



## Presentation Performance: Transforming Anxiety to Confidence of EFL Students in Classroom Seminar at Higher Education Context

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### Abstract

*Anxiety in the classroom, especially in presentation has a debilitating effect on students' performance, academic development, success in learning a foreign language. Some of the students could deliver their speaking fluently and influentially. This study is limited to the aim at exploring cause of anxiety in seminar presentation, and explore the ways to be confident in presentation. The participants consisted of 3 non-native English lecturers who teach Seminar in ELT course and ten students involved in this study; five students who have anxiety problems, and five students who have good confident in classroom presentation. They were advanced students in seventh semester. Observation and interview were used to collect the data. The data were analysed in a linear hierarchical approach building from the bottom to the top. The raw data were organized and prepared for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews typing up field notes, sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information. Dealing with the aims of the study, results revealed presentation anxiety is caused by lack of preparation, fear of audience's judgment, personality problems, language mastery, and academic demands; the suggested ways in mitigating anxiety to be confident in classroom presentation are drilling practice, doing preparation, getting feedback, strengthening concept, and expressing nonverbal communication. Thus, the transformation of presentation anxiety to confidence occurs through interrelated process of cognitive, affective, and psychometric practices.*

### Introduction

issues, or concept in front of the class orally. Many lecturers apply presentation as learning method to train students' ability to communicate effectively (Tsang, 2020; El Enein, 2011; Nguyen & Ly, 2025) In presentation, students are not only needed to master the material concept in depth, but also, they are expected to be able to organize message clearly and confidently. Presentation engages students' performance, participation, and critical thinking to interact with audiences using quiz or question-answer sessions. Thus, classroom presentation is essential in enhancing students' academic demand and career development. Showing the impressive performance in front of the other people is a willingness by many students. However, doing presentation in front of the class is not easy for some students (Zesshreena & Ahmad, 2025). Anxiety becomes a trigger of students to deliver stunning presentation. Students anxiety can be observed from classroom presentation (Meçe & Gjergo, 2023). Presentation is regarded to provoke high level of anxiety (Gong & Kanai, 2025; Beenen et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

A series of related studies provide emerged issue of anxiety in the classroom presentation. Delivering presentation in English is one of prevalent cause (Gebre, 2024; Ch'ng et al., 2025; Ding et al., 2025), as a formidable barrier of feeling anxious by EFL students, they thought it is hard to speak confidently in English (Zesshreena & Ahmad, 2025). Similarly, having inadequate English proficiency leads to anxiety in foreign language learners (Alhasan et al., 2024). The students encounter anxiety due to various interrelated factors, including psychological, social environment, and academic demand (Marhum, 2025). In addition, feeling fear to present in English because of lack of preparation (Chen, 2024) and language acquisition (Rajendran et al., 2025), lack of confidence (Utari et al., 2024), inability to communicate concept mastery well (Naser & Isa, 2021) in delivering to many people (Haratikka & Sony, 2023). As a consequence, they are fear to do mistake in delivering content of their presentation (Meçe & Gjergo, 2023).

In addition, based on students' previous experience of getting much critics influence their next presentation, they are very careful to speak anymore. Being judged by lecturers or classmates is an anxiety trigger of being negatively evaluated (Khouni et al., 2022; Candra, 2025; Alami, 2025), thereby increase students' mental pressure. Moreover, having minimal knowledge and experience of public speaking contribute to students' presentation performance (Melisa, Darmawan, Wahyudin, 2025). In EFL context, presentation in English exacerbate students' anxiety (Mawarwati, 2024), for instance fear of making mistake, lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation, unstructured grammar (Khoudri, 2024) and nervousness (Abdullah, S., Altun, M., & Hama, 2022) and students' stress of thinking too much of the presentation (Hsu & Goldsmith, 2021). As a result, students tend to feel fear, nervous, and they speak in a stammer.

