

University Students' Difficulties in Public Speaking Skills

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Abstrak

Keterampilan berbicara di depan umum adalah kompetensi yang harus dimiliki siswa yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing untuk sukses di sekolah, pekerjaan, dan kehidupan. Keterampilan berbicara di depan umum yang baik akan memberikan peluang dan kemudahan yang lebih baik bagi siswa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kesulitan yang dihadapi mahasiswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris di MNC University dalam hal keterampilan berbicara di depan umum. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif, untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian digunakan kuesioner menggunakan Google Forms dengan pertanyaan tertutup dan pertanyaan terbuka. Kuesioner akan berisi 16 pertanyaan yang didasarkan pada penelitian sebelumnya mengenai kesulitan dalam keterampilan berbicara di depan umum. Ada 28 responden dari program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris di MNC University, Jakarta -Indonesia, yang berpartisipasi dalam studi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa mengaku mengalami kesulitan dengan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris di depan umum.

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Abstrac

Public speaking skill is the competence that students of English as a Foreign Learner (EFL) should have to be successful in school, work, and life. Good public speaking skills will provide better opportunities and convenience for students. The purpose of this study is to identify the difficulties that students of English education at MNC University encounter when it comes to public speaking skills. This research was conducted using qualitative research, to collect the data for the study, a questionnaire using Google Forms with close-ended questions and open-ended questions was utilized. The questionnaire will contain 16 questions that were based on previous research regarding the difficulties in public speaking skills. There are 28 respondents from the English education study program at MNC University, Jakarta -Indonesia, who participated in the study. The results of the research indicated that most of the students acknowledged having difficulties with English public speaking skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the four macro skills required for efficient communication in any language, especially when speakers are using a foreign language (Herbein et al., 2018). As such, speaking is one of the most important skills for communication in any language. Since English is practically globally spoken, proficiency in speaking English is a goal for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. According to Boonkit (2010), since English is a global language of communication, it is important to improve one's English-speaking abilities. According to previous research, the majority of EFL students set speaking proficiency as a goal when learning new languages (Diaab, 2016).

Nowadays, public speaking skills are important for college, carrier, or even for relationships. Almost in every aspect of our life, we need to communicate, negotiate, argue, and discuss many things. The benefits of effective public speaking are numerous. Good public speaking abilities can boost self-assurance, enhance interpersonal relationships, and open doors for career chances in networking or social situations. For language learners, improving speaking abilities is a fundamental strategy. Herbein (2018) asserts that EFL students who are proficient in public

speaking are better able to communicate their information, thoughts, and opinions. This is in keeping with Al-Tamimi's (2014) research-based conclusion that effective public speaking abilities will lead to more favorable possibilities and convenience. Additionally, students who speak well can offer their thoughts, give explanations, and say anything they need to (Rizakhojaveva, 2022).

Aside from the benefits of public speaking, there are several challenges associated with this talent. When speaking English in public, students often struggle with a lack of confidence, lack of knowledge, low motivation, nervousness, and shyness, among other things. According to Trent (2009) (Boonkit, 2010), students struggle to speak in front of groups because they lack confidence. The issues with public speaking skills include shyness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes (Thao & Nguyet, 2019). In addition, Thao & Nguyet (2019) argued that one of the challenges of public speaking for students is their lack of grammatical understanding.

Based on the discussion above, speaking in public is not easy, this ability has difficulties faced by students of EFL when speaking English in public. However, only a few studies discussed the difficulties of public speaking skills for English higher education students. Hence, this research aims to identify the difficulties in public speaking skills faced by higher students of English education.

2. METHOD

The purpose of this study was to identify students' difficulties in public speaking skills at English Education of MNC University. This research was conducted using qualitative research. Qualitative research is a method for investigating and comprehending the meaning that certain people or groups give to social or human problems, as stated by Creswell (Chih-Pei & Chang, 2017).

A Google Forms questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions was used to gather the data for the study. 16 items on the questionnaire will be based on prior research on the challenges of public speaking abilities. After reviewing previous studies and articles, the researcher concluded that students who struggle with public speaking skills face ten challenges, including anxiety (Thao & Nguyet, 2019; Utami, 2019), fear of making mistakes (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Thao & Nguyet, 2019), lack of confidence (Thao & Nguyet, 2019; Utami, 2019), vocabulary deficits (Ratnasari, 2020; Utami, 2019) and unsupportive environment (Ratnasari, 2020).

