Efforts to Train Public Speaking in Elementary Schools and Teacher Strategies in Building Smart Communicators

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Abstract
Public speaking is one of the skills that needs to be developed early on to build effective communication skills. The ability to speak in public is one of the soft skills that is needed in everyday life and the professional world. However, many students in elementary school still experience difficulties in public speaking. Therefore, this article aims to examine the strategies used by teachers in elementary schools in training public speaking to students. This research uses literature (library research) which is descriptive analysis. The procedure for obtaining data is done through document analysis. Document analysis is done by studying literature in the form of books and journal articles related to the material discussed in this article. The results show that strategies such as activity-based learning, the use of visual media, and the provision of positive feedback consistently improve students' confidence and speaking ability. This article concludes that practicing public speaking from an early age can help shape a generation that is smart, confident and able to communicate effectively.
Keywords: *Public Speaking, Elementary School, Teacher Strategy, Intelligent Communicator, Active Learning*

Abstract
Public speaking merupakan salah satu keterampilan yang perlu dikembangkan sejak dini untuk membangun kemampuan komunikasi yang efektif. Kemampuan berbicara di depan umum (*public speaking*) adalah salah satu soft skill yang sangat dibutuhkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari maupun dunia profesional. Namun, saat banyak siswa di sekolah dasar masih mengalami kesulitan dalam berbicara di depan umum. Maka dari itu, pada artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi yang digunakan oleh guru di sekolah dasar dalam melatih *public speaking* kepada siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan kepustakaan (*library research*) yang bersifat deskriptif analisis. Prosedur didapatkannya data tersebut dilakukan melalui analisis dokumen. Analisis dokumen dilakukan dengan studi literatur berupa buku dan juga artikel jurnal yang berhubungan dengan materi yang dibahas pada artikel ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi seperti pembelajaran berbasis aktivitas, penggunaan media visual, serta pemberian umpan balik positif secara konsisten mampu meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan kemampuan berbicara siswa. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa melatih public speaking sejak dini dapat membantu membentuk generasi yang cerdas, percaya diri, dan mampu berkomunikasi secara efektif.
Keywords: *Public Speaking*, Sekolah Dasar, Strategi Guru, Komunikator Cerdas, Pembelajaran Aktif

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is one of the soft skills that is very much needed in everyday life and the professional world. In today's era of globalization, good communication skills are one of the main factors in individual success. Therefore, it is important for children to start training in public speaking from an early age, including at the elementary school level (Saputra, DG, 2024). However, many students in elementary schools still have difficulty in public speaking, such as nervousness, lack of self-confidence, or even fear of being judged by others. This indicates the need for teacher intervention to help students overcome these obstacles.

Teachers have a central role in creating a learning environment that supports the development of students' public speaking skills (Choirunnisa, FN, 2024). This study aims to answer the question of what strategies are used by teachers in training public speaking in elementary schools. In addition, this study also wants to see the impact of these strategies on the development of students' communication skills. Public speaking is an important skill that needs to be developed from an early age. In the current era of information and communication, the ability to convey ideas clearly, confidently, and effectively is the main capital for every individual, including elementary school children. Therefore, training public speaking at the elementary school level is not only about teaching speaking techniques, but also building a strong communication foundation for their future. Children at elementary school age are in a very rapid stage of emotional, cognitive, and social development (Septicasari, R., 2018). In this phase, they begin to learn to interact with their surroundings, including peers and adults. Public speaking helps children develop self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and listening and empathy skills. In addition, the ability to speak in public also trains children to manage fear or anxiety when faced with new situations, which is an important part of character development.

In elementary schools, public speaking practice can be done through various activities, such as short stories (storytelling), simple presentations, speech competitions, group discussions, or drama activities (Muslimin, K., & Kom, MI (2021). These activities not only improve children's verbal abilities but also help them understand the importance of body language, voice intonation, and eye contact in communicating. Training public speaking in elementary schools is a long-term investment to prepare a generation that is confident, critical, and able to communicate well. Teachers have an important role as facilitators who support the development of these abilities through appropriate strategies, such as creating a conducive environment, providing gradual practice, and using technology. With a creative and inclusive approach, teachers can help students grow into intelligent communicators who are ready to face the challenges of the modern world.

