
**OPTIMIZING EDUCATION STUDENTS' PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE
TEACHER COMPETENCE**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the improvement of future educators' public speaking skills through training focused on their final results. In the third meeting, there was a significant improvement of 71.32% in the students' public speaking skills after the post-test. This result showed a good improvement from the previous pre-test. Good public speaking skills are very important for future educators, as this will affect their competence in becoming professional teachers. The teacher's ability to explain the material briefly but comprehensively is needed so that students can understand well. This research makes an important contribution in preparing future educators to communicate effectively, avoid difficulties during the learning process, and improve their public speaking skills.

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INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is the art of public speaking where speakers communicate with their audience through oral presentations. The term public speaking consists of two words: public and speaking. Public means crowd, general public, and people, while speaking means to speak. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines public speaking as "the act or skill of speaking to a usually large group of people". Public speaking is the act or skill of speaking to a large group of people.

For students, the ability in public speaking is needed, especially for education students. In the future, 90% of education students will work in the education sector. In the world of education, public speaking skills are very important, especially for teachers. In delivering lessons to students, a teacher is required to have high public speaking skills, because a teacher must convey the material to be taught with language and flow that can be easily understood by students. Public speaking skills cannot only be obtained in one day, but continuous practice is needed so that it can form students who have a high level of confidence, gestures that are easy to understand, and appropriate intonation and mimic in conveying a message.

Medan State University is one of the educational universities in North Sumatra. This university has produced thousands of educational graduates who have filled the education sectors in the North Sumatra region. The problem that is often found at Medan State University is that many students have low public speaking skills. This is obtained from the results of observations that have been made, where most of the education students at Medan State University do not have good public speaking skills, especially many are found in 1st semester education students. 1st semester education students are students who are in their first year of college, usually in this phase someone will

experience many changes in living everyday life, these changes include differences in the nature of education seen from the curriculum, rules, discipline, social relationships with lecturers or colleagues, and certainly changes in learning styles from high school to college. First semester education students are required to be able to quickly adapt to a campus environment that requires someone to be versatile. Public speaking skills in this case have an important role, because it is the main key to being able to "connect" with each other.

Unfortunately, many of the education students are less aware of how important public speaking skills are, some of them consider "trivial" on this one soft skill. Because, some of them think that public speaking is not something that must be learned seriously. Whereas as a prospective teacher, education students are required to have good public speaking skills. Because if not, there will be difficulties in the future to convey subject matter to students. Besides that, many students do not have the confidence to speak in public.

In public speaking sometimes people feel the existence of obstacles or difficulties that are usually caused by stage fright and lack of readiness of a speaker or communicator. So, to achieve the effectiveness of public speaking requires understanding, skills and also preparation as a whole which of course must be learned and experienced directly by the person who wants to do it. Skills in public speaking must of course be supported by self-confidence as one of the elements of personality that plays an important role for the achievement or success of a person in a particular job or profession. Self-confidence is a belief in a person that causes him to be confident in his abilities and skills. Therefore, to train public speaking skills, it is necessary to have a forum such as special training that can form educational students who are skilled and capable in communication aspects.

The provision of special public speaking training at Medan State University is an effective solution to overcome the problems that occur. Where in this training, it will be focused to be applied to 1st semester education students, the implementation of activities is carried out by first recording students who are considered to have low public speaking skills. Furthermore, these students will be formed into two large groups. On the opening day of the training, both groups are required to come to listen to the first direction for the systematics of the training as well as determining the training schedule. In each group, a rotating schedule will be made for each student to be able to speak alternately in front of other groupmates with a predetermined theme. In addition, the training program will also be filled with public speaking materials that will be delivered by trusted people. Thus, training activities will be interspersed with material delivery activities.

Tamelab (2021) stated that in general, communication has a role in all human life activities, both individually, in groups, socially, culturally, politically, economically, religiously, and in relations between nations. In fact, every human being has been accustomed to communicating to fulfill various needs and interests. Humans in everyday life communicate without using certain theories and methods, some of them are even able to communicate very well, so that all the messages they want to convey are easy to understand. Through communication a person can express ideas, ideas, opinions and intentions clearly which makes the listener understand.

Based on research conducted by Rusliyawati, et al, (2022) the reluctance to appear in public is due to low self-confidence, and lack of mastery of public speaking techniques. This inability causes communication that should be effective, to be graded. In fact, there is often a misunderstanding of communication in public. Public speaking has now become a necessity in various ways of life, both for

external communication and internal communication, therefore many people follow some kind of training periodically such as Public Speaking training in various places.

This is in line with research conducted by Selwen (2021). Where it was found that not all students have good public speaking skills, especially educational students.. Many of them actually appear in front of the public to be nervous, afraid, anxious, sweating, shaking, and others. This situation can be avoided through increasing self-confidence. The key to success to be able to have public speaking skills is to increase self-confidence. The phenomenon of low self-confidence is certainly contrary to public speaking skills. Students are valuable assets for the development of a school in carrying out activity programs in a school, for that the ability in the field of public speaking is needed.

