



EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS FOR NEW STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of public speaking skills in various aspects of life, ranging from academic to professional settings. Public speaking not only enhances communication abilities but also builds confidence and leadership skills. Through the analysis of various techniques and strategies, the article provides insights into how to develop public speaking skills, including mastery of content, body language, and audience management. By understanding and applying public speaking skills, individuals can improve their communication effectiveness,

influence others, and open new career opportunities. Research shows that students actively engaged in public speaking tend to achieve higher academic performance and are better prepared to enter the workforce. Therefore, the development of public speaking skills should be a focus in higher education curricula to produce graduates who are competent in facing global challenges.

Keywords: *Public Speaking, Communication, Confidence, Leadership, Speaking Techniques*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is one of the most important communication skills in the academic and professional world. Communication skills are not only a means of communication, but also a way to build self-confidence, to show honesty and to increase one's self-esteem. In a competitive learning environment, students need to be able to communicate ideas and information clearly and persuasively, in classroom presentations and in organizational activities.

Literally, public speaking is a communication technique that involves delivering a message to a group of people to inform, motivate, or entertain. In the context of the student, public speaking is not only the ability to speak in front of the class, but also the ability to work together in group discussions, show projects, and participate in student

organizations. Public speaking is a dynamic and continuous communication process between the speaker and the audience. The term 'public speaking' itself reflects this interaction, with 'public' referring to the audience and 'speaking' to the method of delivering a message, emphasizing the mutual engagement in the process (Nie, 2020). These skills include the effective use of verbal and non-verbal language to capture attention of the audience and presentation of the message clearly. Public speaking is not just a process or action but an art. It is about the communicator's ability to influence the audience through various creative means, such as storytelling, body language, tone of voice, pauses, and visual cues (Rahmayanti et al., 2023).

Public speaking skills, often called Public Speaking, are very important for individuals in the current era. Speaking skills, or what is known as rhetoric, is the art of speaking (Jayanti et al., 2022). In today's communication era, there is a lot of emphasis on communicating clearly and persuasively, and public speaking skills become stronger. As a new student, the challenge of speaking is often one of the vulnerabilities. Fear, intimidation, and insecurity prevent them from expressing their feelings effectively. This fear often comes from different factors such as low self-esteem, negative past experiences and fear of negative public judgment. Public speaking anxiety affects students' performance and personal growth. Many new students feel that they don't have enough public speaking skills, so they avoid these situations. In addition, the tendency to be overly optimistic and have high expectations of yourself can make you feel more anxious.

For example, the lack of public speaking skills among teenagers in the Medan Children's Forum (FAM), which can be seen from the inspiring video on the social media page of the Department of Women's Empowerment, Protection of children and Community Empowerment Medan, proves that the public speaking potential of FAM teenagers is not yet fully exploited. This situation adds to the decrease in self-confidence of teenagers in front of technological evolution. By the way to overcome this problem, a training was organized aimed at maximizing virtual public speaking skills with educational content using the TikTok application.

The methods used in this training are lectures, discussions and demonstrations. The questionnaire is used as a reference for carrying out the activity. The results of the training show that the TikTok application can be used as an alternative to improve public speaking skills, which increases the creativity of FAM teenagers in production. Useful educational content. During the activity, the FAM youth played an active role in

virtual public speaking training. This is evident from the results of the questionnaire, 88% of the participants understand virtual communication techniques. The activity of teenagers is involved on their social networking site TikTok, which uploads useful educational content.

METHOD

1. Design of Research

This research uses a survey-based, quantitative methodology. The goal of the design is to assess and evaluate how different factors affect first-year students' public speaking abilities.

2. Subjects of Research

The research subjects are first-year students enrolled in the English Literature study program at the State University of Medan for the academic year 2024. There were 33 freshman students in the population from which a sample was drawn at random.

3. Data Gathering

A questionnaire intended to measure the following was used to gather data:

- a. Self-Confidence: Students' degree of self-assurance when speaking in front of an audience.
- b. Public Speaking Proficiency: Students' capacity to deliver and communicate in front of a group of people.
- c. Media: New students use media to improve their public speaking abilities.
- d. Fear: The cause of their public speaking fear.
- e. Efforts: What steps may people take to get better at public speaking?

