English Public Speaking Anxiety: Intercultural Communicative Competence Perspective

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INFO ARTICLE	*ABSTRACT*
Accepted: **Revised:** **Approved :**	Public speaking is one of the common issues in the EFL context but is not limited to the student teachers in Indonesia. To better understand this matter, 15 in-depth interviews and questionnaires were carried out among student teachers in a private university in Indonesia. The research integrates Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) to examine how knowledge, attitude, and skills of interpreting and navigating aspects of cultures influence English public speaking anxiety among them. The findings show that linguistic insecurities, fear of negative evaluation, and psychological stress are the predominant issues impacting students' public speaking skills at the university level. In this sense, the study reveals that students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) plays a significant role in moderating their anxiety, where higher ICC correlates with lower anxiety levels. Psycholinguistic factors such as negative self-perception, lack of confidence, and concerns over cultural miscommunication also significantly contribute to the fear of English public speaking. The findings implicate that enhancing communication education with integrated ICC components and fostering supportive, culturally sensitive learning environments could mitigate this anxiety, potentially improving students' English public speaking performance. Further research engaging a wider population is necessary for policy formulation, which might facilitate the culture learning in public speaking among students of all educational levels.

INTRODUCTION

English public speaking in Indonesia has been widely discussed as one of the main challenges in *EFL* (Mahmudi & Anugerahwati, 2021; Mohd Naser & Mat Isa, 2021; Rahman et al., 2024; Yi-Chen Chen, 2024). To understand the issue in depth, it is essential to trace back to the root of English education when English was introduced as a foreign language in Indonesia. In this regard, factors contributing to public speaking anxiety (*PSA*) among Indonesian learners are closely tied to three key dimensions: physical symptoms, preparation anxiety, and performance anxiety (Rahmawati, 2022). Physical symptoms such as trembling, sweating, and increased heart rate often manifest when speakers face an audience, exacerbating their nervousness (Bodie, 2010). Preparation

anxiety stems from a lack of confidence in language proficiency and fear of inadequate rehearsal, which is particularly prevalent in English as a Foreign Language (*EFL*) contexts (Mak, 2011). Meanwhile, performance anxiety arises from the fear of negative evaluation, especially in intercultural settings where learners may feel heightened scrutiny regarding their language skills and cultural appropriateness (Gedik Bal, Nur. 2022). In Indonesia, where English is not the native language, these anxieties are further amplified by sociocultural factors, including the high value placed on social harmony and the avoidance of embarrassment (Tridinanti, 2018). Addressing these dimensions requires targeted strategies, such as cognitive-behavioral techniques, gradual exposure, and intercultural communication training to enhance both linguistic and psychological readiness (McCroskey, 2009).

Previous studies identify several factors causing *PSA* in higher education. Xue, Q. & Noels, K. (2025) identified that the lack of practice, extra care from class teachers, an introverted state of mind, and mimicking the accent of native English speakers instead of maintaining their own pronunciation make *EFL* learners feel anxious. Other reasons, according to Quvanch, Z., Qasemi, A. S., & Na, K. S. (2024), include the fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and negative perceptions that contribute to increased anxiety. Similarly, Zheng & Cheng (2018) noted that students who struggle with communication anxiety find it hard to communicate with others, primarily verbally, leading to more mental strain during the test-taking process, which impairs their confidence in their ability to study and, ultimately, their competency in a foreign language. As a result, students who are nervous about learning a language may struggle even more when attempting to communicate across cultural boundaries, particularly with peers or professors. This type of worry may also impact students' attitudes toward the learning process and themselves (Shabani, 2012).

Public speaking, as part of communication, is a significant source of anxiety for many English language learners, particularly in intercultural contexts where communicative competence plays a crucial role in effective interaction (Woodrow, 2006; Horwitz et al., 1986). Research suggests that *PSA* is closely related to self-perceived language proficiency and cultural adaptability, with learners often experiencing heightened stress due to fear of negative evaluation in cross-cultural settings (Dewaele, 2013; Liu, 2007). While previous studies have discussed the factors causing anxiety from a psychological perspective, the view from the *ICC* perspective remains underexplored. To fill this gap, the present study explores the current practices of public speaking at the tertiary level and how confident or anxious students feel regarding class presentations, discussions, and communication in the classroom and beyond from the *ICC* perspective.

This study aims to determine the relationship between stress levels and carbohydrate intake with the nutritional status of ninth-grade students at *SMPN 22 Surakarta*. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence the nutritional status of adolescents, thereby serving as a basis for decision-making in nutritional intervention efforts within the school environment. The benefits of this study are to contribute to the fields of education and health by developing strategies

to improve students' nutritional status, considering psychological aspects (stress) and carbohydrate consumption patterns. Additionally, this study can serve as a reference for the development of a more contextual school-based nutrition education curriculum.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative methodology to understand the subjective views of the participants. The data were collected between April and May 2025. We collected data from 15 student teachers and one teacher educator at a private university in West Java, chosen for its diverse student population and relevance to the study's focus on public speaking anxiety and intercultural communicative competence (*ICC*) in an Indonesian context. In-depth interviews and questionnaires were conducted using separate guidelines. We used purposive sampling to select specific students. We conducted in-depth interviews with two female students. The in-depth interviews with students were conducted to learn about their personal experiences and perceptions of public speaking anxiety. The typical length of a qualitative interview was around 10 minutes. Seven questions were facilitated among the students to understand their generalized views from the *ICC* perspective.

