Layers of fear: A typology of speaking anxiety among EFL proposal presenters

Ghinan Nafsiha Basith, Dohra Fitrisia, Siti Sarah Fitriani*, Iskandar Abdul Samad

Universitas Syiah Kuala, Indonesia

ABSTRACT
English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners frequently encounter significant challenges in developing oral proficiency, particularly within high-stakes academic contexts such as seminar proposal presentations. While speaking constitutes a fundamental dimension of language competence, many students exhibit difficulties in verbal communication despite the global prominence of English. This quantitative study investigates the speaking anxiety experienced by EFL students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, focusing on three distinct dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Data were collected via standardized questionnaires from twelve participants across two cohorts (2017 graduates and 2021 active students), all of whom had completed seminar proposal presentations. Findings indicate that communication apprehension was the most prevalent form of anxiety, with all participants reporting moderate levels, manifested through behavioral cues such as hesitation, reduced eye contact, and note dependency. Test anxiety was also prominent, with 92% of respondents experiencing moderate symptoms, including physiological reactions (e.g., trembling, stammering) and cognitive difficulty in handling impromptu questions. In contrast, fear of negative evaluation was reported at low levels, potentially attributable to a supportive classroom environment and familiar audiences. These results underscore the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety and its substantial influence on learner confidence in academic presentation settings. The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity for targeted

---

* *Corresponding author*:

Siti Sarah Fitriani
Universitas Syiah Kuala, Jln. Teuku Nyak Arief, Darussalam, Banda Aceh, 23111, Indonesia
Email: ssfitriani@usk.ac.id

pedagogical interventions designed to mitigate these affective barriers and enhance the oral communicative competence of EFL learners.

Keywords: *Speaking anxiety; EFL learners; Seminar proposal presentation*

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners often struggle to develop speaking skills, which are a crucial part of oral communication and essential for academic achievement. Despite the importance of speaking, many students face challenges with fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation, especially in stressful situations (Siregar, 2022). These difficulties often result from limited exposure to real-life speaking environments and few chances to practice face-to-face communication in English. Additionally, in many EFL settings, teaching methods and cultural expectations prioritize writing over speaking, leaving students unprepared for oral academic tasks. This lack of readiness can increase anxiety and lower students' confidence. Research shows a clear link between speaking ability and communication anxiety (Kayhan, 2025). For example, MacIntyre and McGillivray (2023) found that learners with better speaking skills usually experience less anxiety because proficiency builds confidence.

However, speaking difficulties remain a major barrier to effective communication and language learning. Several factors affect speaking ability, including personality, anxiety, age, gender, motivation, attitudes, and intelligence (Pontillas, 2020). Understanding these factors is important to help learners improve their speaking. Oral communication anxiety can affect various speaking activities such as proposal presentations, thesis defences, daily conversations, interactive speaking, extemporaneous speaking, storytelling, debates, and argumentative speaking. In summary, different speaking skills serve important roles in communication, including proposal presentations, thesis defences, daily conversations, and public speaking.

This study examines speaking anxiety experienced by EFL learners during seminar proposal presentations. Delivering seminar proposal presentation demands not only a thorough understanding of the subject matter but also the capacity to captivate the audience, yet anxiety frequently inhibits effective performance (Ma, 2022). While earlier theories have laid the groundwork for understanding speaking anxiety, contemporary research highlights its complexity, distinguishing various dimensions such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Hatiza & Sujiatmoko, 2025; Rohmah &Wijaya 2025). Seminar proposals constitute a crucial element of academic life, particularly for EFL students who must combine content mastery with proficient communication skills. Achieving success in academic writing, oral communication, and public speaking is imperative to deliver clear and persuasive proposals. Effective oral communication is essential, as students are required to explain intricate ideas clearly and respond confidently to inquiries from academic panels (Xiong et al., 2024). Emerging empirical studies emphasize that both intrapersonal factors, such

as lack of confidence and fear of errors, and external pressures, including audience scrutiny and language barriers, contribute significantly to speaking anxiety among EFL students. Integrating these contemporary insights provide a more comprehensive framework for addressing and mitigating speaking anxiety in seminar presentation contexts.

Therefore, this research examined seminar proposal presentation anxiety among EFL students, particularly English students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The study aims to explore the factors that cause communication anxiety during seminar proposals and to identify the types of foreign language anxiety these students face. By focusing on challenges towards English students, the research hopes to improve their confidence and skills in oral communication in both academic and real-life ways.

