

## GENDERED CONFIDENCE IN EFL PRESENTATIONS: ANALYSING GENDER DIFFERENCES AND LEARNING CAPABILITIES

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**Abstract.** Oral presentations are an important activity in language learning because they provide students with the opportunity to develop communication skills, convey ideas effectively, and interact meaningfully. This study used a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences during presentations. The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of gender differences on students' confidence levels in making oral presentations in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The participants consisted of male and female students taking an English speaking skills course. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques. The results showed that male students tended to display higher confidence in speaking spontaneously and answering audience questions, while female students showed more thorough preparation, better mastery of the material, and more structured delivery. Factors influencing confidence included English language proficiency, presentation preparation, previous speaking experience, and classroom support. In addition, learning capability was shown to have a close relationship with presentation performance and students' confidence levels. This study emphasizes the importance of a supportive learning environment to increase active participation and reduce speaking anxiety in students regardless of gender.

**Keywords:** Self-Confidence, EFL Presentation, Gender Differences, Learning Capability, Oral Communication

**Abstrak.** Presentasi lisan merupakan salah satu aktivitas penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa karena memberikan kesempatan kepada mahasiswa untuk mengembangkan kompetensi komunikasi, menyampaikan ide secara efektif, dan berinteraksi secara bermakna. Tujuan penelitian untuk menganalisis pengaruh perbedaan gender terhadap tingkat kepercayaan diri mahasiswa dalam melakukan presentasi lisan pada pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (*English as a Foreign Language/EFL*). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai pengalaman mahasiswa selama melakukan presentasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen. Partisipan penelitian terdiri atas mahasiswa laki-laki dan perempuan yang mengikuti mata kuliah keterampilan berbicara Bahasa Inggris. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa laki-laki cenderung menampilkan kepercayaan diri yang lebih tinggi dalam berbicara secara spontan dan menjawab pertanyaan audiens, sedangkan mahasiswa perempuan menunjukkan persiapan yang lebih matang, penguasaan materi yang lebih baik, dan penyampaian yang lebih terstruktur. Faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kepercayaan diri meliputi tingkat penguasaan bahasa Inggris, persiapan presentasi, pengalaman berbicara sebelumnya, serta dukungan lingkungan kelas. Selain itu, kapabilitas belajar terbukti memiliki hubungan yang erat dengan performa presentasi dan tingkat kepercayaan diri mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya lingkungan pembelajaran yang suportif untuk meningkatkan partisipasi aktif dan mengurangi kecemasan berbicara pada mahasiswa tanpa memandang gender.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepercayaan Diri, Presentasi EFL, Perbedaan Gender, Kapabilitas Belajar, Komunikasi Lisan

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## INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation is one of the most essential competencies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it supports students' communication skills, critical thinking, and academic as well as professional readiness. Oral presentations require students not only to demonstrate language proficiency but also to organize ideas effectively, communicate arguments clearly, and interact confidently with audiences. However, numerous studies have reported that many EFL learners continue to experience foreign language anxiety, which negatively affects their confidence during classroom presentations (Dewaele & Li, 2021; Bai, 2023). Among the factors influencing presentation confidence, gender differences have attracted increasing attention. Male and female students often demonstrate different communication characteristics during oral presentations. Male students tend to communicate more spontaneously and confidently, whereas female students usually prepare more thoroughly and deliver more structured presentations despite experiencing higher speaking anxiety. Nevertheless, previous findings regarding the role of gender in presentation confidence remain inconclusive.

Previous research by Cheng & Xu (2022) reported that students' willingness to communicate and language proficiency were stronger predictors of communication performance than gender differences. Likewise, Bai (2023) found that foreign language anxiety significantly reduced students' willingness to communicate in English. However, the study did not specifically investigate how male and female students' express confidence differently during classroom oral presentations.

These previous studies indicate an important research gap. Most existing studies have primarily employed quantitative approaches focusing on the relationships among language anxiety, willingness to communicate, and language proficiency. In contrast, limited research has qualitatively explored how gender influences presentation confidence while simultaneously considering students' learning capabilities, particularly within Indonesian EFL higher education contexts. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by employing a qualitative approach to explore students' lived experiences during oral presentations. The study examines how gender influences presentation confidence while also investigating the contribution of learning capabilities, preparation strategies, previous speaking experiences, and classroom support to students' confidence development.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating the concepts of gendered confidence and learning capabilities through qualitative inquiry using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Unlike previous studies that mainly relied on survey-based

quantitative analysis, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and educational processes shaping students' confidence during EFL oral presentations.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore gender differences in self-confidence and learning capabilities during oral presentations in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors related to presentation performance. The study was conducted at Mega Buana University of Palopo in EFL classroom during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of male and female undergraduate students enrolled in an English-speaking course. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in classroom presentation activities.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted during oral presentation sessions to examine students' verbal and non-verbal expressions of confidence, including speech fluency, eye contact, voice projection, body language, audience engagement, and responses to questions. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected participants after their presentations to explore their perceptions of confidence, learning experiences, preparation strategies, and the influence of gender on their presentation performance. In addition, document analysis was conducted using presentation assessment records, students' reflective notes, and lecturer feedback to gain further insights into students' learning capabilities and presentation experiences.

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis following the procedures proposed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. The analysis involved data familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents.