The respondents of the research consist of 28 English education students from MNC University Jakarta. The selection of English education students was based on their background in the classroom and informal English learning. They will also employ their public speaking abilities in their future classrooms as aspiring English teachers.

Participants in this study were asked to rate their agreement with several claims about students' difficulties in public speaking skills at MNC University on a metric scale. In this study, four scales—"Strongly Agree," "Agree," "disagree," and "Strongly Disagree"—were employed (Joshi et al., 2015). The metric scales are in the following conditions: 4 represents strong agreements, 3 represents agreement, 2 represents disagreement, and 1 represents strong disagreement.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Totally 28 students majoring in English education at MNC University took part in the study; 82,1% are female participants and 17,9% are male participants. The subject matter concerned their struggles with English-language public speaking. 12 closed-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions were used by the researcher.

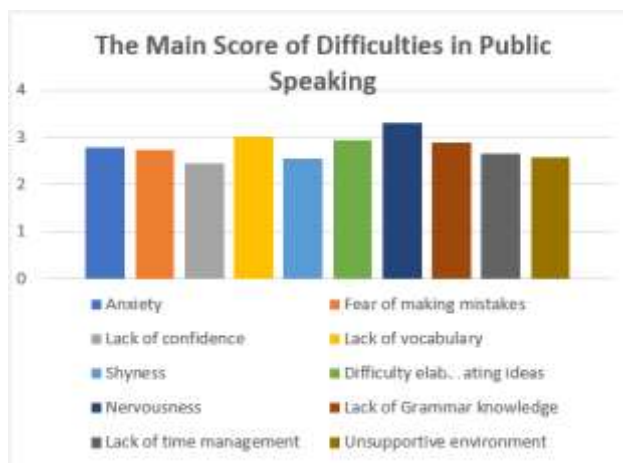


Figure 1. The Main Score of Difficulties in Public Speaking

According to the result of the study instrument, the first difficulty is anxiety, the students strongly agreed with 28,6%, agreed with 28,6%, disagreed with 35,7%, and strongly disagreed with 7,1%. The total average score for this difficulty is 2,79, which indicates most participants agreed that they have anxiety when speaking English in public.

When asked if they were frightened of speaking English incorrectly in front of others, respondents responded in the following order: 32,1% strongly agreed, 35,7% agreed, 28,6% disagreed, and 3,6% highly agreed. The respondents agreed with this assertion, as seen by the aggregate average of 2,72 for this statement.

Furthermore, 21,4% of respondents strongly agreed, 14,3% agreed, 50% disagreed, and 14,3% strongly disagreed with the statement that they never feel completely confident speaking in English. The overall average score for this claim is 2,43, which suggests that while some research participants had no trouble expressing their confidence, the other individuals did.

The next difficulty that faced the respondents is a lack of vocabulary, according to the data collected from the research instrument 39,3% of respondents strongly agreed, 32,1% agreed, 17,9 disagreed, and 10,7% strongly disagreed. The total average score for this difficulty is 3, which indicates that the respondents agreed that they have difficulties in terms of a lack of vocabulary.

In addition, according to responses to the statement that they feel embarrassed to speak English in public (shyness), 25% of respondents strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 39,3% disagreed, and 10,7% strongly agreed. The total average score for this context is 2,64, which indicates the respondents agreed they feel embarrassed when speaking English in public.

Next, according to the responses to the sixth difficulty from the research instrument, 32,1% of respondents strongly agreed, 35,7% agreed, 25% disagreed, and 7,1% strongly disagreed. The total average score for this difficulty is 2,93, which indicates that the respondents agreed that they have difficulty elaborating on ideas when speaking English in public.

Then, according to the research instrument replies to the seventh statement, 42,9% of respondents strongly agreed, 42,9% agreed, 14,3% disagreed, and no one voted strongly disagreed. The total average score for this statement is 3,29, which indicates the respondents agreed that they forgot some words or lines of the speech because of nervousness.

Next, according to the response to the eighth statement from the study instrument, 39,3% of respondents strongly agreed, 17,9% agreed, 35,7% disagreed, and 7,1% strongly disagreed. The total average score for this statement is 2,89, which indicates that the respondents agreed that they have difficulty speaking English in public since they lack grammar knowledge.