Based on the results of preliminary interview that English students at Faculty of Education in UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh have additional challenges presenting their proposals during seminars, some problems with public speaking anxiety were noticed. First, many students feel nervous and lack confidence when speaking in front of an audience. This is clear from their shaking voices and stammering while talking. Their anxiety often comes from worrying about making mistakes in pronunciation and grammar, which makes them even less confident. The researchers of this study found that they may experience significant pronunciation errors due to differences between English phonemes and those in the appropriate English sentences, leading to misunderstandings during oral communication. Second, many students focus too much on reading their papers and do not fully understand what they are saying. This makes their presentations less clear and less convincing to the lecturers. Lastly, many students report feeling embarrassed about their speaking abilities, which discourages participation in classroom discussions or practical speaking exercises students often feel physical signs of nervousness, like fast heartbeats and shaky feelings, which affect their performance during proposal seminars.

Achmad et al. (2024) stated that Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a widespread concern among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), encompassing three main components: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Those was originally created by Horwitz (1986). Communication anxiety pertains to the overarching fear of speaking, which can emerge in various contexts, such as class presentations and public speaking events. This form of anxiety often stems from apprehensions about effective communication, frequently exacerbated by feelings of shyness or nervousness during verbal interactions (Wang et al., 2025).

Recent studies have identified specific challenges during academic presentations. For example, Alharbi (2021) investigated the link between communication anxiety and speaking ability among Saudi EFL learners. The study found a negative relationship: students with higher anxiety tended to perform worse in speaking tasks. It also identified key anxiety sources, such as fear of negative evaluation and lack of preparation, which

reduced students' willingness to speak (Abdullah et al., 2021). The study recommended targeted support to lower anxiety and improve speaking skills and participation.

Similarly, a study by Grieve et al. (2021) looked into the fears related to public speaking among students in UK universities. The goal was to understand the specific worries that come up during oral presentations and how these affect students' learning experiences. The research found six main themes, such as fear of being judged and physical reactions like shaking or sweating, which negatively impact students. The results show a strong need for better support systems in higher education to help students handle their public speaking fears. The study suggests that seminars focusing on genuine self-expression and reducing the pressure to be perfect could be extremely helpful.

In addition, Al-Otaibi (2016) studied speech anxiety among Arab college students learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The research showed that factors like comparing themselves to others, how they see their own speaking skills, the difficulty of English grammar, trouble understanding the teacher, and having to speak without preparation all increased their anxiety. Furthermore, Coker (2022) examined public speaking anxiety in new teachers at a university in Ghana. This study found three main causes of anxiety: not being well prepared, feeling scared and lacking confidence, and being nervous about the audience. It recommended that regular practice and interacting more with listeners could help reduce these problems.

Hence, the previous research shows that seminar proposal anxiety among EFL students is influenced by many factors, including language skills, presentation experience, and psychological barriers like Foreign Language Anxiety. Building on this, the current study would examine speaking anxiety experienced by Acehnese English major students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh during their seminar proposal presentations. This research offers a new perspective by including alumni from 2017 and current students from 2021, focusing specifically on anxiety during proposal seminars—an area less explored in Foreign Language Anxiety research. While earlier studies identified general causes of speaking anxiety, this study aims to understand the unique challenges based on speaking anxiety types of presenting research proposals. The goal is to find out the types and causes of anxiety differ due to the specific demands of seminar proposal presentations. Therefore, this study includes the research question: What specific types of speaking anxiety do EFL learners face regarding their seminar proposal presentations?

2. Literature review
2.1. The types of foreign language anxiety (FLA)

There exists a theoretical framework for understanding Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) that has been elaborated by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), with subsequent contributions by Rohmah and Wijaya (2025), Elahemer and Said (2022), alongside foundational discussions of anxiety and willingness to communicate. This framework posits that FLA primarily stems from concerns about social functioning and

academic performance and identifies three core dimensions of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Collectively, these dimensions elucidate how they influence speaking performance among language learners (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). Horwitz et al. (1986) emphasized the role of situational factors and learner appraisals within classroom contexts; Rohmah and Wijaya (2025) contributed a case-based perspective on classroom dynamics and contextual factors that shape anxiety in speaking tasks; while Elahemer and Said (2022) highlighted direct interventions and indirect interventions in reducing students' anxiety. Damayanti and Listyani (2020) extended the discussion by incorporating cultural and contextual dimensions that shape affective responses in both face-to-face and online settings. Achmad et al. (2024) emphasized methodological and practical implications for assessing FLA, advocating triangulation between standardized scales (e.g., FLCAS) and qualitative insights to capture nuanced experiences. These sources collectively yield a cohesive picture of how FLA develops, how it is expressed, and how it can be attenuated through targeted pedagogical approaches that address both affective and cognitive facets of language learning, especially in speaking skills.

