Empowering Future Teachers: The Role of Student Organizations in Enhancing Public Speaking and Teaching Skills

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Abstract: Recognizing the pivotal role of teachers in shaping education, extensive research has been conducted to assess their effectiveness. Among the prominent challenges faced by many educators is mastering public speaking, a crucial skill for effective classroom instruction. This study delves into whether participation in student groups can augment aspiring elementary school teachers' public speaking and teaching competencies while emphasizing the significance of public speaking skills within the teaching profession. Employing descriptive qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, the research elucidates the profound impact of public speaking proficiency on teaching effectiveness. The study encompasses four key stages: preparation, implementation, analysis, and reporting. Twelve students participated as respondents, focusing on those actively engaged in group activities. Additionally, six lecturers from the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, knowledgeable about the fundamental skill requirements for aspiring teachers and the program director, served as supplementary subjects. The findings suggest that engagement in student groups can significantly enhance aspiring teachers' public speaking skills, thereby better equipping them for successful careers in education.

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is one of the abilities that function to improve an educator's performance because, in the educational environment, lectures remain a method that is often used (Mahmudah, 2016). Every teacher should have teaching skills as the main preparation for carrying out professional responsibilities. Some of these skills include (1) asking skills, (2) strengthening skills, (3) variation skills, (4) opening and closing lesson skills, (5) class management skills, (6) leading small group discussion skills, (7) explaining skills, and (8) small group and individual teaching skills (Alma, 2010).

An educator must fully understand his role as a teacher so that he can manage communicative interactions between himself (as a communicator) and his students (as communicants) in order to achieve the desired learning goals (Dewi, 2019). This concept shows that theoretical understanding and public speaking skills are fundamental for an educator (Swestin & Primasanti, 2015). A teacher skilled at public speaking will be able to effectively communicate his message to his audience (Maesaroh, 2014). This is because public speaking is a form of verbal communication about a subject or topic that is conveyed to a broad audience with the aim of (1) influencing, (2) inviting, (3) educating, (4) changing opinions, and (5) providing explanations and information to the public in a particular context (Angriadi, 2013). Public speaking is speaking in front of an audience with artistic skills and scientific knowledge of efficient oral communication with listeners (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

However, there are still several problems; findings show that in fourth grade, teachers face difficulties in handling students who have learning difficulties and difficulty in maintaining behavior caused by the teacher's lack of ability to communicate and interact with students (Iskandar, 2019). The inability to communicate will cause fear and panic, causing mental disturbances and creating a feeling of
lack of confidence when speaking (Hasyim & Irwan, 2014). Self-confidence must be built because humans were created as the noblest and best forms of creatures (Zaman, 2021).

Therefore, prospective educators must learn public speaking skills as early as possible (Rahma & Zainuddin, 2023). This is because public speaking is a skill that cannot occur naturally in a person. However, public speaking is a field of knowledge that requires time and effort to master (Wahyudi, 2013). Student organizations benefit college alums in various aspects, such as interaction skills, communication, logical-systematic thinking, public presentations, and management skills, such as planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating (Miftahuddin, 2013).

This research is supported by previous studies showing that by applying public speaking skills, teachers can encourage students to actively learn and maintain concentration so that students can absorb and understand the content of the material provided (Amanudin et al., 2022; Hamzah & Oktavia, 2022). Communication skills can also effectively increase teacher-student interaction (Hattie, 2015). However, it is still found that teachers and prospective teachers feel less able to use speaking skills because they do not have adequate experience (Aktay, 2021). Student organizations can be a supportive environment for training public speaking and teaching skills for prospective teachers (Hébert & Hauf, 2015).

