CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provided the background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous research. This chapter reviewed the foundation, research questions, and objectives of the study, presenting a comprehensive theoretical framework. It emphasized key considerations and introduces the conceptual framework, and concluded with a summary of related previous studies

A. Research Background

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the four essential language skills in English language learning. According to Richards (2008), speaking is the ability to use language orally to communicate meaning through interaction, requiring learners to produce appropriate language in real time. This skill enables learners not only to express ideas and engage in social interaction but also to develop confidence and fluency in authentic communicative contexts. However, speaking was often considered the most difficult skill for many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students because it demanded the spontaneous use of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and real-time processing, as well as the management of psychological factors such as confidence and anxiety (Muengnakin & Narathakoon, 2025).

In Thailand, secondary students often faced multiple challenges in developing their speaking skills. Recent research showed that these students struggled with limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, low confidence, and speaking anxiety, especially when exposure to English outside the classroom was minimal. For instance, a study from Muengnakin & Narathakoon (2025) investigating communication apprehension among Thai high school students (Grade 11) found that speaking anxiety and negative attitudes toward speaking were considerable obstacles; students used strategies such as self-practice and seeking social support to cope. Similarly, in a study of English majors

at Phetchabun Rajabhat University, major speaking difficulties cited included limited vocabulary, being shy, and pronunciation issues (Tao-ngoen, 2024). These problems imply that traditional instruction, which often emphasized grammar, reading, or lecture-style transmission, did not sufficiently enable students to practice speaking in meaningful or interactive ways.

To address such issues, pedagogical research proposed a variety of strategies and methods. Some studies have focused on using cooperative learning models and digital/media-enhanced approaches. For example, the use of "Number Head Together" cooperative model combined with TikTok media was found to improve speaking skills, by increasing student engagement and providing alternate participatory modes of learning (Waode, 2024). Another study from Al Khairi et al., (2025) developed speaking material based on storytelling using YouTube for Grade 10 students, which yielded positive gains in speaking performance and validation for content and design. These kind of studies suggest that when students were given more interactive, technology-rich, or media-supported speaking practice, their speaking abilities tended to improve.

One pedagogical strategy that had been less explored in the Thai secondary context was the use of speaking stations — classrooms organized so that students rotate among stations, each with different speaking tasks (Pimpiban & Meesri, 2021). The idea was to provide variety, more opportunities for peer interaction, reduce the pressure of whole-class speaking, and allow for more student talk time. Speaking stations can foster a learner-centered environment that might help alleviate some of the affective factors (anxiety, shyness) whole offering scaffolded speaking practice in rotating, smaller groups or pairs.

Despite its potential, limited research had examined the implementation of speaking stations in Thai EFL secondary classrooms. Most previous studies focused on technology-based or cooperative learning models, while few have explored how station-based approaches could influence students' speaking engagement and perceptions. Furthermore, existing literature tended to report learning outcomes rather that describe the actual classroom process or students' subjective responses. This

created a research gap in understanding how speaking stations were implemented in real classroom settings and how students respond to this approach.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore the implementation of speaking stations to improve Thai secondary students' speaking skills and to investigate students' responses toward this instructional approach. Understanding there aspects could provide both theoretical contributions and practical implications in educational settings.

B. Research Questions

From the background above, the following research questions were formulated to explore the implementation of speaking stations and students' responses in improving Thai secondary students' speaking skills:

1. How was the implementation of speaking stations in teaching speaking to Thai secondary students?
2. What were Thai secondary students' responses toward the use of speaking stations in English class?
3. How were the students' learning performance throughout the course as they participate in speaking station activities?

C. Research Purpose

In alignment with the research questions, the purposes of this study were designed to uncover the implementation of speaking stations and students' responses in improving Thai students' speaking skills:

1. To explore the process of implementing speaking stations in Thai secondary speaking classes.
2. To describe Thai secondary students' responses toward the use of speaking stations in learning speaking.
3. To examine changes in students' speaking performance throughout the course as they participated in speaking station activities.