Table 1

A summary of key findings from the previous studies mentioned above.

Study	Main Types of FLA	Key Findings
Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986)	Communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation	Identified three core dimensions of FLA; situational factors in classroom affect anxiety in communication and evaluation
Damayanti & Listyani (2020)	Contextual and cultural factors shaping FLA; online and face-to-face learning	Anxiety influenced by culture and learning context; combination of standard instruments and interviews/observations
Rohmah & Wijaya (2025)	Variation in speaking anxiety in classroom context; impact of class dynamics	Qualitative case study approach reveals factors that increase or decrease speaking anxiety
Elahemer & Said (2022)	Direct Interventions and Indirect Interventions	Target speaking anxiety directly using techniques like practice, exposure, and anxiety management to reduce anxiety.

		Also, focus on enhancing student competence or modifying the learning environment to indirectly reduce speaking anxiety
Achmad et al. (2024)	Methodological approaches for FLA assessment consists of Communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation	Triangulation between standardized scales (e.g. FLCAS) and qualitative insights captures nuanced experiences

2.1.1. Communication apprehension

Communication apprehension refers to the anxiety or fear individuals experience when anticipating or engaging in oral communication, particularly in a foreign language context. This form of anxiety, as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986), can occur in both a person's native language and second language, but is often more pronounced when communicating in a foreign language due to limited proficiency and increased self-consciousness. Students who are typically confident in their first language may become silent or avoid participation in foreign language settings, such as by skipping classes or choosing larger groups to remain unnoticed, which hinders language acquisition and perpetuates a cycle of anxiety and avoidance (Alnaeem, 2025). For example, an outgoing student may feel overwhelmed and withdraw from English conversations or presentations, fearing inadequate language skills, which reduces their opportunities to practice and gain confidence. During formal activities like seminar proposal presentations, this anxiety can manifest as stammering, soft speech, avoidance of eye contact, or rushing, all of which impair effective communication. Research suggests that repeated practice and constructive feedback are essential strategies to reduce communication apprehension and enhance speaking competence in foreign languages (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). To be concluded, communication apprehension is a multifaceted phenomenon that negatively impacts foreign language learners by limiting their participation and speaking opportunities, thereby affecting their language development and academic performance.

2.1.2. Test anxiety

Test anxiety is a critical component of foreign language anxiety, characterized by the fear of failure during evaluative situations such as exams and presentations. Horwitz et al. (1986) note that students experiencing high test anxiety often struggle in foreign language classes due to frequent assessments, which can divert their focus from the task

to their fears about performance (Said et al., 2021). This anxiety may cause even well-prepared students to underperform, negatively impacting their learning outcomes and self-confidence. For instance, a student preparing for an English proficiency test may experience physical symptoms like increased heart rate and difficulty concentrating, which hinder their ability to demonstrate true competence. Similarly, during seminar proposal presentations, EFL learners may feel intense stress worrying about audience questions and their ability to communicate clearly, resulting in physical manifestations such as sweating or shaking that further disrupt performance (Achmad et al., 2024; Hanifa, 2018). To alleviate such anxiety, educators are encouraged to incorporate mock presentations and provide constructive feedback, helping students build confidence and reduce stress before actual evaluations (Hameed & Jawad, 2024). Overall, test anxiety significantly affects foreign language learners by impairing their performance and confidence, but targeted interventions can mitigate its negative effects.

2.1.3. Fear of negative evaluation

The fear of negative evaluation refers to the anxiety individuals experience about being judged unfavourably by others, which extends beyond academic assessments to any social situation involving potential scrutiny. Hanifa (2018) described this apprehension as distress over possible criticism, often leading individuals to avoid situations where they might be negatively evaluated. In the context of foreign language learning, this fear can significantly inhibit students' willingness to participate in speaking activities due to concerns about making mistakes or being ridiculed for pronunciation or grammatical errors, thereby obstructing effective communication and language development. For example, students may avoid role-play exercises or rush through their contributions to evade judgment, which limits practice opportunities and reinforces feelings of inadequacy. Similarly, during seminar proposal presentations, fear of negative evaluation can cause students to withhold ideas or avoid engaging in discussions, reducing opportunities for meaningful feedback and collaborative learning (Alshakhi, 2025). Addressing this anxiety through creating a supportive environment that encourages constructive criticism can foster greater confidence and participation, ultimately enhancing language proficiency and academic growth.

