# Investigating Pre-service EFL Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Speaking Anxiety during the Shift from Online to Offline Learning in the Post-COVID-19 Era

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#### **Article information Abstract** Article history: The shift from online to offline learning during the post-COVID-19 pandemic Received: 16 Nov 2023 prevents pre-service EFL teachers from producing spontaneous oral Accepted: 26 Aug 2024 utterances due to speaking anxiety. The article aims to determine the Available online: 28 Aug 2024 most preferential strategies that effectively cover speaking anxiety and identify a significant variation among the strategies. To meet such Keywords: objectives, a survey research design was conducted. A Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to 64 pre-service EFL teachers using online Pre-service teacher Overcomina strateav Google Forms. The responses were quantitatively analysed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Tukey post hoc. The findings showed that Speaking anxiety pre-service EFL teachers favoured using cognitive strategies to overcome Online to offline learning Post-covid-19 speaking anxiety. Additional results reveal that cognitive and metacognitive strategies were impactful in reducing anxiety; meanwhile, a combination of compensatory, affective, and social strategies also demonstrates slight effectiveness. Therefore, providing pre-service EFL teachers with training to develop cognitive and metacognitive strategies for coping with speaking anxiety is recommended.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Oral language competence influences pre-service EFL teachers' teaching effectiveness. A high oral language competence enhances their classroom peer-teaching and school-teaching practices. Pre-service EFL teachers with good oral language competence can deliver ideas fluently, explore specific concepts appropriately, explain materials understandably, interact closely with the students, and design fun, communicative, and humorous learning activities (Dewi, 2021; Göncz, 2017; Masuram & Sripada, 2020; Park, 2023; Webster, 2019). Besides, pre-service teachers' oral language competence also improves students' learning outcomes. An effective oral language performed by pre-service EFL teachers avoids misconceptions, assists

discussions in gaining new knowledge, and bridges students' prior understanding to new information (Arboleda et al., 2023; Mardešić, 2023). To assist students in achieving particular learning goals, teachers should have excellent knowledge and practice in linguistics, sociolinguistics, discursive strategies, genres, grammar, lexis, phonetics, and translation (Kösal & Ulum, 2019; Kuzembayeva et al., 2023). Lastly, having good oral language competence meets the teacher's pedagogical competence standard as obligated in Indonesia's constitutional policy (Permendikbud, 2015). Therefore, developing strong oral language competence is essential in pre-service EFL teachers' education.

However, fostering pre-service EFL teachers' oral language competence became challenging because of the COVID-19 cases. The pandemic hindered pre-service EFL teachers from practising teaching directly in a natural school setting, which noticeably lowered their communicative competence (İlerten et al., 2022). The university took various strategies to address the issue, such as restructuring the pre-service EFL teachers' language competence enrichment practices online and using technological advancements in communicative language teaching (An-Nisa et al., 2021; Karatas & Tuncer, 2020). However, the study reveals that technological advancements in online learning during COVID-19 did not always positively impact the pre-service teachers' oral language competence due to a lack of classroom interaction, peer-communication practices, and technical problems (Sayir et al., 2022). The use of Google Translate and Google Assistance during online learning showed effectiveness in increasing pre-service EFL teachers' interest in oral communication classes; on the other hand, it reduced their confidence in speaking in a natural communication setting (Afandi et al., 2023; Hadi & Junor, 2022). The findings indicate that technology is helpful for pre-service EFL teachers' oral communication enhancement, but it also harms their development of spontaneous communication skills.

In a post-pandemic setting, many pre-service EFL teachers developed speaking anxiety in face-to-face communications. The different settings between online and offline classes made it difficult to produce spontaneous talk. The previous findings stated that the academic shift from online to offline led to speaking anxiety (Arifin, 2021; Ilyas et al., 2021; Nikmah & Anwar, 2021; Rachmawati & Purwati, 2021; Sabariyanto, 2021; Wahyuningsih & Maisyanah, 2021). For instance, pre-service EFL teachers now have no time to translate utterances using Google, as they were accustomed to doing so in online learning. This situation increased pre-service EFL teachers' speaking anxiety due to the fear of receiving a negative evaluation. In line with this, some researchers found that fear of negative judgments can also further lead to low communicative competence (Anugrah et al., 2022; Hadi & Junor, 2022; Mahmudi & Mirjam, 2021; Noerilah & Puspitaloka, 2022; Rungsinanont, 2022). Therefore, exploring effective strategies to cope with the issue is highly recommended.

Many researchers analysed strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in a post-COVID-19 setting. Previous research found causal factors and strategies to overcome EFL students' speaking anxiety (Erdiana et al., 2020; Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2020; Kelsen, 2019; Li, 2020; Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017). The generated factors can be manifested internally and externally, while the strategies vary in terms of techniques and media (Akkakoson, 2016; Erdiana et al., 2020; Galante, 2018; Hanifa, 2018; Sutarsyah, 2017). Most of these previous

findings emphasised students' speaking anxiety ranging from high school to university levels. On the other hand, studies about speaking anxiety experienced by pre-service EFL teachers during the shift from online to offline learning in post-COVID-19 pandemic settings were limitedly discussed. Compared to previous research, which mainly discussed various students' strategies to handle speaking anxiety with a limited focus on their effectiveness, this study focuses on analysing the preferable strategies used by pre-service EFL teachers and the effectiveness of their combinations of strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Pre-service EFL teachers**

