

Students' Voices on English Public Speaking Training Program at an Indonesian Vocational High School

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Abstract

English public speaking skills are crucial for career and professional success for vocational high school students. However, the existing literature indicates a lack of English language training at vocational high schools. Therefore, students have limited English public speaking skills, making competing in the global job market difficult. This study investigates students' voices on English public speaking training programs at their vocational school, focusing on their feelings and experiences after attending the program. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study collected data through questionnaires administered to 15 students who participated in the training program. The results show the students' excitement and interest in developing their English public speaking skills. The results also indicate a positive impact in showing confidence through the communication skills of the majority of the students. It can be concluded that developing English public speaking skills among vocational high school students can better prepare them to face the future and be better individuals academically and professionally.

Keywords: *English, public speaking training program, vocational high school*

Introduction

The objective of this study is to investigate the voices of vocational high school students on English public speaking training programs at their school. Public Speaking is a skill that must be mastered and acquired by everybody, including students (Saqillah et al., 2023). Public speaking has been considered an important soft skill among academics and the work field. There are many companies today that require their future employees to have good public speaking skills. As it has become the most crucial aspect to look at in hiring a future employee (Andriani & Srisadono, 2017). Moreover, according to Chollet et al. (2015), good public speaking skills will benefit learners in their academics, careers, and everyday life. In addition, English has become a primary foreign language to learn and master by students and workers in Indonesia (Sari, 2019). Furthermore, English is a language that is used globally (Alatis, 2005). Hence, acquiring English public speaking skills is a valuable soft skill to possess by high school students.

However, despite its significance, the importance of public speaking training for students is often neglected by either the teacher or the students, with only a small number of schools offering such programs (Andriani & Srisadono, 2017). Moreover, according to Grieve et al. (2021), many students have developed various fears regarding public speaking. Such as a lack of confidence, which led them to experience a panic attack. Furthermore, according to

Bartholomay & Houlihan (2016), fear of public speaking or public speaking anxiety affects one in every five people. Thus, public speaking should be a soft skill that becomes the main focus in training among high school students.

Studies on public speaking skills in the vocational high school context have been conducted, and the results generally show that good public speaking skills can help students gain great success in the classroom. Through these skills, students can express their ideas, collaborate with their friends, and help them lead a team. Additionally, this leads to having concise and clear communication skills, which are important soft skills in learning that can help their future career (Mutohhari et al., 2021). Therefore, students will make themselves better individuals academically and professionally (Krisbiantoro et al., 2023). In addition, mastering the art of public speaking can be done in many ways. One of them is through practicing a speech, a process of delivering ideas, thoughts, and information to others (Puspita, 2017), and is often done in front of a crowd.

Bunyamin et al. (2022) stated that English public speaking skills can be learned and improved through various experiences, both in formal education settings and in everyday life. Therefore, a training session can be an effective way to conduct a learning session about public speaking. It could help develop an interest and awareness about English public speaking, especially in speech towards students of a vocational high school (Rido et al., 2023; Zulia et al., 2023). However, studies on English public speaking training programs at vocational schools, especially in the Indonesian context, are still limited. Therefore, this study is important to be conducted to fill the gap in the existing literature.

Theory and Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach and involved vocational high school students. The respondents of this study were students who participated in an English public speaking training program conducted at their school. These students were selected based on some criteria. They must be members of the school English club and recommended by the English language teacher as well as the school principal. Of the 40 students who took part in the program, 15 of them filled out the questionnaires. Meanwhile, the data were collected through a set of questionnaires about students' feelings towards English public speaking training programs conducted at their school. The questionnaires consist of ten questions and a 5-point Likert scale, which (5) indicates strongly agree, (4) indicates agree, (3) indicates neutral, (2) indicates disagree, and (1) indicates strongly disagree. While they were filling out the questionnaire online via Google Drive and their smartphone, they were allowed to ask if they did not understand some parts of the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaires were checked and verified to see the consistency and accuracy of questionnaire items. The results of the questionnaire were then analyzed descriptively by using frequency counts and percentages.

