

## Strategically Speaking English: Upgrading Public Speaking Skills through Strategy Training in High Schools

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### ABSTRACT

This article describes planning, implementation, and long-term strategies of a community service project and aims to help high school students become more proficient public speakers. The first step of the preparation process was determining the needs of the students through preliminary surveys. Next, a WhatsApp group was created for coordination, and Zoom meetings were held to address the difficulties that the students were having with English public speaking. The main problems that were found were pessimism, fear of making mistakes, articulation difficulties, and lack of confidence. To solve these problems, training materials including the basic theory of public speaking, speaking techniques, real-world exercises, and self-evaluation were created. Videos and PowerPoint presentations were also included in both onsite and online training. The program's execution comprised eight sessions where students learned about different public speaking techniques, put them into practice, and got feedback. Strategies for sustainability, including ongoing teacher training, frequent workshops, the creation of accessible learning modules, the establishment of public speaking groups, and recurring evaluations, were suggested to guarantee the program's long-term impact. The project effectively increased students' self-assurance and public speaking abilities, and continued and increased training efforts. To format your abstract, use the Microsoft Word template style.

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## INTRODUCTION

High school students' speaking ability has become the key element developed in the secondary education curriculum, where the enhancement of this skill is carried out through both in-class and extracurricular learning and teaching processes. The speaking ability of high school students is integrated across various subjects through activities such as discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and class presentations. This reflects stakeholders' deep understanding of the critical role speaking skills play in supporting students' learning processes. The more students improve their speaking or communication skills, the greater their opportunities for development. Therefore, it is crucial for high school students to learn how to build effective communication.

In addition to the urgency behind the integration of speaking skills into the school curriculum, the challenges of speaking itself are important to discuss and seek alternative solutions for. The challenges faced by high school students, particularly in the context of difficulties in public speaking, especially in English, have become an interesting issue to discuss and research in recent years (Fathoni et al., 2021; Krisnawati, 2020; Mashudi et al., 2020). According to 21st-century skills theory, there are four skills that must be mastered by Indonesia's younger generation, which cannot be replaced by today's technology, commonly known as Artificial Intelligence (AI). These four skills include collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. These skills are considered important to master and cannot be developed instantly. In other words, in today's education curriculum, schools must emphasize project-based or outcome-based education where the learning process focuses on reasoning, active thinking, creativity, and collaboration. The implementation of this education system in schools shows sensitivity to the actual needs in the educational environment, which is the focus of this community service.

Among the four 21st-century skills, one of the most important for high school students to master first is communication skills. Communication skills positively contribute to the personal and educational development of high school students. In addition to improving academic performance at school, mastering communication skills prepares students for the workforce, develops their social abilities, and enhances their reasoning and critical thinking when facing any situation. Communication skills are also linked to public speaking abilities, and one of the crucial skills that high school students need to master in the 21st century is the ability to speak in public using an international language, in this case, English. Communication skills will also boost students' confidence in communicating in English, thus preparing them to face global challenges. According to Marani (2021) dan Riwayatningsih et al. (2021) in their article, individuals who possess better communication skills tend to achieve better academic performance due to their ability to interact effectively. Furthermore, Anggraini et al. (2020); Girsang (2018); Hartini & Chumaeson (2021) also stated that high school students' involvement in public speaking activities can influence their English proficiency, particularly in terms of mastering confidence and fluency in delivering messages.

Mastering communication or public speaking skills at school certainly cannot be done by students without the guidance of a teacher or tutor who is an expert in this field. Such activities must be continuously conducted to produce Indonesia's golden generation by 2045. Not only the involvement of teachers, but the role of lecturers as educators at the higher education level also becomes a source of knowledge for students to gain inspiration in enhancing their speaking abilities, especially in English. According to Hartini & Chumaeson (2021) dan Annissa & Putra (2021), intensive training programs by educators at universities in the field of public speaking show a significant improvement in students' confidence. This is because intensive exploration and demonstrations are conducted by lecturers to students, providing a different atmosphere by bringing practitioners into schools.

In this community service activity, the team aimed to contribute to high school students in several schools in East Java, Indonesia. The team considered the activity based on the urgency explained in the introduction section by providing intensive public speaking training in English, given that the head of the

team has expertise in public speaking, and all team members are lecturers from the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Islam Malang. The illustration of this community service activity, titled 'Strategically Speaking English: Enhancing Public Speaking Skills through Speaking Strategy Training at High Schools,' is shown in the following diagram.