Pre-service EFL teachers undergo teacher education programs and prepare to become EFL teachers. These individuals are typically enrolled in university or college programs that focus on developing their knowledge and skills in teaching English to non-native speakers (Damnet, 2021). The ability varies from the theory of education, teaching-learning process, students' development, roles of professional teachers, educational psychology, and learning materials; meanwhile, the skills can consist of EFL listening, speaking, reading, writing, linguistics, teaching scenarios, and basic teaching skills (Alvarez et al., 2018; Church, 2009; Hajizadeh, 2013; Kourieos & Evripidou, 2013). They also perform teaching practices to implement educational theories under experienced teachers' supervision. The supervisors would assist them in designing a lesson plan, conducting teaching practices in a natural classroom setting, analysing challenges during the process of teaching-learning, and discussing the solution to teaching obstacles once the teaching practice ends (Azizah & Nurkamto, 2018; Häkkinen et al., 2020; Karataş & Tuncer, 2020). Thus, pre-service EFL teachers must actively engage in knowledge, skills, and practices.

The issue of speaking anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers is intricate and varied, driven by a range of circumstances. A major contributing cause to this fear is the insufficient educational skills and practices carried out by pre-service EFL teachers. This skill deficiency may result in unease when speaking in public, especially in a non-native language. The expectation to excel in a second language can intensify this anxiety, as language learners may experience a sense of powerlessness over the words they generate. Multiple scholars have emphasised a high anxiety among individuals learning a new language who feel they have limited authority over their ability to speak it (Aida, 1994; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Horwitz, 2017; Young, 1990). In addition, pre-service EFL teachers may encounter speaking anxiety due to their apprehension about making errors in front of their colleagues or students. The research conducted by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) emphasises the influence of social evaluation on language anxiety. It suggests that pre-service EFL teachers may feel more anxiety when speaking to respected individuals. This holds particular importance in educational settings, where pre-service EFL teachers may experience the need to exhibit assurance and proficiency in their language under favourable conditions (Aydin, 2016). Although pre-service EFL teachers may have undergone English language teaching preparation programmes, they may still face difficulties with speaking anxiety. This is attributed to a complex interplay of linguistic, social, and psychological factors. This underscores the necessity to thoroughly comprehend the root causes and create specific strategies to assist pre-service EFL teachers in efficiently handling their fear of speaking.

# Pre-service EFL teachers' oral language competence

Developing and training pre-service EFL teachers' oral proficiency during the education program is necessary. Proficiency in oral communication is a fundamental requirement for successfully implementing language instruction and promoting meaningful engagement within the educational setting. Several studies have investigated various facets of oral communication proficiency for pre-service EFL teachers. An area of focus is the possible influence of anxiety on the speaking skills of non-native pre-service EFL teachers (Seraj et al., 2021; Yoon, 2012). A study conducted by Seraj et al. (2021) discovered that anxiety can negatively impact the oral communicative competence of these teachers, potentially impeding their capacity to impart language concepts to their students adequately. This underscores the necessity for interventions to mitigate anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers and improve their proficiency in oral communication. Yoon (2012) conducted a study investigating the impact of anxiety on the oral communicative skills of pre-service EFL teachers. The results indicated that anxiety can reduce fluency, precision, and overall proficiency in oral communication activities. This highlights the need to recognise anxiety as a significant obstacle to improving oral communication skills in pre-service EFL teachers. In addition, the circumstances under which EFL teachers work have been identified as crucial elements impacting oral communication proficiency (Ahmed & Qasem, 2019). Their research emphasised the influence of contextual elements, such as the classroom setting, the student's characteristics, and the institution's support, on the oral communication abilities of pre-service EFL teachers. The findings address the necessity of enriching pre-service EFL teachers with various practices for oral communication. Besides, EFL teacher burnout can negatively impact teachers' oral language skills (Nayernia & Babayan, 2019). This underscores the need to uphold pre-service EFL teachers to bolster their language competency and successful communication in the classroom. Furthermore, the teaching methods and strategies can be influential factors as well (Wulyani et al., 2019). It underscores the importance of establishing supportive teaching environments to alleviate burnout and minimise its negative consequences on language instruction. Hence, tackling burnout among EFL teachers and adopting efficient teaching strategies to enhance pre-service EFL teachers' oral language competence is crucial.

## Pre-service EFL teacher's speaking anxiety

Anxiety is the fear of an adverse action (Bandura, 2018). It negatively responds to the inability to control unpleasant situations (Morony et al., 2013). It forms tension, fear, nervousness, and worry (Horwitz, 2017). Anxiety loosens self-confidence, threatens comfort, and generates difficulties (Roick & Ringeisen, 2017; Tovote et al., 2015). It creates dizziness and tremors when facing unpleasant somatic, psychological, or social situations (Taylor, 1996). Thus, anxiety is the inability to overcome unpleasant events somatically, psychologically, and socially, signed by tension, fear, nervousness, worry, restlessness, dizziness, tremors, loss of self-confidence, and avoidance.

