

Public speaking training to sustain teacher professional development in elementary school

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ABSTRACT

Teachers in an elementary school located at Arcamanik, Bandung, experienced anxieties when speaking in front of audiences. The study aims to identify teachers' anxieties about public speaking training, evaluate how the training alleviates the anxieties, and assess its impact on teachers' public speaking performance. Qualitative approach is employed in this research by using interviews and observations with ten participants: an English teacher, three classroom teachers, and subject-specific teachers in Indonesian, tahfidz (Qur'anic memorization), Arabic, mathematics, and two Islamic religion teachers. The training was conducted at the beginning of the semester to provide sustained professional development. The findings reveal that there are three categories consisting of new comers, old comers and gender. New comer teachers show a significant growth even more they could eliminate speaking doubts, avoiding negative words, clearer speaking, confidence, more understandable, and engaged in communicating more effectively. Secondly, the old comer teachers tend to be steadier and calmer but have a fast-thinking proficiency in making solutions. Lastly, it seen from gender. Female teachers use public speaking theory the most as compared to male teachers who tend to be more ignorant. All the growth stemmed from the school-facilitated training equipping them for various roles – not only as classroom facilitators but also as service providers interacting with parents and at school event. Researchers recommend holding frequent public speaking workshops to assist teachers in overcoming their speaking anxieties. This can boost confidence and help participants communicate more effectively. Everyone can benefit from practice and tips in a confidential environment.

Keywords: elementary school; public speaking; teachers; training; professional; sustain.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the teachers at elementary school of Arcamanik Bandung got anxieties in public speaking, the principal assessed that the supervision results required school to enact an annual training particularly public speaking to enhance their proficiency. As Dwyer and Davidson (2012) provides some intriguing facts in his investigation, it is found that public speaking is “the most common fear,” after

death. Teachers face the situation mostly require them to do public speaking in their everyday teaching and learning activity. They sometimes feel anxieties when speak in public such as an exaggerated fear of being negatively evaluated by others, such as being criticized, humiliated or rejected during social interaction, observation or in performance situations. In accordance to the matters, it is a compulsory to hone teachers' public speaking by carrying out the professional teacher development training. It refers to the process by which teachers' areas are educated and have certain standards and qualifications as professional teachers (Khulaifiyah, 2017). The implication of teachers' professionalism to speak in public implies to teachers' proficiency that must be periodically upgraded. The previous research conducted by Colbeck (2011) resulted a study that was done to see how a speech training affected public speaking anxiety. The result shows most of the anxieties can be lessened after training. For this reason, this research focuses on teachers in elementary school in any subject by investigating public speaking training to sustain their professionalism by conducting a training particularly in service training to maintain the teachers' public speaking quality.

Conducting a training plays a vital role in a flourishing educational system in the context of sustaining teachers' professionalism and for students' outcome. In regard to teachers' anxieties, the school conduct in service training to train teachers to be more professional in public speaking and lessen their matters. Teachers must have the ability to communicate in public, if otherwise, they will be trapped in an area that endanger their career sustainability which related to what Colbeck (2011) highlighted in their previous research, such fears may hinder career aspirations, personal relationships, and self-image. If teachers could not overcome their fear, they will lose the social competence which covering their ability to work together with the community, students, and colleagues (Helmi, 2015). Furthermore, the essential teacher professional development goal is improving students' outcomes (Earley & Porritt, 2014) and encouraging enhancement of school. To improve the quality of students' outcome in teaching and learning it is required the better quality of teacher. "They believe that improving the teachers' quality will positively affect the quality of the students as it is a tool for teachers to enhance their learning outcomes" (Hariyanti, 2023). Sustaining teachers' professionalism means equipping them with the relevant training. In this case, stakeholders and teachers must evaluate periodically what the teachers' need in the changing educational circumstances. In addition, a teacher's primary responsibility is talking and transmitting information in an attempt to convey a lesson through explanation, hence they must be proficient in public speaking. Besides, teachers are retrieved to explain solutions, teaching material, and other teachers' duties, they frequently encounter situations that need them to give public speeches, particularly when performing their tasks in a school or parents' meeting, they are obliged to become school's promoters.