2.2. The types of EFL learners

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners exhibit diverse profiles influenced by their motivations, exposure to English, educational backgrounds, and psychological attitudes, all of which play a significant role in shaping Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and learning outcomes. Hanifa (2018) categorizes learners into instrumental types, who pursue English for practical objectives such as career advancement, and integrative types, motivated by cultural engagement. This distinction is critical, as motivational orientation can either mitigate or exacerbate FLA, influencing learners' willingness to communicate and their anxiety levels. However, recent research indicates that anxiety levels fluctuate

not only with motivation but also with learners' access to real-world language use (Alshakhi, 2025), where limited exposure enhances anxiety in oral skills, while increased opportunities via media and online resources provide beneficial practice that reduces anxiety. Furthermore, linguistic factors related to educational background—such as similarities between the first language and English—impact learners' cognitive ease and thus their anxiety experience, although psychological barriers may still cause persistent FLA despite these similarities (Alharbi, 2021). Psychological attitudes also critically affect anxiety; positive perceptions toward language learning correlate with reduced FLA and academic success, whereas negative attitudes intensify anxiety and hinder learner engagement (Robah & Anggrisia, 2023). Therefore, understanding the complex interaction between learner types and FLA is essential for designing effective, individualized pedagogical strategies that target both affective and cognitive dimensions to alleviate anxiety and enhance language acquisition.

2.3. The proposal seminar

A proposal, as defined by Achmad et al. (2024), is a formal document submitted to present well-founded ideas, plans, and perspectives to stakeholders with the goal of securing financial support, approval, or other necessary resources. The act of proposing involves the submission of such documents, emphasizing its foundational purpose. In the context of scientific research, a proposal functions as a detailed operational plan that outlines strategic steps and methodologies designed to address specific objectives. According to Aziz (2014), strategic planning entails the deliberate design of procedures and techniques aimed at managing data, achieving goals, or solving problems effectively. Drawing from these definitions, a research proposal seminar can be understood as a formal presentation where students convey their research ideas and plans to faculty members and other stakeholders to gain endorsement and support, typically as part of their final course requirements. The proposal must clearly articulate the research's purpose, significance, methodology, and timeline, employing precise, clear, and unambiguous language to ensure comprehension and prevent misinterpretation.

It is important to clarify that a proposal presentation differs significantly from general presentations. While general presentations may cover a wide range of topics and purposes, a proposal seminar specifically involves presenting a structured research plan intended for academic approval and feedback (Samad et al., 2024). This distinction is critical to avoid confusion among readers and to focus on the unique anxieties and challenges associated with defending a research proposal, which is often high-stakes and closely scrutinized by academic panels (Samad et al., 2024). Clarifying these definitions strengthens the understanding of this study's focus and aligns with expert advice on the importance of precise terminology in academic research (Aziz, 2014).

3. Method

This research employed a quantitative approach to systematically measure and analyze oral communication apprehension among EFL learners. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research allows for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships, providing a clear picture of the prevalence and intensity of anxiety experienced by students. By using this method, the study aims not only to quantify the levels of oral communication apprehension but also to uncover the key factors contributing to this anxiety, as supported by the correlation analysis approach (Al–Otaibi, 2016). The quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaires offer an objective basis for understanding how widespread communication apprehension is and which specific elements—such as test anxiety or fear of negative evaluation—most affect learners' speaking performance. Furthermore, this approach facilitates the identification of statistically significant correlations between anxiety levels and academic speaking outcomes, enabling researchers to draw evidence-based conclusions.

The researchers assisted by EFL learners which involved 6 participants of Alumni 2017 and 6 students of batch 2021 who have already taken seminar proposal presentation. In this study, the participants for the quantitative component consisted of EFL learners enrolled the students of English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. Besides, the research used questionnaire. The researchers needed the listed questionnaire statements should be delivered to the participants by using Google Form as an assistive media. To collect data, the researchers used speaking anxiety items established scales like the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by created by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and contains 33 items aimed at measuring anxiety related specifically to foreign language learning. These items evaluate three main aspects of language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The scale has been widely validated and remains a popular tool in applied linguistics because of its strong theoretical basis and reliable psychometric properties (Rohlia, 2023). Recent studies confirm that the FLCAS effectively captures the complex nature of anxiety experienced by language learners (Achmad et al., 2024). However, considering that numerous experts have previously examined and validated the scale, the researchers have customized the instrument by selecting only the items relevant to this study's objectives, thereby reducing the total number of items to 25 to better align with the research focus.