Furthermore, according to the responses to the ninth statement about the difficulty in public speaking, 17,9% of respondents strongly agreed, 46,4% agreed, 17,9% disagreed, and 17,9% strongly disagreed. The respondents have difficulty managing time when speaking in public, as seen by their overall average score of 2,64%, which indicated that they agreed with the statement that they have difficulty managing time when speaking in public.

Moreover, in answer to the tenth statement on the difficulty of public speaking, 25% of respondents highly agreed, 28,6% agreed, 25% disagreed, and 21,4% very disagreed that their environment does not encourage them in speaking English. The overall average score for this claim was 2,57, showing that respondents believed that their surroundings do not encourage them to speak English.

The last, according to the research instrument replies to the first open-ended question, "What are the biggest difficulties you still experience when you have to speak English in public speaking?", nervousness and lack of vocabulary are the most difficulties that the respondents have. For the second open-ended question, "How do you overcome the difficulty of speaking English in public?" most respondents reply that they would practice and prepare to overcome their difficulties of speaking English in public. Based on the findings of the research, almost all of the respondents from English education at MNC University agreed that they have difficulties in public speaking.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the research, most of the participants agreed that they have difficulties in public speaking skills by using English. First, the majority of students experience fear while speaking in front of groups in English, according to the research's conclusions regarding the challenges English education students have with public speaking skills. This is in line with Thao & Nguyet (2019) and Utami (2019), who both claim that students' public speaking challenges are caused by anxiousness.

Second, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, most students have a fear of making mistakes when they have to speak English in public. This was in line with Leong & Ahmadi (2017) and Thao & Nguyet (2019), their study stated that students are worried about making mistakes.

Next, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, some of the participants of the research had no difficulty with confidence, however, the other participants experienced these difficulties. This finding was in line with Thao & Nguyet (2019) and Utami (2019), who concluded from their research that one of the difficulties in public speaking is a lack of confidence.

Then, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, most of the students agreed that lack of vocabulary is one of the most difficulties of speaking English in public. This was in line with Ratnasari (2020) and Utami (2019), whose study found that one of the most difficulties students face in public speaking is a lack of vocabulary.

Furthermore, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, shyness is one of the difficulties of public speaking using English faced by the participants. This was in line with Leong & Ahmadi (2017) and Thao & Nguyet (2019), who both concluded from their research that the difficulty faced by students in public speaking is shyness.

Next, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, most of the students agreed that elaborating ideas is difficult when doing public speaking. This was in line with Utami (2019), who found in her study that difficulty in elaborating on ideas is one of the difficulties in public speaking skills.

Additionally, according to the research's findings, one of the biggest challenges that students encounter while public speaking is anxiety. This is particularly true for English education students. This was consistent with Ratnasari's (2020) study, which found that students' public speaking abilities were hindered by anxiety.

Most of the students acknowledged that they lack grammar when speaking English in public, according to the research's conclusions regarding the issues English education students have with public speaking. This was in line with Ratnasari's (2020) assertion that pupils' inability to speak English in public is due to a lack of grammar.

Moreover, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, students have difficulties managing time when they have to speak in public. This was in line with Utami's (2019), the study found that one of the difficulties students face in public speaking is a lack of time management.

Hence, in the context of difficulties in public speaking skills of English education students, based on the findings of the research, students agreed that they have an unsupportive environment in speaking English. This was in line with Ratnasari (2020), who stated in her study that an unsupportive environment is one of the difficulties in public speaking skills faced by students.

4. CONCLUSION

Having good public speaking skills is crucial due to the numerous benefits they offer in college, career, and even relationships. Even though this ability is unquestionably useful, English language learners frequently struggle with speaking with confidence in front of others. The student's problems include worry about making mistakes, lack of self-assurance, a limited vocabulary, shyness, the inability to elaborate on ideas, anxiousness, a lack of grasp of grammar, poor time management, and an unsupportive atmosphere.

The purpose of this research is to identify the difficulties that students of English education at MNC University encounter when it comes to public speaking skills. The results of the research indicated that most of the students acknowledged having difficulties with English public speaking skills.

5. SUGGESTION

The study successfully demonstrated that students struggle to improve their skills in public speaking. However, it is constrained by the small number of participants, who do not fully encapsulate the MNC University English Education students. Future studies should be conducted with a larger sample size, the researcher advises, and other concerns need to be addressed, such as how students might get over their fears of public speaking.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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