Emotional management skill should be existed in students' mental to control their anxiety. Coping strategies (Ahmed, 2025; Khomairoh et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2025), and alleviating strategy (Hsu & Goldsmith, 2021) are recommended to be adopted by students in classroom presentation. Using strategy can reduce students' anxiety in speaking their presentation to audiences (Nugroho & Hapsari, 2024). There are four strategies can be applied to reduce students' anxiety (Hsu & Goldsmith, 2021), namely shaping active-learning, forming students group, creating inclusive and equitable classroom, and choosing words carefully. Minimizing presentation anxiety also can be done by providing positive feedback, offering praise, and incorporating collaborative work (Khoudri, 2024), improve language skills (Utari et al., 2024 ; Javaid et al., 2023) In addition, coping strategies are suggested to be adopted by students such rehearsal. Peer feedback, relaxation techniques, and technological aid to diminish anxiety issues. The suggested strategies are elaborated into this study to explore ways of lectures and students to do presentation confidently.

Dealing with anxiety issues above, there are many related studies have investigated in speaking activity and classroom presentation. Generally, the strategies suggested still focus on reducing anxiety commonly that occur in the classroom. This study is limited to the aim at exploring cause of anxiety in seminar presentation, and explore the ways to be confident in presentation. As known that lack of confidence is caused by feeling anxious. Therefore, this study elaborated student and lecturers' experiences in terms of anxiety and confidence in classroom presentation. In short, anxiety in the classroom, especially in presentation has a debilitating effect on students' performance, academic development, success in learning a foreign language (Djumingin et al., 2019).

## Methods

This research applies qualitative research method with a case study design. This research was conducted in natural setting. The researchers collected the data in Seminar in ELT course where participants present their proposal research. The main purpose of this study is to explore lecturers and students' perception experience in terms of presentation anxiety. Data from lecturers and students were elaborated and presented in the form of students' causes of presentation anxiety and the ways to be confident in seminar presentation.

### Participants

This study was conducted at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 3 non-native English lecturers who teach Seminar in ELT course. The initial names of the lecturer were Dv, Ic, Im. There are ten students involved in this study from semester seventh; five students who have anxiety problems, and five students who have good confident in classroom presentation. The initial name of students was If, Fh, Bm, Ai, Mt, Ia, Ad, Fm, Kv, Aq. These initials were used to show extract of interview in findings.

### Procedures of Collecting Data

In collecting data, the researchers conducted observation and interview. The researchers employed nonparticipant observation or external observation in which they did not involve in the situation being observed. Observation was used to observe students' presentation and find out students who have anxiety problems and good confidence. After conducting observation for three meetings, the researchers interviewed all lecturers to gain data participant' experiences about anxiety. Type of the interview was semi-structured interview. The interview sessions were organized after the class end. All of the respons were recorded.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researchers follow the steps of Creswell (2014). The data were analyzed in a linear hierarchical approach building from the bottom to the top. At first, the raw data of interview were organized and prepared for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews typing up observation notes, sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information. The researchers provided a general sense of the information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning. Then, the researcher wrote notes in margins of transcripts. Next, coding all of the data, organizing, and bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the margins. It involved taking text data, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs), and labelling those categories with a term. The term is based on the actual language of the participant. After that, giving description which involved a detailed rendering of information events in a setting. Researchers generated codes for this description. Then, the researchers used the coding as well for generating a small number of *themes*. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. The researcher used a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis. In making an interpretation of the findings, the researchers related and compared the findings with information gleaned from the literature or theories. The researchers also discussed the literature at the end of the study. In interpretation, it also involved Discourse Analysis approach collaboratively to present the data display in extract form.

## Results and Discussion

The emergence factors of anxiety are caused by different factors. Research data reveals five factors make students feel anxious.

## **Lack of Preparation**

Extract 1:

“I realize that why I feel fear because I didn’t make well preparation, usually I prepare one day before the show, so at this time my heart is beating fast” (St: If)

Extract 2:

“I have a lot of assignment so I just present in short, I spoke haltingly because my lecturer forbids us to read all the sentences in my slide” (St: Fh)

Extract 3:

“I feel not confident because I prepare my presentation in haphazard manner” (St: Bm)

The lack of preparation contribute on students’ presentation performance. Less preparation causes students feel fear, worry, and nervous (Hinton et al., 2009). Doing preparation in short time reveals the unstructured explanation, unfocused, full reading, unconcreted, and difficult to answer the questions. It means that, lack of preparation (Khouni et al., 2022) encounters presenter’s confident to perform qualified presentation, as a result they are fear to make mistake and get negative evaluation from the audiences (Mawarwati, 2024).