D. Research Significance

This study had important significance, both theoretically and practically, in the context of developing English language learning strategies, especially speaking skills at the secondary school level. This study had both theoretical and practical value in creating English language' learning strategies, particularly speaking skills, at the Secondary school level. It is also important for the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly speaking skills at the secondary school in Thailand.

Theoretically, this study contributed to the theoretical understanding of interactive speaking strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Speaking stations emphasized learner-centered instruction where students rotated through structured tasks that engaged them in varied communicative practices. From a theoretical standpoint, this model highlighted the importance of interaction, peer collaboration, and scaffolded opportunities for speaking. It strengthened the idea that language learning was most effective when students were placed in environments that mirrored authentic communication while still providing manageable support. By exploring how speaking stations functioned in practice, this research added to the broader academic discussion on learner-centered and interaction-based pedagogical approaches.

In addition. Student-centered speaking tasks improved fluency and vocabulary development, further supporting the idea that varied and active speaking practices were effective in strengthening communicative skills. By exploring speaking stations in the Thai EFL classroom, this study extended the theoretical discussion on interactive speaking strategies and provided evidence of how rotational and multi- modal speaking activities could foster learning outcomes.

Practically, the findings of this study were valuable for English teachers, especially those teaching at the secondary school level in Thailand. Teachers often faced challenges in creating classroom environments that actively engaged students in speaking activities while also accommodating learners' diverse proficiency levels and learning styles. By implementing speaking stations, teachers were provided with a

structured framework that allowed them to design varied and interactive tasks where students rotated between stations focusing on fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, or conversation practice. This approach supported teachers in managing large and mixed-ability classrooms more effectively, while ensuring that each student has the opportunity to practice speaking in meaningful ways.

For students, the speaking station model offered an engaging and supportive learning environment where they could participate more actively in speaking tasks. Many Thai students were hesitant to speak English due to fear of making mistakes or lack of confidence (Chaisiri, 2023). However, by practicing in smaller groups or pairs across different stations, students were given more opportunities to build confidence, interact with peers, and gradually overcome speaking anxiety. In addition, the varied activities in speaking stations helped students develop different aspects of communicative competence, which contributed to their overall speaking improvement (Pimpiban & Meesri, 2021).

For schools and curriculum developers, this study provided a concrete example of how innovative, student-centered strategies could be integrated into English instruction. By adopting speaking stations, schools could enrich their language programs with activities that encouraged student participation and fostered collaborative learning. This could serve as a reference for designing English curricula that moved beyond traditional teacher-centered approaches, toward more interactive and communicative practices that aligned with Thailand's educational goals.

In conclusion, this research was expected to provide both theoretical enrichment and practical benefits, serving as a guideline for improving EFL teaching strategies in Thailand. It not only added to academic discussions on speaking pedagogy but also offered actionable insights for classroom practice, helping to improve students' speaking skills in meaningful and sustainable ways.

E. Research Scope

This study was limited to exploring the implementation of speaking stations and students' responses in improving speaking skills within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The research specifically focused on secondary school students in Thailand, with the participants being tenth-grade students at Muslim Suksa School, located in the southern region of Thailand. The choice of this school and level was based on the need to provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking English actively and confidently in structured classroom settings.

The participants of this study consisted of tenth graders who have experienced the implementation of speaking stations during their English class. Their experiences were central to the study, as the research aimed to capture not only the process of implementation but also the students' responses, perceptions, and attitudes toward this method of learning. Therefore, the study did not attempt to measure broader academic outcomes such as reading or writing skills, nor did it compare speaking stations with other teaching methods. Instead, the scope was narrowed to speaking skill development and the interactive learning opportunities provided by speaking stations.

Furthermore, the study was conducted within the specific timeframe of the 2025 academic year and was limited to one secondary school context. Thus, the findings were not intended to be generalized to all Thai schools or EFL settings but rather to provide in-depth insights into how speaking stations function in one particular context and how students responded to them. These insights were expected to serve as a basis for further research and as a reference for teachers and practitioners seeking to apply innovative speaking strategies in similar educational settings.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study was grounded in the idea that improving speaking skills required both effective instructional methods and positive student engagement. Speaking stations, as a student-centered approach, provided structured yet flexible opportunities for learners

to practice speaking in varied contexts. The following framework outlined the key concepts, theories, and prior studies that guided this research.

