

The Students' Confidence in Public Speaking

**Muhammad Patu Diva Abror¹,
Testiana Deni Wijayatiningsih²**
University of Muhammadiyah Semarang
testiana@unimus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Public speaking often presents significant challenges such as nervousness, lack of confidence, and difficulty in conveying ideas clearly. Although frequently perceived as an innate talent, speaking skills can actually be developed through consistent practice and effective strategies. In today's competitive environment, mastering public speaking is crucial for both professional and everyday communication. This research aims to explore practical techniques that help individuals overcome anxiety and boost their confidence in public speaking. A qualitative descriptive method was applied to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions and behaviours. The study involved 10 participants from diverse academic backgrounds who had undergone public speaking training. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a guided questionnaire focusing on preparation techniques, anxiety management strategies, and self-confidence perception. Participants shared their experiences using methods such as power posing, visualization, and daily practice. Findings revealed that consistent preparation, body posture adjustments, and mental rehearsal significantly enhanced their speaking performance and reduced anxiety. Participants also reported feeling more confident and in control after applying these strategies regularly. This study concludes that mastering certain psychological and physical techniques can lead to a noticeable improvement in public speaking abilities, suggesting that public speaking is a skill that can be cultivated by anyone with the right approach.

Keywords: Public Speaking , Anxiety Management, Confidence Building

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is often a challenge for many people. Nervousness, lack of confidence, and difficulty conveying ideas clearly are some of the common obstacles faced. However, speaking skills are not an innate talent, but rather an ability that can be honed with practice and the right strategies. In an increasingly competitive world, the ability to speak well is not only important for public speakers, but also in everyday life, from presentations at school or work to casual conversations. This article will discuss techniques and strategies to improve your speaking skills, so that you can appear more confident and effective in delivering your message. Speaking requires habituation in practicing the language so that the skill will improve autonomously (Mahadewi et al., 2024). Public speaking is a craft that demands both skill and bravery. Beyond just managing nerves, an effective speaker must communicate clearly and simply, ensuring the message is easily grasped in a short time.

One of the main problems that individuals face when speaking in public is excessive nervousness. According to Carnegie (2006), a communication expert, "The fear of public speaking is one of the greatest fears that humans experience." This discomfort often hinders one's ability to speak effectively (Pratiwi et al., 2024). Students' anxiety in public speaking often stems from fear of judgment, mistakes, and rejection, which negatively impacts their pronunciation, intonation, and overall delivery. To address these issues effectively, it is important that educators understand their students' experiences and perspectives (Mulyadi, 2013). Teachers need to know what is exactly happening in their classes, what students are thinking, why they are reacting in the way they do. This understanding allows teachers to create more supportive environments and tailor their approaches to help students overcome their fear of speaking. Therefore, it is important to understand the causes of this nervousness and find ways to overcome it. At its core, public speaking is the ability to communicate effectively in front of others, using language that is appropriate and easy to understand. True mastery involves adapting to different situations and audiences with flexibility and relevance (Singh, 2020). Proficiency in speaking requires a combination of linguistic competence, fundamental speaking skills, and effective communicative approaches, all of which must work together to

produce articulate and purposeful speech. Various studies have been conducted to understand the factors that affect public speaking ability. According to research by Richard A. Lanham (Lanham, 1993), a professor at the University of Maryland, the ability to convey ideas clearly and persuasively is key to being a successful speaker. In his book, "The Electronic Word," Lanham emphasizes the importance of crafting messages in a way that is engaging and easily understood by listeners.

Although much research has been done, there are still many aspects that need to be further explored. For example, little attention has been paid to specific techniques that can help individuals overcome nervousness. More in-depth research on rehearsal methods, such as the use of visualization techniques or practice in front of a mirror, can provide valuable insights for those who want to improve their speaking skills. To fill this gap, this article will introduce some speaking techniques that have been proven effective. One of them is the "power posing" technique, introduced by Amy Cuddy, a professor at Harvard Business School. According to Cuddy, an open and confident posture can boost one's confidence before public speaking. In her research, Cuddy showed that adopting a strong posture for two minutes can increase levels of the hormone testosterone (which is associated with self-confidence) and decrease levels of the hormone cortisol (which is associated with stress).