The interviews were conducted in person and recorded using the university's system. Later, the interviews were transcribed manually (English-Indonesian). Participants are active students of the Faculty of Education and Science at universities in West Java. They can be distinguished through gender, class, and age classification. They also study diverse subjects such as Grammar, Introduction to Linguistics, English Literature, Academic Writing, Interpreting, and English Micro-Teaching. While in-depth interviews were conducted to understand personal accounts,

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 15 student teachers from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds, as well as one teacher educator with experience in English teaching and intercultural communicative competence development. Among the 15 student participants, eight were female and seven were male. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure diversity in experiences and perspectives related to public speaking anxiety and *ICC*.

The participating students had varying levels of education, ranging from freshmen to recent graduates who were beginning their teaching careers. They were enrolled in various English-related courses such as English Grammar, Introduction to Linguistics, English Literature, Academic Writing, Translation, and English Micro-Teaching. This diversity in academic backgrounds provided variations in their perspectives on public speaking anxiety and the role of *ICC* in their learning process.

Research Context

This research used a qualitative research method, and the data presented is in the form of text collected through interview sessions and Google Forms. The in-depth interviews with students were conducted to learn about their personal experiences and

perceptions of public speaking anxiety (Rahman et al., 2024, p. 4). In the interview sessions, we used semi-structured sessions. The researcher asked the participants pre-determined open-ended questions. All sessions were recorded. Participants were selected based on class and age classification; this was considered to be more reliable. For data collection, we involved two students out of a total of 15 students for the interview sessions. These two students included two females.

The questions prepared by the researcher were designed purely to assess how anxiety affects public speaking at that moment, how anxiety can affect language production, and the impact that may occur when experiencing public speaking anxiety. In addition to the semi-structured interview sessions, we also asked questions via Google Form to explore personal experiences, challenges, and strategies used by individuals in overcoming public speaking anxiety in the context of intercultural communication. The answers to these questions provide deeper insights into the factors that influence anxiety and communication effectiveness in multicultural situations.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded to ensure data accuracy, then transcribed into English for clarity and consistency in analysis. After transcription, the data were translated into Indonesian to facilitate deeper contextual understanding and interpretation aligned with the participants' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The transcribed data were then systematically coded to identify recurring themes and patterns related to English public speaking anxiety and intercultural communicative competence. This process enabled the extraction of meaningful insights, allowing the research questions to be thoroughly addressed and ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the detailed findings of the study on English Public Speaking Anxiety (EPSA) from the perspective of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). Through thematic analysis of qualitative interview data, several main themes and subthemes were identified, illustrating various factors contributing to students' anxiety in public English speaking situations.

Nervousness in Prolonged English Public Speaking
Situational Nervousness in Formal Settings

Participants frequently reported experiencing moderate to high levels of nervousness when required to speak English for an extended period, particularly during formal presentations or academic settings. One participant remarked, "If I speak English while doing a presentation then I will feel nervous," highlighting how formal speech contexts heighten anxiety levels. Another shared, "I get nervous when asked to speak English for a long period of time. I might repeat the same sentence," reflecting how prolonged speaking may lead to lapses in concentration and increased self-consciousness.

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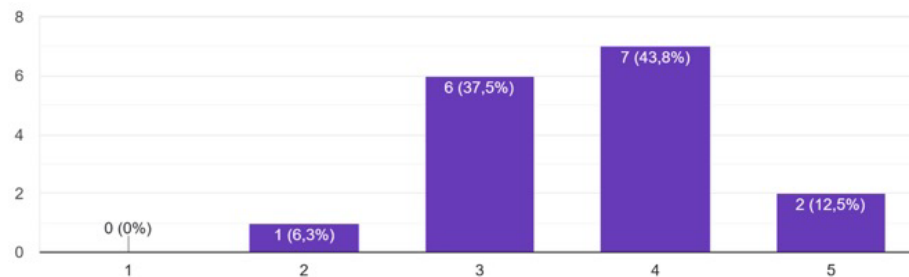
Figure 1. Factors that impact their anxiety (author, 2025)