Researchers discovered that the importance of public speaking in bolstering teaching abilities is tremendous; in this instance, student groups are crucial in helping today's aspiring teachers hone their public speaking abilities. This research aims to determine whether there is a role for student organizations in developing public speaking abilities and teaching skills for Elementary School Teacher Education students, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (PGSD FKIP UMS) as prospective educators, as well as to instill an understanding of the public speaking urgency for prospective elementary school teacher.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The descriptive approach reflects an effort to describe a phenomenon, event, or current issue to produce a comprehensive picture of the problem being investigated and open up insights into new information (Jayusman & Shavab, 2020). Qualitative research is a method based on the philosophy of post-positivism. Qualitative research methods are used for research that focuses on the natural conditions of the subject. In addition, qualitative research uses triangulation (combination) as a data collection technique, inductive analysis, or qualitative analysis. The results obtained using qualitative research emphasize the implications of generalization (Sugiyono, 2016). In qualitative research, the data collection does not refer to theory but focuses on facts discovered through field research (Abdussamad, 2021). The steps prepared for this qualitative research can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Research steps](image-url)

The research observed various activities in student organizations to prove that student organizations can develop public speaking skills and support teaching skills. In this study, the researcher applied a purposive method by involving individuals who were deemed to have in-depth knowledge of the desired aspect or were considered to be the party who had the most control over the context so that it could facilitate the researcher in investigating the object or social situation that was the focus of the research. As a result, the resulting data tends to have optimal quality (Sugiyono, 2016). Twelve PGSD FKIP UMS students participated in the research as respondents; this topic focuses on students involved in
groups. "active" refers to students' participation in forum or discussion activities. Six lecturers from the PGSD study program, who know the fundamental skill requirements for aspiring teachers, and the program director are additional subjects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Student Organizations in Developing Public Speaking Skills

Facts in the field reveal that student organization activities can provide benefits in improving public speaking skills. As many as 11 out of 12 PGSD FKIP UMS student respondents said that the organizations they joined had various useful programs or activities to improve their public speaking skills. This is in line with one of the students in an interview who said,

"Almost all activities in the organization that I participate in require the ability called public speaking."

Activities in every organization prove activities related to public speaking. During these meetings, in a meeting forum, there must be discussion activities to solve a problem, which requires members to actively voice their opinions one by one and be able to explain the reasons or the meaning of the opinion. In student organizations, members can develop public speaking skills through committee activities such as those carried out by HMP PGSD UMS in national seminars, ITC competitions, and halaqah. Observations found that the committee's activities required its members to be moderators. The moderator will be selected from members of the organization in turn so that they both gain similar experiences.

As many as 5 out of 6 lecturers and the Head of the PGSD FKIP UMS Study Program also believe that most activities in student organizations help hone speaking skills. According to them, the simplest example is when consulting regarding activity plans with lecturers or heads of study programs; they have to arrange the language as they would have to communicate with those at higher levels. From there, they will get used to adapting how to communicate with someone from various backgrounds according to their level, so that this can improve their speaking skill.

According to the results of observations in the field, there was an activity called the School of Politics, which IMM FKIP UMS organized. This activity has a role in developing public speaking skills because it is carried out by utilizing their knowledge as a peer tutor. This activity certainly fulfills the purpose of public speaking because it conveys the message, influences the audience's perception, and provides entertainment and inspiration for the general public.

The following Table 1 is the findings from the observations of three student organizations at the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variety Studied</th>
<th>The Purpose of Public Speaking</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Invite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National Seminar</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ITC Competition</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Halaqah (Study)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Meeting</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Binsat (Unit Building)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regular Exercise</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MORSE (Motivasi Racana Sore)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship training</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regular Meetings</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Capacity Strengthening Program</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>School of Politics</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Daily Study</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>TPA (Assisted Village)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above proves that in the three organizations, the researchers observed, there were activities related to public speaking. As many as 11 out of 12 PGSD FKIP UMS student respondents said...
that their participation in student organizations can provide benefits for managing anxiety when speaking in front of students, which can help them maximize learning when they carry out teaching practices such as real-work lectures (KKN) activities, field experience practice (PLP), and so on. This is in line with what the student F said:

"Yes, I think student organizations can provide benefits for managing anxiety when speaking in front of students because the organization made me used to speaking in public and facing different people, so from this experience, I became accustomed to dealing with different students, too."

They emphasized that by becoming student organization activists, they became accustomed to dealing with many people with different backgrounds, which they could implement when they spoke in front of students so that whatever the conditions, they were able to adapt and be able to convey what they should convey in various places and conditions.

The Role of Organizations in Developing Teaching Skills

Not only does it help everyone to develop public speaking skills, but findings in the field prove that there are activities in student organizations that can develop teaching skills. As many as 11 out of 12 students revealed that some activities require members to be skilled in teaching in the student organizations they join. This is in line with what student D said in the interview,

"...that there are several activities in student organizations that I participate in where the activity is teaching at school, so activities like that can certainly be useful for me as a prospective teacher."