Findings and Discussion

This study investigates the voices of vocational high school students on English public speaking training programs at their school. The English public speaking training program was an additional activity at the school that served as a way to understand more about the knowledge the students have regarding public speaking and speech performances. In general, the majority of the respondents positively perceived the speaking training program. The details of the findings can be seen below.

Question 1

The results of the survey, which asked respondents to score the intelligibility of the materials at a public speaking training they attended, are displayed in a bar chart. The majority of respondents, 80%, strongly agree that the materials presented were very clear, as shown by the chart. 13.3% of the remaining respondents believe that the materials were clear, while 6.7% disagree, saying that the contents were not sufficiently clear. This outcome shows that 90% of respondents agreed that the provided materials were well-structured and understandable. Overall, the survey results indicate that the public speaking session was successful in delivering clear and understandable materials to the majority of attendees. The high percentage of respondents who strongly agree that the materials were clear shows that the presenter effectively communicated their message. The feedback from the small percentage of respondents who disagreed provides valuable insight for improving future presentations to ensure clarity for all attendees.

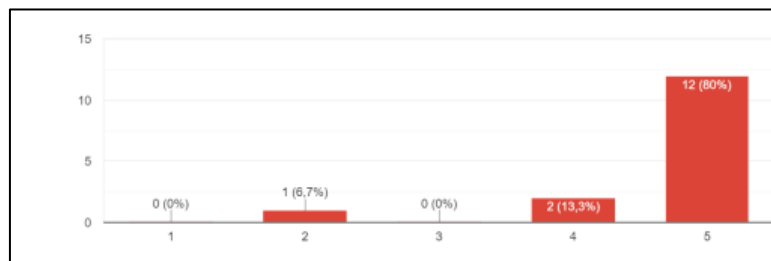


Fig 1. Clarity of the presented materials

Question 2

The next chart shows that 53.3% of respondents strongly agree that the session helped enlighten them on understanding speech. Furthermore, 40% of respondents agree, indicating that the materials provided to aid in their understanding of speech have been effective. However, 6.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed, indicating that the session's influence on speech comprehension may yet be improved. Overall, the data reflects 90% positive responses to the session's content and delivery, but some areas can be further developed to enhance participant comprehension. This feedback will be valuable in refining future sessions to better meet the needs of those seeking to improve their understanding of speech.

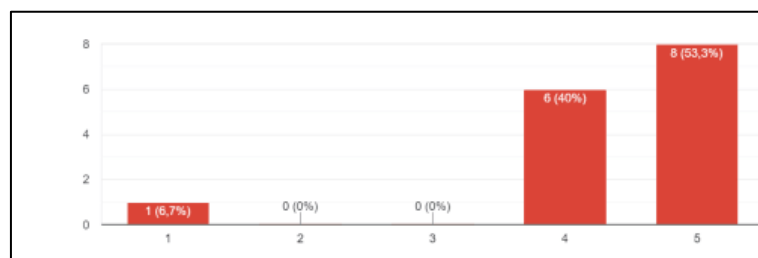


Fig 2. Effectiveness of materials given to understand speech

Question 3

According to the following chart, 73.3% of respondents strongly agree that the provided resources encouraged them to learn speech. Additionally, 20% of students agreed that the resources were helpful in their speech learning journey. The remaining 6.7% strongly disagreed

with the statement, indicating that the majority of students found the resources to be beneficial. This data suggests that the provided resources play a significant role in motivating students to improve their speech skills. Overall, the majority of students found the resources to be effective in helping them learn speech. The high percentage of students who strongly agreed with the statement shows that the resources were not only helpful but also essential in their learning process. With such positive feedback, it is clear that providing resources for speech learning is a valuable investment in students' education.

