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## **Enhancing Students' Self-Confidence and Communication Skills through English Public Speaking Training**

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### **Abstract**

This community service program (Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat / PKM) was designed to improve students' self-confidence and communication skills through English public speaking training at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Darunnajah Trenggalek. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data revealed that the training had a favorable impact on students' self-confidence (77.5%) and communication skills (72.9%), both of which were classified as high to moderately high. The program's impact and sustainability acknowledged the highest score (85.4%), demonstrating robust acceptance and perceived significance among students. Qualitative findings from observations and interviews strengthened these results, representing improved student involvement, lessened speaking anxiety, and a heightened willingness to engage in English public speaking training. Nevertheless, certain technical language aspects, particularly pronunciation, continued to pose challenges, emphasizing the need for constant, systematic training. In summary, the findings demonstrate that English public speaking training is an effective community service intervention for enhancing students' affective and communicative skills, with significant potential for continued implementation in madrasah contexts.

**Keywords: English public speaking; self-confidence; communication competence; community service program**

### **Abstrak**

Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan kompetensi komunikasi verbal siswa melalui pelatihan Bahasa Inggris di Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Darunnajah Trenggalek. Kegiatan ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran dengan mengombinasikan angket survei, observasi selama pelatihan, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Hasil survei menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan memberikan dampak positif terhadap kepercayaan diri siswa dengan skor 77,5% (kategori tinggi) dan kompetensi komunikasi sebesar 72,9% (kategori cukup tinggi). Aspek dampak dan keberlanjutan program memperoleh skor tertinggi sebesar 85,4%, yang mengindikasikan tingginya peningkatan ketrampilan berbicara siswa terhadap program pelatihan. Hasil observasi dan wawancara mendukung temuan kuantitatif, ditunjukkan oleh meningkatnya partisipasi aktif siswa, berkurangnya kecemasan berbicara, serta tumbuhnya keberanian menyampaikan ide dalam bahasa Inggris. Meskipun demikian, aspek teknis kebahasaan, khususnya pengucapan, masih memerlukan penguatan bahasa lanjutan. Secara keseluruhan, pelatihan ketrampilan berbicara di depan publik terbukti efektif sebagai intervensi pengabdian masyarakat dalam meningkatkan keterampilan afektif dan komunikasi siswa di level madrasah aliyah.

**Kata kunci: Public Speaking Bahasa Inggris; Kepercayaan Diri; Kompetensi Komunikasi; Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat**

### **Introduction**

English communication skills represent a critical competency for secondary school students, especially as they navigate global challenges and the evolving landscape of 21st-century education. Effective speaking skills extend beyond mere linguistic proficiency; they also involve affective factors such as self-confidence, courage, and mental preparedness for articulating ideas in

a public setting (Anshori et al., 2024).

In English language learning, a lack of self-confidence often poses a significant barrier to the development of students' oral communication skills (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Numerous studies indicate that high school students frequently encounter speaking anxiety, particularly when required to present in English in front of their peers (Mukminin et al., 2015). This

experience was also examined at MA Darunnajah Trenggalek, where initial findings revealed that students showed hesitance, fear of making errors, and a lack of confidence when engaging in public speaking in English. Furthermore, the English language curriculum, which primarily emphasizes theoretical components and written assessments, limits students' opportunities to practice authentic oral communication.

In light of this background, the issues at the center of this community service initiative have been articulated as follows: How are the students' self-confidence and communication skills in speaking English at MA Darunnajah Trenggalek before and after participating in English Public Speaking training? How does the implementation of English Public Speaking training improve students' self-confidence and communication skills? What are the students' responses to and experiences with the English Public Speaking training?

The literatures indicate that self-confidence is a fundamental component of effective oral communication. Bandura (1997) underscored the importance of self-efficacy in influencing an individual's willingness to engage and persevere in challenging situations, including public speaking. In the context of English language acquisition, students who exhibit high levels of self-confidence are more likely to participate actively and demonstrate enhanced speaking performance (Pham et al., 2021).

A variety of empirical studies conducted over the last 10 years have shown that public speaking training effectively improves students' confidence and communication skills. Sultana and Jamin (2021) found that training through practice and simulations can reduce anxiety about public speaking and enhance students' confidence in public speaking. Nonetheless, most of this research has mainly focused on public school and college environments, leaving the implementation of such training in

Islamic high schools (Madrasah Aliyah) relatively unexamined.