The purpose of this article is to provide practical guidance for individuals who want to improve their public speaking skills. By identifying useful techniques and explaining how to implement them, readers can expect to feel more confident when speaking in front of an audience. In addition, this article will also discuss the importance of practice and preparation in dealing with public speaking situations. Research shows that individuals who practice regularly have better results in public speaking. According to a study by the University of California (University of California, 2019), individuals who engaged in a six-week speaking training program showed significant improvements in speaking ability and confidence compared to those who did not. This data suggests that consistent and structured practice can lead to noticeable improvements. (Vellayan et al., n.d.) In team-based speaking activities, students obtained the opportunity to boost their self-confidence as they know that they are responsible for their overall team achievement. Early research results suggest that techniques such as breathing exercises, visualization, and mastery of material can help reduce

nervousness and improve speaking performance. A survey conducted by Toastmasters International (Toastmasters International, 2018) noted that 70% of its members reported increased confidence after attending a speaking training session. This shows that with the right approach, anyone can learn to speak more confidently and effectively.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach to determine the extent to which the use of public speaking techniques (such as power posing, visualization, and routine exercises) affects anxiety and confidence in public speaking. This approach was used because it allows researchers to measure variables objectively based on participants' responses through questionnaires (Creswell, 2014).

Research Subjects

The subjects in this study were 30 participants who came from various academic backgrounds and had experience or training in public speaking. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the criteria that participants had experienced anxiety when speaking in public and had applied at least one self-control technique when speaking.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire organized in the form of a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire contained 15 statements divided into four main indicators:

1. Level of anxiety when speaking in public
2. Level of confidence in public speaking
3. Frequency of use of public speaking techniques (power posing, visualization, rehearsal)
4. Perception of the effectiveness of these techniques

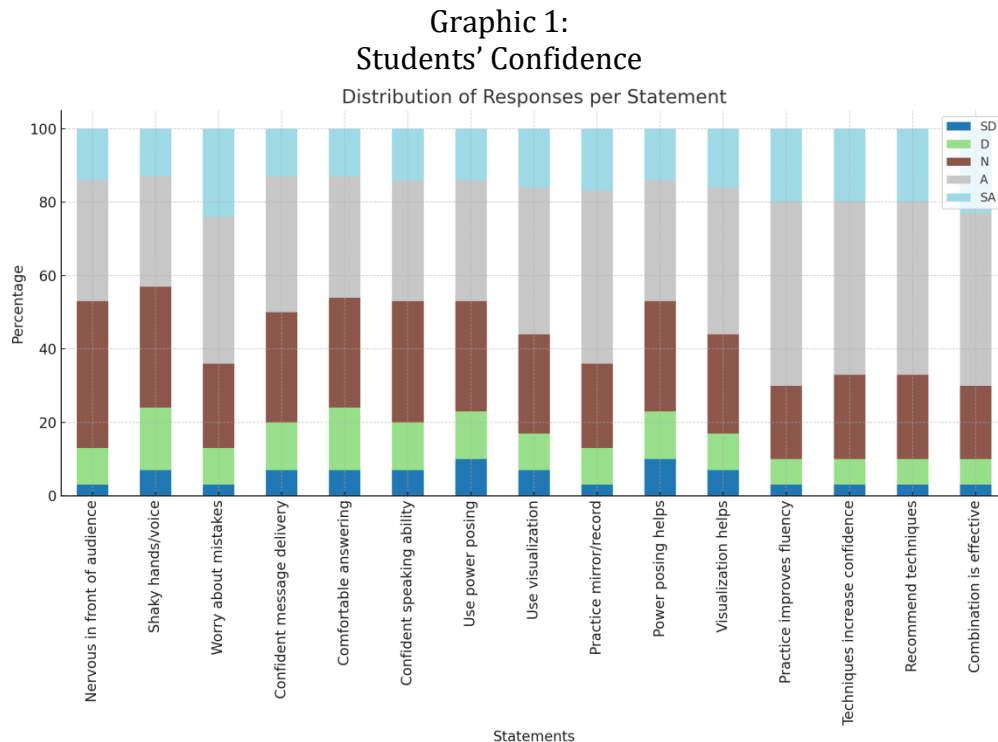
The questionnaire was administered directly and answered independently by the participants. The researcher gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and ensured the confidentiality of participants' personal data.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed descriptively by calculating the number and percentage of each category of answer choices. The results were then

interpreted to describe the general trend in the use of speaking techniques and their impact on participants' self-confidence and anxiety.