The bar chart illustrates the opinions of 16 respondents regarding the statement: "I am nervous when I have to speak in English for a long period". Participants rated their responses on a scale of 1 to 5. No respondents (0%) chose scale 1 indicating no strong disagreement. 1 person (6.3%) selected option 2. 6 individuals (37.5%) responded with a 3, reflecting a moderate or neutral level of agreement. The highest number of responses, 7 participants (43.8%), were at level 4, suggesting they generally feel nervous. 2 respondents (12.5%) rated a 5, expressing strong nervousness. This result indicates that the majority of participants tend to feel uneasy or anxious when required to speak English over an extended period.
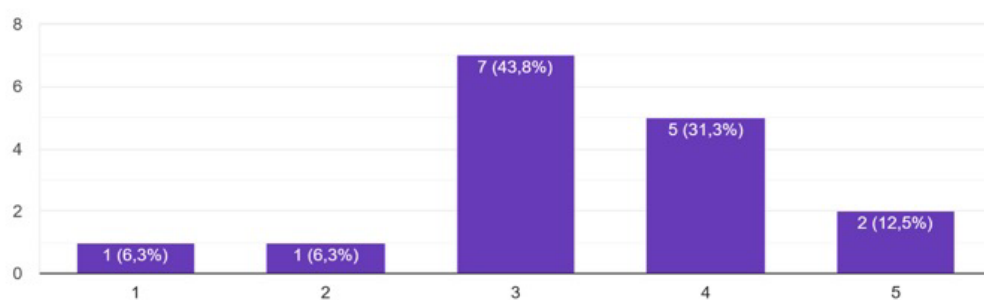

Figure 2. Feeling anxious when practicing speech (author, 2025)

The bar chart illustrates the responses of 16 participants to the statement "I feel get anxious when I practice the speech several times before presenting". The participants rated their agreement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 participant (6.3%) selected option 1, indicating strong disagreement. 1 participant (6.3%) selected option 2.

The majority, 7 participants (43.8%) chose option 3 suggesting a neutral stance. 5 participants (31.3%) selected option 4. 2 participants (12.5%) chose option 5 indicating strong agreement. This data suggests that most respondents feel neutral to moderately anxious when practicing a speech several times before presenting.

Reduced Anxiety in Informal Interactions

In contrast, participants noted that casual conversations with peers elicited significantly less anxiety. The situational nature of anxiety suggests that the level of perceived scrutiny and formality in the speaking context directly influences the intensity of EPSA. This finding indicates the importance of contextual factors in shaping public speaking anxiety among students.

Audience Disinterest as a Trigger for Anxiety
Impact of Perceived Audience Distractedness

Participants expressed divergent reactions to audiences that appeared disinterested or distracted during their speeches. While one participant mentioned, "It makes me less nervous," suggesting that lack of audience engagement may lower performance pressure, another stated, "I am worried about the audience not paying attention to me...they might not like my way of speaking," indicating that perceived disinterest can exacerbate feelings of self-doubt and insecurity.

I feel anxious when the audience seems unintested or distracted during my speech (Saya merasa cemas ketika audiens tampak tidak tertarik atau terganggu selama saya berpidato)
16 jawaban

Figure 3. Audients Disinterest as trigger for anxiety (Author, 2025)

The bar chart presents the responses of 16 participants to the statement: "I feel anxious when the audience seems uninterested or distracted during my speech". Respondents rated their agreement on a scale from one to five. One participant (6.3%) strongly disagreed (option 1). Two participants (12.5%) chose option two. A majority of 9 participants (56.3%) selected option three indicating a neutral stance. Three participants (18.8%) chose option four. 1 participant (6.3%) strongly agreed (option 5). This indicates that most participants feel neutral, though a notable portion leans toward anxiety when the audience appears disinterested or distracted during their speech.

2.2 Emotional Consequences of Audience Engagement

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These contrasting experiences demonstrate that the degree of audience engagement plays a crucial role in influencing a speaker's confidence and anxiety. Sensitivity to audience behavior, whether real or perceived, can either alleviate or intensify public speaking anxiety, underscoring the psychological complexity of audience-speaker dynamics.

Cultural Miscommunication Anxiety
Reliance on Translation Tools

Some participants revealed concerns about potential miscommunication stemming from cultural differences, sometimes resorting to translation apps to clarify their intended messages. One participant admitted, "Sometimes I need the help of a translation app," reflecting an awareness of intercultural communication challenges that may heighten anxiety.

The fear of miscommunication due to cultural differences contributes to my public speaking anxiety (Ketakutan akan miskomunikasi karena perbedaan...i pada kecemasan berbicara di depan umum saya)
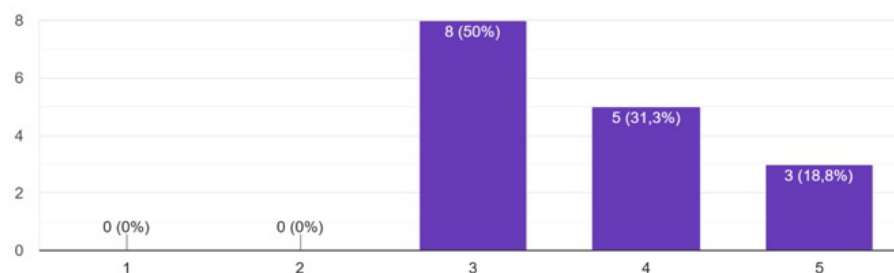16 jawaban

Figure 4. Cultural Miscommunication Anxiety (author, 2025)

The participants were asked whether the fear of miscommunication due to cultural differences contributes to their public speaking anxiety. Based on the responses of 16 participants. None of the participants selected scale 1 or 2 (0% each) indicating no strong disagreement. 8 participants (50%) chose scale 3 suggesting a moderate level of concern. 5 participants (31.3%) responded with scale 4 showing a fairly high level of agreement. 3 participants (18.8%) rated scale 5 indicating strong anxiety linked to cultural miscommunication. The results show that the majority of participants recognize cultural differences as a contributing factor to their public speaking anxiety.