Public Speaking Training in Elementary School

The elementary school in Arcamanik provided teachers with in-service training as part of the principal's supervision of teachers' need for public speaking growth. Meanwhile, a teacher's professional development in adopting changes for sustainability education is impacted by both internal and external factors. In this instance, the principal's supervision was the external element that caused the training to be carried out. Makovec (2018) stated that the external influences consist of stakeholders, students, parents, colleagues, school administrators and society. There are perspectives and expectations of sustainable development for teachers to increase their role in education. The internal factor is the teacher's own recognition of the need to enhance public speaking proficiency to be more confident in teaching and interacting with parents. "It includes the under-standing of the role of teachers, the importance and expectation in their profession" (Makovec, 2018).

Stakeholders desire to succeed teachers' professional development by providing the training to improve professional development relating to changes in classroom diversity and the need of honing teacher expertise for supporting the changes. However, the practice of professional development is often considerably focused on short-term actions instead of long-term impact (Lauer et al., 2013).

Accordingly, very few of previous research are concerned with the long-term impact of professional development, while teachers need to sustain the changes in the long-term period. Schools need to consider that there are necessities in sustaining the profession and notice that it is not just the regulations, it should be teachers' inherent practices. Conducting the periodic in-service training is expected to come up with new ideas of professional practices since teachers have their individualistic nature of teaching and demand some reflective practices. One of the fundamental competencies of a teacher is their ability to communicate effectively; public speaking plays a significant role in this regard. This context, the elementary school teachers want to enhance their public speaking proficiency to deal with the changing time which impacts the changing way of communicating regarding the current situation and era. The role of the speaker in classroom communication is switched between the instructor and the student; the qualities of the teacher's speech in the classroom are also characterized by comparing them to those of the student. The elementary students nowadays are significantly different from students in the past. New proficiency theory of public speaking must be upgraded and teachers should keep up with the times. For this purpose, the study is conducted to find out some issues as below:

1. What are teachers' anxieties for holding the public speaking training?
2. How the training overcoming their anxieties?
3. What are the significant impacts to teachers' public speaking performance after the training?

METHOD

This research used qualitative methods to investigate teachers; anxieties, how the training overcome it, and how it impacts to their public speaking. It employed interviews and observations of ten teachers as participants to get in-depth information. Researchers only taken ten participants as the whole teachers' representative. Those are aimed to avoid researcher's bias by putting their prejudices on the finding. The principal will describe his supervision of teachers. It includes teachers' administration and teacher's need to sustain their professionalism.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research was conducted through one-to-one in-depth unstructured and semi-structured interviews. "Interviews remain the most common data collection method in qualitative research and are a familiar and flexible way of asking people about their opinions and experiences" (Moriarty, 2007). The semi-structured questions in this study were verified by three qualitative research experts. To gain the data, researchers obtained an interview with 10 participants with different subjects. Researchers used Indonesian language to interview the participants with regard for educators who lack fluency in the English language. Qualitative research interviews commonly involve researchers and participants who speak different first languages (Cortazzi et al., 2011). In this context, the interviewees are teachers who are not only teaching English but also other subjects and we consider their perspectives. It is an open-ended questioning interview conducted to in-depth explore their perception on the training and its benefits. The following is presented a detailed participants data:

Table 1

Characteristics of participants

ID	Gender	Age	Position	Teaching Experience
Participant 1	M	34	English teacher	10 years
Participant 2	F	38	Classroom teacher	2 years
Participant 3	M	38	Indonesian teacher	15 years
Participant 4	M	36	<i>Tahfidz</i> teacher	13 years
Participant 5	M	43	Math teacher	17 years
Participant 6	F	35	Classroom teacher	3 years
Participant 7	F	34	Sport teacher	9 years
Participant 8	F	26	Classroom teacher	5 years
Participant 9	F	24	Islamic Religion Teacher	1 year

Participant 10	M	25	Islamic Religion Teacher	2 years
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Data Analysis

Researchers conducted the observation to gain another insight of the research. “The additional time spent in observation offers insights that are unlikely to have been gained from interviews alone” (Moriarty, 2007). The training was conducted on August 2023, due to there is a gap time between interview and observation, researchers observe public speaking performance from the reel videos in Instagram. It shows two events in the elementary school which are P5R and Munaqosyah.