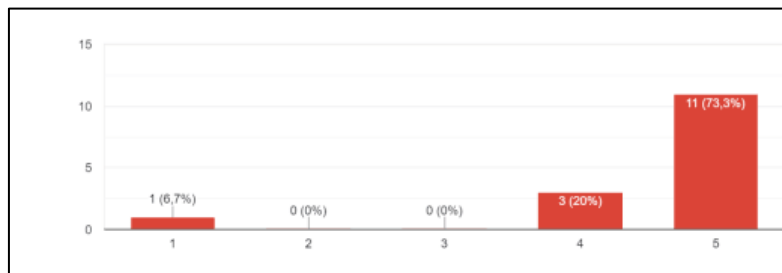


Fig 3. Effectiveness of materials to motivate learning speech

Question 4

The following chart shows that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that the use of examples and practices helped them understand speech better, with 33.3% supporting it by agreeing to the statement. The 6.7% remaining disagree that examples and practices are effective in improving their understanding of speech, which can be helped by providing additional resources and support tailored to individual learning styles. By offering a variety of teaching methods and materials, educators can better cater to the needs of all students, including those who may not benefit as much from examples and practices alone. It is clear from these results that the majority, more than 90% of respondents, find that using examples and practices is beneficial in enhancing their comprehension of spoken language. This suggests that incorporating more examples and opportunities for practice in language learning materials could be a valuable strategy for educators looking to support their students in improving their listening skills.

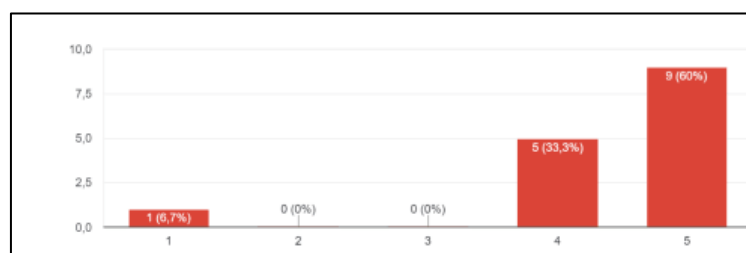


Fig 4. Effectiveness of the use of examples and practices to learn speech

Question 5

The results also indicate that the greatest portion of the chart indicates that 66.7% of the students strongly agreed that the resources provided helped them learn new information that they were not previously aware of. The second largest segment shows that 26.7% of students agree with this statement, while only 6.6% disagree, which indicates that they have known parts of the materials discussed. The majority of students strongly agreed with the effectiveness of the resources, which highlights the importance of providing accessible and engaging

materials to enhance learning outcomes. It is clear that the resources utilized in this training program had a significant impact on expanding students' knowledge and understanding, which is in line with the purpose of this activity, that is to spread awareness about the importance of public speaking.

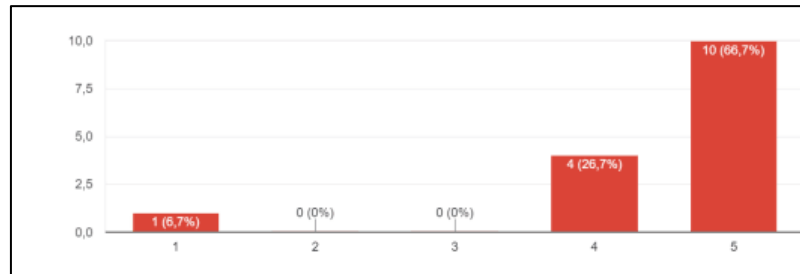


Fig 5. Materials presented as new information for students

Question 6

The response to a survey question asking students to rank how much the provided materials motivated them to improve their speech and public speaking abilities is shown in the bar chart. The results show that 66.7% of respondents strongly agree that they found the materials extremely motivating, while 20% somewhat agree. The rest of the respondents are divided into 6.7% staying neutral on the matter and another 6.7% disagreeing. This could be solved by providing a wider range of materials to cater to different learning styles and interests. Ultimately, the goal should be to create materials that are not only informative but also inspiring and engaging for all students. Overall, the majority of students seem to have been positively impacted by the provided materials in terms of improving their speech and public speaking skills.