## **Fear of Audiences Judgment**

Extract 4:

“I worried about the judgment from my friends, most of them pay attention to my presentation, so I worried on they judge me that my pronunciation is bad, my grammar is broken and so on” (St: Ai)

Extract 5:

“after presentation I expect no questions because I’m afraid if cannot answer it” St: Mt)

Extract 6:

“I think they give negative perception on me that I’m not competent, I’m fear of being criticized, laughed at, or making mistakes” (St: If)

Audiences judgment encounters presentation anxiety. The students thought to much on the judgment of negative evaluation (Rajendran et al., 2025), so the presenter could not present well. Overthinking on the judgment also influence self-confident, so in this time unclear explanation and much filler conduce presentation (Keese & Bauer-Reich, 2022) performance. Moreover, the audiences are intersected to keep on listening.

## **Personality Problems**

Extract 7:

“I have bad experience before, that’s why sometime I cannot control myself in front of many people” (St: Fh)

Extract 8:

“I’m shy, when I am calling to present something, I’m getting nervous, sweaty hands, and my voice is trembling” (St: Bm)

Critics in previous presentation produce personality problem some students. Mixed feeling is experienced by students in the next presentation. The students are fear getting the similar comment that cause their mental and psychological (Javaid et al., 2023). The anxiety in this time are nervous, sweaty hands, and trembling voice. Process of language learning is complex because it involves linguistics development and emotional experience. Students should try to control their emotion, so they can do well-presentation.

### **Language Mastery**

Extract 9:

“I’m doubt if I cannot answer the question correctly because I aware my English is bad” (St: If)

Extract 10:

“sometimes I’m very hard to understand the text or question from the floor if it is delivered very fast” (St: Ai)

Extract 11:

“I always use wrong pronunciation and take time to think what should I say and what grammar is used” (St: Mt)

Most of EFL students undergo challenging (Purwati et al., 2023) to speak English fluently. As a result, students are anxious because of lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation, and disorder grammar in doing presentation. Some students have unlimited ability of English proficiency that can lead to anxiety problems (Alhasan et al., 2024). In this case, the presenter is obstructed to communicate the message of their presentation. Besides, the listener is difficult to catch the information.

### **Academic Demands**

Extract 12:

“because my lecture takes score from the presentation, I feel nervous, I thought if I cannot show my best and it influence my score” (St: Bm)

Extract 13:

“I’m really be careful in this presentation, sometime I feel stress because I always think my presentation, I’m afraid if I fail, so I lack of sleep because of much thinking” (St: Fh)

Over expecting to achieve high score interferes students’ presentation performance. Students focus on grades rather than the meaning being conveyed, causing their hearts to beat faster. They worry that their expectations will not be achieved. Students faced difficult to academic presentation as research seminar presentation in the classroom (Pitura, 2022).

Transforming anxiety to be confident in conducting presentation depends on presenter’s effort. It deals with strategy, method, and technique applied by presenters. Besides, students should be assisted and trained by the lecturers. There are some ways can be considered as solution on anxiety problems (Haratikka & Sony, 2023) given by lecturers and students who have high confidence in presentation.

## **Drilling Practice**

Being a confident presenter, it needs big effort to study hard. One way to be confident to speak fluently without filler or anxiety disorder is by practicing the substance material many times. It should be repeated every day before the show begins. Even though everything the key points in the slide but the presenter must give additional explanation.

Extract 14:

“I engage my students to repeat in their mind by doing reading the paper again and again, I believe it works for students’ presentation” (Lec:Dv)

Extract 15:

“before presentation, I remind my students to practice and practice to master the issue, so they will be confident to answer the questions” (Lec:Am)

Extract 16:

“in home, I repeat again the material that I have learnt from the class, I read again my note to get comprehensive understanding” (S:Ti)

From the extracts of lecturers and students interview share similar experience to have a great performance in presentation (Utari et al., 2024). The lecturer encourages students to practice many times. Reading a seminar paper repeatedly influence students’ memory to keep the information in their mind.

