

# **Investigating the Influences of Linguistic Insecurity on Pre-service English Language Teachers' Teaching Performance in Thai EFL Classrooms**

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## **Abstract**

Speaking anxiety is a crucial difficulty experienced by pre-service English language teachers in the Thai context. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of linguistic insecurity on the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service teachers majoring in English education programs at six Rajabhat universities in Thailand. The questionnaire was adapted from Jantri and Phusawisot (2021) and the professional standard for Thai pre-service teachers by the Teachers' Council of Thailand (2021), which included three factors: Lack of Confidence (LC), Poor Performance (PP), and Negative Self-Concept (NSC). A quantitative approach was adopted in this study; thus, 100 participants were selected through convenience sampling due to their teaching experience. The data were collected using a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques were employed, using SPSS Statistics version 29, to examine factors affecting the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service teachers. The results revealed that the correlation coefficient (R) is .649, and the coefficient of prediction (R square) is 42.20 percent, indicating that one of those factors predicted the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers. The adjusted coefficient of prediction (Adjusted R square) is 0.403. Consequently, a Negative Self-Concept (NSC) significantly influenced the teaching performance of all Thai EFL pre-service teachers from Rajabhat Universities ( $P < 0.05$ ).

*Keywords:* linguistic insecurity, teaching performance, pre-service English language teachers

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## Introduction

In the era of globalization, English has progressively established itself as the primary medium of communication across all domains. Consequently, the ability to use English proficiently has become an essential requirement in every country. Teaching and learning of English are essential for effective communication, meeting the demands of the global economy, and responding to the growing need for English proficiency at local, national, and international levels. Thailand is one of the countries where English is used as a foreign language (Khamkhien, 2010). Apart from Thai, English is the most widely instructed language in Thai schools as it is regarded as essential to Thailand's development, particularly in education, business, science, and technological advancements, all of which necessitate proficiency in the language (Phothongsunan, 2018).

Mastering English is vital for effective communication among Thai students. Although the majority of Thai students have dedicated over 10 years learning English from kindergarten to university, it was found that the English language proficiency of Thai students is relatively low (Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021). This finding was repeatedly substantiated by more recent studies (e.g., Santiwatthanasiri, 2018; Yuh & Kaewurai, 2021), indicating that Thai students face significant challenges in speaking English due to both linguistic and psychological barriers. Research has shown that fear of making mistakes and speaking anxiety are major obstacles preventing students from confidently using English in communicative contexts. It also found that despite years of instruction, many students lack the confidence to speak due to high levels of anxiety and limited exposure to real-life speaking practice. Additionally, it revealed that grammatical errors, restricted vocabulary, and pronunciation difficulties further hinder their ability to communicate effectively.

This challenge in English proficiency not only affects students, but also influences Thai EFL pre-service English teachers. As future educators, these teachers must guide students in developing English proficiency, but their own experiences with English learning often mirror the struggles faced by their students. Many pre-service teachers experience anxiety and insecurity in using English, particularly in pronunciation and spontaneous communication, which can negatively affect their confidence in teaching, ability to concentrate, and student engagement (Kenoh III, 2021). This anxiety is especially evident during the teaching practicum, a crucial phase in pre-service teacher development where they encounter real classroom situations for the first time (Damnet, 2021). At this stage, linguistic insecurity becomes even more apparent, as pre-service teachers find themselves facing the same struggles they observed in their students. Furthermore, linguistic insecurity among Thai EFL pre-service teachers is often tied to the same difficulties their students encounter. Since pronunciation and accents significantly impact student learning, pre-service teachers may fear being judged on their own pronunciation, which leads to self-doubt and reluctance to engage in spoken English instruction. In Thailand, where English is taught as a foreign language, linguistic insecurity can significantly impact pre-service teachers' confidence, limiting their ability to engage in classroom discussions, provide effective instruction, and foster communicative learning environments. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring that future English educators can teach with confidence and competence (Patomchaiwat, 2019).