I feel more confident speaking english when i am familiar with my audience (Saya merasa lebih percaya diri berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris ketika saya akrab dengan audiens saya)
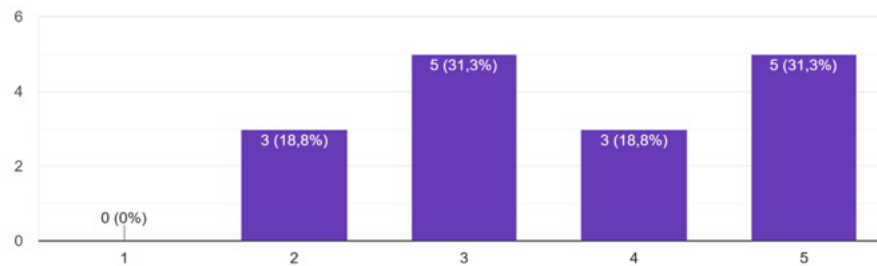16 jawaban

Figure 5. Confidence when familiar with the audience (author, 2025)

The participants were asked whether they feel more confident speaking English when they are familiar with their audience. The responses from 16 participants show the following distribution: No participants chose scale 1 (0%), indicating that no one strongly disagreed. 3 participants (18.8%) selected scale 2 showing a low level of agreement. 5 participants (31.3%) chose scale 3 indicating a moderate level of confidence. 3 participants (18.8%) responded with scale 4 suggesting fairly high confidence. 5 participants (31.3%) selected scale 5 which reflects strong confidence when speaking to a familiar audience. These results suggest that familiarity with the audience significantly boosts the participants' confidence in using English.

Minimal Concern about Cultural Differences

Conversely, other participants expressed little to no anxiety regarding cultural miscommunication, with one stating, "I don't even value this aspect." This divergence suggests that individual differences in cultural adaptability and self-confidence influence how much cultural factors contribute to EPSA.

English Proficiency and Self-Comparison with the Audience
Anxiety from Perceived Linguistic Inferiority

Participants consistently reported that comparing their English proficiency unfavorably to that of their audience significantly increased their anxiety. One participant shared, "I feel scared and nervous when trying to express my thoughts," highlighting the emotional impact of linguistic self-doubt. Another participant elaborated, "They definitely understand more about language structure...how to pronounce it properly," emphasizing the perceived skill gap that amplifies their public speaking apprehension.

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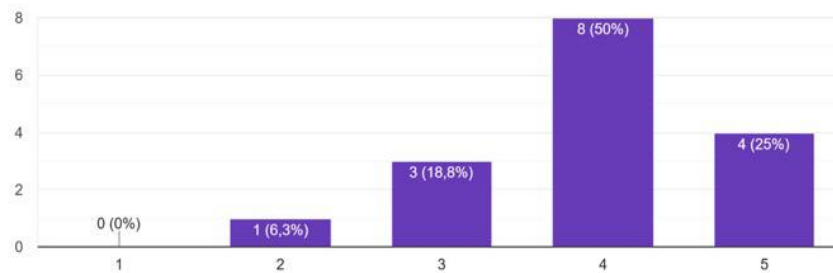

Figure 6. English Proficiency and Self-Comparison with the Audience (author, 2025)

The participants were asked whether they feel more anxious when they believe their English proficiency is lower than that of their audience. The results from 16 respondents are as follows. 0 participants (0%) strongly disagreed by choosing scale 1. 1 participant (6.3%) chose scale 2 indicating slight disagreement. 3 participants (18.8%) selected scale 3 reflecting a moderate level of anxiety. 8 participants (50%) responded with scale 4 suggesting a high level of anxiety in such situations. 4 participants (25%) selected scale 5 strongly agreeing that this factor contributes to their anxiety. These findings show that the majority of participants experience greater anxiety when they perceive their English ability to be lower than their audience's.
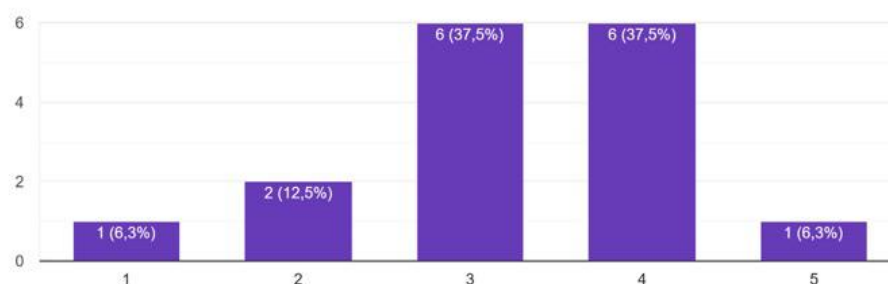

Figure 7. Presence of an unfamiliar audience (author, 2025)

The participants were asked whether the presence of an unfamiliar audience increases their anxiety when speaking English. The responses from 16 participants are as follows. 1 participant (6.3%) strongly disagreed by selecting scale 1. 2 participants (12.5%) chose scale 2 indicating slight disagreement. 6 participants (37.5%) selected scale 3 showing a neutral or moderate level of agreement. Another 6 participants (37.5%) responded with scale 4 suggesting a higher level of anxiety in the presence of unfamiliar

audiences. 1 participant (6.3%) strongly agreed by choosing scale 5. These results indicate that most participants experience moderate to high levels of anxiety when speaking English in front of people they are not familiar with.