The researchers analyzed the collected data using a questionnaire as the primary instrument for gathering information. For the quantitative portion of the study, they employed the Likert scale to measure students' attitudes and perceptions systematically. According to Khayati (2021), the Likert scale allows researchers to convert subjective responses into numerical values that can be statistically analyzed. At this stage, the researchers calculated students' perceptions by applying a percentage formula, which quantifies the proportion of responses within each category. This method helps to clearly

present the distribution of responses, making it easier to interpret the levels of agreement or disagreement among participants. The use of the Likert scale also facilitates the identification of trends and patterns in the data, supporting more objective conclusions.

4. Findings and discussion

This section of the study analyzed the results of a questionnaire administered to a sample of twelve participants, comprising six alumni from the 2017 batch and six current students from the 2021 batch. The primary aim was to explore the nature and degree of speaking anxiety experienced by these students during their seminar proposal presentations. Data collection was conducted through a closed-ended questionnaire adapted from Horwitz et al.'s Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which includes 25 items specifically designed to assess anxiety related to speaking English in academic settings. The participants' responses were categorized into three dimensions of speaking anxiety as conceptualized by Horwitz and colleagues (1986): communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. To facilitate efficient data gathering, the questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms. This methodological approach was employed to address the research question concerning the participants' experiences of speaking anxiety during their presentations.

Table 2
The percentage of participant responses on communication apprehension.

No.	Communication Apprehension Statements	Scale				
		SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I never feel completely sure of myself when I speak in English.	17%	50%	25%	8%	0%
2	I start to feel anxious when I have to speak without preparing for my seminar presentation.	42%	58%	0%	0%	0%
3	I wouldn't feel nervous speaking a foreign language during the seminar presentation.	0%	8%	33%	59%	0%
4	I feel upset when I don't understand what the reviewers are correcting.	17%	67%	8%	8%	0%
5	I feel confident when I speak a foreign language during my seminar presentation.	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%
6	I feel very aware of myself when speaking a foreign language in front of others.	17%	66%	17%	0%	0%
7	I get nervous and confused during my seminar presentation.	8%	33%	33%	25%	0%

8	I feel anxious when I don't understand every word the reviewers say.	0%	67%	25%	8%	0%
9	I feel overwhelmed by all the rules for speaking a foreign language.	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%
10	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of that language.	8%	50%	17%	25%	0%

The survey results on speaking anxiety and communication apprehension among twelve participants, including 2021 students and 2017 alumni, reveal that anxiety significantly affects their performance and comfort during seminar presentations. Responses, categorized into Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, indicate a prevalent lack of confidence, with 67% agreeing they never feel completely sure when speaking English. Preparation emerges as a critical factor, as all participants agreed that unprepared speaking triggers anxiety. Most participants reported feeling nervous when speaking a foreign language, with only half expressing confidence during presentations. Emotional responses to feedback also contribute to anxiety; a majority feel upset or anxious when they do not fully understand reviewers' comments, and many experience heightened self-consciousness and confusion during presentations. Furthermore, half of the participants feel overwhelmed by language rules, and only 58% feel comfortable interacting with native speakers, highlighting the influence of linguistic complexity and social context on communication apprehension. Overall, these findings demonstrate that speaking anxiety is widespread among both current students and alumni, particularly in unfamiliar or high-pressure situations, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to support students in managing anxiety and enhancing their confidence in academic speaking contexts.

Table 3

The level of participant responses on communication apprehension.

Range	Level	Result
46-66	High	0% (no participant)
23-45	Medium	100% (12 participants)
1-22	Low	0% (no participant)

The data of table 3 reveals that all twelve participants, including students from the 2021 batch and 2017 alumni, experienced a moderate level of communication apprehension during their seminar proposal presentations. None of the participants fell into the high or low anxiety categories, as no scores were recorded in those ranges. Instead, every individual's anxiety level was within the medium range, indicating noticeable but not overwhelming anxiety. This shows that while participants felt some nervousness or discomfort when speaking publicly, it remained manageable and did not severely impact their performance. The results highlight the importance of implementing

support strategies to help both students and alumni reduce speaking anxiety. Such interventions can improve their confidence and overall effectiveness in academic presentations.

Table 4
The percentage of participant responses on test anxiety.