Linguistic insecurity refers to feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness, or lack of confidence that individuals experience regarding their language use, particularly when they perceive their speech diverges from a standard or socially accepted norm. This concept was first introduced

by sociolinguist William Labov in 1972, this concept explains how speakers may perceive their language abilities as inadequate, often leading to hypercorrection or adjustments in their speech to conform to prestigious linguistic forms. Scholars from various fields have explored linguistic insecurity in different contexts. Baron (1976) suggested that linguistic insecurity arises from negative attitudes toward one's own language use, causing individuals to doubt their proficiency and perceive their speech as error-prone. Bucci and Baxter (1984) examined how linguistic insecurity can lead to communication challenges in multicultural environments, particularly in professional settings such as healthcare, where dialectal differences may result in miscommunication. Meyerhoff (2006) described linguistic insecurity as the belief that one's language variety is inferior or substandard, which can affect speakers' confidence and limit their ability to engage effectively in social interactions. Although there are some differences in the core elements of linguistic insecurity, most scholars are in favour of the term linguistic insecurity, representing the idea of an individual's negative self-perception regarding their language and how they use it. In other words, linguistic insecurity refers to the situational anxiety and self-consciousness experienced when using their own language. This differs from foreign language anxiety, which stems from the challenges of acquiring a language.

Several studies have been conducted on linguistic insecurity (Ashari et al., 2023; Daftari, 2016; Daftari & Tavit, 2017; Jantri & Phusawisot, 2021). For example, in an educational context, Daftari (2016) investigated some aspects of the linguistic insecurity of Turkish EFL teachers. The findings revealed that Turkish EFL teachers experienced a low level of linguistic insecurity in their classrooms. The specific factors such as teaching pronunciation, low proficiency in the target language, and limited knowledge of the target language's culture were identified as contributors to linguistic insecurity among these teachers. Moreover, Daftari and Tavit (2017) examined the linguistic insecurity of non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) and investigated its influence on learners' productive skills. The results indicated that linguistic insecurity among NNESTs, regardless of gender, has no significant correlation with learners' writing and speaking scores. Jantri and Phusawisot (2021) explored how linguistic insecurity affects Thai EFL teachers' teaching performance. The analysis revealed that linguistic insecurity negatively impacted teaching performance in three key areas: lack of confidence in English knowledge, poor performance in English language teaching and negative self-concept toward English language ability. Another study on pre-service English teachers' anxiety in speaking English in the Indonesian Islamic College. The results revealed that pre-service English teachers in an Indonesian Islamic college experience significant speaking anxiety due to factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, nervousness, and limited speaking practice. This anxiety negatively impacts their ability to communicate effectively in English (Ashari et al., 2023).

However, research on linguistic insecurity among Thai EFL pre-service English teachers in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) remains limited. While several studies have examined linguistic insecurity among in-service teachers, no research has specifically focused on Thai EFL pre-service teachers or its impact on their teaching performance. Therefore, this study seeks to explore linguistic insecurity among pre-service English teachers, with a particular emphasis on Thai EFL pre-service English teachers in EFL contexts. The main objective of this study is to investigate the influences of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers' linguistic insecurity on teaching performance in EFL classrooms and the research question is how linguistic insecurity influences the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers in EFL classrooms.

## **Literature Review**

### **Linguistic Insecurity**

Feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness, or lack of confidence experienced by people in their language use are called linguistic insecurity. Linguistic insecurity is a phenomenon that affects individuals' confidence in their language use, often arising from perceived deficiencies in pronunciation, grammar, or fluency. It is commonly experienced by speakers who feel their language skills do not align with linguistic standards or conventions, leading to anxiety and self-consciousness in communication. This issue is particularly relevant in multilingual and educational contexts, where language proficiency is closely tied to social and professional identity.