## **Doing Preparation**

Preparing the presentation paper well in advance will really help students in delivering a stunning presentation. Preparing before showing a presentation so that it can run effectively, fluently and confidently, there are tips given by the lecturer and students based on their real experiences to minimize anxiety (Marhum, 2025).

Extract 17:

“well, first I write my paper based on the instructions given, then I provided references, and double-checked the structure and methodology” (St: Ia)

Extract 18:

“to give best presentation I also create my slide with pictures and harmony colors, I only put the point of my research paper there.” (St: Fh)

Extract 19:

“the things that I prepare before presentation is my mental, I took breath and be a positive thinking that I can give well-performance.” (St: Aq)

Dealing with preparation, students who have confident in presentation have similar experience to do much preparation before the show in terms of classroom seminar. They prepare the content of the paper, reference, presentation slide, media aid, and mental. To have confident presentation, the presenter should not focus on the content only but also verbalize mentally.

Extract 20:

“I think if students didn’t have any preparation it will be difficult for them to speak confidently, I see the students who have great presentation but for whom are lack-reparation feel anxious and stuttered” (St: Ic)

Extract 21:

“feeling anxious in front of other people is common, but it should be minimized by preparing the paper, reading and comprehending several times. It works so far.” (Lec:Dv)

Extract 22:

“from my experiences in assisting my students, I engage them to do well-preparation, it helps them to present confidently, so they will not fear anymore for the question given” (Lec: Im)

From the lecturers’ side, transforming students’ anxiety to be confident need preparation and strategies (Nafiul, 2023). The fact shows, there are two group found in the classroom, they are active and passive to speak. The active one refers to the students who give best presentation, asking questions, giving response, and assisting their low friends. Student who are passive refer to them who are nervous, shy and reluctant to speak. In another occasion, the passive one is active in writing and completing all the tasks not in presentation.

### **Getting Feedback**

Giving and getting feedback is essential to revise students’ performance both in oral and written activity. It has mainly benefit for learning proficiency, self-development, and presentation performance. Copying strategies are suggested to be adopted by students such as rehearsal, peer feedback, and relaxation technique (Ahmed, 2025).

Extract 23:

“after I gave assignment or exercise, I check students’ work and give feedback, I write my comment on the paper” (Lec.Ic)

Extract 24:

“I give feedback directly, but before that I explain first the methodology and ask students to follow it, when I find mistake, I show the right one.” (Lec.Im)

Extract 25:

“I train my students one by one for using greeting, opening, closing and presenting the content of students’ paper, I correct them for inappropriate expressions, include pronunciation.” (Lec.Dv)

Supplying feedback is important for students’ progress, especially to prepare confident presentation. Feedback covers written and oral note. Dealing with presentation, material of public speaking must be provided by the lecturers. Students practice the feedback given (Dobson & Sojisirikul, 2023) by using an appropriate expression and utterance.

Extract 26:

“I feel more confident after getting feedback from my lecturer and friends, it’s really meaningful for me, like at previous I was wrong to greet the examiner, now from the feedback I can say it fluently” (St: Ad)

Extract 27:

“my lecture trained me to speak well, she shows the example and ask me to repeat it, but when I mispronounce and my eye contact are not on the audiences, my lecturer fix it, and ask me to try again. I think this process and feedback make my performance is better than before” (St: Mt)

Extract 28:

“the feedback that I received help me to improve my performance, like how to use gesture and intonation, how to response question”. (St: Sy)

Receiving feedback is meaningful for students, it can come from friends and lecturer comments. It gives positive effect on performance quality, self-confidence, and self-reflection for the next presentation. Besides, students are able to know their strength and weakness, so repeated error can be reduced. Having impressive verbal and nonverbal communication in presentation are depend on preparation and feedback (Dobson & Sojisirikul, 2023).

