oriented patterns described by Dong (2024), Lou and Noels

(2019a), and Sadeghi et al. (2020). Students who proactively engaged with their mistakes tended to interpret failures as part of the learning process rather than as threats to their competence, a behavior reflecting the mindset-goal-response model proposed by Lou and Noels (2017).

The three major factors identified in this study, which are emotional outcomes of attribution, motivational process-oriented goals, and proactive responses in failure situations, were consistently supported across multiple data sources. The consistency between the survey results, guided journal entries, and interview findings provides triangulated evidence for the central role of these factors in shaping students' foreign language speaking mindsets. These results are significant for understanding the development of foreign language speaking mindset, particularly within Thai EFL context. The three identified factors provide critical insights into how students internally respond to the cognitive and emotional challenges of speaking tasks. In Thai context, where traditional grammar-translation practices, face-saving cultural value, and exam-driven learning dominate language education, emotional vulnerability and avoidance behaviors are especially pronounced. The emotional outcome of attribution highlights how students' prior negative learning experiences and fear of negative judgment contribute to speaking anxiety. Motivational process-oriented goals point out the need to support students in meaningful, progress-based goals. Proactive responses in failure situations demonstrate the value of fostering resilience and feedback-seeking behavior. These factors help explain why growth-oriented mindset does not always translate into confident speaking behavior. Understanding this dynamic is essential for designing interventions and instructional strategies that are culturally and contextually appropriate for Thai learners.

The current section discussed the factors that shape students' foreign language speaking mindset. The next section discusses how these mindset related to students' speaking performance.

5.3 Relationship Between and Among Mindsets and Speaking Performance of Thai Undergraduate Students

The results revealed a moderate positive relationship between language mindset and foreign language speaking mindset among Thai undergraduate students. Students who believed that their general language ability could improve also tended to believe in the potential for improving their foreign language speaking abilities. This finding aligns with the concept of a mindset system proposed by Lou et al. (2022), which suggests that mindsets are systematically intertwined with related motivational and emotional

constructs, guiding learners' interpretations and responses across different domains of language learning.

In contrast, the relationship between both types of mindsets and actual speaking performance was found to be weak. Although students endorsed growth-oriented beliefs, these beliefs did not strongly predict measurable gains in speaking test scores. This observation corresponds with prior research indicating that mindset alone may not directly determine academic achievement outcomes (Lou et al., 2022; Elahi Shirvan et al., 2024; Tapia Castillo, 2023). Speaking performance likely requires the interaction of multiple factors beyond beliefs, such as emotional regulation, consistent speaking practice, feedback interpretation, and willingness to communicate under real-time pressure (Zhang, 2022). Therefore, while growth beliefs provide motivational foundations, they may not be sufficient to produce significant improvements in performance without strategic behaviors and emotional coping.

Although the quantitative results showed only weak direct relationships, the qualitative findings revealed that students' mindsets influenced speaking performance indirectly through changes in their learning strategies and emotion regulation. Students who demonstrated stronger growth-oriented beliefs engaged more actively in learning strategies, sought constructive feedback, practiced speaking more consistently, and attempted to regulate their emotional responses during speaking tasks. These learning behaviors are consistent with the mindset-goal-response model proposed by Lou and Noels (2017, 2019a), suggesting that mindsets foster adaptive processes that support gradual improvement over time. The results also align with previous research suggesting that students with mastery goals often use active learning strategies and respond positively to feedback (Oxford, 2011; Shih, 2019; Yao & Zhu, 2024).

Emotional factors emerged as critical mediators in the relationship between mindset and speaking performance. Students who developed better emotional regulation skills reported reduced anxiety, greater willingness to engage in speaking tasks, and a more positive attitude toward language learning challenges. These patterns correspond with findings by Papi and Khajavy (2023) and Zarrinabadi et al. (2022), who emphasized that the ability to manage negative emotions is essential for successful foreign language speaking development. Consequently, emotional resilience appears to be a necessary condition for translating growth-oriented beliefs into improved speaking outcomes.

The visual representation of the indirect relationship between language mindset, foreign language speaking mindset, and speaking performance is presented in Figure 5.2 below.