The five questions on the quiz, which uses a Likert scale from 1 to 10, address a variety of speaking abilities, including audience management, body language, pronunciation, and fluency.

It is anticipated that the analysis's findings would shed light on the variables influencing freshmen students' public speaking abilities and provide suggestions for next instructional initiatives. This format will make the article's methods section understandable and comprehensive, giving readers a thorough grasp of the research strategy employed.

RESULT

The result of the article regarding the improvement of public speaking skills in new student show that public speaking training significantly increases the confidence and communication skills of the participants. Through practice and feedback sessions, students feel more prepared to speak in public. The research also emphasized the importance of effective material preparation and delivery techniques, which contributed to their success as speakers. This activity is expected to equip students with the necessary skills to interact in academic and professional environments.

- Question: From 1 – 10 how confident are you in your public speaking skills?

Table 1. Respondents' Answer Based on Scales

SCALE	ANSWER
1-3	5 respondents
4-7	17 respondents
8-10	11 respondents

- Question: What makes you afraid of public speaking?

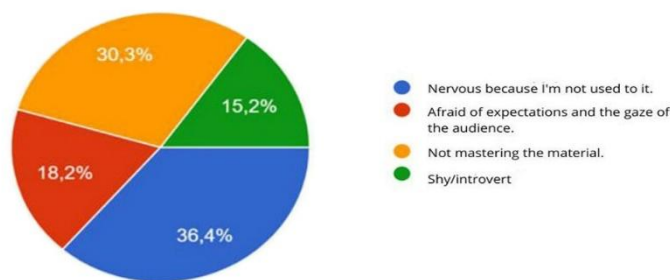


Figure 1. Respondents' Response's Percentages

- Question: What do you think are the best ways to improve public speaking?

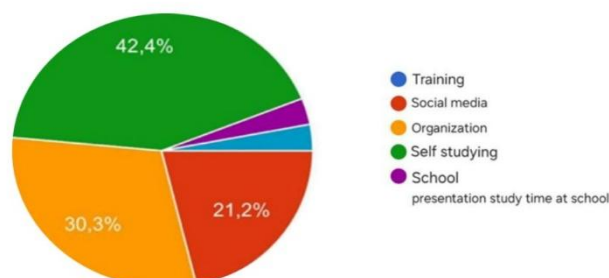


Figure 2. Respondents' Response's Percentages

4. Question: How often did you get the chance to speak in public (class discussions, presentations, etc.) during school?

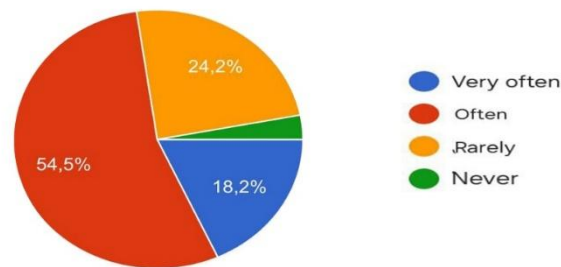


Figure 3. Respondents' Response's Percentages

5. Question: Where did you learn public speaking skills?

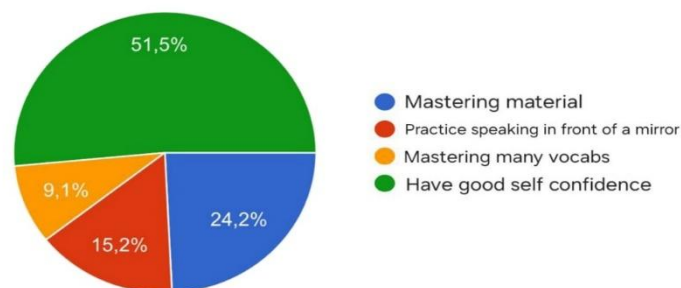


Figure 4. Respondents' Response's Percentages

DISCUSSION

One easy technique to help students become better public speakers is to have them give presentations in class. Public speaking abilities will increase with regular questioning and discussion. (Muliana Vina, 2022).