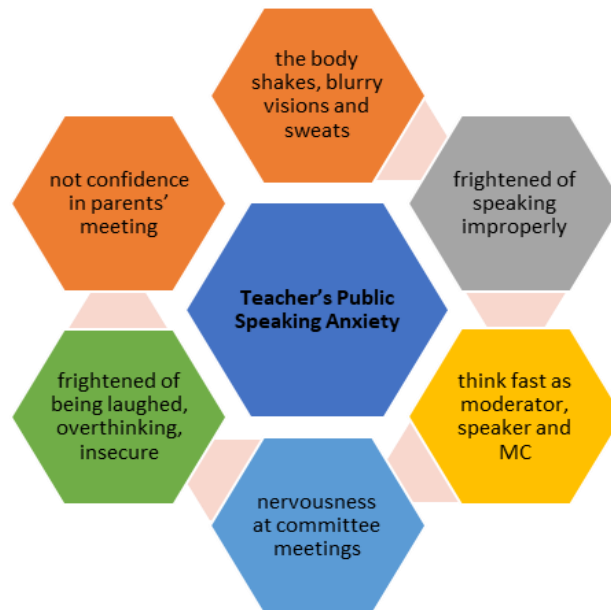
Besides the observation, researchers open and question the participants by some interview. The questions help researchers to proceed towards better understanding of teachers' perception on how the training is conducted and enhance teachers' professionalism in public speaking. The process typically begins with a general query, which gets more precise during analysis, and the end result of interpretation is arrived at when the researcher looks for solutions to the questions that the data have revealed:

The data gained will be presented as it is. However, there will also add researchers' view from observation about the topic discussed, the researchers' own view is revealed by how he or she presents questions to the text that is being analyzed. It is important that the researcher should point out the differences between his or her own views and those of the subjects, as well as their similarities. In addition, researchers should make such dialectic movements for structuring the new understanding in attempting to make an interpretation. It should be considerable for recognizing the mutual connection between the messages.

RESULTS

Teachers' Anxieties to Speak in Public

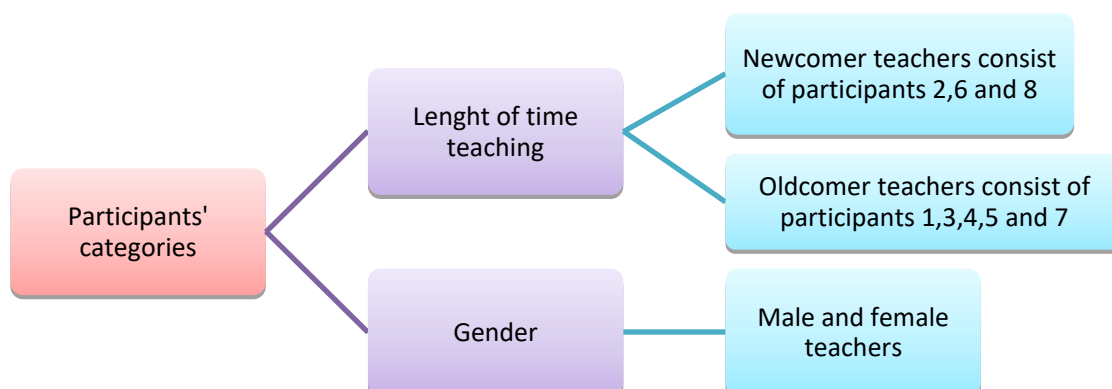
In the beginning of first semester 2023, the school held training by inviting a national public speaking trainer. Teachers were trained to be more confident speaking in public by giving some techniques to deal with discussion to parents, students, teachers and so on. They practiced to confidently speak in public. Theme initiation is dependent on the supervision of the principal. Accordingly, most teachers who were questioned in the supervision felt some anxieties about public speaking, thus they still struggle with engaging with parents and offering the pupils interactive teaching and learning in the class. After the interview, there are some anxieties felt by teachers including body shaking and sweating, nervousness at committee meetings, think fast as moderator, presenter or MC, overthinking, insecure, not confidence in parents' meeting, frightened of speaking improperly, unconfident, anxiousness, and afraid of being laughed.

Figure 1*Teacher's public speaking anxiety*

The periodic training program upgraded teachers' proficiency and professionalism very significantly. The principal assessed that teachers' professional and proficiency to speak in public are increasing after the training. It was proven by the supervision assessment, the increase of teachers' confidence in both conveying the material in front of students or discussing with parents, even doing the aside duties such as being MC and moderator. They seemed handed on by the training. By observation and interview, researchers consider that their anxieties are lessen.