METHOD

In this study, we as the authors of the article use a descriptive analysis library research method. The main sources of this study are books and various literatures that are relevant to the topic of discussion. The data that researchers can get from non-human sources. Non-human data sources are obtained from document analysis related to the material discussed in this article such as: books and journals. The data collection procedure is carried out by document analysis. Document analysis is carried out by studying book literature and journal articles related to the material discussed in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Activity Based Learning in Elementary School

Teachers often design activities such as group presentations, class discussions, and speech simulations to give students the opportunity to practice public speaking. These activities not only train speaking skills but also help students overcome fear and nervousness (Masyitoh, A., 2024). Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is a learning approach that emphasizes the active involvement of students in the learning process. In elementary schools, ABL is very relevant because it is in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development who tend to enjoy exploring, playing, and learning through direct

experience. Through ABL, students not only receive information from teachers passively, but they are also involved in activities that facilitate a deep understanding of concepts (Rahman, RA, Astina, C., 2021). In its application, ABL in elementary schools often involves direct practice activities, group discussions, simple experiments, or creative projects. For example, when studying the concept of an ecosystem, students can be asked to observe the environment around the school, record the flora and fauna present, and discuss the interactions between these living things. In this way, students not only learn theory but also build understanding through real experiences. The advantage of PBA is its ability to increase students' learning motivation. Children are more interested in learning when they feel that the subject matter is related to the real world. In addition, PBA also helps develop critical thinking skills, collaboration, and creativity. Students are trained to solve problems, work together in teams, and dare to express their ideas (Santika, M., Komalasari, N., 2024). However, the challenge in implementing PBA is the need for careful planning from teachers. Teachers must design activities that are appropriate to the students' ability levels and learning objectives. In addition, adequate facilities and time are also important factors so that activities can run effectively. Overall, Activity-Based Learning in Elementary Schools is an effective approach to creating a learning environment that is fun, meaningful, and supports students' holistic development. Activity-Based Learning in Elementary Schools is a method that actively involves students in the learning process through real activities, thereby increasing their understanding, skills, and learning motivation (Fauzi, SA, & Mustika, D. (2022).

B. Use of Visual Media in the Learning Process in Elementary Schools

The use of visual media such as images, videos, or PowerPoint slides helps students understand the material more easily. Visual media also makes presentations more interesting and interactive, thus increasing students' interest in participating. The use of visual media in the learning process in elementary schools has a very important role in improving student understanding and making learning more interesting (Muammar, M., & Suhartina, S. (2018). Visual media includes images, diagrams, videos, animations, infographics, and other aids that can be seen by students. In the context of elementary schools, where students are still in the early stages of cognitive and emotional development, the use of this media helps simplify complex concepts to make them easier to understand. One of the main benefits of visual media is its ability to attract students' attention. Elementary school-aged children tend to have a short attention span, so the use of images or videos can make them more focused on the subject matter (Nurfadhillah, S. (2021). For example, when studying the water cycle, showing an animation about the movement of water from the sea to the atmosphere will be more effective than just explaining it in words. It also helps students visualize processes that are difficult to observe directly. In addition, visual media supports multisensory learning.

By seeing and hearing information simultaneously, students can relate new concepts to their previous experiences. This is very beneficial for students with a visual learning style, who understand information more easily through images than written text (Urba, M., Ramadhani, 2024). For example, using picture maps in geography lessons helps students understand the location of a place more quickly. Visual media also encourages interaction and collaboration in the classroom. Teachers can use this media as a discussion tool to stimulate students' curiosity. However, it is important for teachers to choose media that is appropriate to the age and level of understanding of students so that learning objectives

are achieved optimally. Thus, visual media is not only entertainment, but an effective tool for improving student learning outcomes (Wibowo, HS (2023). Visual media is a very effective tool in learning in elementary schools because it is able to attract attention, simplify concepts, and support multisensory learning.