Mathematics Education students are always known for their inability to process language, both orally and in writing. Students always tend to have numerical intelligence difficulties when faced with linguistics. However, the reality on the ground must always be faced is that public speaking skills are very important to have. Everyone can talk, but only a few are able to mix words into beautiful and attention-grabbing rhetoric listeners (Fathoni, Asfahani, Munazatun, & Setiani, 2021). Furthermore, we have compiled a number of professional viewpoints on how new students might simultaneously and concurrently enhance their public speaking abilities. Experts have recommended the following methods:

1. Becoming an Expert in Presentation Content:

David Setiadi:

Ensure that the content is well-prepared. Examine the message you plan to deliver and jot down the key points you want the audience to take away.”

2. Consistent Practice:

David Setiadi:

Practice is essential for public speaking and presentations, just like it is for other abilities. You will get more comfortable speaking in front of others and more assured in your delivery of the topic the more often you practice. Preparation before public speaking is very important. The function of preparation is to make it easier to organize the conversation and maintain the listener's interest in the speaker's message (Olii, 2008: 24).

3. Observe Body Language and Expressions on Faces:

David Setiadi:

When presenting ideas to an audience, be mindful of your body language. You should be aware that body language and other nonverbal cues have greater weight than words.

4. The STAR Method

- a. *Public Speaking Mastery Book (2013)*: This book describes how communication practitioners need to have two-way communication abilities without excluding the elements of pathos, ethos, and logos in order to successfully undertake public speaking. This includes putting together a presentation utilizing the STARS method (Situation, Task, Steps, Results, Questions).

- b. Employ Proper Humor:

Effective Language Use (20th Century): The art of rhetoric can be applied to the effective use of language, which includes the use of suitable humor to lighten the tone and add interest to a presentation.

- c. Employ a Varying Tonality of Voice:

Aristotle's Rhetorical Theory (350 BC): Aristotle also underlined the need for evidence in speeches made by persuasive speakers, including the use of different voice intonations to highlight key themes.

Everyone, especially new students, can enhance their public speaking abilities and gain greater confidence when presenting content in front of an audience by putting these tried-and-true ideas and techniques to use. There are four techniques in public speaking:

- 1) Self-confidence: The communicator must have a strong foundation of self-confidence to make it easier to master the next technique.
- 2) Vocal technique: has four things that must be considered volume, speed, articulation, and intonation.
- 3) Articulation: the clarity of the communicator in conveying the content of the message.
- 4) Intonation: is the tone of the communicator's speech, which is made interesting so that it sounds exciting to the audience (Zhang, 2020).

The reasons why everyone, especially students, should overcome their nervousness to have the courage to improve their public speaking skills are:

First, This skill helps students to communicate effectively with a diverse audience, including classmates, teachers and professionals in their field. Good communication skills are the key to successfully working together in different teams in the future. Second, Public speaking can increase self-confidence. Students trained in public speaking tend to be more confident in conveying their thoughts and ideas. Third, Public speaking also contributes to lifelong learning. While preparing a presentation, students not only learn more about the topic discussed, but also develop critical and analytical thinking skills. They learn to understand the audience and adapt the message so that it is well received. Fourth, speaking skills can enhance students' personal brands. What they say in public will shape others' perceptions of them, so it's important to have good speaking skills.

In today's information age, where effective communication has become increasingly important, mastery of public speaking skills will provide many benefits to young students. It is therefore important that they actively practice and develop these skills to be competitive in the world of work and succeed in their future career.

CONCLUSION

Summarizes the importance of developing public speaking abilities among incoming students. It highlights that effective communication is crucial for personal and professional success. The article emphasizes various strategies, such as workshops, practice sessions, and feedback mechanisms, that can help students improve their speaking skills. Additionally, it encourages institutions to provide supportive environments where students feel comfortable practicing and gaining confidence. Ultimately, the article calls for ongoing efforts to cultivate these skills, as they are essential for future endeavors.

Additionally, it's important to create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and practicing. With this holistic approach, new students will not only acquire effective public speaking skills but also build communication abilities that will help them adapt and thrive in the professional world. Such efforts will equip them to become effective leaders and skilled communicators in the future.

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