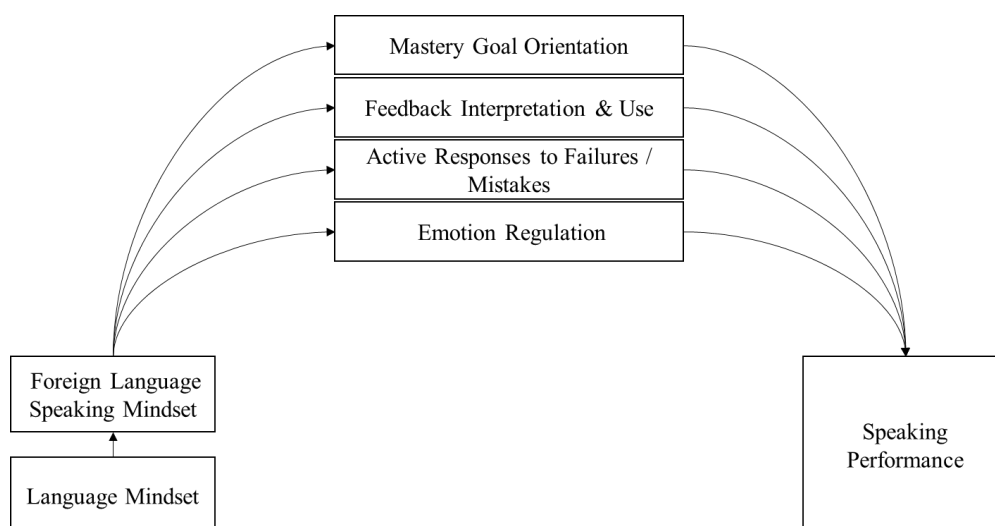


Figure 5.2 Relationship between Language Mindset, Foreign Language Speaking Mindset, and Speaking Performance

Figure 5.2 suggests that while mindset contributes to foreign language speaking development, its effects are indirect and mediated by emotional responses, feedback perceptions, and learning strategies. A simple focus on changing students' beliefs without addressing emotional and strategic dimensions is unlikely to produce significant gains in speaking performance. Therefore, interventions aiming to foster foreign language speaking ability should not target mindset in isolation but should also incorporate explicit training in emotional regulation, strategic goal setting, communication skills, and effective feedback reception, in order to maximize students' learning outcomes.

The above section showed that mindset influences speaking performance indirectly through emotion regulation and learning strategies. The next section discusses how students' foreign language speaking mindset evolved over the course of the language mindset intervention and its dynamic nature.

5.4 Change of Foreign Language Speaking Mindset Over Time

The results of the survey indicated a slight improvement in both language mindset and foreign language speaking mindset following the six-week intervention. Although most aspects of the language mindset meaning system demonstrated non-significant changes, certain dimensions, including achievement goals, self-regulatory tendencies, and competence-based emotional tendencies, exhibited meaningful development. These results suggest that the intervention had a positive but moderate effect on students' mindset orientations. This change can be partially attributed to the influence

of ecological factors, such as feedback experiences, academic requirements, and cultural values emphasizing effort, as explained by Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological systems theory.

These findings are illustrated in Figure 5.3 below. It presents the interaction between the language mindset intervention, internal learner changes, and ecological influences that contribute to meaningful shifts in students' mindset.

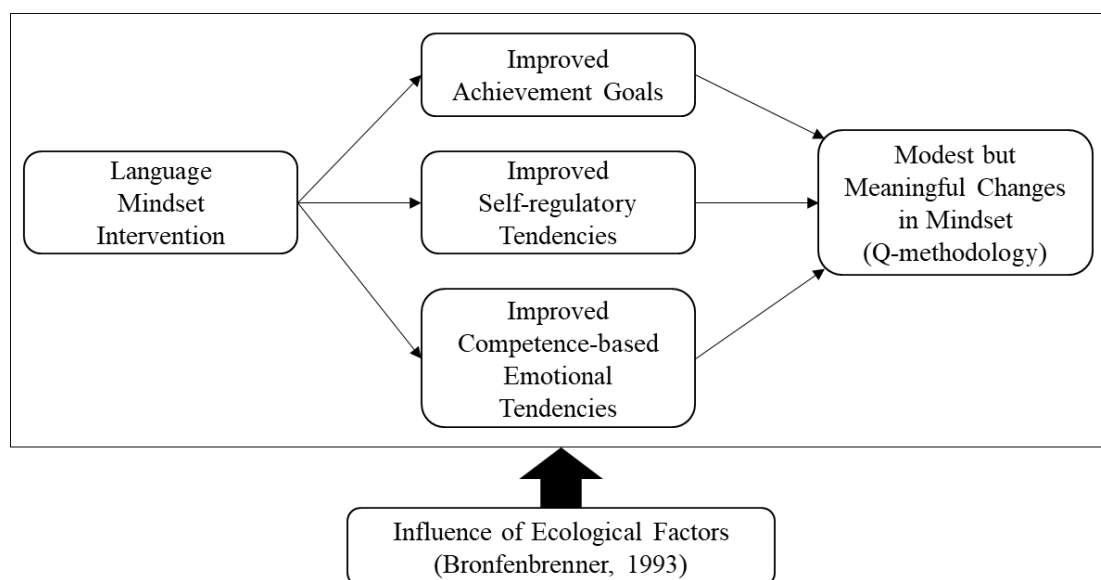


Figure 5.3 Change of Foreign Language Speaking Mindset After Intervention

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological systems theory, multiple interconnected layers of environment influence learners' development. At the microsystem level, teachers' feedback plays a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of effort and success. The mesosystem reflects how students' past experiences with examinations and overcoming failures impact their beliefs about learning. The exosystem includes external educational structures, such as curriculum design and grade advancement policies, which emphasize effort as a necessary value. The macrosystem reflects broader cultural beliefs about perseverance and effort, which are deeply rooted in Thai society. Finally, the chronosystem captures the influence of time and developmental changes, as students' mindsets fluctuate in response to feedback and new learning experiences. Together, these ecological layers interact to shape students' gradual development of language learning mindsets.