No.	Test Anxiety Statements	Scale				
		SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I experience trembling when I am aware that I am about to present my seminar proposal.	8%	50%	25%	17%	0%
2	During the presentation, I often find my thoughts drifting to unrelated matters.	0%	25%	25%	50%	0%
3	Typically, I feel quite at ease during the seminar proposal presentation.	0%	50%	42%	8%	0%
4	I am concerned about the potential repercussions of failing my seminar proposal presentation.	8%	67%	17%	8%	0%
5	In the context of my seminar proposal presentation, I can become so anxious that I forget important points.	25%	58%	8%	8%	0%
6	Even with thorough preparation for the seminar proposal presentation, I still experience feelings of anxiety.	8%	75%	8%	8%	0%
7	Frequently, I contemplate avoiding my seminar proposal presentation due to fear.	17%	17%	17%	41%	8%
8	I can feel my heart racing when I anticipate being called upon to present.	25%	42%	25%	8%	0%
9	The more I study for the presentation, the more perplexed I become.	0%	33%	25%	33	8%
10	I do not feel significant pressure to prepare extensively for my seminar proposal presentation.	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%

Table 4 summarizes the responses of twelve participants, comprising students from the 2021 batch and 2017 alumni, regarding their experiences of test anxiety during seminar proposal presentations. Using a five-point Likert scale, the data reveal that over half of the participants (58%) reported physical symptoms of anxiety, such as trembling,

when anticipating their presentations. While most participants were able to maintain focus during their presentations, a significant proportion expressed concern about the consequences of failing, highlighting the high stakes associated with these academic tasks. Despite thorough preparation, many participants still experienced anxiety, which in some cases impaired memory recall of important points. Although avoidance of presentations was not commonly reported, physiological symptoms like increased heart rate were prevalent. Participants' perceptions of preparation varied, with some feeling overwhelmed while others did not experience significant pressure. Overall, the findings indicate that test anxiety is a pervasive issue among EFL learners during seminar proposal presentations, affecting both their emotional and cognitive functioning, and suggesting the need for targeted interventions to help mitigate these anxieties.

Table 5

The level of participant responses on test anxiety.

Range	Level	Result
46-66	High	0% (no participant)
23-45	Medium	92% (11 participants)
1-22	Low	8% (1 participant)

The data indicates that none of the twelve participants, comprising students from the 2021 batch and 2017 alumni, experienced high levels of test anxiety during their seminar proposal presentations. The majority (92%) exhibited moderate test anxiety, while only one participant (8%) reported a low level of anxiety. This distribution suggests that test anxiety is prevalent within the group but typically manifests at a moderate intensity. Instances of extreme anxiety or complete absence of anxiety were uncommon. Consequently, the findings suggest that although seminar presentations induce some degree of stress, this anxiety is generally manageable for most participants.

Table 6

The percentage of participant responses on fear of negative evaluation.

No.	Fear of Negative Evaluation Statement	Scale				
		SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I do not concern myself with the possibility of making errors during my seminar proposal presentation.	0%	33%	50%	8%	8%
2	I constantly find myself believing that my peers possess superior language skills compared to my own during the presentation.	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%

3	I feel a sense of embarrassment when I am required to respond to questions from the reviewers.	0%	25%	42%	33%	0%
4	I fear that my reviewers are poised to point out every mistake I make.	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%
5	I am apprehensive that others will ridicule me when I attempt to speak in a foreign language.	0%	17%	50%	25%	8%

Table 6 summarizes the responses of twelve participants, including students from the 2021 batch and 2017 alumni, regarding their fear of negative evaluation during seminar proposal presentations. Using a Likert scale, the data reveal varying degrees of anxiety related to making mistakes, comparing language skills to peers, embarrassment, fear of criticism, and apprehension about ridicule. Most participants expressed moderate concern about making errors, with half remaining neutral and a third agreeing that they do not disregard the possibility of mistakes. Responses to perceived peer superiority were evenly distributed, indicating that while some participants feel insecure about their skills compared to others, others do not share this belief. Feelings of embarrassment when responding to reviewers' questions were mixed, with a majority either neutral or disagreeing. Notably, fear of criticism was prominent, as over half of the participants agreed that reviewers are likely to highlight their mistakes. Lastly, apprehension about ridicule was less pronounced, with half of the participants neutral and only a minority expressing strong concern.

Table 7

The level of participant responses on fear of negative evaluation.

Range	Level	Result
46-66	High	**0%** (no participant)
23-45	Medium	**0%** (no participant)
1-22	Low	**100%** (12 participants)

The data presented in the table indicate that all twelve participants, comprising the 2021 batch and 2017 alumni, who experienced speaking anxiety related to fear of negative evaluation during their seminar proposal presentations, were classified within the low of test anxiety range, with scores between 1 and 22. Notably, no participants fell into the moderate (23-45) or high (46-66) anxiety categories, as both registered 0%. This finding implies that, despite reporting some degree of speaking anxiety associated with concerns about negative evaluation, the participants' overall levels of test anxiety remained relatively low.

