Public Speaking to Grow and Develop Speaking Skills in Elementary School Extracurricular Activities

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Abstract

Purpose: This article aims to describe public speaking to develop speaking skills in linguistic aspects in elementary school extracurricular activities. Exploration public speaking to develop speaking skills in non linguistic aspects in elementary school extracurricular activities.
Methodology: The research design used in this study is descriptive-qualitative and the research was conducted at Elementary School of Muhammadiyah Kottabarat Special Program Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesian. The subjects of the study were the teachers, trainers, and students who participated in public speaking extracurriculars. The data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, while the data analysis techniques used flow models.
Results: The research results indicated that the students' speaking skills in the linguistic aspect were quite good, with upper-class students exhibiting superior language structure and word choice abilities compared to lower-class students. Additionally, the students' speaking skills in non-linguistic aspects had significantly increased due to their participation in extracurricular public speaking activities.
Applications/Originality/Value: In elementary schools, public speaking skill have gaps that can be observed from how students tell stories or make speeches in front of the class. While some students are confident in public speaking, others lack confidence. In order to solve this challenge, the implementation of extracurricular activities that can effectively enhance the speaking skills of students is imperative. The current research delves into the discourse of students' speaking proficiency, particularly in the realm of Public Speaking extracurriculars. A dearth of studies exist on the topic of speaking abilities in extracurricular activities, making this research all the more significant.

Introduction

Public speaking is an important skill that every individual should possess. It helps in developing individual speaking skill. According to (Magdalena et al., 2021), speaking ability refers to the capacity to express and convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions through sentences. It is crucial to enhance public speaking skill from an early age, as per the view of (Widoyoko, 2016), who suggests that speaking skills must be developed since elementary school to improve communication skills. Speaking skills are necessary to articulate ideas, opinions, and exchange information. According to (Burhanudin & Syathori, 2019), verbal communication is essential for human activities. Public Speaking is crucial for achieving life goals. According to (Muste, 2016) The process of communication encompasses both verbal and nonverbal components designed to mediate students and teacher behavior.

The study conducted by (Marfuah, 2017) reveals a significant lack of communication skills among students in Indonesia. Moreover, it is a widely known fact that students seldom receive assignments that require them to make observations or study natural objects and phenomena. Rather, they are often treated as passive recipients of information, leading to a situation where they struggle to express their opinions or participate in discussions, resulting in a limited understanding of the material and suboptimal learning outcomes. (Dipalaya et al., 2016) argue that this is due to an over-reliance on rote learning, which often results in students' abilities being misunderstood as mere memorisation abilities rather than genuine communication skills. However, research conducted by (Sutama et al., 2022) points to a potential solution to this problem. Collaborative learning, particularly in the context of mathematics, has been shown to enhance students' communication skills. This approach fosters a more interactive and cooperative learning environment, which can effectively increase the learning output of students.

Unfortunately, many elementary school students struggle with public speaking, hindering their ability to communicate thoughts and skill. Based on the findings of the preliminary observations conducted, it has come to light that certain students at Elementary School of Muhammadiyah Kottabarat Special Program Surakarta require further improvement in their public speaking skill. The students' speaking abilities exhibit certain gaps that are noteworthy. It is evident from the observations that some students lack the confidence to speak in public, are hesitant to present their ideas and lack the required level of confidence.

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The ability to deliver effective public speeches is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of self-confidence, self-doubt, feelings of shame, fear of being bullied by peers or inadequate knowledge on the subject matter. Moreover, external factors, such as family and environmental conditions, can also make a significant role in shaping individual's public speaking skills. Studies conducted by (Ferina et al., 2020) indicate that students get less attention from their families and surroundings may struggle with public speaking. Similarly, research conducted by (Harahap et al., 2020) highlights that the problem of not being able to communicate effectively can lead to the marginalization of individuals and communities. Hence, it is imperative to address the issue of poor public speaking skills to promote societal progress.

Participation in extracurricular public speaking activities is an effective approach to enhancing students' speaking skills. These supplementary programs, conducted outside regular school hours, play a vital role in educating individual talents and interests. Extracurricular activities are commonly conducted within and outside school premises, aligning with (Mayar et al., 2019) perspective that defines them as programs taking place outside school hours that can be conducted either inside or outside the school environment. The primary objective of incorporating extracurricular activities is to channel students' abilities, enhance their knowledge, and facilitate holistic development.