Linguistic insecurity was first introduced by William Labov in the 1970s. According to Labov (1972), it refers to the anxiety or lack of confidence experienced by language users, particularly non-native speakers, when they perceive their language use as deviating from the standards of the dominant or "correct" language variety. Similarly, Baron (1976) described linguistic insecurity as the awareness of errors among non-native English speakers, leading to feelings of self-doubt in their language proficiency. Bucci and Baxter (1984) defined linguistic insecurity as a speaker's negative perception of their own language or speech variety. This could happen when individuals compare their phonetic and syntactic features to those of what is considered the 'correct' form of the spoken language.

It can be concluded that linguistic insecurity is the negative self-perception of language users, regarding their own pronunciation, grammar, or fluency that they use. Furthermore, in this present study, linguistic insecurity also refers to the feeling of having inadequate language skills, not being good enough, and lacking confidence experienced by Thai pre-service English language teachers.

### **Linguistic Insecurity and Its Impact on Thai Pre-service English Teachers**

Linguistic insecurity, a phenomenon where individuals feel inadequate in their language abilities, has been widely observed among non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) (Horwitz et al., 1986). This issue is particularly prevalent in Thai EFL classrooms, where English proficiency is often viewed as a key determinant of teacher credibility (Wernicke, 2017). Three major factors contribute to linguistic insecurity: lack of confidence, poor performance, and negative self-concept. They have been shown to significantly impact pre-service English teachers in Thailand, shaping their teaching practices and professional development.

Lack of confidence is common among Thai pre-service teachers, many of whom perceive their English proficiency as inferior to native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) (Kamhi-Stein, 2014). This perception leads to hesitation in classroom interactions, reduced participation in communicative activities, and an overreliance on scripted lesson plans (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Additionally, poor performance resulting from linguistic insecurity is another critical issue affecting Thai EFL teachers. Teachers with low confidence in their language abilities often adopt rigid, textbook-based teaching methods rather than engaging in student-centered approaches (Richards & Farrell, 2005). This pattern reinforces their negative self-concept as they begin to internalize the belief that their English proficiency is inadequate, leading to heightened anxiety in the classroom. Lastly, negative self-concept,

the internalized belief that one's English ability is inadequate, further exacerbates linguistic insecurity among Thai pre-service teachers. According to Wernicke (2017), NNESTs who struggle with self-perception issues frequently question their teaching effectiveness and experience heightened anxiety in the classroom.

To conclude, the mentioned factors can create a cycle of linguistic insecurity that significantly impacts pre-service teachers' ability to engage in effective classroom instruction and professional growth.

### **The Performance of Pre-service Teachers During the Teaching Internship**

Teaching performance for pre-service English teachers refers to their ability to effectively apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the classroom during their training (Teachers' Council of Thailand, 2021). Since they are still refining teaching strategies and language proficiency, their performance varies more than that of in-service teachers. Linguistic insecurity and low confidence, particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, can significantly impact their effectiveness, especially for Thai EFL pre-service teachers.

A teaching internship is crucial for professional growth, helping pre-service teachers develop essential competencies in curriculum design, classroom management, and student engagement (Teachers' Council of Thailand, 2021). These competencies involve analyzing curricula, implementing learning strategies, integrating digital tools, and fostering critical thinking and innovation among students. Effective lesson planning, classroom management, and mentorship enable pre-service teachers to create a supportive learning environment that enhances student well-being and academic success.

Additionally, pre-service teachers must incorporate technology such as Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), Google Classroom, and Kahoot to improve student engagement. Collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders is also key in developing teaching effectiveness and ensuring continuous professional growth (Teachers' Council of Thailand, 2021).

To conclude, the teaching internship is a crucial stage in the development of pre-service English teachers, equipping them with essential skills in curriculum planning, classroom management, and student engagement. Their teaching performance is influenced by linguistic confidence, professional competencies, and the ability to create an engaging learning environment. By integrating effective teaching strategies and digital tools, pre-service teachers can enhance student learning and refine their instructional methods. Ultimately, these experiences prepare them to transition into competent in-service educators who can effectively support student development and academic success.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

This research was a quantitative research design. The participants were a hundred of the forth year students or pre-service teachers, majoring in English education from six Rajabhat universities located in northern and southern parts of Thailand. All the participants had roughly upper intermediate to proficiency in English, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These pre-service teachers were selected

through convenience sampling according to their teaching experience from the first semester and their roles in both primary and secondary schools in EFL classrooms.