## RESULTS

### **Differences in Confidence Expression between Male and Female Students**

The findings indicated noticeable differences in how male and female students expressed confidence during oral presentations. Male students generally appeared more willing to speak spontaneously, maintain eye contact, and respond to questions from the audience. They tended to demonstrate greater verbal assertiveness even when their language accuracy was limited. In contrast, female students showed higher levels of preparation and organization in their presentations. Although some female participants reported experiencing anxiety before presenting, they often demonstrated stronger content mastery and more structured delivery. Several female students stated that fear of making mistakes affected their confidence despite adequate preparation (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

### **Factors Influencing Presentation Confidence**

Interview data revealed several factors that influenced students' confidence during presentations. The most frequently mentioned factors included preparation, language proficiency, previous presentation experience, and peer support. Students who prepared extensively reported feeling more confident and capable of managing presentation challenges. Language proficiency was also identified as a significant factor, as students with stronger English skills expressed less fear of speaking in front of an audience. Additionally, supportive classroom environments and positive feedback from lecturers contributed to increased confidence among both male and female students (Wang et al., 2022).

### **Relationship between Learning Capabilities and Presentation Performance**

The findings suggested a close relationship between learning capabilities and presentation performance. Students who demonstrated strong learning habits, such as reviewing materials regularly, practicing presentations, and seeking feedback, generally exhibited higher confidence levels during presentations. Document analysis further showed that students with stronger academic engagement received more positive presentation evaluations. These students were better able to organize ideas, communicate effectively, and respond to audience questions. The results indicate that learning capabilities play an important role in developing presentation confidence regardless of gender (Oxford, 2021). Overall, the findings reveal that while male and female students may express confidence differently, both confidence and presentation performance are strongly influenced by preparation, language competence, and learning capabilities (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that male students tended to express confidence through spontaneous speaking, maintaining eye contact, and actively responding to audience questions. In contrast, female students demonstrated stronger preparation, better-organized presentations, and greater content mastery, although they frequently reported experiencing presentation anxiety. These findings suggest that confidence should not only be interpreted as verbal assertiveness but also as careful preparation and academic readiness. The present findings are consistent with Mercer & Gregersen (2020), who argue that learner confidence develops through the interaction of psychological factors, learning experiences, and supportive classroom environments. Likewise, Dewaele & Li (2021) explain that individual emotional differences influence how learners express confidence during foreign language communication.

However, these findings contrast with Sundari et al., (2025), who reported that gender did not significantly affect English speaking confidence or proficiency among EFL students. This discrepancy may be explained by methodological differences. While Sundari et al. employed a quantitative approach focusing on statistical relationships, the present qualitative study explored student's lived experiences and revealed nuanced differences in confidence expression during oral presentations.

The study identified preparation, English language proficiency, presentation experience, peer support, and lecturer feedback as the primary factors influencing students' confidence during oral presentations. Students who practiced regularly and mastered their presentation materials experienced lower anxiety and demonstrated greater confidence when responding to audience questions. These findings support Bai (2023), who found that foreign language anxiety significantly reduces students' willingness to communicate in English. Similarly, Cheng & Xu (2022) reported that willingness to communicate is influenced by language proficiency, learning experience, and supportive classroom environments. Furthermore, Ulpa et al., (2025) demonstrated that active learning strategies, collaborative activities, and constructive feedback effectively enhance speaking confidence among Indonesian EFL learners. These findings reinforce the present study by emphasizing that classroom support is equally important as language competence in developing presentation confidence.

The findings indicate that students with stronger learning capabilities—including consistent study habits, presentation practice, and active feedback seeking—performed better during oral presentations and demonstrated higher confidence levels. This suggests that learning capabilities constitute an essential foundation for effective oral communication.

These findings are consistent with Oxford (2021), who argues that self-regulated learners are more likely to develop higher motivation, stronger self-efficacy, and better academic performance. Likewise, Li (2024) demonstrated that self-efficacy-based interventions significantly improve learners' confidence, intrinsic motivation, and English language achievement. The findings also align with Ilyas & Istaryatiningtias (2025), who concluded that oral presentations promote not only communication skills but also critical thinking, reflective learning, and confidence development. Therefore, learning capabilities play a central role in strengthening presentation performance regardless of gender.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored gender differences in self-confidence and learning capabilities during oral presentations in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The findings revealed that male and female students expressed confidence in different ways. Male students tended to demonstrate greater spontaneity and assertiveness during presentations, while female students generally showed stronger preparation, organization, and attention to accuracy. However, confidence levels were influenced not only by gender but also by factors such as language proficiency, preparation strategies, previous presentation experience, and classroom support.

The study further found that learning capabilities play a significant role in enhancing students' confidence and presentation performance. Students who actively engaged in learning, practiced regularly, and sought feedback were more likely to present effectively and confidently. These findings suggest that confidence can be developed through appropriate learning experiences and supportive educational environments. The practical implication of this study is that EFL lecturers should create inclusive and supportive classroom environments that encourage all students to participate actively in oral presentations. Teaching strategies that promote regular practice, constructive feedback, and confidence-building activities may help reduce presentation anxiety and improve communication skills. Future research may examine gendered confidence in different educational contexts or investigate additional factors influencing presentation performance among EFL learners.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings may serve as a reference for developing learning strategies that promote communication competence and 21st-century skills. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate other factors influencing confidence in EFL presentations, such as learning

motivation, emotional intelligence, academic culture, and the integration of educational technology, using larger and more diverse samples to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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