EFL anxiety is the emergence of negative behaviour, self-perception, and self-belief from foreign language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). These negative things include worry, self-consciousness, tension, and agitation from certain stimuli associated with one or more receptive and productive skills in learning a foreign language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). These affective variables cause doubts between self-beliefs and reality, ultimately preventing success in learning a foreign language (Young, 1991). An example of EFL anxiety is EFL speaking anxiety. It is a feeling of shame, marked by the emergence of fear to communicate with people (Horwitz, 2010). It arises along with performing EFL monologues, dialogues, public speaking, and responding to verbal messages from the interlocutor (Young, 1990). People suffering from EFL speaking anxiety get embarrassed, which hinders them from mastering aspects of public speaking (Pertaub et al., 2002). They realise that irrational fear leads to depression, distress, and frustration. They tend to be speechless in class, unmotivated to join various speaking activities and prefer to keep silent (Bekleyen, 2009; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). In conclusion, EFL speaking anxiety is an exceptional affective psychological condition such as worry, tension, and agitation due to self-perception, self-belief, and negative behaviour toward learning EFL speaking.

The EFL speaking anxiety case encountered by pre-service EFL teachers is significantly concerning. Several studies found that anxious feelings arise due to the inability to use appropriate teaching methods, limited experience in teaching speaking, and fear of negative evaluation (Aydin, 2016). Another factor raising such anxiety is inadequate teaching practices and experiences (Li et al., 2023; Tum, 2015). Another finding states that age, years of learning English, teaching experience, and habits of using English as a communicative tool can also generate pre-service teachers' speaking anxiety (Kralova & Tirpakova, 2019). The findings highlight the need for further research into strategies to manage pre-service EFL teachers' speaking anxiety.

# Strategies for coping with speaking anxiety

Strategies for overcoming speaking anxiety can be varied. Previous research finds that affective strategies such as taking a deep breath, self-motivation, positive thinking, and social strategies like avoiding speech in front of others and close situational testing can be preferential (Horwitz, 2001). Other findings mention that strategies for resolving speaking anxiety can be affective, cognitive, metacognitive, social, and compensatory (Akkakoson, 2016; Hanifa, 2018; Sadi & Dastpak, 2017). Affective strategies consist of appreciating individual feelings, thinking positively, self-motivating, taking a deep breath, raising confidence by speaking loudly, and performing particular hand movements to avoid nervousness. Cognitive strategies are about script building and choosing the topic freely, speech training and simulation, vocabulary memorisation, practising word pronunciation, practising oral sentence building, responding to questions, avoiding direct feedback, giving constructive feedback, understanding the speech performance rubrics, and avoiding focusing on grammar and vocabulary correctness, allowing the use of speakers' native language once they cannot remember vocabulary in the target language. Metacognitive strategies include translating speech content, increasing cultural awareness, keeping talk when making mistakes, being aware of the audience, and allocating unlimited time for speech performance. Social strategies include creating an individual-respectful classroom setting, increasing individual engagement in conversation, doing pair speech, avoiding individual speech performance in front of the class, and making close-setting assessments. Compensatory strategies relate to self-practice, listening to music, watching English movies, and taking an English course

## **OBJECTIVES**

The research findings emphasise the need to successfully provide pre-service EFL teachers with various strategies to tackle and overcome speaking anxiety during oral communication practices. Hence, it is imperative for teacher preparation courses to foster the development of oral communication skills and augment the educational encounter of pre-service EFL teachers. The research offers a thorough analysis of the strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers to address speaking anxiety and evaluates the efficacy of the strategies. The research aims are outlined as follows:

- 1. To determine the strategies mainly used by pre-service EFL teachers when encountering speaking anxiety in an offline classroom setting during the new normal Era of post-COVID-19.
- 2. To identify any significant variations among the strategies employed by the pre-service EFL teachers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Research design

The researcher implemented a survey design. The design is preferable for several reasons. Firstly, a survey provides a snapshot of certain situations at a specific time (Creswell, 2012). The particular setting represents the post-COVID-19 era. Secondly, it has also been implemented for various research on EFL speaking anxiety and provides a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and strategies. The survey offers a momentary overview of many participants in a limited setting, such as EFL speakers experiencing anxiety (Quansah et al., 2022). Besides, it provides an opportunity to investigate the incongruity between the EFL teachers' perspectives on the preferential strategy of coping with anxiety under the shift from online to offline speaking. A survey enables research on speaking anxiety in online and offline teaching-learning settings. (Rogowska et al., 2022). Furthermore, a survey offers valuable insights to identify the underlying strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in detail by administering a questionnaire.

# **Participants**

The research population was 76 pre-service EFL teachers. At the same time, the sample comprised 64 individuals, 13 males and 51 females, who were selected using simple random sampling. The sampling technique is preferred because it offers an unbiased and representativeness of the population. It allows for the selection of population members as part of the study, and

the findings at the participant level can be generalised to a large population. However, the technique also offers several areas for improvement, which lead to the study's limitations. Simple random sampling may fail to consider specific characteristics or variances within the community of pre-service EFL teachers, resulting in a potential lack of representation for some subgroups. This constraint is especially significant when considering the issue of speaking anxiety, as the unique experiences and elements that contribute to anxiety levels may differ across pre-service EFL teachers. Moreover, biases may hinder the accurate representation of pre-service EFL teachers' various experiences and viewpoints about their nervousness when speaking. The results obtained from a basic random sample of pre-service EFL teachers may need to accurately reflect the complete population, which could introduce biases in the generalizability of the research findings.