Moreover, earlier studies often highlighted self-confidence enhancement without a thorough assessment of communication skills. Nevertheless, successful public speaking hinges not only on emotional factors but also on linguistic competencies, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Consequently, this community service initiative was developed as a practical application of previous research findings, integrating public speaking training with a multidimensional evaluation using surveys, observations, and interviews.

This article aims to make a significant empirical contribution to the development of a contextualized, practical, and sustainable model for English Public Speaking training within the Islamic Senior High School (Madrasah Aliyah) context.

## **Method**

This community service activity (PKM) employs a descriptive, mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach was selected because it offers a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of educational interventions, particularly in measuring the depth of changes in participants' perceptions and experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the context of PKM, it is deemed effective for evaluating training programs that focus on both cognitive and affective aspects of participants (Tarigan et al., 2024). The quantitative component assessed students' levels of confidence and communication competency following their participation in English Public Speaking training, while the qualitative component examined participants' responses, experiences, and perceived benefits from the training.

The Community Service Program (PKM) activity was held at Darunnajah Islamic Senior High

School (Madrasah Aliyah) in Trenggalek, East Java. Participants included students who took part in an extensive English Public Speaking training program. The selection of these participants was influenced by initial observations revealing a lack of confidence in public speaking in English, a trend documented in other secondary schools in previous research and community service initiatives (Rajagukguk et al., 2023).

**Stages of Activity Implementation** The execution of community service is conducted through three primary stages, as outlined below:

#### Preparation Stage

The preparation phase involves conducting a needs analysis through initial observations and discussions with schools, creating training materials for English Public Speaking, and developing data collection instruments. The needs analysis is a vital component of PKM activities, as it ensures the program is tailored to address partners' specific challenges and is relevant to the local context (Mbato, 2020).

#### Training Implementation Stage

English Public Speaking training employs an experiential learning approach that encompasses delivering concise content, engaging in speaking exercises, simulating speeches and presentations, and offering direct feedback. This methodology has been shown to effectively enhance students' confidence and oral communication skills (Abellana & Lovido, 2025).

#### Evaluation and Reflection Stage

The evaluation phase was undertaken to assess the impact of the training on students' self-confidence and communication skills. Participants engaged in reflective discussions to provide insights on the program's strengths and weaknesses, an established practice in educational community service initiatives.

#### Data collection technique

Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: surveys, observations, and interviews.

#### Survey

A survey questionnaire was employed to assess students'

perceptions of self-confidence and communication competency following their participation in the training. This instrument was designed using a 1-5 Likert scale, which is commonly used in educational and community service research for its effectiveness in gauging respondents' attitudes and perceptions (Rogelberg et al., 2001). To enhance data collection efficiency and accuracy, the questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms.

#### Observation

Observations were conducted throughout the training process to assess students' active engagement, verbal communication skills, and their capacity to articulate ideas in English. These observations served as a complementary method to corroborate survey data (Godwin & Chambers, 2009), as recommended for evaluating practice-based educational programs.

#### Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to gather more comprehensive qualitative data

regarding their training experiences and the associated benefits. This methodology permitted researchers to examine participants' responses in a manner that was both flexible and focused (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

#### Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from the survey questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including calculating average scores (means) and categorizing achievement levels into low, medium, and high. This descriptive analysis is frequently employed in PKM to illustrate trends in program outcomes without necessitating complex inferential testing (Kemp et al., 2018).

Qualitative data obtained from observations and interviews were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis approach, involving stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This method enabled researchers to identify key patterns and themes emerging from participants' experiences. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses were

subsequently integrated to form comprehensive conclusions.

### Success Indicators

Drawing on a synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative data, this training effectively enhanced students' confidence and preparedness for communication. The findings offer an empirical foundation for developing additional programs by focusing on pronunciation exercises, expanding thematic vocabulary, and employing think-pair-share strategies to enhance fluency and coherence of ideas. These insights highlight the need to design PKM activities as a continuous mentoring process that adapts to partners' evolving needs (McNatt, 2019; Tarigan et al., 2024).

