



TOURISM STUDENTS' ORAL PRESENTATION ANXIETY: A CASE STUDY

(Kecemasan Presentasi Lisan Mahasiswa Pariwisata: Sebuah Studi Kasus)

Sepsy Caroline Theresya

Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Stikom Ambon

Email: carolinetheresya@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:

Received: 03-02-2026

Revised: 20-03-2026

Accepted: 10-04-2026

Published: 15-04-2026

Keywords:

Oral presentation anxiety,
foreign language anxiety,
tourism students, case study,
English for tourism

Kata kunci:

Kecemasan presentasi lisan,
kecemasan bahasa asing,
mahasiswa pariwisata, studi
kasus, bahasa Inggris pariwisata

ABSTRACT

Oral presentation is a core learning activity in tourism education, as it simulates real professional tasks such as tour guiding, and destination promotion delivered in English. However, many tourism students experience considerable anxiety when required to present orally in front of an audience, which may hinder their communicative performance and professional readiness. This study aims to explore the forms, sources, and coping strategies of oral presentation anxiety among students of the Tourism Study Program at ITB STIKOM Ambon. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving eight purposively selected students who had completed at least one course requiring English oral presentations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observation, and reflective journals, then analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure. The findings reveal five interrelated themes underlying students' anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test/performance anxiety, linguistic insecurity, and physical-emotional symptoms such as trembling and mental blocking. Students reported employing several coping strategies, including repeated rehearsal, reliance on cue cards, positive self-talk, peer support, and selective eye contact with supportive audience members. The study concludes that oral presentation anxiety among tourism students is a multidimensional phenomenon rooted not only in linguistic limitations but also in socio-psychological factors related to fear of judgment and performance evaluation. These findings suggest the need for anxiety-reducing pedagogical interventions, such as low-stakes practice opportunities, formative feedback, and a supportive classroom climate, to better prepare tourism students for authentic professional communication.

ABSTRAK

Presentasi lisan merupakan salah satu aktivitas pembelajaran inti dalam pendidikan pariwisata karena mensimulasikan tugas profesional yang sesungguhnya, seperti pemanduan wisata, pengarahan tamu hotel, dan promosi destinasi yang disampaikan dalam bahasa Inggris. Namun demikian, banyak mahasiswa pariwisata mengalami kecemasan yang cukup besar ketika harus melakukan presentasi lisan di hadapan audiens, yang berpotensi menghambat performa komunikatif dan kesiapan profesional mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bentuk, sumber, dan strategi mengatasi kecemasan presentasi lisan pada mahasiswa Program Studi Pariwisata ITB STIKOM Ambon. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dengan melibatkan delapan mahasiswa yang dipilih secara purposif dan telah menempuh minimal satu mata kuliah yang mensyaratkan presentasi lisan berbahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semiterstruktur, observasi kelas non-partisipan, dan jurnal reflektif, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan prosedur analisis tematik Braun dan Clarke. Hasil penelitian mengungkap lima tema yang saling berkaitan sebagai penyebab kecemasan mahasiswa, yaitu kecemasan komunikasi, ketakutan akan evaluasi negatif, kecemasan menghadapi penilaian, ketidakpercayaan diri linguistik, serta gejala fisik dan emosional seperti gemetar dan pikiran kosong. Mahasiswa



dilaporkan menerapkan sejumlah strategi mengatasi kecemasan, antara lain latihan berulang, penggunaan catatan bantu, dialog diri positif, dukungan sesama teman, dan pemilihan kontak mata dengan audiens yang dianggap suportif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kecemasan presentasi lisan pada mahasiswa pariwisata merupakan fenomena multidimensional yang tidak hanya berakar pada keterbatasan bahasa, tetapi juga pada faktor sosio-psikologis terkait ketakutan akan penilaian. Temuan ini menyarankan perlunya intervensi pedagogis yang berorientasi pada pengurangan kecemasan, seperti kesempatan berlatih dengan tekanan rendah, umpan balik formatif, dan iklim kelas yang suportif, guna mempersiapkan mahasiswa pariwisata menghadapi komunikasi profesional yang otentik.