The sample determination follows the Slovin formulae since the population is less than 10,000 and is categorised into small settings. (Adam, 2020). The following Slovin's formulae calculation determined the total samples of 64 respondents:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{76}{1 + 76(0.05)^2} = \frac{76}{1.19} = 64$$

The population number of pre-service EFL learners proposed to be survey respondents (represented by N) is 76 people. The population ranged from 20 to 22 years old and took English bachelor's degree programs at the university level. They had no specific teaching experience except peer-teaching in microteaching classes and school-teaching practices. The participants were joining an EFL teacher training and education program. They also took peer-teaching courses and teaching practices in natural ELF classroom settings. To determine the total of 64 samples (n), the number of populations (N = 76) was divided with the calculation of the total population multiplied by the standard error square (e = 0.05) plus one.

#### Instruments

The researchers gathered the data using five-point Likert questionnaire instruments adapted from Akkakoson (2016). It expands upon earlier reliable tools for managing speaking anxiety, including those created by (Aida, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Horwitz, 1996; Riazi, 2007; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Woodrow, 2006). The instrument combines features from these prior instruments and expands upon their contributions by offering a focused strategy for handling speaking anxiety in pre-service EFL teachers. The tools used in the research showed high levels of dependability, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient achieved, which was 0.87. Regarding validity, the results of items testing were found to be  $r_{obtained}$  ranging from 0.353 to 0.583,  $r_{table}$  = 0.325, n = 37, which indicates the instruments are valid. The instrument consists of 30 statements detailing cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, social, and affective strategies for overcoming anxiety during EFL speaking. The cognition consists of eight items. The affective, metacognitive, and social strategies comprise six statements for each. The compensatory strategy lists four statements. The options for the questionnaire

represent 5 for *always*, 4 for *often*, 3 for *usually*, 2 for *seldom*, and 1 for *never*. The detailed indicators for the questionnaire are presented below, while the statements can be seen in the *appendix*.

Table 1
Strategies for coping with EFL speaking anxiety

Strategies	Indicators	Items number
Affective	Self-motivation	1
	Positive thinking	2
	Specific gestures	3
	Speaking loudly	4
	Deep-breathing	5
	Positive appraisal	6
Cognitive	Pre-performance script building	7
	Focusing on content delivery to grammatical usage	8
	L2 to L1 switching to overcome forgetful utterances	9
	Pre-performance drilling on pronunciation	10
	Contextual grammar drilling	11
	Pre-performance vocabulary memorisation	12
	Time allotment for practice	13
	Pre-performance simulation	14
Metacognitive	Being aware of cultural differences	15
	L2 translation technique	16
	Keep talking even if you make mistakes	17
	Being aware of the audience's mood swing	18
	Unlimited performance-time	19
	Well-prepared material	20
Compensatory	Self-practice on the reading script	21
	Joining English conversation course	22
	Self-regulated learning using an Android application	23
	Self-regulated learning using social media	24
	Self-regulated learning using YouTube	25
	Self-regulated learning using an online website	26
Social	Peer-work performance	27
	Closed speaking performance	28
	Individual closed feedback	29
	Keep laughing while practising	30

# Data collection technique

The data was collected through an online survey platform called Google Forms. Once the survey link was created, it was distributed to the audience via WhatsApp groups and individual phone numbers. Participants had to read and agree to an informed consent form before the survey. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey was conducted in an offline setting during the mid-semester test. Before completing the online survey, the EFL pre-service teachers should perform a face-to-face speech. The performance was assessed as the requirement for passing the speaking course. Due to facing a crucial exam, the respondents prepared and performed the speech seriously. This setting was entirely different from the

previously conducted online teaching-learning process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The topic was given a week before the speaking performance. It was done to allocate the time for speech preparation. Respondents could freely determine strategies for overcoming speaking anxiety that match their learning styles. With such a design, the researcher could collect the best data on preferential strategies before and during the speech performance. Finally, the survey was run immediately after the respondents finished performing their speech.

## Data analysis

The researchers employed descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Tukey post hoc to analyse the data. The analysis utilised SPSS Statistics software version 26. The researchers interpreted the mean scores derived from descriptive statistics to gain an understanding of the most and least preferable sub-strategies under cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and compensatory. The researcher continued with a one-way ANOVA analysis. It was employed to examine the efficacy of strategies in different groups and the presence of substantial variations among the groups. The researcher ended the analysis with the Tukey post hoc test to determine the more efficacious strategies in reducing speaking anxiety than others.

# **FINDINGS**

The most and least preferential strategies to overcome speaking anxiety undertaken by pre-service EFL Teachers

Tables 2 to 6 list the preferential strategies pre-service EFL teachers use. Each table represents different sub-categories under cognitive, compensatory, social, affective, and metacognitive strategies.

Table 2
Preferable cognitive strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

Item no	Cognitive strategies	М	SD
14	Pre-performance simulation	4.28	.79
13	Time allotment for practice	4.20	.72
7	Pre-performance script building	4.06	.75
10	Pre-performance drilling on pronunciation	4.02	.84
12	Pre-performance vocabulary memorisation	4.02	.74
9	L2 to L1 switching to overcome forgetful utterances	3.91	.92
11	Contextual grammar drilling	3.89	.78
8	Focus on content delivery rather than grammatical usage	3.70	.83

M mean, SD standard deviation

Table 2 shows that pre-service EFL teachers mostly used cognitive strategy through pre-performance practices and simulation, with a mean score of 4.28. Furthermore, the mean score of pre-performance drilling on pronunciation and vocabulary remained at about 4.02. Finally, focusing on content delivery rather than grammatical usage was less favourable (mean = 3.70).

