EXPLORING THE SELF-CONFIDENCE OF SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENT IN PRESENTING PROPOSAL DURING THE PROPOSAL SEMINAR COURSE

MENGEKSPLORASI RASA PERCAYA DIRI MAHASISWA SEMESTER ENAM DALAM MEMPERSEMBAHKAN PROPOSAL PADA KULIAH SEMINAR PROPOSAL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi kepercayaan diri mahasiswa semester enam dalam mempresentasikan proposal penelitian pada mata kuliah Seminar Proposal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, data diperoleh dari 19 mahasiswa melalui kuesioner kepercayaan diri dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Hasil kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar partisipan memiliki tingkat kepercayaan diri yang tinggi, dengan skor rata-rata 79,61%. Analisis transkrip wawancara menunjukkan enam tema utama: kekuatan dalam presentasi, tantangan presentasi, persiapan, strategi mengatasi, pengaruh audiens, dan refleksi diri. Meskipun banyak mahasiswa yang mengalami kegugupan, mereka menunjukkan kesadaran akan kekuatan mereka dan menerapkan strategi seperti bernapas dalam-dalam, berpikir positif, dan latihan sebagai cara untuk mengatasi kecemasan. Kehadiran audiens yang evaluatif, terutama dosen, terbukti memberikan pengaruh besar pada tingkat kepercayaan diri mahasiswa. Secara keseluruhan, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan diri mahasiswa bersifat dinamis dan dibentuk oleh kesiapan, pengalaman, konteks audiens, dan latihan reflektif. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya lingkungan akademik yang mendukung untuk menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri dalam presentasi akademik lisan.

Kata Kunci: Kepercayaan Diri; Seminar Proposal; Mahasiswa EFL

Abstract

This study aims to explore sixth semester students' self-confidence in presenting research proposals in the Proposal Seminar course. Using a mixed methods approach, data was obtained from 19 students through a self-confidence questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire results showed that most participants had a high level of self-confidence, with an average score of 79.61%. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed six main themes: strengths in presenting, presentation challenges, preparedness, coping strategies, audience influence, and self-reflection. Although many students experienced nervousness, they demonstrated an awareness

of their strengths and applied strategies such as deep breathing, positive thinking, and rehearsal as ways to manage anxiety. The presence of an evaluative audience, especially lecturers, proved to be a major influence on students' confidence levels. Overall, the results show that students' self-confidence is dynamic and shaped by readiness, experience, audience context, and reflective practice. This study emphasizes the importance of a supportive academic environment to foster confidence in oral academic presentations.

Keywords: *Self Confidence; Proposal Seminar; EFL students*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, self-confidence plays a vital role, especially in oral presentations that require both cognitive and affective readiness. One academic setting that demands such readiness is the research proposal seminar course, where students are required to present and defend their research proposals in front of classmates and lecturers. Furthermore, in seminar courses, situations that demand the ability to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively before an evaluative audience, this condition can trigger various psychological responses, with self-confidence playing a crucial role in determining how students manage academic stress and present themselves (Zulkosky, 2016; Mustika & Handayani, 2020). For sixth-semester students, this moment also marks an important milestone in their academic journey, shaping their self-perception and influencing their learning experience.

Self-confidence is generally defined as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 1997). During the proposal presentation, students must present their research ideas, defend their chosen methodology, and answer questions, all of which require a stable level of self-confidence. Research indicates that low self-confidence is associated with anxiety, avoidance behavior, and poor academic outcomes (Setyowati et al., 2022; Azmi & Gunawan, 2021), while high self-confidence supports greater engagement, clearer communication, and resilience under pressure (Ismail et al., 2019; Sunardi & Mardiah, 2023). This moment becomes a crucial point for many students, as the presence of lecturers and peers creates a highly evaluative environment. While some students are able to present with confidence, others experience significant performance anxiety, leading to doubts about their academic abilities.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of communication skills and psychological readiness in student presentations. However, limited attention has been given to students' internal experiences, such as measuring levels of self-confidence or exploring its relationship with performance. This leaves a gap in understanding how students perceive, develop, and experience self-confidence in high-pressure academic situations (Rahmawati & Sari, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to explore the real experiences of sixth-semester students during their proposal presentations, with a focus on the development, manifestation, and influencing factors of self-confidence in this specific academic context.