## Results and Discussion

### Quantitative Survey Results

#### Overview of Survey Results

The analysis of the survey questionnaire reveals that the English Public Speaking training significantly enhanced students' self-confidence and communication skills at MA Darunnajah Trenggalek. Overall, all

assessed dimensions fell within the moderately high to very high range, as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of English Public Speaking Training Survey Results**

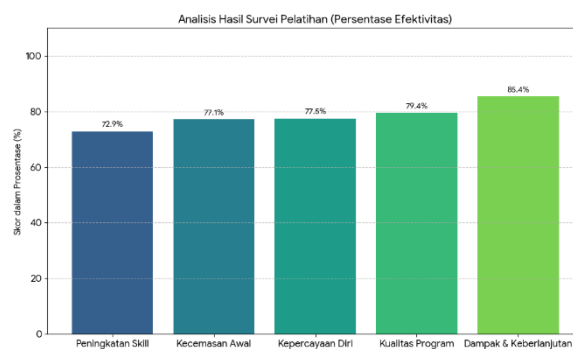


Table 1. Summary of English Public Speaking Training Survey Results

The high impact and sustainability score of 85.4% suggests that students not only gained immediate benefits from the training but also recognized the program's relevance for ongoing implementation. This finding is consistent with prior studies on Personal Knowledge Management (PKM), which have established that the success of public speaking training is evaluated based on the acceptance and support of key stakeholders for the program's continuation (Tarigan et al., 2024).

## Self-Confidence and Reducing Speaking Anxiety

The self-confidence aspect received a score of 77.5%, placing it in the high category and indicating a notable increase in students' confidence when speaking English in public. This finding is particularly significant when compared to the initial anxiety data, which also registered a high level at 77.1%. This suggests that prior to the training, a considerable number of students experienced anxiety related to speaking.

This situation supports Wijaya's (2023) research, which highlights that speaking anxiety is a significant barrier in foreign language acquisition, especially within the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The effectiveness of public speaking training that employs a hands-on approach combined with intensive mentoring has been demonstrated to alleviate this anxiety by enhancing students' self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

## Findings from Observations on the Implementation of Training Programs

### Active Participation and Class Dynamics

Observations revealed that the training was conducted in a supportive and interactive manner. Students not only absorbed the material but also actively engaged in question-and-answer sessions, simulations, and speaking practice. This aligns with the survey results regarding program quality, which indicated a positive rating of 79.4%. The material's structure and the instructor's role were identified as key factors in the training's effectiveness.

The experiential learning approach, characterized by hands-on practice and speech simulations, has proven to enhance student engagement. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Namaziandost et al. (2019), which highlighted that experiential training is more effective than traditional lectures in public speaking education.

### The Role of Coaching as a Catalyst

Observations indicate that direct mentoring from instructors significantly enhances student confidence. Providing instant feedback on pronunciation, gestures, and delivery structure creates a safe environment for students, allowing them to speak without the fear of making mistakes. To alleviate speaking anxiety, teachers can continue to offer motivation during bilingual classroom interactions (Hasanah & Hidayah, 2025), where structured programs are designed to help students build confidence in speaking a foreign language and reduce anxiety when addressing an audience.

This phenomenon aligns with the concept of scaffolding in education, which suggests that a supportive mentor can expedite the development of skills and self-assurance in learners (Vygotsky, 1978). Utilizing modern media for scaffolding, such as structured training programs, can further enhance the effectiveness of public speaking training. Schools are encouraged to continue improving

their collaborative learning initiatives (Hidayah, 2025) and to engage experts in public speaking through organized online MOOCs (Hidayah, 2022; Hidayah & Hasanah, 2020).

#### Interview Results: Participants' Perspectives and Experiences Psychological Anxiety as an Initial Problem

The interview results indicated that prior to the English Public Speaking training, students experienced notably high levels of speaking anxiety, particularly stemming from a fear of making mistakes and being judged negatively by their peers. One participant shared, "I feel nervous and afraid of saying the wrong thing" (Participant 1, Grade 11). This finding suggests that the primary barrier to their performance is not solely a lack of language skills, but rather psychological factors, particularly performance anxiety. This observation aligns with Gobena's (2025) findings, which identified speaking anxiety as a significant factor hindering students' active

participation in learning English as a foreign language.