### **Research Instrument**

A quantitative approach was adopted in this study; thus, the quantitative data was gathered through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Jantri and Phusawisot (2021) and the professional standard for Thai pre-service teachers by the Teachers' Council of Thailand (2021), which included three factors: Lack of Confidence (LC), Poor Performance (PP), and Negative Self-Concept (NSC). This questionnaire was divided into three sections, consisting of 39 items. Each item was designed to collect specific types of information relevant to the study. Furthermore, a 5-point Likert scale was employed to ask the participants to rate themselves.

To ascertain the validity of the research instruments, the research instrument was assessed by three experts who are familiar with this field. The experts were asked to indicate their opinion using a three-point rating scale for each statement. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to summarize the expert's opinions. The validity of the instrument was found to be 0.95. It was acceptable to be used as the research instrument of this study. To validate the research instruments, a questionnaire was piloted to identify the weaknesses of the instrument, check for clarity of language and content, and establish an appropriate time for completion. Furthermore, a questionnaire was piloted with a small group of fourth-year students who shared similar characteristics to the participants and who were not part of the actual participants.

### **Data Collection**

The data of this research was gathered using an online questionnaire. Data collection was conducted in September 2024. Participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire. Google Forms was selected for its ease of use and its ability to protect participants' privacy, ensuring that the data collection process was both efficient and ethically sound. Therefore, the link of the questionnaire was distributed to Thai EFL Pre-Service English Teachers from 6 Rajabhat Universities in Thailand. Prior to participation, a letter of consent was provided to inform participants about the study. Additionally, they were assured that all information collected would be used exclusively for research purposes and treated with the strictest confidentiality. Furthermore, they were guaranteed that no personal details would be disclosed in any reports or publications derived from the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the questionnaire were used to address the research question which aimed to investigate the influences of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers' linguistic insecurity on teaching performance in ELT classrooms. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques were employed, using SPSS Statistics version 29, to investigate the influence of linguistic factors that affect the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service teachers.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic information of the participants. The data were analyzed using percentages to provide an overview of demographic

characteristics. To determine the proportion of each demographic characteristic, the following formula was employed to calculate percentages:

$$Percentage = \frac{f}{N} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

Where;  $f$  = The number of respondents in each category.  
 $N$  = The total number of respondents.

Furthermore, multiple linear regression was utilized as the most appropriate method to assess the relationships between the factors contributing to linguistic insecurity and teaching performance. It also identified significant relationships between several factors, such as lack of confidence in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and overall teaching performance in EFL classrooms. Therefore, multiple linear regression was applied to evaluate how these factors affect the dependent variable: teaching performance, reported by the participants in the third section of the questionnaire. The multiple regression equation used to predict teaching performance based on linguistic insecurity factors is given by the following formula:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \dots + \beta_nx_n + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

Where;  $\beta_0$  = the y-intercept  
 $x_1 + x_2 + \dots + x_n$  = The independent variables  
 $\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \dots + \beta_n$  = The regression coefficients  
 $\epsilon$  = The error term

## Results

As mentioned earlier, there were a hundred participants in this study. 70 percent of the participants were female, 29 percent were male, and 1 percent were identified as other. Participants were involved in teaching at both the primary and secondary levels. However, the participants were grouped according to the region and the university they were studying; moreover, each university was labeled based on the region or location of the university.

Table 1 shows that the participants were from six Rajabhat Universities in Thailand, located in the Northern part and the Southern part of Thailand. 44 participants were from Northern Rajabhat University: 25 percent of the participants were fourth-year students at N1 University, and 19 percent of the participants were from N2 University. On the other hand, the rest of the participants were from Southern Rajabhat University: 19 percent of the participants were from S1 University, 23 percent were from S2 University, 11 percent were from S3 University, and 3 percent were from S4 University.