C. Providing Positive Feedback in Public Speaking Material in Elementary Schools

Teachers provide appreciation and positive feedback to students after they speak in front of the class. This feedback does not only focus on technical aspects such as voice intonation or body language, but also on students' efforts and courage to perform. Providing positive feedback is an important aspect in teaching public speaking skills to elementary school students. Positive feedback is a form of appreciation or recognition of the efforts, progress, or results that have been achieved by a student (Ain, SQ (2024). In the context of public speaking, this feedback aims to build self-confidence, encourage motivation, and help students improve their public speaking skills gradually. When providing positive feedback, teachers need to focus on specific things that students do well. For example, if a student is able to speak with a clear voice and interesting intonation, the teacher can give praise such as, "Your voice is very clear, and the way you emphasize important words makes your story more alive!" This kind of feedback not only provides appreciation, but also helps students understand their strengths so that they can be maintained in the future. In addition, positive feedback should be delivered in a sincere and specific manner. Avoid general comments such as "You are great!" without further explanation. Students need to know what they are being praised for so they can repeat or improve on that aspect.

Teachers can also use body language, such as smiling or nodding, to reinforce positive messages. Positive feedback should also be interspersed with constructive suggestions, but with a friendly and supportive approach. For example, after giving appreciation, the teacher can add, "Try adding more hand gestures when speaking to make the audience more interested." (Pohan, AE, Yulia, D., & Husna, A. (2021). With this method, students do not feel judged, but are encouraged to continue learning and developing. In the long run, positive feedback helps create a safe and supportive learning environment. Students become more courageous in trying new things and are not afraid to make mistakes, because they feel appreciated for their efforts (Azhar, M., & Wahyudi, H. (2024). This is very important in building a strong foundation for public speaking skills that will be useful throughout their lives.

D. Creating a Supportive Environment in the Learning Process in Elementary Schools

Teachers create a comfortable and stress-free classroom atmosphere. In this way, students feel more confident to speak without fear of being judged by their peers. Creating a supportive environment in the learning process in Elementary Schools is one of the important factors to support student success. A conducive learning environment not only involves physical aspects, such as a clean and comfortable classroom, but also includes psychological, social, and emotional aspects (Aini, F., Adawiyah, 2024). All of these elements must be integrated with each other so that students can learn optimally. Physically, the classroom must be designed in such a way as to encourage comfort and concentration. Good lighting, smooth air circulation, and flexible table and chair layouts can help students feel more focused. In addition, the presence of learning aids such as whiteboards, visual media, and easily accessible books are also important to facilitate an interactive learning process. A decorative classroom with cheerful colors and educational elements such as posters or student work can increase children's learning motivation

(Utomo, MS D). From a psychological perspective, teachers play a major role in creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers must be able to build warm and supportive relationships with students, so that they feel valued and heard. Praise and appreciation for students' efforts, even small ones, can increase their self-confidence. On the other hand, an authoritarian or punitive approach can make students feel pressured and afraid to participate. The social aspect is also no less important. Interaction between students must be fostered well through group work, discussions, or other collaborative activities. This will help them learn to work together, respect each other, and develop communication skills. An inclusive social environment will also make students from various backgrounds feel accepted and valued. Finally, the emotional aspect greatly influences students' ability to learn. A sense of security, happiness, and freedom from intimidation are key to maintaining students' emotional well-being (Zubaidah, S. 2018, October). By creating a holistic environment that includes physical, psychological, social, and emotional, elementary schools can be an ideal place for students to develop academically and personally.

A supportive learning environment in elementary schools must include physical, psychological, social, and emotional aspects so that students can learn optimally. The impact of these strategies is quite significant. Students who were initially hesitant or afraid of public speaking began to show increased self-confidence. They also became more skilled at constructing arguments, conveying ideas clearly, and using appropriate body language (Putra, R. (2023). However, this study also found several challenges, such as limited learning time and minimal training for teachers in developing students' public speaking skills. Therefore, further support is needed from schools and the government to optimize the public speaking learning process in elementary schools.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Training public speaking in elementary schools is an important step in building a smart and confident generation. Teachers play a crucial role in developing these skills through various innovative strategies, such as activity-based learning, the use of visual media, and the creation of a supportive environment. However, challenges such as time constraints and lack of training for teachers still need to be addressed. This study recommends that schools and the government provide special training for teachers in public speaking, as well as provide adequate resources to support learning. Thus, students can grow into smart communicators who are ready to face future challenges.

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