1. Speaking Skill in English learning

Speaking is a core component of communicative competence in language learning; it's what learners use to interact, negotiate meaning, and function in real communicative settings. Important aspects include fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and confidence. In many EFL settings like Thailand, students reported difficulties with fluency, limited opportunities to speak, and low confidence (Phisutthangkoon, 2024).

A recent study "Upgrading English Public Speaking Skills in Thai EFL Students Through Imitating TED Talks Videos" (Sukrutrit, 2025) showed improvements in public speaking performance when students had models and authentic input from TED Talks. It also found that applying Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) helped scaffold speaking practices. This aligned with Hymes' Communicative Competence Theory, which underscores that speaking involves not only grammatical accuracy but also fluency, appropriateness, and confidence in real interaction.

2. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) underpins many contemporary communicative methods, emphasizing real-world tasks as the foundation for language use. In this framework, speaking is not isolated skill but a means to achieve communicative goals through problem-solving, role-playing, and interactive discussion. As Ellis et al., (2019) point out, TBLT allows students to focus on meaning first while promoting fluency, accuracy, and complexity through task repetition and scaffolding.

Speaking stations integrated TBLT principles by organizing multiple communicative tasks across rotating stations, each designed to address a particular speaking sub-skill or interaction type. This mirrored authentic communication, allowing students to perform tasks that simulated real life context. Thus, TBLT

provided a theoretical bridge linking communicative teaching principles and the structured design of speaking stations.

3. Speaking Stations Model as Instructional Strategy

Speaking stations refer to a classroom structure in which students rotate among different stations where each station involves different speaking tasks or focuses (role-play, pair work, pronunciation drills, discussion, etc.). This strategy can provide more varied, interactive, scaffolded opportunities compared to "whole-class speaking only".

An example of a closely related strategy is the Station Rotation Model (SRM) in blended learning. The study "Effects of Using Station Rotation Model in Blended Learning on English Speaking Ability of Thai EFL Primary School Students" (Pimpiban and Meesri, 2021) found that using SRM significantly improved speaking ability and positive attitudes toward speaking among primary school students in Thailand. These findings suggested that station-based designs could effectively enhance speaking performance and learner engagement. Thus, the speaking stations model, as conceptualized in this study, drew from these principles by structuring classroom activities into divers, task-based stations to foster more active participation and communicative practice.

4. Speaking Assessment

Assessing speaking skill requires evaluating learners' ability to communicate effectively through language use in real situations. Speaking assessment is not merely about linguistic accuracy, but also involves fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and communicative competence, as noted by Kuvera et al., (2022), a valid and reliable speaking rubric should include four components: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, which together capture students' ability to express meaning clearly and naturally. Similarly, communication ability must also be considered, since speaking is inherently interactive and requires spontaneous meaning negotiation (Nugraha et al., 2025).

To ensure fairness and consistency, performance-based assessment was often used in speaking classrooms. According to Ismailia, (2021), performance assessment using rubrics helped teachers evaluate not only students' linguistic aspects but also their ability to perform authentic tasks such as reporting, presenting, or storytelling. These forms of assessment were considered authentic because they reflected real-life communication contexts. In this sense, rubrics served as both evaluative and instructional tools, guiding students toward improvement through transparent criteria.