### **Strengthening Concept**

Being confident presenter deals with concept mastery of content and language features. Mastery concept of variables affect to the quality of presentation, confidence, listeners' comprehensibility and academic result (Naser & Isa, 2021).

Extract 27:

“to be fluent and confident in front of the class and lecturer, I must study and master my paper, so I will be not fear if there is question from the floor. (St: Sf)

Extract 28:

“to strength my knowledge, I rewrite the key points into sticky notes and stamp it on the laptop, I use it if I forgot my ideas during the presentation” (St: Bm)

Extract 28:

“my way is exploring additional concept, theory, and related studies from previous research article, then I elaborated into my explanation.” (St: Mj)

Extract 29:

“I try to comprehend not memorize all things in my slide or paper, I learn the main topic, definition from expert and I try to construct my own words” (St: Kv)

The extracts indicate that strengthen concept of article are important to demonstrate powerful presentation. The students inform the ways such as master the content, use small note, explore and elaborate with previous related studies. However, students should not memorize the text but understand so they can deliver it without doubt loss of idea during the presentation.

Extract 30:

“I show how to make brainstorming of ideas on whiteboard, connect the phrases each other, and instruct my students to do so. Giving example also is helpful to master the concept” (Lec:Ic)

Extract 31:

“I suggest to students to bring small note in their hand, but I forbid them to read all. They must explain not read; I train this way every meeting by inviting some of them to come forward.” (Lec: Dv)

Extract 32:

“to be confident presenter I push them to master their paper, doing exercise presentation, put supported picture in the slide, when delivering it I forbid them to look on only one side, but involve all the participants” (Let: Im)

From lecturers' perspective, guiding student with some strategies encourage them to speak well in front of the class (Hsu & Goldsmith, 2021). They emphasize on making brainstorming, providing small notes, comprehending. The students are forced (Khoudri, 2024) to avoid reading practice during presentation, it can affect their performance quality. Illustrating the concept with examples and real case to describe the issue clearly. Concept mastery can be achieved when the presenter understands meaning and deliver it flexibility with their own words.

### **Expressing Nonverbal Communication**

To provide meaningful information of the presentation, it should be supported by using nonverbal communication. It also helps the presenter to reduce anxiety problems. The use hand gesturing, eye contact, and body movement can obscure anxiety (Gong & Kanai, 2025). Speaking while small walking removes presenter's fear. As a consequence, the presenter becomes more confident slowly.

Extract 33:

“I feel more confidence when I make a small walk from one side to another side during the presentation. It helps me to reduce my fear to do mistake.” (St:Aq)

Extract 34:

“to explain point of my presentation I use certain hand gesturing by waving or shaking my hand, I think the participant didn't realize at the time my trembling voice.” (St:Kv)

Extract 35:

“I try to expressed my sweet voice..hehehe...so the participants thought I'm okay. But I feel relax and confidence to continue my presentation” (St: Sf)

These three interviewees agree that expressing communication by nonverbal communication (Rentko et al., 2023) encourage them to be more confident. Even in the beginning, they are anxious but it was decrease slowly. The way of they delivered nonverbal communication are different to each other but it gives similar effect on their presentation performance.

Extract 36:

“to emphasize the meaning, presenter should nonverbal communication such as hand gesturing and face expression because they impress audiences' attention. (Lec: Dv)

Extract:

“I recommend student to move a bit from the table, not only standing in one stage, because it will help presenter more comfortable and relax in presentation” (Lec: Ic)

Extract 37:

“the use of intonation is important like when we use rising and falling for some condition and showing the face expression on that cases.” (Lec: Im)

The lecturers recommend to use nonverbal communication in presentation. Nonverbal like gesturing, proxemics, face expression, eye contact, and paralinguistics increase performance

and build rapport with the audiences. A confident presentation is a matched of what is said and how it is delivered. It is important to reduce speaking anxiety (Lan, 2024) in classroom presentation.

Transforming anxiety to be confident in presentation needs training process with various strategies and techniques. The process was conducted in classroom seminar course. The students are guided to prepare the proposal paper which consists of writing introduction, literature review, and methodology. The following activities are designing presentation slide and presentation practice. The lecturers modelled presentation strategy to be applied by students in conducting presentation. Each student has equal opportunity to practice in front of the class and get feedback from their classmate and lecturer. However, identifying the anxiety causes are should be explored first, then trying to reduce it by appropriate copying strategy.