FINDINGS



The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the participants' experiences with public speaking, focusing on their levels of anxiety, confidence, and the effectiveness of various techniques they employed. The data, collected from 30 respondents through a structured questionnaire, highlight both the challenges and potential solutions in public speaking.

Anxiety in Public Speaking

A substantial portion of the participants reported experiencing anxiety when speaking in public. Specifically, 73% of respondents indicated feeling nervous or anxious, with 33% agreeing and 14% strongly agreeing that they feel nervous when speaking in front of a large audience. Additionally, 30% agreed and 13% strongly agreed that their hands or voice shake during presentations, further underscoring the physical manifestations of their anxiety. The fear of making mistakes was particularly pronounced, with 40% agreeing and 24% strongly agreeing

that they often worry about errors while speaking publicly. These results demonstrate that anxiety remains a pervasive issue, affecting a majority of individuals in public speaking scenarios.

Confidence Levels

Despite the high levels of anxiety, the data also shed light on participants' confidence in their public speaking abilities. Only 37% agreed and 13% strongly agreed that they are confident in delivering their message clearly to the audience. Similarly, 33% agreed and 13% strongly agreed that they feel comfortable answering questions from the audience, while another 33% agreed and 14% strongly agreed that they are confident in their public speaking abilities. These figures indicate that less than half of the participants feel assured in their skills, suggesting a need for more effective confidence-building strategies.

Usage of Public Speaking Techniques

The study explored the frequency with which participants employed specific techniques to improve their public speaking. Power posing was used regularly by 33% who agreed and 14% who strongly agreed, while visualization techniques were utilized by 40% who agreed and 16% who strongly agreed. The most popular technique was practicing in front of a mirror or recording oneself, with 47% agreeing and 17% strongly agreeing that they engage in this method. These results show that a significant portion of participants (ranging from 47% to 63%) actively use these techniques, with mirror practice being the most prevalent.

Perceived Effectiveness of Techniques

Participants generally viewed the techniques as beneficial for managing anxiety and enhancing confidence. For instance, 33% agreed and 14% strongly agreed that power posing helps reduce their anxiety, while 40% agreed and 16% strongly agreed that visualization makes them mentally prepared. Regular practice was deemed highly effective, with 50% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing that it improves speaking fluency. Furthermore, 47% agreed and 20% strongly agreed that these techniques make them more confident, and a similar percentage (47% agreed and 20% strongly agreed) would recommend these techniques to others. Combining these methods was also seen as effective by 47% who agreed and 23% who

strongly agreed. Overall, 70% to 73% of participants found the techniques beneficial, with regular practice being the most highly regarded.

The findings underscore a clear relationship between the use of specific techniques and improvements in public speaking performance. While anxiety levels remain high among participants, those who actively employ strategies like power posing, visualization, and regular practice report greater confidence and reduced nervousness. The data suggest that these techniques are not only practical but also widely accepted as effective tools for overcoming public speaking challenges. However, the relatively low confidence levels indicate that more intensive or targeted training may be necessary to fully address these issues.

In summary, the study highlights the persistent challenge of anxiety in public speaking but also points to actionable solutions. Techniques such as power posing, visualization, and regular practice are not only frequently used but also perceived as effective by a majority of participants. These results align with the broader goal of the research, which is to identify practical methods for enhancing public speaking skills. The data provide a foundation for future interventions aimed at reducing anxiety and boosting confidence, ultimately empowering individuals to communicate more effectively in public settings.

The findings from this study offer valuable insights into the dynamics of public speaking anxiety and confidence. They reveal that while anxiety is a common hurdle, it can be mitigated through consistent practice and the application of specific techniques. The high perceived effectiveness of these methods suggests that they are viable tools for anyone looking to improve their public speaking abilities. Moving forward, further research could explore how these techniques can be integrated into training programs to maximize their impact and accessibility.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between self-confidence and public speaking skills among students, aligning with previous research on the topic. The data collected from 30 respondents demonstrate that self-confidence plays a pivotal role in students' ability to speak effectively in public, with 96.7% of participants agreeing that

confidence directly impacts their speaking performance. This result is consistent with the study by Nurmallasari et al. (2023), which found that self-confidence significantly influences public speaking abilities, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.005 (< 0.05). Similarly, the research by Ibrahim and Shahabani (2020) highlighted that 87% of students reported increased confidence after participating in public speaking training, further supporting the notion that confidence is a critical factor in public speaking success.