1. Introduction

Effective oral communication in English constitutes one of the most critical competencies for tourism graduates, given that the profession routinely demands spontaneous spoken interaction with international guests, whether in tour guiding, front office service, or destination promotion. Within tourism higher education, oral presentation is frequently used as a pedagogical activity to simulate such professional communication, requiring students to deliver structured spoken content in English before their peers and lecturers. Despite its instructional value, oral presentation is also widely recognized as one of the most anxiety-inducing tasks in foreign language learning, since it combines the challenges of second language production with the pressure of public performance and evaluation.

Foreign language anxiety has long been documented as a distinct and pervasive phenomenon that negatively affects learners' willingness to communicate, fluency, and overall performance, particularly in speaking-related tasks that demand real-time language processing in front of an audience. In the context of tourism education, this anxiety may carry heightened consequences, as students who struggle to manage presentation-related anxiety during their studies may later face similar, or even greater, pressure when interacting with real tourists in professional settings. Preliminary classroom observation and informal discussion with English lecturers at ITB STIKOM Ambon indicate that a considerable number of tourism students exhibit visible signs of nervousness, hesitation, and avoidance behavior when assigned oral presentation tasks in English, even though many of them perform reasonably well in written assignments.

While foreign language anxiety has been widely studied in general English learning contexts, empirical accounts specifically addressing oral presentation anxiety among tourism students, particularly within local Indonesian higher education settings such as Ambon,

remain limited. Understanding how tourism students experience, interpret, and cope with this anxiety is essential for designing more supportive and effective English for Tourism instruction. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer three research questions: (1) What forms of anxiety do tourism students at ITB STIKOM Ambon experience during English oral presentations? (2) What factors contribute to this anxiety? and (3) What strategies do students employ to cope with their presentation anxiety?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is conceptualized as a distinct type of situation-specific anxiety arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process, rather than merely a transfer of general trait anxiety. It is commonly described as comprising three interrelated components: communication apprehension, or the fear of communicating with others due to inadequate interpersonal or public speaking skills; test anxiety, referring to apprehension related to academic evaluation and fear of failure; and fear of negative evaluation, which concerns learners' worry about being judged negatively by others, including peers and teachers, based on their language performance. These three components frequently overlap and reinforce one another, particularly in speaking-focused learning activities such as oral presentations.

2.2 Oral Presentation Anxiety

Oral presentation anxiety refers specifically to the apprehension experienced by learners when required to deliver a structured spoken performance before an audience in a foreign language. Unlike everyday conversational speaking, oral presentations typically involve heightened self-consciousness due to formal evaluation, sustained audience attention, and the pressure



to perform without immediate interactional support from a conversational partner. Common manifestations include physiological symptoms such as trembling, rapid heartbeat, and sweating, as well as cognitive symptoms such as memory blocking, difficulty organizing ideas, and excessive self-monitoring, all of which may compromise fluency and coherence during the presentation.

2.3 Anxiety within English for Specific Purposes and Tourism Education

Within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, and particularly in tourism education, oral presentation is often embedded as an authentic task simulating real professional communication, such as delivering tour commentary or promotional pitches. Consequently, anxiety experienced during classroom presentations may be closely tied to learners' anticipated professional identity, as students often perceive presentation performance as a reflection of their future competence as tourism practitioners. Prior research on language anxiety in ESP and vocational settings suggests that limited domain-specific vocabulary, lack of authentic practice opportunities, and high-stakes evaluation contribute significantly to learners' anxiety, underscoring the importance of pedagogical approaches that gradually build learners' confidence through low-pressure, practice-

oriented tasks before high-stakes performance assessments.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design, which is appropriate for exploring a bounded, contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context. The case in this study is bounded by the specific context of English oral presentation activities among tourism students within a single academic institution, allowing for an in-depth, contextualized understanding of the phenomenon rather than broad generalization.