The topic of public speaking has been extensively researched in the past. The research conducted by (Herbein et al., 2018) in Germany has concluded that public speaking skills are essential to be mastered in elementary school. To address this gap, it is necessary to conduct training programs such as extracurricular activities. Through training, students can improve their speech delivery and refine their non-verbal skills. Similarly, research conducted by (Fazil et al., 2018) in Malaysia has concluded that students from lower-class backgrounds face challenges in communicative activities due to their limited vocabulary. Consequently, such students may struggle to comprehend the instructions provided by their teachers.

Other research related to public speaking. Research results by (Vera, 2022) in South America, concluded that students' speaking abilities can be developed by working on rubrics that allow them to recognize what knowledge they have acquired and learn to achieve the next target. Research results by (Raykov & Martinelli, 2019) in Malta, concluded that the anxiety experienced by students in class was public speaking anxiety. They are anxious when giving a short speech in class and it is possible that they forget to provide information in their speech.

The previous research conducted by (Jayanti et al., 2023) on public speaking in elementary schools as part of extracurricular activities has yielded results that are consistent with the findings of the current study. Based on the observations of the Indonesian extracurricular program aimed at enhancing the quality of public speaking at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah of Muhammadiyah Digdaya Bolon, It was found that students were able to gain valuable experience, skills and knowledge related to speaking. However, some students still require guidance and support to enhance their confidence, articulation, intonation and delivery skills. Specifically, eight students demonstrated good intonation and articulation skills but were not confident enough when reading in front of the class, while four students exhibited confidence, good articulation and intonation but required assistance with writing story texts. Lastly, three students needed intensive guidance to overcome their fear of public speaking, read in a low voice and in a hurried manner, and avoided eye contact with the audience.

Based on this description, there are two research objectives in this article. 1) Describe public speaking to develop speaking skills in linguistic aspects in elementary school extracurricular activities. 2) Exploration public speaking to develop speaking skills in non linguistic aspects in elementary school extracurricular activities.

Methods

Research Approach

The type of research used is Qualitative Research with descriptive methods. Qualitative research is a method used to understand and describe complex phenomena in-depth. It focuses on interpreting and understanding the social context of data, as stated by (Sutama et al., 2019). Meanwhile, according to (Cresswell & Wekke, 2020) Qualitative Research is an approach used to understand the meaning of a phenomenon or experience by exploring data in the form of images, words, and illustrations.

Location and Object

This particular research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Kottabarat Special Program, Surakarta, Central Java. The research subjects were students and teacher of the Muhammadiyah Elementary School Special Program Kottabarat Surakarta who took part in Public Speaking extracurricular activities, the coach of public speaking extracurricular. The focus of this research is on the speaking skills of the participants in the public speaking extracurricular activities.

Collection and Validity Data

In qualitative research, data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. According to (Khadijah, 2018) states that interviews, observation, and documentation methods are commonly used for data collection. Researchers often analyze the public speaking skills of students who participate in extracurricular activities. To analyze students' public speaking abilities, researchers generally conduct observations and interviews. To ensure data validity, researchers often use triangulation of sources and methods. (Creswell, 2020) defines triangulation as the use of two or more research methods, data sources or theoretical approaches in a study to strengthen research findings. Additionally, the flow method (Sutama et al., 2022) is used for data analysis, which involves collecting data, reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The chart below summarizes the data analysis steps (Figure 1).
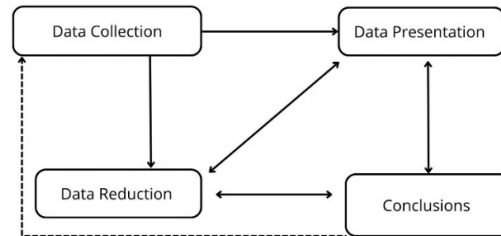

Figure 1. Data Analysis Process

Data reduction is Simplifying data by converting raw data into meaningful information making it easier to draw conclusions. Data Presentation is used to help draw conclusions from the collection of information used. Final data analysis Drawing conclusions. The data that has been compiled is compared with each other to draw conclusions.