Teachers' Perspective about The Training and its Impact

To reveal teachers' perspective, researchers will firstly divide participants into two categories depending on their working period: newcomers and oldcomers, as well as male and female. The result shows a distinctive working time period and gender which are very influential to the development. New teachers are more likely to be anxious than experienced ones. For example, they feel nervous while becoming moderator. While experienced teachers are more confident, they still struggle with speaking effectively, responding quickly to audience queries, and making policy decisions in meetings with parents and committees. Secondly, gender matters the way you speak in public. However, there are those newcomers who are confident and skilled in public speaking; they became apparent to prove their expertise.

Figure 2*Participants' categories*

The training activity contains some exercises consisting of practicing one by one and discussing the public speaking issues. It also serves as an effective means of communication and content delivery for general context but it is very useful for teaching and other purposes. The instructor conveyed some strategies to omit nervousness and tips on how to speak in the right tone. Researchers interviewed all the participants and gave them some interview questions. The result shows that there are some developments perceived by all the teachers after the training. Teachers' perspectives will be discussed in terms of participant classification. So, we will begin with the length of the teaching category and then proceed with the gender category.

First, the perspective from new comer teachers which are participants 2, 6, and 8. Based on the interview, there are some beneficial impacts on their public speaking proficiency. They explained that the trainer gave them some tips to eliminate speaking doubts such as; "eu" or "what". "It's better to be silent and pause the speaking for a while before continuing." Secondly, avoiding negative words like "no" or "difficult" becomes "it's not easy," they said that the trainer required them to be more convincing to the audiences by optimistic words. Also, they may not point with their index finger, it should be open and not clasped. They also perceived that there are many beneficial impacts, such as their speaking performance becoming clearer, confidence, understandable, and engaged in communicating more effectively. Participants 7 started to stop saying "eu" "mm" and tried to convey authority by speaking in a low tone. While participants 2 and 6 highlighted some uncomfortable issues to be corrected yet found some favorable influences, they are not frightened of being laughed at again because being insecure is merely a mindset. Researchers observed some Instagram feeds regarding their public speaking performance. There are two reels showing participants 6 and 7 were presenting the foundation anniversary and Munaqosyah event as an MC. They seem shifted and the anxieties become normal and natural rather than a horrible monster like the previous statement. It means that they already know what is their priority to concentrate on something they can control. After observing, researchers asked them about their preparation before performing and said that they did more practice in the setting and audiences that they will be in. Hence, with repetitive practices, they become accustomed to lowering anxieties.

However, some facts emerge by portraying participants 9 and 10 who performed the otherwise. Looking to the Instagram video, they seem to be more competent and confident. Researchers consider that they are experienced and skillful for being MC seemed by their gestures, attitude, convincing audience by a good speaking skill and intonation, a firm voice, and confident. "In general, to be a good MC you must have overall public speaking skills such as speaking skills, gesture, eye contact, content, and diction selection" (Rizkya, 2024). Rizkya (2024) also highlighted a few factors to take into account when honing public speaking abilities, such as self-confidence, be able to maintain attitude, solve problems and find solutions quickly and precisely and be able to organize the audience so that the event runs smoothly as desired. Researchers also collect the interview data from these two participants. It was shown that they see themselves as having prior experience with public speaking as they used to be done in organizations. Participant 9 was active in Scout when she was in college. She was interested in public speaking and constantly asked to lead some events in scout. While participant 10 was a member of the organization too. He has a firm voice and a public speaking attitude. However, his diction is not as precise as in participant 9. He tends to use a long-winded sentences or phrases. "To be a good MC, you must have overall public speaking skills such as speaking skills, pronunciation and diction selection" (Layla & Megawati, 2023). Furthermore, they are professional MC who always work in weddings or other events and take side jobs when they are off or free from school duties.

Second, the perspective of experienced older teachers consisting of participants 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. After observing the reel's video on Instagram, researchers analyzed two videos that showed School Project and P5R events. The oldcomers are more confident and skillful except participant 7. Researchers consider that they are experienced enough performing in public so their mentality is honed. However, participant 7 seemed nervous while performing his public speaking in P5R events when he announced the students. Researcher considered that he is a sport teacher who is not used

to performing a formal event that required him to be a formal performer. We validated it in the further interview and he stated that formal occasions are not his preference. He tends to be more confident in a casual situation since he is a field person. Whereas the rest of the oldcomer's teachers were confident, in fact they still felt uncomfortable, but they could control and hide their nervousness so that they didn't appear panicked while making errors in public. Furthermore, their instincts are very strong and honed in deciding things, especially in meetings. They tend to be steadier and calmer but have a fast-thinking proficiency in making solution.