3.2 Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, involving eight active students of the Tourism Study Program at ITB STIKOM Ambon who had completed at least one course requiring English oral presentations and who self-identified as experiencing noticeable anxiety during such tasks. The selection aimed to capture variation in semester level, gender, and prior public speaking exposure, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Code	Semester	Gender	Prior Public Speaking Experience	Self-rated English Level
P1	2th Semester	Female	Limited (classroom only)	Intermediate
P2	2th Semester	Male	Moderate (working area)	Intermediate
P3	6th Semester	Female	Limited (classroom only)	Pre-Intermediate
P4	6th Semester	Female	Moderate (internship)	Intermediate
P5	8th Semester	Female	Considerable (internship)	Upper-Intermediate
P6	8th Semester	Male	Considerable (internship, hotel front office)	Intermediate
P7	4th Semester	Female	Limited (classroom only)	Pre-Intermediate
P8	4th Semester	Female	Limited (classroom only)	Intermediate

All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection, and pseudonymous codes (P1–P8) were used throughout the study to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant to explore their subjective experiences, perceived causes, and coping strategies related to presentation anxiety. Second, non-

participant classroom observation was carried out during scheduled oral presentation sessions to record observable behavioral and physiological indicators of anxiety, such as voice trembling, avoidance of eye contact, and excessive reliance on notes. Third, participants were asked to complete brief reflective journals immediately after their presentations, describing their feelings and thoughts before, during, and after the performance.

3.4 Data Analysis



Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis procedure, comprising: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final analytic narrative. Interview transcripts, observation field notes, and reflective journals were triangulated to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Member checking was conducted with selected participants to

confirm the accuracy of the interpreted themes.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Forms and Sources of Oral Presentation Anxiety

Thematic analysis of the interview, observation, and journal data identified five major themes underlying tourism students' oral presentation anxiety, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Thematic Findings on Sources of Oral Presentation Anxiety

No	Theme	Illustrative Sub-themes / Participant Codes
1	Communication Apprehension	Fear of forgetting words while speaking (P1, P3, P7); difficulty organizing spoken ideas spontaneously (P2, P8)
2	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Worry about being laughed at for mispronunciation (P1, P3, P4, P7); fear of being judged less competent by peers (P2, P5)
3	Test/Performance Anxiety	Excessive worry before graded presentations (P1, P2, P3, P6, P8); physical symptoms before scoring sessions (P4, P7)
4	Linguistic Insecurity	Limited tourism-specific vocabulary (P1, P3, P5, P7); low confidence in grammar accuracy while speaking (P2, P8)
5	Physical and Emotional Symptoms	Trembling hands/voice, rapid heartbeat, sweating (P1, P3, P4, P6, P7); mind going blank (P2, P5, P8)

The most frequently reported theme was fear of negative evaluation, which emerged consistently across interviews and reflective journals. Several participants expressed persistent worry about being ridiculed by classmates for mispronunciation or grammatical inaccuracy, a concern that appeared to intensify their self-consciousness during the presentation itself. This finding resonates with the theoretical proposition that fear of negative evaluation constitutes a central and particularly potent component of foreign language anxiety, as it extends beyond linguistic performance into learners' broader social self-image within the classroom community.

Closely related to this was test or performance anxiety, which participants associated specifically with graded presentation sessions rather than informal speaking practice. Several participants noted that their anxiety diminished considerably during ungraded, low-stakes rehearsal activities but intensified sharply once scoring and formal assessment were introduced, suggesting that the evaluative dimension of oral presentations, rather than public speaking per se, constitutes a significant anxiety trigger among tourism students.

Linguistic insecurity, particularly limited mastery of tourism-specific vocabulary, was also identified as a

contributing factor. Participants reported that uncertainty about appropriate technical terms related to tour guiding, hospitality, or destination description often disrupted their fluency and forced them to pause or code-switch into Indonesian mid-presentation, which in turn heightened their embarrassment and anxiety. Classroom observation corroborated this pattern, as several presenters were seen hesitating noticeably when attempting to describe specific tourism-related concepts in English.