Table 3

Preferable compensatory strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

Item no	Compensatory strategies	М	SD	
24	Self-regulated learning using social media	3.95	.76	
25	Self-regulated learning using YouTube	3.89	.82	
23	Self-regulated learning using an Android application	3.87	.74	
21	Self-practice on the reading script	3.84	.88	
26	Self-regulated learning using an online website	3.79	.74	
22	Joining English conversation course	3.47	.91	

M mean. SD standard deviation

Table 3 shows that the most applicable compensatory strategy, with a mean score of 3.95, was self-regulated learning through social media such as TikTok and Instagram. Meanwhile, the less applicable one was joining an English conversation course with a mean score of 3.47.

Table 4
Preferable social strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

Item no	Social strategies	М	SD
27	Peer-work performance	3.89	.87
28	Closed speaking performance	3.88	1.08
30	Individual closed feedback	3.72	.93
29	Laughing while practising	3.62	1.00

M mean, SD standard deviation

Table 4 shows that peer work performance to avoid individual speech and get peer support was a favourable social strategy among respondents, with a mean score of 3.89. Otherwise, laughing once making errors during speaking practices was less favourable, with a mean of 3.62.

Table 5
Preferable affective strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

Item no	Affective strategies	М	SD
1	Self-motivation	4.12	.79
2	Positive thinking	3.95	.90
3	Specific gestures	3.83	.79
6	Positive appraisal	3.82	.96
5	Deep-breathing	3.69	.81
4	Speaking loudly	3.37	.84

M mean, SD standard deviation

Table 5 shows that self-motivation in performing speech well was highlighted as the preferable affective strategy, with a mean score of 4.12. Furthermore, the mean score of acting specific gestures to avoid nervousness and positively reacting to appraisal in the form of a smile and thumbs up reached almost the same as about 3.82. Lastly, speaking loudly to increase self-confidence was less favourable, with a mean score of 3.37.

Table 6
Preferable metacognitive strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

Item no	Metacognitive strategies	М	SD
16	L2 translation technique	4.01	.81
20	Well-prepared material	3.69	.69
18	Audience's mood swing awareness	3.62	.68
15	Cultural difference awareness	3.47	.75
19	Unlimited performance-time	3.47	.78
17	Keep talking once making a mistake	3.30	.88

M mean. SD standard deviation

Table 6 shows that thinking of the L2 sentence translation before uttering ideas was highlighted as the most preferable metacognitive strategy, with a mean score of 4.01. Furthermore, the mean score of giving more attention to L1 and L2 cultural differences and having unlimited performance time to remove metacognitive pressure reached the same at about 3.47. Lastly, keep-talking once making mistakes was less favourable, with a mean score of 3.30.

# The Pre-service EFL Teachers' strategy preference to overcome speaking anxiety

The following table lists the strategies, from the most favourable to the least, to overcome speaking anxiety in the cognitive, compensatory, social, affective, and metacognitive areas.

Table 7
Preferable strategies for overcoming EFL speaking anxiety

			Standard Deviation	95% Confidenc	e Interval for Mean	_	
mean	Deviation	Error	Lower Bound	<b>Upper Bound</b>	Min	Мах	
4.02	.60	.07	3.87	4.16	2.0	5.0	
3.80	.62	.08	3.65	3.96	2.5	5.0	
3.80	.65	.08	3.64	3.96	2.3	5.0	
3.79	.57	.07	3.65	3.94	2.0	5.0	
3.59	.44	.05	3.48	3.70	2.5	4.8	
3.80	.59	.03	3.74	3.87	2.0	5.0	
	4.02 3.80 3.80 3.79 3.59	4.02 .60 3.80 .62 3.80 .65 3.79 .57 3.59 .44	Mean         Standard Deviation         Deviation Error           4.02         .60         .07           3.80         .62         .08           3.80         .65         .08           3.79         .57         .07           3.59         .44         .05	Mean         Deviation         Deviation         Error         Lower Bound           4.02         .60         .07         3.87           3.80         .62         .08         3.65           3.80         .65         .08         3.64           3.79         .57         .07         3.65           3.59         .44         .05         3.48	Mean         Deviation Deviation         Deviation Error         Lower Bound         Upper Bound           4.02         .60         .07         3.87         4.16           3.80         .62         .08         3.65         3.96           3.80         .65         .08         3.64         3.96           3.79         .57         .07         3.65         3.94           3.59         .44         .05         3.48         3.70	mean         Deviation         Period         Lower Bound         Upper Bound         Min           4.02         .60         .07         3.87         4.16         2.0           3.80         .62         .08         3.65         3.96         2.5           3.80         .65         .08         3.64         3.96         2.3           3.79         .57         .07         3.65         3.94         2.0           3.59         .44         .05         3.48         3.70         2.5	

Table 7 shows that cognitive is the most favourable strategy employed by pre-service EFL teachers under a mean of 4.02. Furthermore, compensatory and social strategies reached the same preference in 3.80. Finally, the less preferable ones were affective and metacognitive strategies, with a mean of 3.79 and 3.59 consecutively.