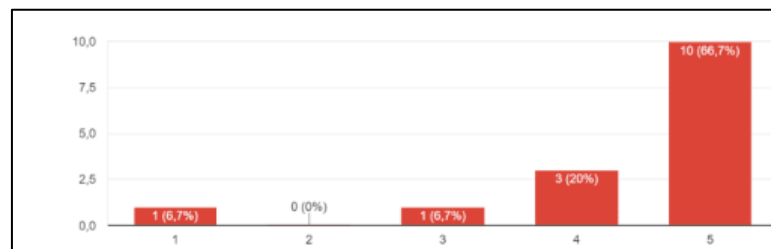


Fig 6. Influence of materials given to improve the students' skill

Question 7

The chart indicates the results of a survey question that asked students about whether or not the materials and presentation about speech helped boost their confidence in public speaking. The chart shows that 73.3% of the students expressed their strong agreement with the effectiveness of the materials and presentation in boosting their confidence in public speaking. This high percentage suggests that the majority of students found the resources to be very helpful in improving their public speaking skills. The other 20% are also agreeing, while the rest, 6.7%, are staying neutral. The neutral responses may suggest that there is room for improvement in tailoring the materials and presentation to better meet the needs of all students. The results of the survey indicate that the materials and presentation were successful in achieving their goal of increasing students' confidence in speaking in front of an audience.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate the value of providing resources to support students in developing their public speaking skills.

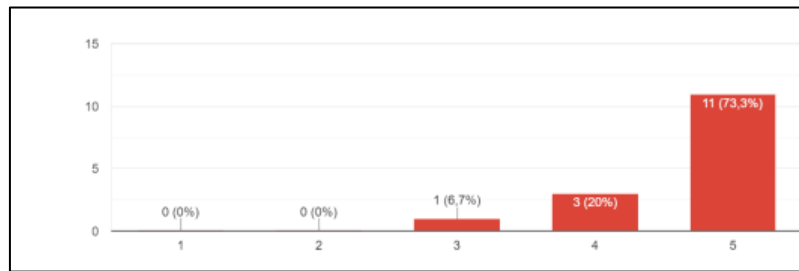


Fig 7. Influence of materials given in boosting students' confidence

Question 8

The bar chart indicates that 80% of the respondents strongly agree that the delivery of the presentation intrigued them enough to pay attention throughout the session. While the other 13.3% agree and the rest, 6.7%, somewhat disagree with the statement, which proves there is still room for improvement. The high percentage of agreement suggests that the presenter was able to effectively engage the audience and capture their interest. It also implies that the content of the presentation was compelling and well-organized, leading to a positive reception from the audience. This level of agreement from the respondents indicates that the delivery of the presentation was successful in achieving its goal of holding the audience's attention.

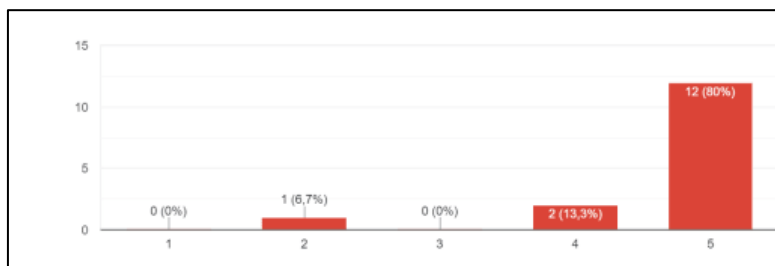


Fig 8. Students' attention toward the delivery of materials by presenters

Question 9

The following chart shows that 80% are in strong agreement about how the materials presented are in line with their interests, while the other 20% also agree with the statement. This high level of agreement indicates that the materials are effectively catering to the interests of the majority of the audience. Presenters need to continue creating content that resonates with their target audience to maintain engagement and interest. This proves that the training program to promote public speaking through speech was very much needed for the students. This fulfilled the goal of the activity to the extent that students were actively engaged and interested in the content being presented.