To be concluded, among the 12 participants, including six from batch 2021 and six alumni from 2017, speaking anxiety was a common issue during seminar proposal

presentations, with communication apprehension and test anxiety being the most frequently reported types. Physical signs such as shaking, unstable voices, and avoidance of eye contact were observed, especially at the beginning and during questioning, with less experienced students showing more visible nervousness and female participants tending to display subtler signs of anxiety compared to males.

In this part, the researchers indicate that every participant experienced some degree of communication apprehension when delivering seminar proposal presentations. The questionnaire results revealed that both the 2021 batch and the 2017 alumni reported a moderate level of this anxiety, confirming that public speaking anxiety is a widespread issue among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, especially in critical academic situations, as previously noted by Hanifa (2018), Irie (2022) and Horwitz et al. (1986). This moderate anxiety did not prevent students from performing, but it did impact their delivery, as seen through hesitant speech, limited eye contact, and reliance on notes. These behaviours were observed across both groups, suggesting that presenting in English to an academic audience is a challenging experience for learners regardless of their prior experience. The similarity between groups also highlights the persistent difficulty EFL students face in environments where linguistic accuracy and fluency are highly valued, as Said and Hussain (2021) have pointed out.

Test anxiety emerged as the second most prevalent form of speaking anxiety, with 92% of participants reporting medium-level anxiety and the remaining 8% experiencing only a low level. This indicates that nearly all students, regardless of group, were concerned about being evaluated during their presentations, which aligns with Chan and Wu's (2004) assertion that oral assessments provoke heightened anxiety due to immediate feedback. The moderate anxiety likely stems from students' awareness of the high stakes involved, including the influence on their grades and the desire to meet the expectations of both instructors and peers. It is supporting Xiong et al. (2004) argued that anxiety diminishes with experience but does not entirely disappear. Notably, fear of negative evaluation was reported as low by all participants, contrasting with findings from studies such as Bailey (2005) where this fear is often prominent.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the manifestations of speaking anxiety among twelve participants from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, comprising both current students (2021 batch) and alumni (2017), during their seminar proposal presentations. The analysis focused on three primary dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension was predominantly observed through paralinguistic and behavioral cues, including frequent hesitations, prolonged pauses, and a marked reliance on prepared notes. These indicators pointed to a significant discomfort with extemporaneous speech and a deficit in perceived fluency, as evidenced by participants' avoidance of direct eye contact and a tendency to glance downwards. Test anxiety manifested somatically and cognitively under evaluative pressure. Physical

symptoms such as hand tremors and an elevated heart rate were common, coupled with cognitive disruption when participants faced unanticipated questions from reviewers. For instance, one participant exhibited stammering and a loss of coherent thought when asked to elaborate on an under-prepared methodological point, demonstrating how anxiety can impair information retrieval and articulation during high-stakes assessment. In contrast, fear of negative evaluation was reported and observed at comparatively low levels. This attenuation is likely attributable to the supportive academic environment and the participants' familiarity with the faculty and peer audience, which collectively reduced apprehensions regarding harsh judgment. This finding highlight that while internal nervousness and performance pressure were salient, the specific social context of the seminar served as a mitigating factor for this particular anxiety dimension.

References

Abdullah, M., Hussin, S., & Ismail, K. (2021). Does flipped classroom model affect EFL learners' anxiety in English speaking performance? *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 16*(1), 94-108. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i01.16955

Achmad, D., Samad, I. A., Muslem, A., Yusuf, Y. Q., Fitriani, S. S., Safitri, T. H., & Linville, H. (2024). The types and causes of anxiety in EFL students during proposal seminar presentations. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education| IRJE|*, 8(1), 189-206. https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v8i1.33682

Alharbi, A. T. (2021). Speaking anxiety during English oral presentations: Investigating Saudi undergraduate EFL learners' behaviors. *Linguistics and Culture Review, 5*(S2), 1548-1564.

Alnaeem, L. A. (2025). The power of self-talk for speaking anxiety reduction among EFL Learners. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)*, *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1501.12

Al–Otaibi, G. (2016). Speech anxiety among EFL Arab college students. *Language in India*, *16*(2), 83-100.

Alshakhi, A. (2025). Speaking test anxiety among adult Saudi EFL learners: Causes, factors, and suggested solutions. *International Journal of Language Testing*, *15*(2), 166-180. https://doi.org/10.22034/ijlt.2025.550175.1484

Aziz, J. A. (2014). Errors made by the presenters of thesis proposal seminar in English Study Program. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, *1*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v1i1.32

Bailey, K. M. (2005). *Practical English language teaching: Speaking*. McGraw-Hill.