Result and Discussion

The results of the research indicate that despite participating in extracurricular public speaking activities, some students still struggle with poor speaking skills, owing to a sense of self-doubt. This finding was derived from an interview with the instructor in charge of extracurricular activities, who reported that students' attitudes towards practicing speeches or storytelling varied widely. Some students required persuasion to come forward, while others felt compelled, and when they spoke in front of others, they would often cover their faces with books or hands. This behavior can be attributed to students' embarrassment in front of their peers, as well as inherent factors that affect their confidence levels.

The results of this research are in line with the opinion (Ferina et al., 2020) that states, two factors can influence students' speaking skills, namely Internal and External Factors. Internal factors include lack of self-confidence, feelings of shame, doubt, fear of being bullied by friends or not mastering the learning material. Apart from that, external factors come from the family and environment, such as students feeling less cared for and not receiving love. Additionally, research (Westgate & Hughes, 2015) states that the low speaking skills of students can occur because of the low level of speaking skills of teachers.

In addition to the lack of self-confidence, there exist other internal factors that impede the development of speaking skills. According to a study conducted by (Wijayanti, 2014), psychological and neurological factors play a significant role in influencing speaking skills. Psychological factors affect speaking fluency, where a child's stable emotional state translates to fluent speech. On the other hand, neurological factors related to the speaking process involve the connection between the cerebellum, mouth, ears, and other body parts. This suggests that students' inability to speak publicly can be attributed to both internal and external factors. While self-confidence is an internal factor, the lack of teachers' expertise in speaking skills can be deemed an external factor.

Assessing students' speaking skills involves examining both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Linguistic aspects include language structure, intonation, tone placement, and tempo. On the other hand, non-linguistic aspects include the student's attitude, movements, gaze towards the speaker, facial expressions, fluency, and loudness of voice (Muna et al., 2019). Research by (Husna, 2020), linguistic factors are diction, accuracy of speech, placement of tone and stress, and accuracy of the target of the conversation. On the other hand, non-linguistic factors include a calm and natural attitude, view of the audience, appropriate expression, loudness of voice, and fluency. (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Speech Activities in Extracurricular Public Speaking

Aspects of Linguistic Speaking Skills in Public Speaking Extracurricular Activities

Based on observations and interviews with teachers and students participating in public speaking extracurricular activities, students in the program experienced significant improvements in their speaking skills, especially linguistically. Evidently, when students read a story or deliver a speech, they employ well-structured language that adheres to the guidelines of the Indonesian language. Generally, high-achieving students surpass their low-achieving counterparts in terms of language structure and word choice.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by extracurricular public speaking trainers, they said that the use of The language structure of students is in accordance with class level, the higher the class, the more in accordance with linguistic rules. However, this does not rule out the possibility that lower-class students with extensive vocabulary and strong grammatical skills have been trained in public speaking for competitions.

The findings of this research align with the study conducted by (Samsul, 2014), which posits that regular practice enables students to become proficient in public speaking in the presence of their peers and under the guidance of their instructors. In case of any errors during the practice process, the teacher is readily available to provide instant feedback and corrective measures. Moreover, the research conducted by (Wati & Utami, 2022) suggests that students who exhibit introverted tendencies and lack confidence in public speaking can benefit from this practice as it helps them overcome their shyness. This implies that consistent practice can enhance students' speaking abilities and help them become more comfortable and confident in expressing their ideas in front of an audience.

Some of the most common forms of public speaking include storytelling, delivering speeches, and hosting events. To become skilled in these areas, students can use storybooks or other reading materials to practice their storytelling skills, while speechs and presentations can be prepared using well-structured scripts.

The findings of the current study are consistent with the research conducted by (Dewanti et al., 2018), Pop-up books have been found to be an effective tool in enhancing children's interest in reading. As stated by (Ahmadi et al., 2018) , Using pop-up book media has proven to be effective in enhacing the learning outcomes of student. Furthermore, (Nupus & Parmiti, 2017), research suggests that the type of learning media used has a significant impact on students' learning outcomes. By utilizing appropriate learning media, educators can improve the quality of learning and facilitate better learning experiences for their students. The research by (Sutama et al., 2020) that Media facilities are necessary to support creativity and innovation in learning, particularly for elementary school students. Media is a tool that can be used as an intermediary in stimulating all aspects of development in good students. The aspects of moral and religious values, physical materials, language, social emotional aspects, cognitive aspects, and artistic aspects are all present. The research by (Tafonao, 2018) also supports the use of teaching aids or media in teacher training and professional development, which can prove to be more effective in improving teacher learning outcomes. Pop-up book media is one such tool that can be utilized in diverse ways to enhance the learning experience.