**Table 1**  
*Distribution of Participants by University*

University	Percent
<b>Northern Rajabhat University</b>	
N1 University	25
N2 University	19
<b>Southern Rajabhat University</b>	
S1 University	19
S2 University	23
S3 University	11
S4 University	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### **The Results of the Influences of Linguistic Insecurity on Pre-service English Language Teachers' Teaching Performance in Thai EFL Classrooms**

This study aimed to investigate the influences of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers' linguistic insecurity on teaching performance in EFL classrooms. To address this, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, including three independent variables: Lack of Confidence (LC), Poor Performance (PP), and Negative Self-Concept (NSC), and one dependent variable included Teaching Performance (TP). The regression analysis was performed at a 0.05 significance level, with all independent variables entered the model simultaneously. Regression coefficients and significance (Sig.) values were examined and compared to the alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) to determine the statistical significance of each predictor. The results of the analysis are presented below.

Table 2 shows a multiple regression analysis of linguistic insecurity's impact on pre-service English teachers' performance in Thai EFL classrooms among a group of northern-Thai pre-service English teachers. The findings show that the model has a coefficient of prediction (R Square) of 0.384, and an Adjusted R Square of 0.338, indicating that 33.8% of the teaching performance can be explained by the independent variables from Northern Rajabhat University in Thailand, demonstrating the reliability of the regression equation in predicting teaching performance. Among the three independent variables, none reached statistical significance at the 0.05 level. The multiple regression equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 0.433 + 0.191 + 0.413 + 0.271 \quad (3)$$

It indicated that while the independent variables are relevant, the findings show that linguistic insecurity may have an indirect or contextual influence on teaching performance. It can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis was rejected.



**Table 2**

*A Multiple Regression Analysis of Linguistic Insecurity's Impact on Pre-service English Teachers' Performance in Thai EFL Classrooms at Northern Rajabhat University*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Regression</b>	11.689	3	3.896	8.322	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Residual</b>	18.727	40	0.468		
<b>Total</b>	30.416	43			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>(Constant)</b>	0.433	0.775		0.559	0.580
<b>Overall LC</b>	0.191	0.324	0.095	0.590	0.558
<b>Overall PP</b>	0.413	0.220	0.353	1.880	0.067
<b>Overall NSC</b>	0.271	0.145	0.284	1.871	0.069

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup> Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.620 <sup>a</sup>	0.384	0.338	0.68424

a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

Table 3 demonstrates a multiple regression analysis of linguistic insecurity's impact on pre-service English teachers' performance in Thai EFL classrooms among a group of southern-Thai pre-service English teachers. The results reveal that the model has a coefficient of prediction (R Square) of 0.514 and an Adjusted R Square of 0.486, indicating that 48.6% of the teaching performance can be explained by the independent variables from Southern Rajabhat University in Thailand, demonstrating the reliability of the regression equation in predicting teaching performance. Among the three independent variables, only Overall Negative Self-Concept (NSC) reached statistical significance at the 0.05 level, while Overall Lack of Confidence (LC) and Overall Poor Performance (PP) showed no significance. The multiple regression equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 1.418 + 0.026 + (-0.101) + 0.689 \quad (4)$$

The results suggest that although the independent variables are relevant, linguistic insecurity, particularly Negative Self-Concept, has a significant impact on teaching performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 3**