One of the key findings of this study is the high level of anxiety among students when speaking in public, with 73% of respondents admitting to feeling nervous or anxious. This aligns with the research by Pratama (2017), which identified anxiety as a major internal factor affecting students' confidence in public speaking. The fear of making mistakes was particularly pronounced, with 24% of respondents strongly agreeing that they worry about errors while speaking. This finding resonates with the study by Kansil et al. (2022), where 90% of respondents acknowledged that worry about making mistakes negatively impacted their self-confidence. Such anxiety can hinder students' ability to communicate effectively, as noted by Carnegie (2006), who described the fear of public speaking as one of the greatest human fears.

Despite the prevalence of anxiety, the study also found that students who employed specific techniques, such as power posing, visualization, and regular practice, reported higher confidence levels. For instance, 47% of respondents agreed and 17% strongly agreed that practicing in front of a mirror or recording themselves improved their fluency. This mirrors the findings of Cuddy (2012), who demonstrated that adopting confident postures (power posing) could increase testosterone levels and reduce cortisol, thereby boosting confidence. Additionally, the study by Ibrahim and Shahabani (2020) showed that structured public speaking training, including peer evaluations and recorded speeches, significantly enhanced students' confidence and performance. These techniques provide practical strategies for students to manage anxiety and build self-assurance, reinforcing the idea that public speaking skills can be cultivated through deliberate practice.

The role of motivation in public speaking was another critical finding, with 100% of respondents agreeing that motivation to speak

influenced their performance. This aligns with the research by Kansil et al. (2022), which identified motivation as a key driver of speaking skills. Similarly, Pratama (2017) emphasized that internal factors like motivation and behavior significantly affect students' confidence. The current study further revealed that students with high motivation were more likely to engage in regular practice, which in turn improved their speaking abilities. This underscores the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation among students to encourage consistent effort and skill development.

The study also explored the external factors affecting students' confidence, such as audience support and the learning environment. For example, 86.7% of respondents agreed that listeners' support impacted their speaking performance. This finding is supported by the research by Pratama (2017), which highlighted the importance of social and non-social external factors, including audience reactions and the physical setting. Similarly, Ibrahim and Shahabani (2020) found that peer evaluations and a supportive classroom environment were instrumental in boosting students' confidence. These results suggest that creating a positive and encouraging atmosphere is essential for helping students overcome their fear of public speaking.

A notable discrepancy between this study and previous research lies in the perceived effectiveness of certain techniques. While this study found that 70%-73% of participants viewed techniques like power posing and visualization as beneficial, the research by Nurmalasari et al. (2023) reported a higher impact (82.8%) of self-confidence on public speaking abilities. This difference may stem from variations in sample size, cultural context, or the specific training methods employed. Nonetheless, both studies agree that targeted interventions can significantly enhance students' confidence and speaking skills.

The qualitative responses from students provided deeper insights into their experiences. Many respondents cited lack of vocabulary and fear of criticism as barriers to confidence, echoing the findings of Kansil et al. (2022), where 66.7% of students admitted that inability to speak well affected their self-confidence. Additionally, students' strategies for managing nervousness, such as fighting shyness or avoiding eye contact, reflect the diverse coping mechanisms identified in previous research. For instance, Pratama (2017) noted that students often relied on gestures or

notes to mitigate anxiety, while Ibrahim and Shahabani (2020) emphasized the value of mental preparation and positive thinking.