Based on research data, the main cause of anxiety in classroom presentation is fear of negative evaluation by their classmate. In classroom context, the presenter regards the other students are evaluator, so their judgment influence presenter performance. In addition, the presenter perceived every small mistake such as a slightly shaky voice or a slip of tongue, fillers will be noticeable and commented by the audience. Therefore, the presenter should be careful in producing their words. Besides, performance anxiety is also triggered by low self-efficacy in terms of insufficient preparation or superficial of material mastery. As a result, students feel heart palpitation, nervousness, and stuttering to deliver presentation. It is in line with (Mardiani & Apriyani, 2021) who found lack of preparation and fear of making mistakes are anxiety causes factors in oral presentation in the classroom. Besides, having low English proficiency is one of anxiety causes in the classroom (Kramatwatu et al., 2025). Similar to the result that students have lack of grammar and pronunciation, so they feel anxious to speak fluently during the presentation.

From these cases, coping strategy is needed to reduce students' anxiety problems in presentation. The results indicate there are some strategy can be adopted by students such as drilling practice, doing preparation, getting feedback, strengthening concept, and expressing nonverbal communication. It is also need to support classroom environment to assist students minimize presentation anxiety effectively. (Melisa, Darmawan, Wahyudin, 2025). In this case (Zesshreena & Ahmad, 2025) suggest to keep attention on students' anxiety in doing presentation because it could affect students' performance. In addition, (Haratikka & Sony, 2023) recommend to train the students' before conducting presentation, in this case it is in line with current research result that drilling practice is one way to mitigate presentation anxiety in the classroom.

As overall, anxiety is a prevalent case among students in the classroom, especially in doing presentation. It affects students' performance and confident (Gebre, 2024). In EFL academic context, presentation anxiety is a common issue, particularly in research seminar. This anxiety is not only connected to demands of communicating in front of the audiences, but also to perform of students' English language proficiency. In seminar class, students show anxiety behaviours like tremor voice, tremor hands, uncontrol eye contact, speak too fast, and use a lot filler. They are worry of lecturer's question that they cannot understand and answer it correctly. Thus, this condition makes EFL students susceptible to presentation anxiety, which can lead to low self-confidence. Coping strategy is crucial adopted by students to alleviate their anxiety behaviour.

## Conclusion

Based on the results, anxiety becomes a trigger of students' presentation performance. The causes come from different factors such as psychological, environment, and language. Allowing anxiety for a long time give negative impact to students' presentation, language proficiency, and career development in the future. From this case, anxiety issues should be decrease by adopting some appropriate strategies, so the presenter could deliver presentation confidently. In short, from research data, presentation anxiety is caused by lack of preparation, fear of audience's judgment, personality problems, language mastery, and academic demands; the suggested ways in mitigating anxiety to be confident in classroom presentation are drilling practice, doing preparation, getting feedback, strengthening concept, and expressing nonverbal communication. These results indicates that, even though anxiety is hard to get rid of, but it can be minimized. Each student has obligation to maximize presentation performance in front of the class. Thus, the transformation of presentation anxiety to confidence occurs through interrelated process of cognitive, affective, and psychometric practices.

Dealing with the results, this study provides theoretical and practical implication on productive skills in the classroom. As theoretical implication, this study enriches concept of presentation by underlined that presentation anxiety is common problems faced by many students and it causes of some factors such as psychological, language mastery, and classroom environment, but it can be mitigated with strategies and appropriate techniques. The practical implication, the factor causes can be used as a basis for lecturers to explore ways to decrease presentation anxiety. The lecturer should train students to adopted coping strategy to transform their anxiety became confident presenter, like doing preparation some days before the classroom presentation. Drilling practice is suggested to implemented repeatedly. Thus, transforming from anxiety to confidence need process and practices. The study suggested to the further researcher to practice the students to implement coping strategies by conducting quantitative design, so the effectiveness can be proven.

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