From interviews and observations conducted by researchers, it was found that there were service activities for the assisted villages organized by IMM FKIP UMS, where each member was obliged to dedicate themselves to becoming educators for the surrounding community, especially children in the villages they fostered. One form of activity was a garden. Al-Qur'an Education (TPA).

Table 2. Observation results on aspects of teaching skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variety Studied</th>
<th>Teaching Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National Seminar</td>
<td>Questioning √ Provide Reinforcement √ Creating Stimulus √ Explaining (Opening and Closing Lesson) √ Guiding Discussion √ Guiding Class management √ Group and Individual teaching √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ITC Competition</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Holaqoh (Study)</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Meeting</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Binsat (Unit Building)</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regular Exercise</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MORSE (Motivasi Racana Sore)</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>TPA (Assisted Village)</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As a result of observations at the Racana Ahmad Dahlan UMS organization, there is an activity called Bina Unit (Binsat). This activity is a form of collaboration with several educational institutions that requires its members to complete learning at the collaborating institutions. Before each member of the organization undertakes learning at an institution, they first receive training regarding teaching according to the level they will teach in elementary to high school. This is what makes members of student organizations superior in preparing themselves to become professional educators compared to students who do not join student organizations.
IMM FKIP and Racana Ahmad Dahlan UMS organize activities that satisfy all aspects of teaching skills, such as asking questions to get the audience’s attention, giving the audience information or feedback about responses or responses given as encouragement or correction, and providing ice-breaking when the audience looks bored, attracting the audience’s attention at the beginning of the activity and drawing conclusions at the end of the activity, refocusing attention with spontaneous questions when the audience has started to get noisy themselves, actively asking questions and giving directions to each group, and building good interpersonal relationships within the group. Teaching in small groups and individually. Table 2 is a table of observation results regarding student organization activities related to teaching skills:

The table 2 proves that the researchers observed activities related to teaching skills in the three organizations. As many as 11 out of 12 student respondents revealed that with activities in student organizations that can train teaching skills, they become more confident, think critically, and create a teaching atmosphere that is not boring for students. So, they rarely experience difficulties when conveying information to students because they are used to carrying out teaching practices. This is in line with what student G said in the interview:

"I often feel that there is no difficulty in conveying material to students when carrying out teaching practices such as PLP or KKN because I think I am used to being in a student organization handling lots of people and supported by activities as a peer tutor or educator in an institution that collaborates with the organization I follow."

The Urgency of Public Speaking for Prospective Elementary School Educators

Based on interviews, all respondents said that public speaking was important for prospective elementary school teachers to master. Communication skills in front of students can support the success of the learning process in class. This aligns with what student H said regarding the importance of public speaking for prospective elementary school teachers.

"Educators should be required to convey material, especially to pupils or students, so if the teacher does not have good public speaking, then the teacher cannot convey the message efficiently, which causes students to feel a lack of understanding."

All students in interviews said that in carrying out teaching practice, they still chose to use the lecture method when delivering material to students. They also said they often use spoken language to restore students’ enthusiasm when their interest in learning is low, such as by giving motivational words, quotes, ice-breaking, and making songs that suit the material.

All PGSD FKIP UMS academics also said this: the delivery of material is essential in the eyes of elementary school students, and the communication that is easiest for students to understand is verbal. This is in line with what the Head of the PGSD FKIP UMS Study Program said in an interview:

"If a teacher or prospective teacher does not have speaking skills, then the students who will become teachers will, of course, not be able to convey information, even though this is the most essential thing. Because in the eyes of elementary school students or the understanding of elementary school students, the most accessible communication for them is verbal communication."

In interviews, all PGSD FKIP UMS academics also emphasized that the urgency of public speaking is needed when teaching in class and communicating with the parents of students with different backgrounds. Then, a teacher must also be able to be a role model and actively contribute to a school committee; communication skills will also be helpful when exchanging opinions or discussing with colleagues or superiors so that later what is conveyed can be well received and not cause misunderstandings.