# The difference among pre-service EFL Teachers' strategies to overcome speaking anxiety

A one-way analysis of variance was utilised to determine the similarities and differences between the five preferential strategies. The result of the one-way ANOVA calculation was presented as follows:

Table 8

The result of one-way ANOVA calculation for differences among pre-service EFL teachers' preferential strategies

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.78	4	1.44	4.29	.002
Within Groups	105.94	315	.33		
Total	111.72	319			

df degree of freedom. F average score of categories. Sig ANOVA significance score

Table 8 presents the one-way ANOVA calculation for differences among pre-service EFL teachers' preferential strategies to overcome speaking anxiety. The significant score of ANOVA testing (0.002) was smaller than the alfa value (0.05). The ANOVA testing revealed a substantial difference in the mean scores of affective, cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, and social strategies. This discovery showed statistically significant differences in the efficacy of each strategy in managing the speaking anxiety encountered by pre-service EFL teachers. Therefore, a Tukey post hoc was run to determine the differences. The calculations were displayed as follows:

Table 9
Tukey post hoc test for strategies difference

(I) Strategy	(J) Strategy for	Mean			95% Confidence Inte	
overcoming	overcoming	Difference	Std.		Lower	Upper
speaking anxiety	speaking anxiety	(I-J)	Error	Sig.	Bound	Bound
Cognitive	Affective	.22	.10	.20	06	.50
	Metacognitive	.42*	.10	.00	.14	.71
	Compensatory	.21	.10	.23	07	.49
	Social	.21	.10	.23	07	.49
Compensatory	Affective	.01	.10	1.00	27	.29
	Cognitive	21	.10	.23	49	.07
	Metacognitive	.21	.10	.23	07	.49
	Social	.00	.10	1.00	28	.28
Social	Affective	.01	.10	1.00	27	.29
	Cognitive	21	.10	.23	49	.07
	Metacognitive	.21	.10	.23	07	.49
	Compensatory	.00	.10	1.00	28	.28
Affective	Cognitive	22	.10	.20	50	.06
	Metacognitive	.20	.10	.27	08	.49
	Compensatory	01	.10	1.00	29	.27
	Social	01	.10	1.00	29	.27
Metacognitive	Affective	20	.10	.27	49	.08
-	Cognitive	42 <sup>*</sup>	.10	.00	71	14
	Compensatory	21	.10	.23	49	.07
	Social	21	.10	.23	49	.07

Table 9 shows that there is no significant mean difference in cognitive and affective, cognitive and compensatory, cognitive and social, compensatory and affective, compensatory and metacognitive, compensatory and social, social and affective, social and metacognitive, affective and metacognitive because the alpha value (0.005) was smaller than the significance value (0.20, 0.23, 0.23, 1.00, 0.23, 1.00, 1.00, 1.00, 0.27 respectively). It indicated that a combination of affective, social, and compensatory strategies had no significant effects in reducing pre-service EFL teachers' speaking anxiety. On the other hand, the mean on cognitive and metacognitive

differed significantly since the alpha value (0.005) was greater than the significant score (0.000). It implied that a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies resulted differently in overcoming speaking anxiety.

#### **DISCUSSIONS**

The discussion was divided into three primary analyses to address the research objectives. The subtopic of preferable techniques was employed to ascertain the primary strategies utilised by pre-service EFL teachers in addressing speaking anxiety during the transition from online to offline classes in a post-COVID-19 environment. The subtopic of strategy variations was highlighted to uncover any notable differences in the strategies utilised by the pre-service EFL teachers. The optimal classroom design that minimises anxiety was explained in the outcome.

# Pre-service EFL Teachers' preferential strategy to overcome speaking anxiety

The study revealed that pre-service EFL teachers used cognition as the most favourable strategy for overcoming speaking anxiety. They believed focusing more on pre-performance preparation and simulation would improve their confidence in facing the speech and reduce anxiety. This happened because they had better time allotment to drill pronunciation, correct grammatical errors, and master the content before starting the speech. Compared to metacognitive strategies like preparing for speech schemata and reducing complex thought, cognitive strategies offered practical actions that directly influenced speaking results and reduced speaking anxiety. The finding aligns with previous research recognising cognitive actions resulted better for talk satisfaction and anxiety reduction because they offer a different insight than the metacognition visualisation (Milanrianto et al., 2023; Riazi, 2007). The visualisation technique sometimes hindered talk fluency and led to speaking anxiety due to forgotten talking scripts.

The study results also showed that the cognitive strategy was more preferential than the affective strategy to reduce speaking anxiety. Using cognitive strategies like speech simulation and practising linguistic elements, pre-service EFL teachers could prepare for content mastery and became more ready to face speaking performance. On the other hand, effective strategies like positive self-talk and deep breathing proposed a short-term solution to reduce speaking anxiety. The anxiety problem could still occur later on during the speech due to a lack of content mastery. The finding supported Cheng (2023) and Rita et al. (2018) who stated that individual affective coping might be lost once they forget the talk's content and face unexpected dreadful situations during the talk. Controlling personal negative thoughts by replacing them with positive affirmations before engaging in a talk was influential; however, speaking practices and training help manage anxious feelings better during a talk (Kenoh, 2021; Li, 2020).

Lastly, the study revealed that compensatory was less favourable among all strategies. Compared to cognition, compensatory strategies such as gestures and non-verbal clues factually gave no specific effect to reduce speaking anxiety. The gestures did not help recall information to utter and often disturbed the speaking performance. In addition, verbal clues tended to make

the speaker unfocused in continuing the speech because they led to remembering several words only. The finding is in line with the statement that even if a compensatory strategy is effective, it might lead to disturbance during speaking performance (Hsu, 2009; Liu, 2018; Tee et al., 2022).

## Pre-service EFL teachers' preferential strategical actions for overcoming speaking anxiety

## **Cognitive strategies**

The study found that practising speaking before performance day was highly recommended to reduce speaking anxiety under cognitive strategies. Speaking simulations offered natural speech settings and self-reviewing to improve speaking performance. An earlier initial correction reduced speech errors and mistakes during the performance and increased goal achievement opportunities. The speech content, vocabulary choice, grammatical usage, and pronunciation were well-delivered. This finding aligns with pre-performance simulation positively affects cognitive task accomplishment, the psychological willingness to communicate in an EFL setting. performance quality, and better oral performance due to the inexistence of speaking anxiety (Gramer et al., 2012). The finding also supported Hanifa (2018), who stated that repetitive exercising releases speaking anxiety because it improves speech fluency, accuracy, neutrality, pronunciation appropriateness, intonation mastery, and grammatical usage. On the other hand, the researcher recommended to avoid focusing more on the content than the language. Unclear language usage could lead to misunderstanding of information. The communication could be distracted due to unclear words and grammar settings. Even if the information was delivered successfully, lacking confidence in linguistic features might lead to speaking anxiety arousal along the speech. This finding supported previous studies highlighting the importance of linguistic accuracy in EFL speaking to avoid anxiety (Hien, 2021; Mahmoodzadeh, 2012).

## **Compensatory strategies**

The finding indicated that pre-service EFL teachers favour employing self-regulated learning using social media to overcome speaking anxiety under compensatory strategies. Social media provided practices for conversing with others or even native speakers fluently. This increased the speakers' experience of using English, which also reduced speaking anxiety. Social media enabled users to set self-learning goals, monitor their learning progress, join interactive talks, and receive feedback to improve speaking skills. Practising communication using social media was also preferable to cope with speaking anxiety due to easy access and time flexibility. The finding aligns with utilising social media as self-regulated learning assistance to improve speaking performance (Devi et al., 2020; Gulati et al., 2020; Mahmudah & Ardi, 2020; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

# **Social strategies**

The most preferable social strategy for coping with speaking anxiety employed by pre-service EFL teachers was peer-speaking performance. Classmate support provided comfort during a talk and lower speaking anxiety. Having classroom backing, the speakers had no more fear of

negative evaluation from their classmates. Making errors or mistakes was no longer frightening. Therefore, they can perform their best without any boundaries, including anxiety. This finding aligns with the previous research, which mentions that social support boosts self-confidence and helps decrease speaking anxiety (Domysheva & Kopylova, 2021; Fagsao & Mi-ing, 2021)

# **Affective strategies**

Self-motivation was the most preferred affective strategy recognized by pre-service EFL teachers. Self-motivation here refers to the internal drive to improve English conversation skills. Pre-service EFL teachers could self-motivate by reassuring themselves that everything would be fine, that they could do it, and that they had already shown their best. This positive self-talk helped alleviate anxiety and boosted confidence during speaking activities. It was also crucial for pre-service EFL teachers to remain calm if they made mistakes while speaking. English is not their native language, so errors are expected to be made. This finding aligns with highlighting motivational strategies in English classrooms to avoid anxiety (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Babakhouya, 2019; Chen & Hwang, 2022; Gürbüz & Cabaroğlu, 2021; Kenoh, 2021). Furthermore, acting specific gestures to avoid nervousness and positively reacting to appraisals, such as a smile and thumbs up, also received a relatively high preference. Nonverbal cues like gestures and facial expressions could help individuals manage their anxiety and convey positive emotions during talks. The finding supports previous studies exploring the role of attitudes in English communication (Mulyono, 2019; Ozdemir & Papi, 2022; Syahfutra, 2021; Yanxia, 2017). On the contrary, the finding suggested that pre-service EFL teachers might not consider speaking loudly as an effective strategy for overcoming their speaking anxiety. They might perceive speaking loudly as a forced behaviour that does not align with their communication style. Previous findings emphasise that an individual's willingness leads to speech authenticity, comfort, and less anxiety (Bozkirli, 2019; Khudobina et al., 2019).