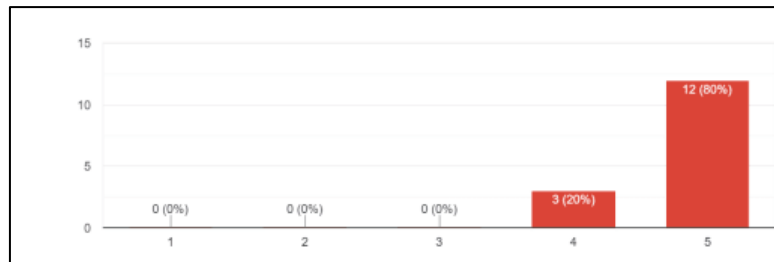


Fig 9. Relevance of students' interest and the materials given

Question 10

The bar chart represents the agreement of the respondents that the materials of the presentation by the presenters are well structured. The biggest percentage was 86.7% strongly agreeing, while the rest, 13.3%, were somewhat agreeing. Overall, the data shows a high level of satisfaction with the structure of the presentation materials. The majority of respondents felt that the presenters had organized their materials effectively. This positive feedback indicates that the presenters were successful in delivering their content clearly and coherently, achieving the goal of the activity, which is to promote the importance of public speaking understandably and compellingly.

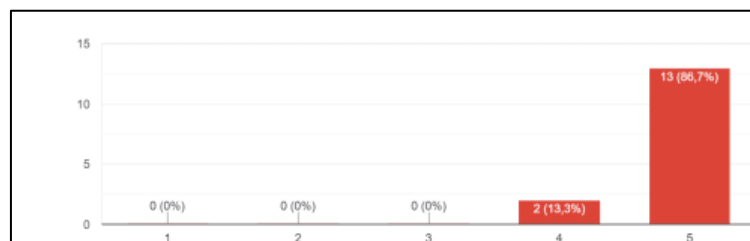


Fig 10. Delivery of the presentation

The results of the study indicate that the majority of them reported that the training session was helpful, efficient in helping them speak more fluently in English, and simple to understand. Although the charts demonstrated that the students understood the materials well, some students felt that the practices did not prepare them for public speaking, suggesting that they would benefit more from a different approach to learning, such as theoretical understanding.

The feedback given implies that the public speaking training program's goal of helping students learn public speaking by increasing their confidence and communication abilities was accomplished. Through dedicated practice and discipline, one can enhance their public speaking skills even further (Amrullah et al, 2024). Public speaking abilities are considered one of the essential soft skills for children to acquire (Turistiati, 2019b). Additionally, public speaking skills are very essential in various situations, including academic, work, and everyday life (Rido et al, 2023).

The ability to effectively communicate ideas and thoughts is vital for success in both personal and professional endeavors, which will be helpful to have for high school students. Ultimately, clear communication skills can aid students in enhancing both their creativity and critical thinking during the learning process (Budi at al, 2020). In fact, in this day and age, there have been many companies that require their future employees to have good public speaking skills and make it an important aspect to look at in hiring a future employee (Andriani &

Srisadono, 2017). Overall, the positive outcomes of the speech session showcase how beneficial and important, as well as exciting, this particular training is, and truly underscore the importance of providing students with opportunities to develop their public speaking skills to thrive in a competitive and ever-evolving world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, acknowledging public speaking as a pivotal soft skill in academic, professional, and daily contexts, especially among vocational high school students, this English public speaking training program aimed to mitigate the prevalent fear of public speaking among students. The comprehensive program, encompassing training sessions and informative materials, yielded positive outcomes. The findings illustrated a high degree of satisfaction among students, emphasizing the clarity, effectiveness, and motivation provided by the materials. The session not only increased students' confidence in public speaking but also highlighted the relevance and structure of the materials, contributing to their overall skill development.

The findings also underscore the significance of integrating public speaking training into the high school curriculum. Mastering this skill equips students to express ideas with clarity and confidence, fostering personal and professional growth. The success of this training emphasizes the continued importance of promoting public speaking skills, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance communication abilities among high school students.

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