Given this context, the present study aims to explore the self-confidence of sixth-semester students during proposal presentations. By using a mixed-methods approach that combines questionnaire data and in-depth interviews, this research seeks to uncover students' perceived levels of self-confidence, the challenges faced during presentations, the coping strategies they use,

as well as the influence of audience and preparation. The findings of this study are expected to provide deeper insights into how self-confidence develops and what kinds of support systems can be implemented to improve students' performance in academic oral tasks.

THEORY REVIEW

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence represents an essential psychological element which influences many life domains particularly educational settings and academic success. Self-confidence is the general perception which people hold about their personal capabilities alongside their ability to make judgments and their competence in achieving tasks or dealing with challenges. The concept shows strong connections with self-esteem and self-efficacy yet it possesses distinct characteristics from these two constructs.

According to Baron and Byrne (2019), self-confidence is an individual's evaluation of their own capabilities and potential to succeed in a particular situation. This belief not only encompasses technical skills but also the ability to interact socially and emotionally. Someone with high self-confidence tends to see challenges as opportunities for growth rather than intimidating threats. Bandura (2021), in his theory of self-efficacy, states that self-confidence is one of the main components of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a person's specific belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions needed to achieve desired outcomes. When someone is confident that they can succeed at a task, they are more motivated to put in the effort, even when facing obstacles.

Self-confidence is not a singular feeling but rather a combination of several interrelated aspects. The first is belief in one's abilities, which refers to the fundamental conviction that an individual possesses the necessary skills, knowledge, and talents to complete a task. For students, this might include the belief that they can understand course material, construct logical arguments, and respond to questions effectively (Chen et al., 2022). The second aspect is belief in one's presentation, which involves how a person presents themselves to others. This includes the confidence to speak fluently in public, maintain eye contact, and use body language effectively to communicate a message persuasively (Smith & Jones, 2023). Finally, resilience is another key component of self-confidence. It reflects the ability to recover from failure and setbacks. Confident individuals do not let mistakes deter them; instead, they view these experiences as opportunities for growth and self-improvement (Lee & Park, 2022). Together, these aspects form a comprehensive understanding of self-confidence as a dynamic and multi-dimensional construct.

Self-confidence is shaped by a range of internal and external factors that interact in complex ways. One significant factor is past experience, where previous successes—especially in similar tasks—can enhance an individual's confidence, while repeated failures may gradually diminish it. Another important influence is social support, as encouragement from peers, lecturers, or family members often serves as positive reinforcement that strengthens self-belief (Williams, 2023). Additionally, social comparison plays a role; comparing oneself to others can either motivate or discourage, depending on whether the comparison is realistic and constructive or idealized and unattainable. Finally, self-perception is a crucial internal element—how individuals view their own competence greatly affects their confidence. If they perceive themselves as capable and effective, they are more likely to approach challenges with assurance.

Presenting a Proposal

A proposal presentation is a professional and academic activity that involves presenting an idea, a proposal, or research to an audience. In the context of education, particularly in the seminar proposal, this presentation serves as a crucial step for students to demonstrate their research skills in front of the students' peers and rekan-rekan. The success of the presentation is not only determined by the quality of the proposal but also by the way it is presented.

The primary purpose of presenting a proposal, as stated by Doyle (2023), is to convince the audience that the proposed idea is valid, feasible, and significant. In an academic setting, this involves persuading examiners that the research topic is relevant and contributes to scientific knowledge, that the proposed methodology is appropriate and implementable, and that the expected outcomes have the potential to offer new insights. Beyond persuasion, a proposal presentation also functions as an opportunity to receive constructive feedback. Through this process, students can identify potential weaknesses in their proposals and make necessary improvements before moving on to the research phase (Levin & Jones, 2022). Therefore, a proposal presentation is not merely about delivering information—it is a meaningful dialogue intended to refine and strengthen the quality of the proposed research.