Finally, physical and emotional symptoms, including trembling hands, a shaking voice, rapid heartbeat, and momentary mental blocking, were consistently observed and self-reported, reflecting the well-documented physiological dimension of foreign language anxiety. Several participants described a sensation of their "mind going blank" despite having rehearsed extensively beforehand, indicating that anxiety at the moment of performance may override prior preparation, a pattern consistent with the cognitive interference mechanism frequently discussed in foreign language anxiety research.

4.2 Coping Strategies

Despite experiencing considerable anxiety, participants reported employing a range of coping strategies to manage their nervousness, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Coping Strategies for Oral Presentation Anxiety



No	Coping Strategy	Description
1	Repeated rehearsal / self-practice	Practicing the presentation script repeatedly, often in front of a mirror or with peers before the actual presentation
2	Preparation of notes/cue cards	Relying on written notes or PowerPoint slides as memory aids to reduce fear of forgetting content
3	Positive self-talk and breathing techniques	Silently reassuring oneself and regulating breathing before and during the presentation
4	Peer support and group rehearsal	Practicing together with classmates to gain feedback and build collective confidence
5	Focusing on friendly faces in the audience	Directing eye contact toward supportive classmates rather than the whole audience

Repeated rehearsal emerged as the most commonly reported strategy, with participants describing extensive practice, sometimes in front of a mirror or with close friends, as a means of building familiarity with their material and reducing uncertainty. Reliance on cue cards and slide notes was also widely reported as a way of alleviating the fear of forgetting content, functioning as a psychological safety net during the presentation. Notably, several participants described a strategy of selectively directing their gaze toward friendly or supportive classmates rather than scanning the entire audience, which they perceived as reducing the intensity of perceived evaluative scrutiny.

These findings suggest that while tourism students actively attempt to self-regulate their anxiety, their coping strategies remain largely self-initiated and informal, with limited structured support embedded within the current instructional design. This points to an opportunity for lecturers to formally integrate anxiety-reducing techniques, such as guided rehearsal sessions, peer feedback protocols, and gradual exposure to low-stakes speaking tasks, into the English for Tourism curriculum.

4.3 Pedagogical Implications

The findings collectively suggest that oral presentation anxiety among tourism students is not solely a linguistic deficiency but a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by evaluative pressure, social self-image, and limited authentic practice. This implies that pedagogical interventions should extend beyond vocabulary and grammar instruction to address the affective dimension of language learning. Practical implications include incorporating frequent, low-stakes presentation practice prior to graded assessments, providing constructive rather than purely evaluative feedback, fostering a supportive and non-judgmental classroom climate, and explicitly teaching tourism-specific vocabulary through scaffolded, task-based activities. Such measures may help tourism students build

the confidence necessary to perform effectively not only in academic presentations but also in authentic professional interactions with international tourists.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This case study concludes that oral presentation anxiety among tourism students at ITB STIKOM Ambon manifests through five interrelated dimensions: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test/performance anxiety, linguistic insecurity, and physical-emotional symptoms. These dimensions are mutually reinforcing, with fear of evaluation and linguistic insecurity emerging as particularly salient contributors within this specific institutional and disciplinary context. Students have developed a range of largely self-directed coping strategies, including rehearsal, note reliance, and selective audience engagement, yet these efforts remain informally structured and would benefit from more deliberate pedagogical support.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Tourism Study Program: (1) integrate structured, low-stakes oral practice opportunities throughout the curriculum prior to formally graded presentations; (2) train lecturers to provide formative, constructive feedback that minimizes students' fear of negative evaluation; (3) develop supplementary tourism-specific vocabulary materials to strengthen students' linguistic confidence; and (4) cultivate a classroom culture that normalizes mistakes as part of the learning process. As this study is limited to a single institutional case with a relatively small number of participants, future research is encouraged to employ comparative case studies across multiple tourism institutions or mixed-methods designs to further validate and extend these findings.

References



-
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, 44(2), 283–305.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Öztürk, G., & Gürbüz, N. (2014). Speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners: The case at a state university. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 10(1), 1–17.
- Tsang, A. (2020). Enhancing learners' awareness of oral presentation (delivery) skills in the context of self-regulated learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 21(1), 39–50.
- Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 308–328.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.