Role of Linguistic Self-Efficacy

This theme illustrates the critical role of linguistic self-efficacy in moderating EPSA. Students' beliefs in their ability to effectively communicate in English directly influence their confidence and anxiety levels, pointing to the need for targeted interventions to boost language competence.

Fear of Negative Evaluation
Experiences of Fear Related to Feedback

Negative evaluation emerged as a recognized source of anxiety, yet participants reported varying degrees of concern about this factor. One participant noted, "Not really, because I receive feedback from my lecturers and friends," indicating that supportive feedback environments may buffer against fears of negative judgment.
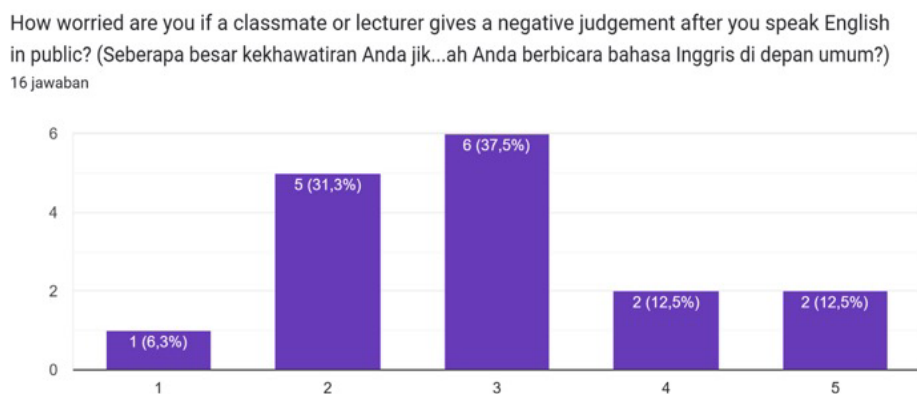
How worried are you if a classmate or lecturer gives a negative judgement after you speak English in public? (Seberapa besar kekhawatiran Anda jik...ah Anda berbicara bahasa Inggris di depan umum?)
16 jawaban

Figure 8. Fear of Negative Evaluation (author, 2025)

Participants were asked how worried they are if a classmate or lecturer gives a negative judgment after they speak English in public. The responses from 16 participants are summarized as follows 1 participant (6.3%) selected scale 1 indicating they are not worried at all. 5 participants (31.3%) chose scale 2 suggesting low levels of concern. 6 participants (37.5%) chose scale 3 showing moderate worry. 2 participants (12.5%) selected scale 4 indicating high concern. 2 participants (12.5%) chose scale 5 meaning they are very worried.

These results show that while a majority of participants experience moderate worry, a smaller portion feel high or very high anxiety about being judged negatively when speaking English in public.

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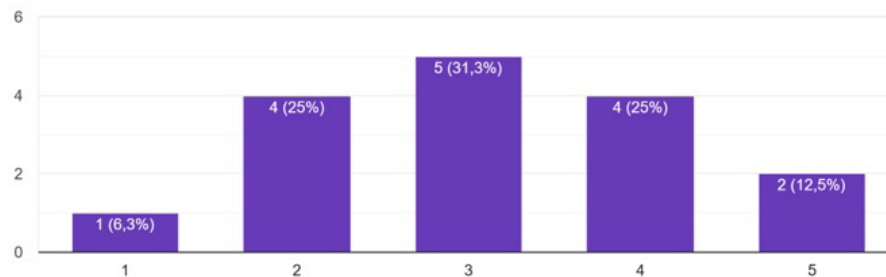

Figure 9. Fear of Negative Evaluation (author, 2025)

The chart illustrates how often participants avoid speaking English in front of a crowd due to fear of being considered incompetent. A total of 16 responses were recorded. 1 participant (6.3%) chose scale 1 indicating they rarely avoid speaking. 4 participants (25%) selected scale 2 showing low frequency of avoidance. 5 participants (31.3%) chose scale 3 representing a moderate tendency to avoid speaking. 4 participants (25%) selected scale 4, indicating frequent avoidance. 2 participants (12.5%) chose scale 5 meaning they very often avoid speaking due to fear of being judged as incompetent. These results suggest that a significant number of participants, particularly those at scale 3 and above, experience notable anxiety about being perceived as lacking competence when speaking English in public.