The final category is viewed from gender. Male teachers are more confident, systematic, good instinct, to the point, short sentences, more prominent, ignoring to partner error, fast thinker, and precise (except participant 10). While female teachers are confident, systematic, rich in vocabulary, responsive to the partner error, syntactic, and speak in a proper tone. Both male and female are good at public speaking if they prepare it very well. However, they have their own distinctive character. Based on the observations, female teachers use public speaking theory the most as compared to male teachers who tend to be more ignorant. It is examined based on the pre-interview from the principal's supervision data and after the training is conducted. Thus, every skill is proficient to anyone who is willing to, since they practice and struggle to attain it frequently. Thus, public speaking is a process, an act and an art of making a speech in front of the audience rather than a science. As a teacher, it is needed to be a good public speaker.

DISCUSSION

Being proficient in public speaking means teacher have met one of the professional competencies. According to [Helmi \(2015\)](#), a professional teacher should master the four competencies, namely: first, Pedagogic competence is the ability of teachers to manage learning activity in the classroom. Secondly, professional competence indicates the ability of teachers for being up to date to the latest science for the development that always be dynamic. Third, social competence, it will be seen whether a teacher can work together with the community, students, and colleagues. Lastly, personality competence. In addition, these competencies are associated with teachers' personality. They should have noble qualities that make them to be role models for the students. Professional teacher development program refers to the process by which teachers' areas are educated and have certain standards and qualifications as professional teachers ([Khulaifiyah, 2017](#)). It implies that teachers' proficiency and professionalism must be periodically upgraded adjusting to the recent teaching trends, methods, self-proficiency, and many aspects.

Teachers' public speaking is associated with what [Petek \(2014\)](#) referred as "instructional speech". Accordingly, "A part of pedagogical speech known as instructional speech is used by teachers to impart subject-specific knowledge (by explaining, illustrating, posing instructional questions etc.), and through which students acquire new knowledge" ([Petek, 2014](#)). Teaching is not about acting and speaking in complex words; rather, it's about being flexible and blending in to see things from the perspective of the students. The teacher should communicate in a way that the students accept and influences them in accordance with the message's goal. However, there are some conditions required teacher to be a professional public speaker. In addition to instructing in the classroom, there are other duties that must be fulfilled. Teachers are transformed into various roles for specific events, such as being MC, the main committee, committee of Munaqosyah of tahfidz event, presenter, moderator event organizer, event division, and providing services to parents via consulting. As public speakers, they have to carry out their responsibilities with professionalism and give their best performance.

All the participants agreed that they need to sustain professionalism particularly in public speaking. They considered that the changing times have an impact on how they communicate. It retrieves to the broader literacies and information people can access and influence to their communication context to the most updated information. Seeing this phenomenon, teachers believe they need to improve and sustain their public speaking proficiencies. Moreover, teachers need to engage with different backgrounds among students, colleagues, and parents, in attempt to engage

with those elements effectively and it doesn't cause any misunderstanding in communication. Engaging in a certain element can significantly improve the school environment and foster excellent colleague relationships. Engaging with pupils will help them better understand the material. And communicating with parents in an attempt to serve as the best mediator between the school and the parents to convey students learning development or any school policies to be known. To become a skilled public speaker, they feel that they must also master strategies and gain understanding. So, they proposed public speaking as their current need in supervision assessed by principal to become the core theme of the training in that semester.

This research shows that public speaking training is proven to increase teachers' anxieties to speak in public. In addition to previous study by [Apriani \(2023\)](#), a simple course offered to students who experience anxieties relating to public speaking can be effective in reducing these anxieties. Accordingly, enrollment in communication courses emphasizing speaking proficiency and public speaking confidence for students. Another research by [Quinn and Goody \(2019\)](#), shows that the public speaking training is also impactful to participants' performance. The research was resulted in significant decreases in scores on two standardized measures of public speaking anxiety, the Audience Anxiety Scale and the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension.

CONCLUSION

To enhance teaching quality, schools must prioritize professional development for teachers, focusing on essential competencies like public speaking. At the elementary school in Arcamanik, training has shown that both new and experienced teachers can overcome anxieties and improve their skills, leading to greater confidence and effectiveness. Schools should implement regular, accessible public speaking workshops tailored to teachers' needs. These programs can foster professional growth and help create a supportive environment for effective teaching.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any potential conflict of interest.

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