Additionally, the interviews highlighted the importance of training methods that incorporate direct practice, simulations, and instructor guidance in helping students step outside their comfort zones. This is exemplified by a participant's comment: "The role-play and public speaking simulations really helped build my courage" (Participant 16, Grade 11). Such findings support the experiential learning approach, which underscores active participation as an effective strategy for developing communication skills (McNatt, 2019).

Previous PKM studies have also demonstrated that direct practice and personalized feedback can significantly boost student confidence and engagement (Tarigan et al., 2024). In light of this, schools can enhance structured training support by implementing mentoring programs that offer not only material resources for public speaking but also psychological support from mentors. This approach could further

strengthen students' self-confidence and ultimately improve their public speaking performance (Hidayah, 2016).

#### Attitude Transformation and Increased Self-Efficacy

The most notable change following the training was an increase in students' self-efficacy in speaking English. One participant remarked, "I have become more courageous and confident in speaking in public" (Participant 6, Grade 10). This statement reflects that, although their technical skills may not yet be fully developed, students have gained the confidence to engage and take initiative in communication. This observation aligns with Bandura's (1997) theory, which highlights that enhanced self-efficacy is a crucial prerequisite for successful performance and ongoing learning.

Despite this boost in self-confidence, interviews also revealed a disparity between mental readiness and proficiency in technical language. One participant shared, "The difficulty I still experience is fluency

because I often stop to think" (Participant 16, Grade 11). This insight clarifies why communication competency scores in the survey were lower than self-confidence ratings. This finding supports the research by Abellana & Lovido (2025), which found that short-term public speaking training tends to improve affective dimensions more quickly than linguistic aspects such as vocabulary and pronunciation.

Overall, the interview results reinforce the survey and observational findings, indicating that English Public Speaking training is an effective initial intervention for fostering students' confidence and self-efficacy. However, these results also highlight the necessity for follow-up programs that continuously enhance technical language skills. As Hasanah and Hidayah (2025) suggest, one effective approach to strengthening technical language skills is maintaining vocabulary records. This practice enables students to implement various vocabulary-enhancing strategies that can bolster long-term

memory. A robust memory will directly influence improvements in technical language, enhancing not only vocabulary but also comprehensively improving students' language structures.

#### Critical Discussion: The Gap between Courage and Technical Skills

While the training results indicated notable improvements, the data also highlighted a significant concern: the technical language skills aspect received the lowest score at 72.9%, with the pronunciation sub-indicator falling even further to 65.7% (an average score of 3.28/5.00). These findings suggest a gap between students' mental readiness and their mastery of technical language; they exhibit confidence in speaking yet struggle with vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. This observation is consistent with Mbato's (2020) research, which found that short-term public speaking training enhances affective aspects more rapidly than linguistic ones.

Consequently, the outcomes of this Community Service Program (PKM) affirm that English Public

Speaking training is effective as both a psychological and motivational intervention. However, it necessitates ongoing program continuity to gradually bolster technical language competencies. In this context, enhancing students' speaking skills and providing teacher training are critical components for improving public speaking capacity (Hidayah et al., 2025).

The synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates that the English Public Speaking training has successfully met the primary objective of community service activities: enhancing students' self-confidence and communication readiness. Nevertheless, the findings also offer an empirical foundation for developing a more structured follow-up program, which could include dedicated pronunciation practice sessions, thematic vocabulary enrichment tailored to the context of student communication, and the implementation of think-pair-share learning strategies to improve

fluency and coherence in idea delivery.

These implications underscore that PKM activities should not end with the initial implementation phase; instead, they should evolve into a continuous mentoring process responsive to partners' needs and the development of participants' competencies (Tarigan et al., 2024).

### **Conclusion**

Community service activities through English Public Speaking training at MA Darunnajah Trenggalek have proven effective in enhancing students' self-confidence and communication skills. Survey results reveal a significant increase in self-confidence levels and a moderate improvement in communication abilities. This is further supported by observations and interviews that indicate greater student participation and reduced speaking anxiety.

The practice-based training and mentoring have positively influenced students' readiness to engage in public speaking in English. However, technical aspects of the

language, such as pronunciation and vocabulary mastery, still require further reinforcement through follow-up programs. Therefore, it is essential to develop English Public Speaking training as an ongoing mentoring initiative that is integrated with English instruction in Islamic senior high schools. These findings are intended as a reference for developing similar community service programs to enhance students' soft skills and communication abilities in secondary education settings.

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