*A Multiple Regression Analysis of Linguistic Insecurity's Impact on Pre-service English Teachers' Performance in Thai EFL Classrooms at Southern Rajabhat University*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Regression</b>	20.968	3	6.989	18.307	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Residual</b>	19.853	52	0.382		
<b>Total</b>	40.820	55			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>(Constant)</b>	1.418	0.588		2.409	0.020
<b>Overall LC</b>	0.026	0.198	0.014	0.129	0.897
<b>Overall PP</b>	-0.101	0.193	-0.070	-0.524	0.602
<b>Overall NSC</b>	0.689	0.118	0.755	5.835	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup> Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.717 <sup>a</sup>	0.514	0.486	0.61788

a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

According to Table 4 it shows a multiple regression analysis of linguistic insecurity's impact on both northern and southern pre-service English teachers' performance in EFL classrooms. The results show that, out of the three independent variables, Negative Self-Concept (NSC) is the only factor that entered the multiple regression equation. The coefficient of prediction (R square) is 0.422, and the adjusted coefficient of prediction (Adjusted R square) is 0.403, indicating that only one independent variable can be used to predict 40.3% of the teaching performance of Thai EFL pre-service English teachers from Northern Rajabhat and Southern Rajabhat Universities in Thailand and shows statistical significance at the 0.05 significance level. The multiple regression analysis equation can be written as follows:

$$Y = 0.676 + 0.128 + 0.214 + 0.468 \quad (5)$$

The analysis reveals that while the independent variables are relevant, linguistic insecurity, particularly Negative Self-Concept among pre-service teachers from Northern and Southern Rajabhat Universities in Thailand, significantly affects teaching performance. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 4**

*A Multiple Regression Analysis of Linguistic Insecurity's Impact on Both Northern and Southern Pre-service English Teachers' Performance in EFL Classrooms*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Regression</b>	30.241	3	10.080	23.318	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Residual</b>	41.499	96	0.432		
<b>Total</b>	71.740	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>(Constant)</b>	0.676	0.448		1.509	0.135
<b>Overall LC</b>	0.128	0.173	0.069	0.743	0.459
<b>Overall PP</b>	0.214	0.136	0.169	1.577	0.118
<b>Overall NSC</b>	0.468	0.089	0.502	5.241	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teaching Performance (TP)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup> Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.649 <sup>a</sup>	0.422	0.403	0.65748

a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall NSC, Overall LC, Overall PP

In conclusion, the findings indicate that Negative Self-Concept (NSC) is the primary predictor of teaching performance, whereas Lack of Confidence (LC) and Poor Performance (PP) were not statistically significant. A comparison between the two regions revealed a notable difference in how linguistic insecurity influences teaching performance. At Northern Rajabhat University, linguistic insecurity did not have a statistically significant impact on teaching performance. In contrast, at Southern Rajabhat University, the Negative Self-Concept (NSC) significantly influenced teaching performance, with an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.486, indicating a stronger explanatory power.

### Discussion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the relationship between factors of linguistic insecurity and their impact on teaching performance among Thai EFL pre-service English teachers. Specifically, the results in Table 4 highlight that Negative Self-Concept (NSC) has a significant influence on teaching performance. The analysis indicates that NSC is the only factor with a statistically significant effect, whereas Lack of Confidence (LC) and Poor Performance (PP) did not significantly impact Thai EFL pre-service English teachers.

The analysis of these findings confirms the significance of Negative Self-Concept (NSC) as a key factor influencing teaching performance among Thai EFL pre-service English teachers, aligning with previous studies. These results are consistent with the research by Jantri and

Phusawisot (2021), which found that a negative self-concept directly affects teaching performance by reducing confidence and increasing anxiety in ELT classrooms. Furthermore, these findings are supported by Jantri and Phusawisot (2021) in conjunction with Tonelson (1981), Burns (1982), and Tabassum (2014), who stated that teachers' self-concept is positively related to their classroom performance and student achievement. Their research also indicated that apprehension about their teaching abilities leads to decreased confidence in using English and heightened anxiety. Additionally, Wernicke (2017) found that a negative self-concept causes teachers to frequently question their own English proficiency, further increasing anxiety and insecurity while teaching.