A notable change was observed in students' achievement goal orientations. Prior to the intervention, many students demonstrated a performance-oriented approach, focusing primarily on passing examinations and avoiding failure. After participating in

the intervention, students' guided journal reflections and survey responses indicated a shift toward mastery-oriented goals. Students began setting goals aimed at personal improvement, communication abilities, and long-term language development. They demonstrated a growing awareness that setting meaningful and personally relevant goals reduced their fear of failure. This shift aligns with findings by Chen and Wong (2014) and Derakhshan and Fathi, 2024, who noted that students pursuing mastery goals exhibit greater flexibility and resilience in language learning.

The findings also showed a positive change in students' perception of mistakes and failures. Students increasingly viewed mistakes as a natural and necessary part of the learning process rather than as indicators of inability. This perspective is consistent with the growth mindset framework proposed by Lou and Noels (2019a), which emphasizes the importance of learning from challenges. Students shared strategies such as analyzing their mistakes, seeking new approaches, and consulting peers and instructors, indicating a more adaptive and proactive response to setbacks. These observations were further supported by findings from Bai et al. (2025), Sadeghi et al. (2020), and Yao et al. (2021).

Changes in students' emotional tendencies toward foreign language speaking were also evident. Although many students continued to experience negative emotions such as anxiety and nervousness, the intensity of these feelings appeared to decrease after the intervention. Students reported improved emotional regulation strategies, such as reframing negative feedback, using positive self-talk, and seeking support from peers. These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the role of emotional regulation in successful language learning (Liu et al., 2025; Ozdemir & Papi, 2022; Zarrinabadi et al., 2022).

An important development was found in students' interpretation of feedback. Prior to the intervention, feedback was often perceived as personal criticism, reinforcing feelings of inadequacy and discouraging participation. After the intervention, students demonstrated greater openness to constructive feedback and recognized its role in supporting language development. This shift mirrors the findings of Papi et al. (2019), Papi et al. (2020), and Waluyo and Apridayani (2024), who reported that students with growth mindsets are more likely to perceive feedback as useful input rather than judgment. Improved feedback perception likely contributed to greater emotional resilience and more active engagement in speaking tasks.

In addition to survey and interview findings, the Q-methodology results provided further support for the changes observed in students' mindsets. Students acknowledged that their difficulties in foreign language speaking were linked to their

current proficiency levels rather than to fixed personal abilities. They recognized that low proficiency could be improved through effort and practice, reflecting a growth-oriented perspective. Students reported employing strategies such as practicing speaking, watching English videos, listening to songs, and expanding their vocabulary knowledge. These Q-methodology results confirmed that students were beginning to internalize more adaptive, effort-based beliefs about language learning, which complemented the patterns observed in the survey and guided journal data. These findings also reflect the theoretical ideas presented in Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.4 (as discussed in Chapter 2). Students' responses illustrate the shift between fixed and growth perspectives depending on context. This supports the view that mindset operated as a meaning system shaped by effort, goals, and emotional responses.

The findings suggest that while changes in students' mindsets were moderate, they were meaningful in shaping their learning behaviors and emotional experiences. Mindset development appears to be a dynamic process influenced not only by intervention activities but also by students' interactions with feedback, their learning environment, and broader cultural factors. Future interventions aiming to enhance foreign language speaking mindsets should consider integrating emotional support mechanisms, gradual scaffolding for goal-setting, and strategies for positive feedback delivery to sustain mindset growth and language learning success.

5.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the discussion of the study's main findings. Thai undergraduate students were found to hold moderate growth language mindset and weak growth foreign language speaking mindset. Three key factors were identified as influencing foreign language speaking mindsets: emotional outcomes of attribution, motivational process-oriented goals, and proactive responses in failure situations. Triangulated evidence from surveys, guided journals, and interviews supported these findings. The relationships between mindsets and speaking performance were weak but indicated that mindsets indirectly influenced learning behaviors through emotional regulation and strategy use. Modest changes in students' mindsets were observed over time, reflecting growth in goal setting, emotion regulation, and feedback perception following the intervention. These findings provide the foundation for the conclusions, implications and recommendations outlined in the next chapter.