Mitigating Effects of Supportive Environments

This finding suggests that positive social and academic support can significantly reduce anxiety related to negative evaluation, helping students to focus on communication rather than fear of criticism. It underscores the importance of fostering constructive feedback cultures within educational settings.

Lack of Confidence in Expressing Ideas Clearly
Internal Doubts and Hesitancy

Participants revealed persistent doubts about their ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently in English. For example, one participant stated, "I feel unsure, because I know my English speaking skills are not very good yet," while another admitted, "Even when speaking I have difficulty...makes me quite hesitant to speak more." These expressions indicate how internal psychological barriers compound linguistic challenges to exacerbate anxiety.

How often do you feel less confident when speaking English even though you have prepared the material beforehand? (Seberapa sering Anda merasa ...el 5 : Very often happens (Sangat sering terjadi)
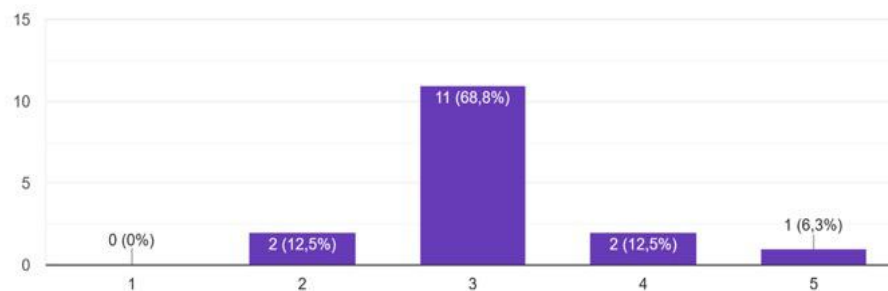16 jawaban

Figure 10. Lack of Confidence in Expressing Ideas Clearly (author, 2025)

The chart shows how often participants feel less confident when speaking English, even after preparing the material in advance. Based on 16 responses. 0 participants (0%) selected scale 1, indicating they never feel less confident. 2 participants (12.5%) chose scale 2, meaning they rarely feel this way. 11 participants (68.8%) selected scale 3, showing that the majority moderately experience a lack of confidence. 2 participants (12.5%) chose scale 4, indicating they frequently feel less confident. 1 participant (6.3%) selected scale 5, meaning they very often feel a lack of confidence despite being prepared. The results indicate that most participants (especially those choosing scale 3) still experience a considerable degree of self-doubt when speaking English, even when they have prepared beforehand.

When asked to speak English in front of the class, do you feel doubtful of your ability to express ideas or opinions clearly? (Saat diminta berbicara b...gu-ragu)   Level 5 : Very doubt (Sangat ragu-ragu)
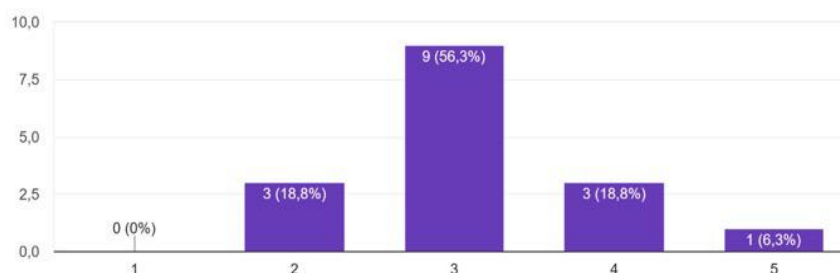16 jawaban

Figure 11. Lack of Confidence in Expressing Ideas Clearly (author, 2025)

The chart illustrates how doubtful students feel about their ability to express ideas or opinions clearly when asked to speak English in front of the class. Based on 16 responses. 0 participants (0%) chose scale 1 indicating no doubt at all. 3 participants

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(18.8%) selected scale 2 showing low levels of doubt. 9 participants (56.3%) chose scale 3 meaning the majority feel moderate doubt. 3 participants (18.8%) selected scale 4 indicating frequent doubt. 1 participant (6.3%) chose scale 5 suggesting a very high level of doubt. Overall, the data suggests that while no students feel completely confident (none chose scale 1), most experience at least a moderate level of doubt when expressing themselves in English in front of the class.
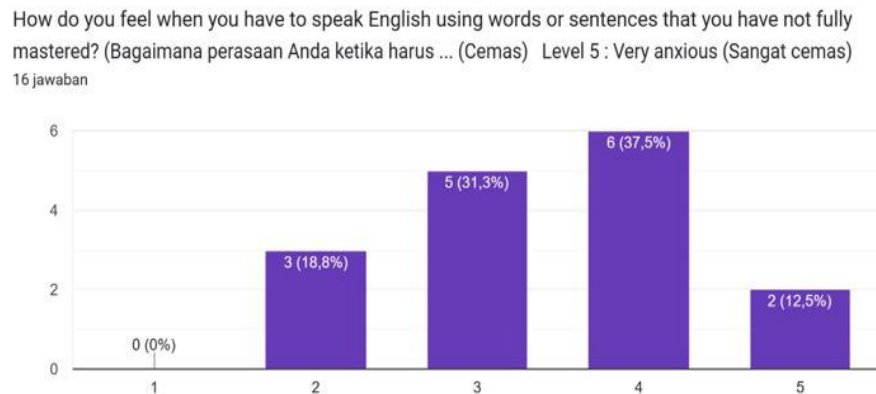
How do you feel when you have to speak English using words or sentences that you have not fully mastered? (Bagaimana perasaan Anda ketika harus ... (Cemas) Level 5 : Very anxious (Sangat cemas)
16 jawaban