An effective proposal presentation must incorporate several key elements that work together to ensure clarity and impact. One essential element is having a logical and clear structure, where the presentation flows in an organized manner—typically beginning with the background of the problem, followed by the problem statement, research objectives, a brief literature review, and the proposed methodology. This structure helps the audience follow and understand the arguments being presented (Miller & Thompson, 2023). Additionally, concise and focused content is crucial. Presenters should distill the main ideas from a comprehensive proposal into a presentation that is clear and easy to follow, avoiding overly text-heavy slides and instead emphasizing key points with appropriate data visualization (Chen & Wu, 2022). Lastly, effective verbal and non-verbal communication greatly enhances the delivery. Clear articulation, appropriate intonation, and a steady speaking pace contribute to better understanding, while body language—such as eye contact, hand gestures, and posture—helps convey confidence and credibility (Rodriguez & Garcia, 2023). Together, these elements create a compelling and professional presentation.

Presenting a proposal can be a challenging task for students, particularly those in their sixth semester. One of the most common difficulties is public speaking anxiety, where students feel nervous or intimidated when speaking in front of an audience—especially when the audience consists of critical examiners. This nervousness can interfere with the clarity and flow of the presentation. Another significant challenge is time constraints, as students are often required to present complex and detailed ideas within a limited time frame, necessitating the ability to prioritize and communicate only the most essential points. In addition, anticipating questions from examiners can be daunting. Students must not only demonstrate a strong understanding of their proposal but also think quickly and respond confidently to unexpected or challenging questions. Recognizing and addressing these challenges can help students prepare more effectively, ultimately enhancing their self-confidence during proposal presentations.

EFL students

For EFL students, presenting a proposal in English is a complex task. They must master the content and deal with language barriers, anxiety about communicating, and the pressure to

perform well in front of an audience and lecturers. Self-confidence is crucial for overcoming these challenges [Horwitz et al., 1986]. Several aspects of self-confidence are crucial for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students during proposal presentations. Linguistic self-confidence refers to students' belief in their ability to use English effectively when speaking, including pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (MacIntyre et al., 1998). A lack of linguistic self-confidence can lead to speaking anxiety, communication avoidance, and lower presentation quality. Academic self-confidence relates to students' belief in their capacity to understand content, construct arguments, and present ideas clearly (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). In proposal presentations, this includes confidence in the quality of their research proposals and their ability to defend them. Presentation self-confidence is the specific belief in one's ability to deliver a presentation effectively, including managing stage fright, maintaining eye contact, and using visual aids appropriately (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Several factors influence the level of self-confidence among EFL students during proposal presentations. English language proficiency plays a major role, as stronger language skills often lead to greater confidence when speaking (Spolsky, 1989). Prior experience also affects self-confidence; positive presentation experiences can enhance it, while negative experiences can diminish it (Ellis, 1994). Environmental support, including encouragement from teachers and peers as well as a positive classroom atmosphere, can reduce anxiety and boost confidence (Dörnyei, 2005). Learning strategies and preparation, such as consistent practice, creating outlines, and rehearsing in front of a mirror, can also strengthen self-confidence (Brown, 2001). Finally, public speaking anxiety, though distinct from self-confidence, can hinder its expression and affect performance (McCroskey, 1977). Students with high anxiety may require targeted strategies to manage their nervousness effectively.

METHODS

This study made use of a mixed-methods design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches in exploring sixth-semester students' self-confidence in proposing presentations during the Proposal Seminar course. The participants involved 19 sixth-semester students who were randomly selected based on their class registration and direct participation in proposing presentations. Data were collected using two primary instruments: a self-confidence questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire contained 20 statements on a Likert scale of 4 points from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Each student's total score was converted into percentage to determine their level of self-confidence, categorized into four bands: Very High (85–100%), High (70–84%), Moderate (55–69%), and Low (below 55%).