Chan, D. Y. C., & Wu, G. C. (2004). A study of foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taipei County. *Journal of National Taipei Teachers College, 17*(2), 287-320.

Coker, W. (2022). Exploration of public-speaking anxiety among novice instructors at a Ghanaian university. *The African Journal of Information and Communication*, *2022*(29), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.23962/ajic.i29.13772

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oak,CA: Sage.

Damayanti, M. E., & Listyani, L. (2020). An analysis of students' speaking anxiety in academic speaking. *Eltr Journal*, *4*(2), 152-170. https://doi.org/10.37147/eltr.v4i2.70

Elahemer, H. H. M., & Said, S. B. H. M. (2022). A systematic review of interventions used to reduce university students' speaking anxiety. *International Journal of Education and Practice, 10*(2), 128-149. https://doi.org/10.18488/61.v10i2.2994

Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt, S. E., & McKay, A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: A qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 45*(9), 1281-1293. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1948509

Hameed, H. H., & Jawad, A. E. (2024). The influence of EFL apprehension on speaking performance: An empirical study. *Morfologi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra dan Budaya, 2*(6), 20-30. https://doi.org/10.61132/morfologi.v2i6.1017

Hanifa, R. (2018). Factors generating anxiety when learning EFL speaking skills. *Studies in English Language and Education, 5*(2), 230-239. https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v5i2.10932

Hatiza, Z., & Sujiatmoko, A. H. (2025). EFL students' speaking anxiety during presentation performance at a language center. *Teaching and Learning Journal of Mandalika (Teacher)*, *6*(2), 430–446. https://doi.org/10.36312/teacher.v6i2.4930

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, *70*(2), 125-132.

Irie, K. (2022). Exposure and language anxiety in EFL learners: An empirical study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 13*(4), 567-578.

Kayhan, S. (2025). The effect of intervention studies on foreign language speaking anxiety: A meta-analysis study. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, *9*(3), 62-83. https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202533156

Khayati, W. N. (2021). *An analysis of students' difficulties in doing English assignment during online class at SMK Diponegoro Salatiga in academic year 2020/2021*. States Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Salatiga, Indonesia.

Ma, X. (2022). The role of self-efficacy in reducing foreign language speaking anxiety: An ecological perspective. *Journal of Psychology and Language Learning, 35*(1), 56-71.

MacIntyre, P. D., & McGillivray, M. F. (2023). The inner workings of anxiety in second language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *43*(2), 88-104. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190523000065

Pontillas, M. S. D. (2020). Reducing the public speaking anxiety of ESL college students through popsispeak. *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *26*(1). http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2020-2601-07

Robah, A., & Anggrisia, N. F. (2023). Exploring challenges and strategies in English speaking among Indonesian university students: A case study of AKM university. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities, 11*(1), 55-74. https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v11i1.19156

Rohliah, L. (2023). Non-English major students' foreign language classroom anxiety. *Global English, 6*(1), 50–65. https://doi.org/10.36982/jge.v11i1.3201

Rohmah, F., & Wijaya, M. K. (2025). A case study of students' speaking anxiety in learning English in the classroom. *SELL (Scope of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature) Journal, 10*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.31597/sl.v10i1.1207

Said, M., Ahmad, M., & Hussain, S. (2021). The role of qualitative insights in understanding language anxiety among EFL learners: A case study approach. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 31*(3), 456-472.

Samad, I. A., Fitriani, S. S., Nomnian, S., Yusuf, S. B., & Sofia, S. (2024). Students and lecturersí experiences in courses provided for the English thesis defence examination. *Studies in English Language and Education*, *11*(1), 267-284. https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i1.30124

Siregar, A.M.P. (2022). Tertiary-level students' public speaking anxiety: A case study of English education department students in Indonesia. SALEE: *Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education, 3*(2), 318-338. https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v3i2.507

Wang, Q., Gao, Y., & Wang, X. (2025). Exploring engagement, self-efficacy, and anxiety in large language model EFL learning: A latent profile analysis of Chinese university students. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, *41*(12), 7815-7824. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2024.2400403

Xiong, Y., Zhang, Q., Zhao, L., Liu, S., Guan, H., Sui, Y., ... & Lee, K. M. R. (2024). A meta-analysis and systematic review of foreign language anxiety interventions among students. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 43*(5-6), 620-650. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X241291258