Therefore, among Thai pre-service English teachers from Southern Rajabhat University, Negative Self-Concept (NSC) emerged as a significant predictor, accounting for 48.6% of the variance in teaching performance. This finding supports the literature's assertion that negative self-concept strongly influences teachers' performance in ELT classrooms (Bucci & Baxter, 1984). Pre-service teachers with a higher NSC struggle with classroom interactions, avoid complex language tasks due to fear of making errors that may seem unprofessional to students, compare their English skills with other English teachers, and feel uncomfortable giving feedback in EFL classrooms. Consequently, their Negative Self-Concept (NSC) affects key teaching elements such as lesson planning, classroom management, teaching techniques, and student engagement, as emphasized by the Teachers' Council of Thailand (2021).

The contrasting results between Northern and Southern Rajabhat Universities indicate that different factors influence how linguistic insecurity affects teaching performance. Several sociolinguistic and cultural factors contribute to these differences.

Firstly, Sociolinguistic Environment and Exposure to English, Northern Thailand has a relatively lower level of exposure to English compared to the South. The Northern region mainly uses Thai dialects, and there is limited interaction with English speakers. Consequently, Northern pre-service English teachers may experience linguistic insecurity but do not necessarily translate this into lower teaching performance. Their self-perception may be influenced by local linguistic norms, leading to a more accepting attitude toward non-native English proficiency (Baker, 2012; Kosonen, 2008). Unlike the north, southern Thailand has more interaction with international communities, particularly in tourism-driven provinces like Phuket and Surat Thani (Keyuravong, 2010). Southern pre-service English teachers may face higher expectations regarding English proficiency, leading to increased self-doubt and anxiety when teaching. This aligns with previous research suggesting that greater exposure to English-speaking environments can increase linguistic insecurity among non-native speakers due to heightened self-comparison with native speakers (Labov, 1972; Wernicke, 2017).

Another factor might be the cultural and psychological factors. Thai culture is highly collectivist, meaning that students and teachers are often reluctant to stand out or challenge authority (Hofstede, 2011). However, Southern Thailand has a stronger Malay-Muslim influence, which may foster different cultural attitudes towards education and self-perception (Jindapon, 2018). If pre-service teachers in the South are more self-critical due to cultural norms, this could explain why Negative Self-Concept NSC plays a stronger role in their teaching performance. Moreover, pre-service English teachers in the South may experience stronger internalized pressure to conform to a "native-like" English standard, particularly in regions where foreign tourism creates a demand for high English proficiency (Hiranburana,

2017). This pressure could contribute to a heightened negative self-concept, negatively affecting their teaching confidence.

### **Conclusion**

The study highlights significant regional variations in how linguistic insecurity affects teaching performance among Thai EFL pre-service English teachers. While Northern pre-service English teachers were not significantly affected by linguistic insecurity, their Southern counterparts experienced a strong correlation between Negative Self-Concept (NSC) and poor teaching performance. These differences are likely shaped by sociolinguistic exposure and cultural attitudes toward English proficiency.

Addressing linguistic insecurity requires context-specific strategies to ensure that all Thai pre-service English teachers can develop the confidence necessary to succeed in the classroom. Future research should explore longitudinal data to track how these perceptions evolve over time and whether interventions can mitigate their effects on teaching performance.

According to the findings, tailored interventions are essential to address regional differences in linguistic insecurity. For Northern Rajabhat Universities, where insecurity shows no significant impact on teaching performance, the focus should be on enhancing English communication skills through authentic practice such as role-playing and classroom immersion. In contrast, for Southern Rajabhat Universities, where Negative Self-Concept (NSC) significantly affects performance, confidence-building initiatives like peer mentoring, pronunciation workshops, and self-efficacy training should be prioritized. At the national level, Thai teacher education programs should emphasize pedagogical confidence and intelligibility over native-like proficiency to help pre-service English teachers develop a more positive self-concept and reduce linguistic insecurity.

### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

To enhance the writing process, especially in improving academic tone and readability, AI-assisted programs such as Grammarly and ChatGPT were utilized in this study. These tools assisted in refining language, ensuring clarity, and maintaining a formal writing style. However, the interpretations, conclusions, and analyses remain the responsibility of the authors.

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