Figure 12. Lack of Confidence in Expressing Ideas Clearly (author, 2025)

The chart presents how students feel when they have to speak English using words or sentences that they have not fully mastered. Based on the responses of 16 participants. 0 participants (0%) selected scale 1 indicating no anxiety at all. 3 participants (18.8%) chose scale 2 suggesting low anxiety. 5 participants (31.3%) selected scale 3 indicating moderate anxiety. 6 participants (37.5%) chose scale 4 meaning a high level of anxiety. 2 participants (12.5%) selected scale 5 which indicates very high anxiety. In general, the data shows that most students experience at least a moderate level of anxiety when speaking English using unfamiliar or not fully mastered language, with the majority falling in the range of scale 3 to 4.

Psychological Impact on Speaking Performance

This lack of confidence creates a reinforcing cycle where anxiety hampers communication effectiveness, which in turn deepens self-doubt. Addressing these psychological barriers is essential for improving students' public speaking abilities and reducing EPSA.

Psychological Stress and Speaking Anxiety
Influence of Topic Complexity and Audience Type

Participants noted that anxiety levels were not static but varied depending on the difficulty of the speaking topic and the nature of the audience. One participant reflected, "Sometimes I'm afraid that what I say is grammatically incorrect," while another added, "It depends on the topic and the audience...if they're professionals, I worry about being

judged." This highlights how external situational factors interact with internal stress responses.

Do you feel uncomfortable speaking English in front of a large group or your classmates? (Apakah Anda merasa tidak nyaman berbicara bahasa Inggr...depan kelompok besar atau teman sekelas Anda?)
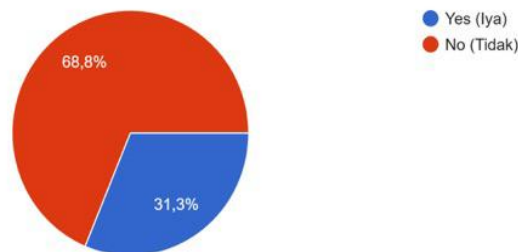
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● Yes (Iya)
● No (Tidak)

68,8%

31,3%

Figure 13. Psychological Stress and Speaking Anxiety (author,2025)

The pie chart illustrates students' responses to the question of whether they feel uncomfortable speaking English in front of a large group or their classmates. Out of 16 respondents. 68.8% answered No, indicating they do not feel uncomfortable speaking English in front of others. 31.3% answered Yes, meaning they do feel uncomfortable in such situations. This result suggests that while a majority of the students feel confident speaking English in front of groups, a significant portion still experiences discomfort or anxiety.

Do you feel anxious if someone you don't know listens when you speak English? (Apakah Anda merasa cemas jika ada orang yang tidak Anda kena...ndengarkan saat Anda berbicara bahasa Inggris?)
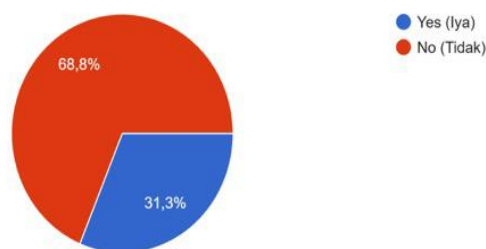
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● Yes (Iya)
● No (Tidak)

68,8%

31,3%

Figure 14. Psychological Stress and Speaking Anxiety (author,2025)

The pie chart shows students' responses to the question of whether they feel anxious when someone they don't know listens to them speaking English. From a total of 16 respondents. 68.8% answered No, indicating they do not feel anxious in such situations. 31.3% answered Yes, showing that they do feel anxious when speaking English in front of strangers. This data reveals that while the majority of students are confident speaking English around unfamiliar people, nearly one-third still experience anxiety in these interactions.

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Do you feel tense or worried about your English speaking performance during a class presentation or discussion? (Apakah Anda merasa tegang atau kh...nggris Anda saat presentasi atau diskusi kelas?)
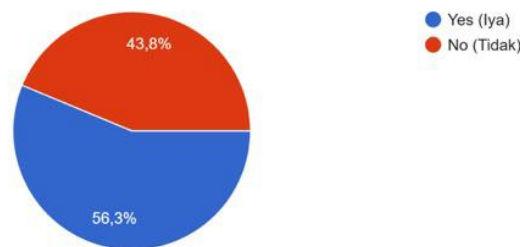16 jawaban

Figure 15. Psychological Stress and Speaking Anxiety (author,2025)

The pie chart illustrates students' responses to the question about whether they feel tense or worried about their English speaking performance during a class presentation or discussion. Out of 16 respondents. 56.3% answered Yes, indicating that they do feel tense or worried in such situations. 43.8% answered No, showing that they do not feel tense or worried when speaking English in class. This data suggests that more than half of the students experience anxiety or nervousness when speaking English in academic settings, which may impact their confidence and performance during presentations or discussions.