Riwayatinationsih, et al, (2022) argue that, in the teaching and learning process, communication is not only important, but how communication can have a good influence on teaching effectiveness will have a good impact on students' attitudes, behavior, mentality and way of thinking in the future. Communication is the art of conveying information (messages, ideas, attitudes) from communicators or news delivery, to change and shape the behavior of communication or news recipients (patterns, attitudes, views, and understanding), managing and understanding the desired together. Therefore, public speaking skills for students, especially educational students, are very necessary.

Every teacher at every level of education is expected to be able to speak skillfully. This skill is an effort to improve the teacher's ability in terms of oral communication in order to communicate in various contexts effectively. Through proficient speaking skills, teachers will be able to express ideas, thoughts, and information in the right way in their teaching and

not cause misunderstanding. Therefore, this research is very important to conduct in order to prepare prospective educators to be better at communicating. Thus, the difficulties faced during the learning process can be avoided.

This research aims to determine the level of public speaking skills of Medan State University education students, besides that this research also aims to increase awareness of the importance of public speaking skills in Medan State University education students and this research is certainly intended to be able to optimize the public speaking skills of Medan State University education students.

RESEARCH METHODS

The location of this research was carried out at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Medan State University. The samples in this research were regular and bilingual science education students for the 2023/2024 academic year at Medan State University. This research design uses descriptive methods. This research aims to optimize the public speaking skills of education students, especially first-level education students, as an effort to increase teacher competency. The data needed in this research is data about students' perceptions regarding their public speaking abilities, as well as the factors that influence them. public speaking skills. There are several data collection techniques used, namely questionnaires, observation, and guided practice methods.

At the first meeting, students had not been given any treatment or guidance. Students try to appear in front of the class to do public speaking as usual when presenting in front of the class. After training themselves to speak publicly in front of the class, students are given a pre-test regarding public speaking skills for prospective teachers. Questionnaires are a data collection technique about

student perceptions and experiences. Questionnaires can be used to collect data about students' perceptions regarding their public speaking abilities, how confident they are in public speaking, and their experience in public speaking situations. The questions in the questionnaire can explore the extent to which students feel confident in speaking in public, the difficulties they experience, and their hopes for improving their public speaking skills. Questionnaires can help identify the needs and challenges faced by students in developing their public speaking skills. This can help in designing appropriate strategies to improve their teacher competency.

The second meeting, in this meeting, students were given guidance, namely by explaining several important points related to public speaking material. After the presentation of the material, students who appeared at the first meeting were asked to appear again by applying the material that had been explained. At the third meeting, the focus was on developing students' public speaking skills. Students were given a post test to see how students' abilities were after being given guidance from the presentation of material about important points in Public Speaking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1. Results of Pre-test and Post-test Questionnaire Optimizing Education Students' Public Speaking Ability as an Effort to Improve Teacher Competency