However, despite the use of these coping strategies, students may still struggle to deliver effective speeches. This is partly due to the inherent complexity of speaking itself (Yuniarti & Mulyadi, 2019). Speaking is a complex skill because at least it is concerned with components of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. These interconnected elements demand not only confidence but also linguistic competence, which must be developed through structured practice and feedback. The implications of these findings are significant for educators and curriculum designers. First, integrating public speaking training into language courses can help students build confidence through structured practice and feedback. Second, addressing anxiety through techniques like visualization and power posing can empower students to manage their fears effectively. Third, fostering a supportive learning environment, where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process, can reduce the fear of criticism and encourage participation. Finally, emphasizing the importance of motivation and self-efficacy can inspire students to take ownership of their learning and persist in their efforts to improve.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the existing body of research on the interplay between self-confidence and public speaking skills. The findings highlight the pervasive nature of anxiety among students and the transformative potential of targeted techniques and supportive environments. By addressing both internal and external factors, educators can help students develop the confidence and skills needed to communicate effectively in public settings. Future research could explore the long-term effects of these interventions and their applicability across diverse cultural and educational contexts. Ultimately, the goal is to equip students with the tools they need to thrive as confident and competent public.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of self-confidence and anxiety management in enhancing public speaking skills among students. The findings demonstrate that techniques such as power posing, visualization, and regular practice effectively reduce nervousness and boost

confidence, aligning with prior research. However, despite these strategies, anxiety remains a pervasive challenge, underscoring the need for targeted training and supportive learning environments. The research contributes to the field by validating practical, evidence-based methods for improving public speaking abilities. Future studies could explore cultural and contextual variations to further refine these techniques. Educators are encouraged to integrate such strategies into curricula to empower students as confident communicators.

REFERENCES

- Amelia, D., Afrianto, A., Samanik, S., Suprayogi, S., Pranoto, B. E., & Gulo, I. (2022). Improving public speaking ability through speech. *Journal of Technology and Social for Community Service (JTSCS)*, 3(2), 322–330. Available online at: <https://ejurnal.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/teknoabdimas>
- Karimova, G. I. (2023). Mastering the art of effective speaking and reading: Strategies for improving speaking and reading skills. *International Journal Of Literature And Languages*, 3(10), 32-38. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijll/Volume03Issue10-06>
- Tahir, M., Korompot, C. A., Makassar, U. N., Makassar, U. N., Makassar, U. N., Information, A., & Speaking, P. (2023). *The impact of self- confidence on students ' public speaking ability*. 1(2), 53–57.
- Carnegie, D. (2010). *The quick and easy way to effective speaking*. New York: Dale Carnegie & Associates.
- Cuddy, A. (2012). *Presence: Bringing your boldest self to your biggest challenges*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Lanham, R. A. (2006). *The electronic word: Democracy, technology, and the arts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Toastmasters International. (2021). *the impact of toastmasters on communication skills and confidence*. Retrieved from [Toastmasters International](https://www.toastmastersinternational.org/)
- Silva, A. (2017). *Public speaking for success: Techniques to improve your presentations*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Pendekatan kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan campuran* (Edisi ke-4). SAGE Publications.

Toastmasters International. (2021). *The impact of toastmasters on communication skills and confidence*. Diakses dari
<https://www.toastmasters.org>

Mahadewi, K. J., Rusmana, I. P. E., Amalia, R., Sukadana, D. A. P., Sukmayanti, M. S., & Rama, B. G. A. (2024). Penerapan pembangunan berkelanjutan dalam upaya peningkatan pengelolaan lingkungan. *Jurdimas (Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat) Royal*, 7(3), 493–500.
<https://doi.org/10.33330/jurdimas.v7i3.3123>

Mulyadi, D. (2013). *The effectiveness of multimedia presentation in improving students' speaking skills (student nurse of unimus)*.

Pratiwi, A. E., Budiastuti, R. E., & Setiawan, A. (2024). Students challenges in learning public speaking. *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities*, 18, 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v18i.1225>

Singh, C. K. S. (2020). The use of think pair share of cooperative learning to improve weak students' speaking ability. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(5), 4008–4023.
<https://doi.org/10.37200/ijpr/v24i5/pr2020111>

Vellayan¹, G., Kaur, C., Singh¹, S., Tek², O. E., Yunus³, M., Singh, T., Singh, M., Mulyadi, D., Vellayan, G., Singh, S., Tek, O. E., & Yunus, M. (n.d.). A review of studies on cooperative learning strategy to improve esl students' speaking skills a review of studies on cooperative learning strategy to improve esl students' speaking skill Smy 1 * A Review of Studies on Cooperative Learning Strategy to Improve ESL Students' Speaking Skills-Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt. In *Egyptology* (Vol. 17, Issue 6).

Yuniarti, N. E., & Mulyadi, D. (2019). The effectiveness of edmodo and schoology in teaching speaking. 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.24905/efj.v3i1.60>