To complement quantitative information, semi-structured interviews were also conducted on sampled participants to provide detailed information about their self-rated strengths and weaknesses, preparation methods, coping mechanisms, and the extent to which audience conditions affected their levels of confidence. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Quantitative data descriptive analysis used percentages and mean scores to classify the self-confidence levels of the students. For qualitative data, data were examined.based on the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), that is, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Repeated patterns of nervousness, preparation, environmental influence, and coping strategies were identified using thematic coding. These mixed methods provided a clear description of factors contributing to students' self-confidence in academic presentation settings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that sixth-semester students generally possessed a high level of self-confidence when presenting their research proposals. As shown in Table 1, the average percentage score across all 19 respondents was 79.61%, which falls under the "High" category.

Table 1

Respondent	Total Score (out of 80)	Percentage (%)	Category
Elisma	80	100.00%	Very High
Maria	59	73.75%	High
Hilda	74	92.50%	Very High
Sirintin	58	72.50%	High
Deswita	67	83.75%	High
Untsa	57	71.25%	High
Jusmita	70	87.50%	Very High
Septiani	72	90.00%	Very High
Dian	62	77.50%	High
Aisha	61	76.25%	High
Kiki	62	77.50%	High
Arnita	50	62.50%	Moderate
Azzura	74	92.50%	Very High
Nur	57	71.25%	High
Tantri	61	76.25%	High
Adhitya	56	70.00%	High
Riyan	71	88.75%	High
Nadya	60	75.00%	High
Melanie	59	73.75%	High
Average		**79.61%**	**High**

Five students (26.3%) demonstrated a "Very High" level of self-confidence (≥85%), thirteen students (68.4%) were categorized as having "High" self-confidence (70–84%), and only one student (5.3%) fell into the "Moderate" category (55–69%). Notably, no students were categorized as having "Low" self-confidence (below 55%), indicating that all participants generally perceived themselves as capable and prepared to deliver academic presentations.

Table 2

Category	Score Range (%)	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Very High	85 – 100%	5	26.3%
High	70 – 84%	13	68.4%
Moderate	55 – 69%	1	5.3%
Low	< 55%	0	0.0%
Total		**19**	**100%**

In addition to the questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights into the students' experiences. Several thematic findings were identified. The results of the qualitative data analysis revealed several emerging themes that reflect the self-confidence experiences of sixth-semester students during their research proposal presentations. These themes were identified through careful coding and interpretation of the interview transcripts. Each theme captures different aspects of the students' internal experiences, behaviors, and strategies in managing their performance. Overall, the data show that while most students experienced varying degrees of nervousness, they also demonstrated awareness of their strengths, employed coping mechanisms, and engaged in self-reflection to improve their confidence. The thematic findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Theme	Description	Supporting Statements / Patterns
Presentation Strengths	Students displayed clear communication, structured content, and good **non**-verbal cues.	"I tried to maintain eye contact and organize my slides properly.""I felt more confident when I followed a structure."
Presentation Challenges	Nervousness, rapid speech, forgetfulness, difficulty in answering spontaneously.	"Sometimes I speak too fast and forget my next point.""When I get nervous, I go blank."
Preparation and Readiness	Students felt more confident after rehearsing and mastering the material.	"Practicing really helped me reduce my anxiety.""The more I knew my content, the less nervous I felt."
Coping Strategies	Breathing, short pauses, self-talk, focusing on slides, and light audience interaction.	"I take a deep breath before speaking.""I tell myself: 'You can do this.'"
Audience Influence	Presence of lecturers and critical peers increased performance anxiety.	"I get more nervous when my lecturer watches me.""Some classmates ask hard questions that stress me out."
Self-Reflection	Students evaluated their performance and sought feedback to improve.	"After the presentation, I usually ask my friend how I did.""I reflect on what I could improve."