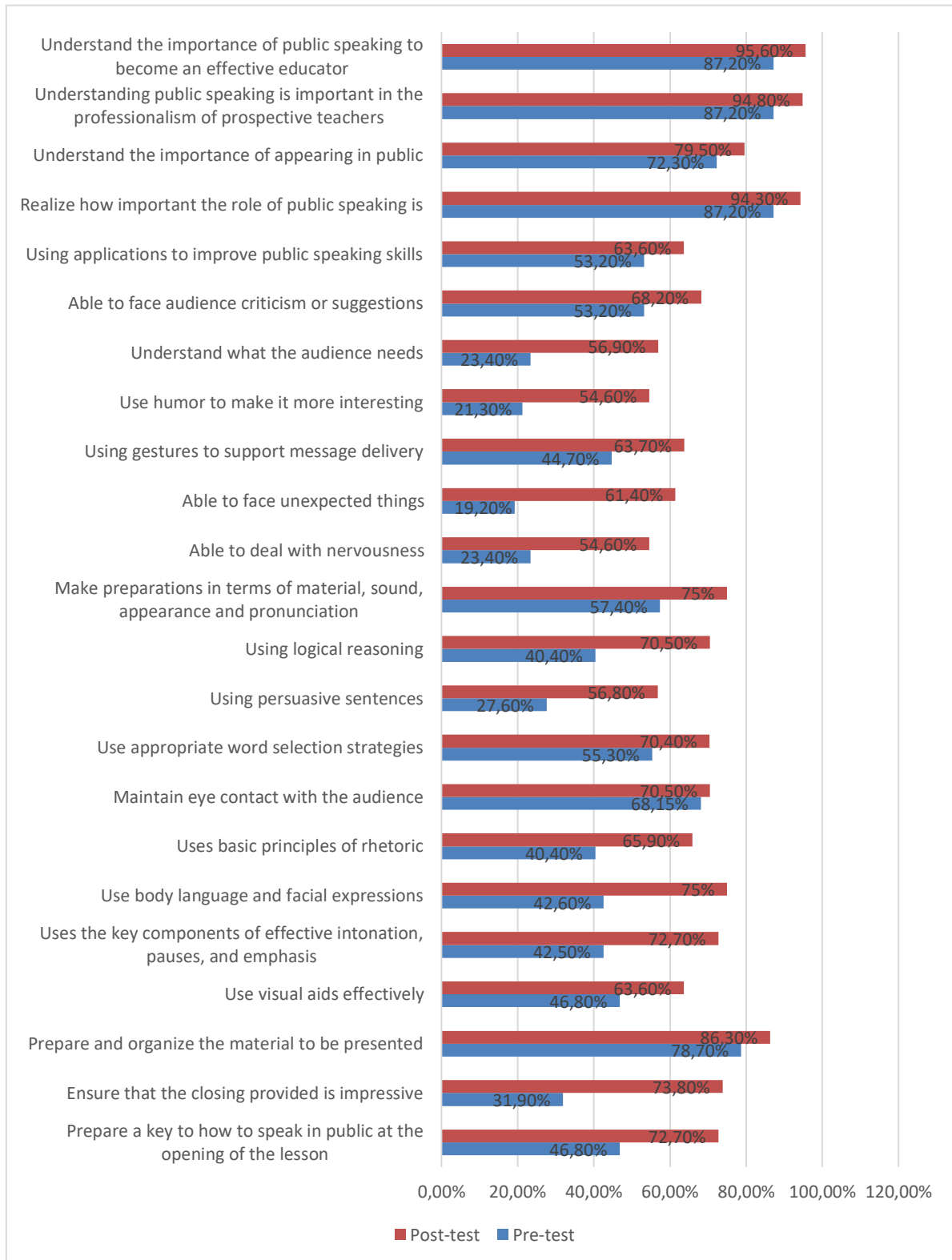


Table 1. Results of the N-Gain Treatment Test in the Experimental Class on the Pretest and Posttest Results of Education Students' Public Speaking Ability as an Effort to Improve Teacher Competency

CLASS	Average Value			Information
	Pre-test	Post-test	N-gain	
Experiment	50.03%	71.32%	0.42	Currently

From the results of the research that has been carried out, each meeting showed significant results. At the first meeting, students had not been given any treatment or guidance. Students try to appear in front of the class to do public speaking as usual when presenting in front of the class. After training themselves to speak publicly in front of the class, students are given a pre-test regarding public speaking skills for prospective teachers. The results of the pre-test showed that around 50% of students responded that public speaking skills for a teacher are very important, especially when presenting material to students. In this exercise without guidance, there were still several students who were found to have poor public speaking skills. This can be seen as students still feeling nervous, not understanding the content of the material to be presented, lacking interaction with the audience such as eye contact, questions and answers and so on.

The second meeting, in this meeting, students were given guidance, namely by explaining several important points related to public speaking material. After being given an explanation of the important points in public speaking, three samples of students were taken to see the development of their public speaking. The results of the research at the second meeting were that there was an increase in public speaking among students after training was provided

with material guidance on public speaking. The development of Public Speaking at this second meeting was visible, where the sample retrained himself to appear in front of the public speaking class and included several important Public Speaking points in it. The aim is that the material presented is easy to understand and can attract the audience to listen more.

At the third meeting, this meeting focused more on the students' final results regarding their public speaking abilities. The results obtained at this meeting can be seen in the post-test that was carried out, there was an increase of 71.32%. This shows that there has been a good improvement if seen in the pre-test that has been carried out. And the public speaking skills that you already have are good, this can be seen in public speaking practice with material guidance.

Public speaking for a prospective teacher is very important. This will also affect the teacher's competence so that the teacher can later become a professional teacher in his work. Students will be able to understand the material presented by the teacher when the teacher can explain the material in a very short way but the content presented can cover all aspects being taught. How teachers encourage students to be active in learning is also one of the public speaking skills that a prospective teacher must have. It is concluded that there has been a good increase in public speaking research for prospective teachers.

CONCLUSION

First year students at Medan State University have an awareness of how important Public Speaking is to become an effective educator. In research conducted, several Medan State University students still have poor public speaking skills. This can be seen from students still feeling nervous, not understanding the content of the material being taught. will be delivered, there is a lack of interaction with the

audience such as eye contact, questions and answers and so on. After being given guidance, namely by explaining the important points in Public Speaking, there is an increase in knowledge among students, it can be seen from the sample who returned to the front by implementing the presentation of the important points from public speaking.

SUGGESTION

As prospective educators, students must continue to practice their public speaking skills because that is very important for a good prospective teacher.

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