When speaking English, do you often feel tense for fear of making mistakes that can affect other people's judgement of you? (Saat berbicara bahas...memengaruhi penilaian orang lain terhadap Anda?)
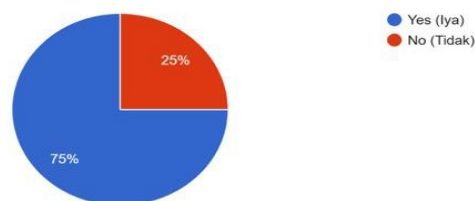16 jawaban

Figure 16. Psychological Stress and Speaking Anxiety (author,2025)

The pie chart shows the responses to the question: "When speaking English, do you often feel tense for fear of making mistakes that can affect other people's judgement of you?" Out of 16 respondents. 75% answered Yes, indicating that they often feel tense due to fear of being judged for making mistakes. 25% answered No, showing that they do not feel tense about the possibility of being judged when making errors in English. This result highlights that the majority of students experience anxiety when speaking English, driven by concerns about negative judgment from others, which may hinder their willingness to speak and participate actively.

Interaction of External and Internal Factors

These findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of EPSA, where both contextual elements and personal psychological states shape anxiety experiences. Understanding this interplay can inform more nuanced support strategies for students.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Overall, the findings reveal that language proficiency concerns and perceived audience judgment are the most consistent and potent sources of English Public Speaking Anxiety among university students. Although cultural differences are acknowledged, they were generally less impactful compared to linguistic and psychological factors. These insights highlight the critical need for educational interventions focused on enhancing linguistic skills and intercultural communicative competence to effectively alleviate EPSA.

Discussion

This study reveals that English Public Speaking Anxiety (EPSA) continues to be a significant challenge among Indonesian student teachers, shaped by a complex interplay of linguistic, psychological, and intercultural factors. Consistent with prior research (e.g., Bodie, 2010; Tanveer, 2007; Rahmawati, 2022), participants reported common anxiety symptoms such as nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, and low linguistic self-confidence. However, this study deepens understanding by framing these experiences within Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework, highlighting the intersection between intercultural dimensions and public speaking performance.

A prominent finding is the situational nature of anxiety. Students experienced higher anxiety in formal academic settings, such as presentations, but felt notably more comfortable during informal interactions with peers. This aligns with McCroskey's (2009) concept of context-based communication apprehension and underscores the importance of creating pedagogical environments that offer authentic, low-stakes speaking opportunities, thereby allowing students to gradually build confidence.

Linguistic self-efficacy also emerged as a crucial factor influencing EPSA. Students who perceived their language skills as inferior to those of their peers or audience were more prone to anxiety, corroborating findings by Wang and Chen (2023). This highlights the need to not only enhance linguistic competence but also foster positive self-perceptions through constructive feedback and affirming classroom practices.

Interestingly, although cultural miscommunication was recognized, it was not universally identified as a direct source of anxiety. This suggests variability in students' intercultural sensitivity and adaptability, potentially shaped by their prior experiences or educational background. Participants with higher ICC—demonstrated by greater cultural awareness, openness, and interpretive ability—reported lower anxiety levels. This supports the view that ICC can act as a protective factor against communication-related stress, especially within multicultural learning contexts (Byram, 2021; Cierpisz, 2022).

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The fear of negative evaluation remained a significant contributor to anxiety, albeit attenuated in supportive classroom environments. Students who received constructive feedback from peers and instructors reported reduced stress levels, emphasizing the importance of cultivating psychologically safe spaces for communication practice.

Lastly, internal psychological stress—often intensified by complex topics and perceptions of audience expertise—was found to exacerbate public speaking anxiety. This interaction between external pressures and internal emotional states reflects the multifaceted nature of EPSA and indicates the need for holistic interventions addressing both linguistic skills and emotional regulation.

In conclusion, while linguistic challenges and performance anxiety remain central to EPSA, integrating ICC training into teacher education programs offers a promising pathway to alleviate these anxieties. Equipping future educators with intercultural communicative skills not only enhances their public speaking capabilities but also strengthens their overall communicative competence in diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

This study highlights that English Public Speaking Anxiety (*EPSA*) among Indonesian student teachers is significantly influenced by linguistic insecurities, psychological stress, and fear of negative evaluation. While cultural miscommunication is a concern, it is less prominent compared to issues of self-confidence and language proficiency. The research finds that Intercultural Communicative Competence (*ICC*)—which includes cultural awareness, communication skills, and critical thinking—can help mitigate this anxiety. Students with stronger *ICC* showed better adaptability and lower stress when speaking in English. Therefore, integrating *ICC* into teacher education programs could enhance students' confidence and effectiveness in public speaking across diverse contexts. Further research with broader participant diversity is recommended to deepen understanding and improve educational strategies.

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