The findings suggest that students were aware of their strengths and areas of growth during presentations. Despite common experiences of nervousness, most participants were able to manage their anxiety through coping strategies such as deep breathing and self-talk. Furthermore, self-reflection appeared to be a significant process that supported ongoing development of their presentation confidence.

The results of ths study indicate that sixth-semester students possess a relatively high level of self-confidence in presenting their research proposals, although this confidence is not fixed and is influenced by various internal and external factors.

First, the presence of clear communication and presentation structure suggests that students have developed essential presentation skills through academic exposure. However, the frequent experience of nervousness aligns with previous findings that anxiety is a common emotion in public speaking among university students (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Nervousness did not always indicate a lack of preparation, but rather the pressure associated with academic performance. Preparation emerged as a central factor in enhancing self-confidence, supporting Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, where mastery experiences significantly impact confidence. Students who prepared thoroughly tended to perform more confidently and reported lower anxiety levels.

The coping strategies identified in this study—such as breathing techniques and self-talk—illustrate that students were actively engaged in emotional regulation. This aligns with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping, which emphasizes the importance of cognitive and behavioral strategies in managing stress. Moreover, the role of audience pressure, particularly from lecturers, reinforces the concept that confidence is shaped not only by internal readiness but also by social context. According to Zimmerman's (2000) social cognitive theory, environmental factors significantly affect motivation and performance, which was evident in the students' heightened anxiety when facing evaluative audiences.

Finally, the practice of self-reflection among students suggests that they are developing metacognitive awareness, which contributes to gradual improvements in both confidence and performance. Reflection enables students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, paving the way for personal and academic growth.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the self-confidence of sixth-semester students while presenting research proposals with a mixed-method approach that combined questionnaire information and qualitative interviews. The quantitative results showed that the majority of the students reported high self-confidence, with a mean score of 79.61%. The more prominent majority of the participants fell under the "high" and "very high" categories, which represented overall high self-reported confidence in academic oral activities.

The qualitative findings also revealed that although nervousness was felt by everyone, students worked consciously with strategies to manage anxiety, such as preparation, self-talk, and breathing. Students also identified the function of membership in the audience, specifically the presence of lecturers, as a key determinant of their emotional readiness. In addition, reflection and self-reflection were found to be effective tools in creating confidence in the long term.

Overall, the study concludes that students' academic presentation self-confidence is a fluid and multifaceted construct developed through self-preparation, coping, experience, and environment. Promoting frequent practice, providing constructive criticism, and establishing a supportive academic environment can significantly contribute to the improvement of students' public speaking and academic communication confidence.

SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for students, educators, institutions, and future researchers. For students, it is recommended that they engage in regular practice and thorough preparation before delivering academic presentations, as these activities help build confidence and reduce anxiety. Personal coping strategies—such as deep breathing, positive self-talk, and focusing on the content—can also assist students in managing their nervousness. Furthermore, students are encouraged to engage in self-reflection after each presentation, which can help them assess their performance and identify areas for improvement.

For lecturers and academic instructors, it is important to create a psychologically safe and supportive environment during proposal seminars. This may reduce performance-related anxiety and foster students' self-confidence. Constructive and balanced feedback should be provided to help students improve without diminishing their self-worth. In addition, implementing rehearsal sessions, peer evaluations, or mock presentations prior to the final seminar can help students develop confidence and become more familiar with the process.

At the institutional level, it is advisable for universities or faculties to integrate confidence-building programs into the academic curriculum—particularly for final-year students. These may include workshops on presentation skills, stress management, or public speaking. Establishing mentoring programs that connect senior students with juniors may also help promote self-confidence through shared experiences and guidance.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore students' self-confidence in academic presentations through longitudinal approaches—examining the progression before, during, and after proposal seminars. Further studies may also include a larger and more diverse population across faculties or universities to improve generalizability. Comparing students from different academic disciplines or English language proficiency levels could offer valuable insights into additional factors that influence self-confidence during academic presentations.

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