## Metacognitive strategies

The data analysis showed that translating from the native language (L1) to the target language (L2) sentences before talk delivery was the most favourable under the metacognitive category. With a translated script, the speaker could easily remember the content of the speech. The translation process unconsciously made the speaker comprehend the speech organization and keywords. When the speaker experienced sudden speaking anxiety due to content forgetfulness, he could quickly try to remember the translated keywords. Besides, the translation strategy could also increase sentence accuracy, decrease grammatical errors, and reduce pausing during the talk. The finding aligns with the previous research mentioning that translating ideas from L1 to L2 allows individuals to plan ideas, organise talks, reduce speaking anxiety, and produce spontaneous talk (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Sparks & Patton, 2013)

# The strategies variation for coping with pre-service EFL Teachers' speaking anxiety

The mean difference among strategies showed different effectiveness levels. No significant difference among compensatory, affective, and social strategies implied that the three strategies combination had no significant impact on pre-service EFL teachers' speaking anxiety. However,

the interaction of cognitive and metacognitive strategies showed different effectiveness in reducing speaking anxiety. This is because cognitive and metacognitive strategies started far before performance. Speakers developed ideas, planned the talk, drafted the scenario, elaborated the content, and practised the script using cognitive and metacognitive strategies before delivering the talk. These pre-performance preparations led pre-service EFL teachers to deliver a talk more fluently, accurately, and less anxious. The finding was in line with the previous research highlighting confidence intervals among strategies for overcoming speaking anxiety differ (Chou, 2018; Han & Tulgar, 2019).

## The design of classroom setting to reduce pre-service EFL Teachers' speaking anxiety



Figure 1 The design of a less anxious classroom setting for pre-service EFL speaking activities

The design of classroom settings to reduce pre-service EFL teachers' speaking anxiety was ordered into six stages. The first phase was motivating pre-service EFL teachers to make mistakes during speaking performance as they are non-native speakers. They were encouraged to think positively about how to perform EFL speaking well. The second phase was pre-teaching vocabulary by memorising and peer-practising new words in contextual topics. Third, pre-teaching grammar was structured by reviewing videos from various learning sources such as social media. The activities included peer practice in a contextual grammar setting. The next stage maps the speaking scenario by elaborating ideas and detailed content. After that, pre-service EFL teachers did pre-performance practising in pairs to familiarise themselves with the content, vocabulary, grammar, and staging. Finally, they should be allowed to translate the unfamiliar vocabulary into their L2 once they find it challenging to explore.

## CONCLUSION

The study examines the efficient utilisation of strategy to decrease speaking anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers. It offers insights into the preferences and efficacy of different strategies. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise certain constraints that could affect the applicability of the results and propose prospective avenues for future investigation. A possible constraint of the study is the potential for response bias. The respondents' preferences for specific strategies may be perceived as socially desirable. This can change the accuracy of the reported preferences for cognitive, compensatory, social, affective, and metacognitive strategies. Subsequent investigations may incorporate other designs, such as observational studies or qualitative interviews, to supplement self-reported information and gain a more comprehensive comprehension of the strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers to alleviate speaking anxiety. Another constraint to take into account is the applicability of the results. The study specifically targeted pre-service EFL teachers, and the findings may not be

entirely relevant to experienced EFL teachers or persons in diverse teaching environments. It is crucial to recognise the potential disparities in the strategies employed by seasoned educators and the distinct obstacles they may encounter in mitigating speaking anxiety. Subsequent investigations could examine the efficacy of the strategies among various levels of teaching expertise and educational settings to increase the applicability of the results. Moreover, although the study emphasises the efficacy of integrating cognitive and metacognitive strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety, it is important to acknowledge that individual variations among pre-service EFL teachers may influence the effectiveness of these strategies. The success of specific strategies may be influenced by factors such as language competency, personality traits, and prior experiences with public speaking. Further investigation may explore the interplay between cognitive and metacognitive techniques and individual variances to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their influence on speaking anxiety. Given these constraints, future research endeavours should also incorporate a variety of methodological approaches, broaden the range of participants to include seasoned EFL teachers, and investigate the impact of individual differences on the efficacy of strategies aimed at mitigating speaking anxiety. By addressing these constraints, we can gain a more thorough understanding of the strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers to relieve speaking anxiety and promote the creation of specific training programmes to improve their ability in managing speaking anxiety.

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## **APPENDIXES**

- 1. I believe that I can perform speaking well
- 2. I believe that making mistakes during speaking performance is mutual
- 3. I move on specific gestures to avoid anxiety during speaking performance
- 4. I speak loudly during speaking performances to avoid anxiety
- 5. I take a deep breath once I have got anxious
- 6. I perform speaking better when audiences show smiley and thumbs up.
- 7. I perform speaking better when I am allowed to prepare a monologue script
- 8. I focus on content delivery more than grammatical accuracy
- 9. I switch to Bahasa Indonesia to express unknown English vocabulary
- 10. I practice words-pronunciation before performing speaking
- 11. I practice speaking using accurate grammar
- 12. I practice memorizing new vocabularies
- 13. I perform speaking better when I have got enough preparation time
- 14. I perform speaking better when I do pre-performance simulation
- 15. I pay attention to cultural differences while speaking
- 16. I translate Indonesian sentences into English before speaking
- 17. I keep delivering speeches even though I realize some errors
- 18. I keep focusing on the audience's boredom during speaking
- 19. I perform speaking better when there is no specific limited duration
- 20. I perform speaking better once the material is well-prepared
- 21. I practice pronunciation independently by reading English texts
- 22. I join an English conversation course to improve my speaking skills
- 23. I practice speaking independently using a specific Android-based mobile application
- 24. I practice speaking independently using social media: Instagram, TikTok, Facebook
- 25. I practice speaking independently using Youtube
- 26. I practice speaking independently using an e-learning website
- 27. I perform speaking better in pairs than alone
- 28. I perform speaking better in a closed setting
- 29. I laugh when making mistakes while speaking
- 30. I prefer to have individual closed feedback for speaking errors