Furthermore, Masyuroh et al., (2023) highlighted that authentic assessment (role-plays, discussions, and debates) provided students with meaningful opportunities to demonstrate their speaking competence. Such approaches allowed teachers to capture the dynamic nature of spoken interaction, rather than focusing solely on memorized or rehearsed speech. Meanwhile, the importance of designing speaking assessments that were appropriate to learners' proficiency levels, culturally relevant, and pedagogically fair. Speaking tests should align with learning objectives and classroom instruction, thereby enhancing both validity and practicality (Widiastuti, 2025).
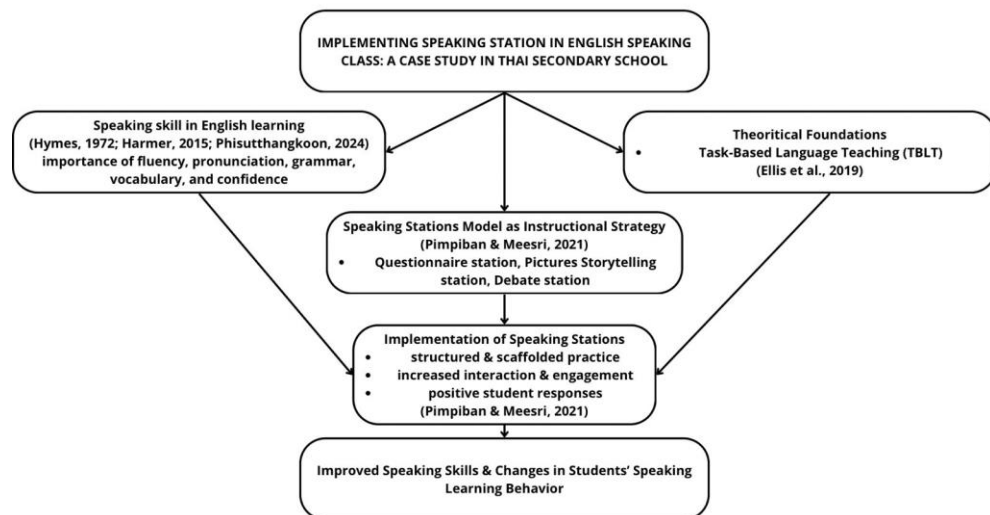

Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Study

Speaking skill remains one of the most essential aspects of English language learning because it directly reflects learners' communicative competence. In Thailand,

secondary school students often struggled with fluency, confidence, and opportunities for authentic practice, as English instruction frequently emphasized grammar and written forms. Innovative approaches such as station-based learning or station rotation models were proposed to address these challenges by giving students structured yet varied opportunities to speak in different contexts. The following studies provided insights into related practices and served as a foundation for the present research.

Pimpiban and Meesri, (2021) investigated the Station Rotation Model (SRM) in blended learning with Thai EFL primary students. Their findings showed significant improvements in speaking ability and students' positive attitudes toward English speaking. This demonstrates that a station-based approach could effectively foster oral communication skills among young Thai learners.

Seitova & Khalmatova, (2025) explored teachers' and implementers perspectives on the Blended Learning Station Rotation Model. The study revealed that teachers valued SRM for its flexibility and student-centered design, though challenges such as classroom management and time allocation were noted. These findings highlighted the importance of considering implementation issues when applying station-based strategies like speaking stations.

Another study by Larsari et al., (2023) synthesized findings from multiple implementations of the Station Rotation Model across educational context. The review concluded that SRM promotes learner engagement, scaffolding, and differentiated practice opportunities. This body of evidence strengthened the argument that structured rotations (whether technological or task-based) support active learning and improved communicative competence.

Zhou, (2021) provided a practical account of the application of Station Rotation Model in blended learning within English language classrooms. The study detailed how rotation between stations with different tasks (listening, discussion, pronunciation, and vocabulary activities) gave students varied ways to practice. Results indicated enhanced speaking confidence and active participation, showing the model's adaptability across contexts.

Finally, Maura Isanti et al., (2024) explored a variety of speaking tasks such as role-play, group work, storytelling, and free conversation. Teacher strategies and students' responses were examined, especially how tasks were designed to encourage participation and reduce speaking reluctance. This provided useful parallels for understanding how speaking stations might be implemented and how students might perceive them.

From these studies, it was evident that the station-based approach had been shown to improve speaking ability, enhance student engagement, and create more positive classroom dynamics. However, most prior research had focused either on blended learning or at the primary level. Vary few studies had examined speaking stations specifically in Thai secondary Muslim school contexts. Particularly, regarding both the implementation process and students' responses. This gap highlighted the importance of the present study, which aimed to explore how speaking stations were implemented in a tenth-grade classroom at Muslim Suksa School and how students respond to this approach in improving their speaking skills.