There exist multiple media forms apart from pop up books that can aid in the development of speaking skills. According to the research conducted by (Karim & Efendi, 2016), the usage of image media can enhance an individual's speaking skills. Furthermore, a study conducted by (Aufa et al., 2020), shows that poster media has been proven effective in improving students' speaking skills, with an increase from 58% to 75%. The research conducted by (Saputro et al., 2023), highlights the importance of teachers utilizing appropriate strategies and effective media to encourage students to practice public speaking skills.

Based on several existing studies, it is evident that the media used by teachers to train students' speaking skills, especially linguistically, are very important. Media that can be used are pictures, posters, scripts, story books or pop up books, etc. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Storytelling Activities in Extracurricular Public Speaking using Storybook Media

Aspects of Non-Linguistic Speaking Skills in Public Speaking Extracurricular Activities

Based on observations and interviews with extracurricular public speaking teachers and trainers, students who participated in this activity experienced significant improvements in their speaking skills, particularly in non-linguistic aspects. This can be seen from the progress of students while participating in these extracurricular activities. There are lower class students who initially didn't want to speak in front at all because they were embarrassed. Ultimately, after participating in this extracurricular activity, they began to feel more comfortable speaking in public, although they still struggled to modulate their voice properly while telling stories. In this extracurricular activity, there are three types of students when speaking. The first is that there are those who are used to using a louder voice volume, there are those who are used to and trained in public speaking and there are also those who still need guidance or practice.

It has been observed that students participating in extracurricular activities often lack self-confidence. Their demeanor reflects this, as some require persuasion before being able to gather the courage to face an audience, while others resort to covering their faces with books or their hands while sharing their stories. However, some students display a certain level of self-assurance, evident in their body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Possessing a confident attitude is crucial when it comes to public speaking, and research conducted by (Kanza, 2016), reveals that self-confidence is defined as the belief that one must persist until they succeed. Furthermore, (Perkins, 2018), highlights how self-confidence is linked to a person's sense of inner peace, success, achievement, and well-being.

The findings of the present study are consistent with the research conducted by (Gardner-Neblett & Iruka, 2015), which suggests that students with lower self-confidence tend to feel nervous and pressured while speaking in public. Similarly, (Maulani et al., 2021) has reported that many students are hesitant to take the initiative due to their fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, the study conducted by (Anjelina & Tarmini, 2022) reveals that students often exhibit non-verbal cues, such as lowered heads and fidgeting with objects, while conversing with others, which indicate their lack of attention and self-esteem. In line with these observations, (Permana, 2015) proposes that teachers can provide positive reinforcement in the form of rewards to encourage students to speak confidently and effectively. This implies that students' lack of self-assurance and performance anxieties often lead to poor communication skills, which can be addressed through appropriate pedagogical interventions.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with extracurricular public speaking teachers and coach, Speaking skills can be assessed by how students appear in front of the class. When telling a story or giving a speech, how do they use language structure and choose good diction, what is their attitude, and how is their volume and intonation. In extracurricular public speaking, teachers give students who are more skilled in public speaking the opportunity to provide assessments to their friends. The study conducted by (Rahmawati & Fatimah, 2015) The assessment of speaking competence is divided into two stages, one for process assessment and the other for outcome assessment. The development of speaking competence can be assessed theoretically using portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment.

Conclusion

Participation in public speaking extracurricular activities can significantly enhance individual's speaking skills in both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Participants familiarize themselves with speaking in public and through a focused scrutiny of language structure and word choice, they gain mastery over these elements, thus improving their overall proficiency in speaking.

The progress made by students participating in such activities is remarkable, particularly in non-linguistic aspects of speaking. Students who were initially reluctant to speak in public, owing to their inherent shyness, have shown significant improvement over time. These activities have instilled in them the confidence to speak up and express themselves better, although they may still struggle with certain aspects such as voice modulation and storytelling.

Acknowledgement

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