In order to support success in teaching, the PGSD FKIP UMS academics revealed that there are public speaking criteria that prospective educators must understand and learn, including (1) language etiquette, (2) gestures, and (3) speaking techniques.
Discussion

The role of student organizations in honing the public speaking and teaching skills of PGSD FKIP UMS students was stated by PGSD FKIP UMS students in interviews. They realized that in the teaching process, public speaking, or the art of communicating, is essential for an educator because teaching activities are almost all in the form of explanations through verbal communication. For the student-teachers, one of the most crucial lessons was the need for interpersonal and communication skills in obtaining outcomes from upper management and other authority figures (Goh et al., 2013).

They emphasized in interviews that their participation in student organizations can provide benefits for managing anxiety when speaking in front of students, which can help them maximize the learning process when they carry out teaching practice. They said that with various activities in student organizations, they became more confident and accustomed to dealing with many people with different backgrounds, which they could implement when speaking in front of students. Because self-confidence is often considered the key to a person’s success, people with good self-confidence will quickly adapt to any environment (Khoriroh, 2018). Competencies that can be developed through student organizations include pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence, and one of the implications is an increase in high self-confidence (Saputra et al., 2019).

With verbal communication, it will be easier for students to understand information when the teacher provides an explanation or reinforcement. Apart from that, verbal communication is also needed in building learning situations so that students’ attention can be focused when guiding a discussion or providing stimulus for students, usually in quotes, motivational sentences, or icebreakers. Teachers have roles as facilitators, motivators, demonstrators, mediators, and evaluators (Minsih & Galih, 2018).

One teaching process includes generating student learning motivation, so appropriate communication methods are needed to build student learning motivation (Ngatinah & Purnami, 2019). If teachers do not have the skills to create good communication skills, students will feel bored, and they will not be able to participate in learning well, making students feel incomprehensible. This is a fatal thing.

Apart from communicating with students, a teacher must also be able to communicate with the parents of students with different backgrounds. Then, a teacher must also be able to be a role model and actively contribute to a school committee, communication skills will also be helpful when exchanging opinions or discussing with colleagues or superiors so that later what is presented can be well received and does not trigger misunderstandings. There are three centers of education: the family (home), educational institutions, and society, as Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasizes. The three have a complementary and interrelated relationship (Daulay, 2016).

In interviews with PGSD FKIP UMS academics, it was revealed that to support success in the teaching process, there are public speaking criteria that prospective educators must understand and learn, the first of which is in terms of language. Teachers must use children’s language and understand the language development of the children. Students can understand the information easily once teachers have mastered how students develop in terms of language. That is why a teacher or prospective teacher must master good speaking skills, be polite, and adapt to the student’s educational levels according to their age (Rahmawati & Rudiyanji, 2019).

Next is gesture because talking to children differs from talking to fellow students. Because the height of the students is not as high as that of the teacher, the speaking gestures that teachers should pay attention to are as low as the height of children in elementary school and supported by fun facial expressions. Teacher gestures are essentially a form of communication that can express the teacher’s statements in non-verbal form but can convey messages, replace words, and be conveyed simultaneously with the pronunciation of the words (Putra, 2016).

Next is the speaking technique. Speaking technique is how the teacher processes sound, information, volume, intonation, word emphasis, and articulation so that students can listen well and that the information they receive is really what the teacher wants. There is a statement that "... Almost any aspect of our voice can be readily shaped, adapted, developed, and modified," which means that all aspects of our voice can be processed, adjusted, improved, and changed relatively quickly (Nowak, 2011).
In evaluating these findings, it should be acknowledged that this study has several limitations. Limitations of this research include the lack of research coverage of the subject, which only consists of students or lecturers from the PGSD study program. In this context, future research could expand the scope of respondents and involve more educational institutions to obtain more general and widely applicable results.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that student organization activities significantly improve public speaking and teaching skills. For instance, national seminars, ITC competitions, and leadership meetings have been found to develop teaching skills. The urgency of public speaking for prospective elementary school educators is also emphasized, as good communication skills are essential for the success of the learning process in the classroom. The study highlights the importance of verbal communication in conveying information and building learning situations and the need for teachers to communicate effectively with students and parents from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the discussion emphasizes the significance of language etiquette, gestures, and speaking techniques as essential criteria for prospective educators to understand and learn. Overall, the findings underscore the valuable role of student organizations in equipping students with the necessary skills for their future roles as educators.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES