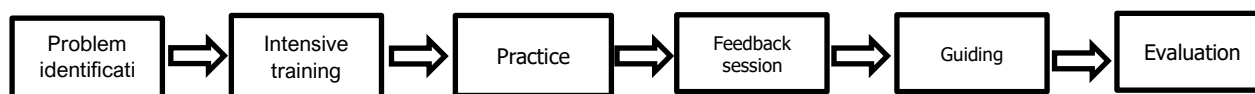


FIGURE 1. Illustration of English Public Speaking

## METHODS

The implementation of the community service program on public speaking for high school students is carried out through six stages: problem identification, intensive training, practical training, feedback sessions, mentoring, and final evaluation. Each stage is described in detail in the following section:

Problem identification is a crucial initial stage carried out by the community service team. Before conducting the program on English public speaking strategies for high school students, the team first conducts a problem identification activity with several teachers to assess the importance and need for public speaking in English at the school. Additionally, problem identification is conducted with the participants via Zoom for 90 minutes. The team and the participants discuss issues faced in public speaking, particularly in English. This is done to align the training materials with the participants' needs and challenges.

This intensive training is the core part of the community service program, where the team provides training over eight sessions to strengthen participants' English-speaking skills. This practical training is conducted both offline and online by the community service team from the English Education Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at the Islamic University of Malang.

Students are involved in practical training sessions where they are given opportunities to practice newly learned public speaking skills. This includes various activities such as presentation simulations, group discussions, and direct feedback from lecturers and peers.

In this stage, the community service team provides regular feedback sessions where participants receive constructive evaluations from lecturers and their peers regarding their public speaking training in English. The goal is to help them identify areas for improvement and strengthen the positive aspects of their presentations.

Public speaking simulations at the school involve all students presenting material or specific topics in front of an audience. This event provides real-world experience and enhances students' confidence in public speaking. Additionally, the community service team, consisting of lecturers from the English Education Department of FKIP Unisma, will offer direct support and supervision throughout the program.

A satisfaction survey is conducted among the students regarding the program, followed by a final evaluation to measure the achievement of the program's objectives. The results of this survey and evaluation will be used to improve the program in the future.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In the preparation stage for the community service program titled 'Strategically Speaking English: Enhancing Public Speaking Skills Through Speech Strategy Training in Senior High Schools,' the team has

carried out several important activities to ensure that the training runs smoothly and effectively. Below are the details of the preparations that have been made.

### Preparation Identifying Students' Needs

An initial survey was conducted at various high schools through discussions with teachers, including those from SMA Islam Nusantara, MA Ma'arif Singosari, MA Ma'arif Kota Batu, SMA Negeri Senduro, SMA N 1 Banyuwangi, and SMA N 1 Lamongan. The teachers recommended their students to participate in a public speaking training program organized by the English Education Department of FKIP Unisma Malang. After identifying the students who would join the training, the facilitators gathered them in a WhatsApp group to ease coordination throughout the community service activity. In the WhatsApp group discussion, the facilitators organized a Zoom meeting to discuss the students' challenges in conducting public speaking in English. It was found that among the 11 students who joined, they mentioned that public speaking in English posed a unique challenge, as students had to accommodate the content of the speech in English. Of the 11 students participating, they expressed a desire to master public speaking strategies to reduce problems when speaking in front of an audience. The identified issues included confidence, articulation, fear of making mistakes when speaking in English, and pessimism. From the discussion with these students, these points became the basis for the facilitators to design the materials and strategies to be provided during the training sessions.

### Developing Training Materials

The community service team then developed training materials relevant to the students' needs regarding public speaking. The materials included the basic theory of public speaking, speaking strategy techniques, practice sessions through various public speaking activities, and self-evaluation/performance evaluation in public speaking. The training materials were also supplemented with public speaking videos and PowerPoint presentations to support interactive learning between students.

### Implementation

The stages of the Community Service activity on "Strategically Speaking English: Enhancing Public Speaking Skills Through Speaking Strategy Training in High Schools" could include the following steps:

**TABLE 1.** The implementation of public speaking

Meeting	Activities
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of students and lecturers</li> <li>2. Explanation about the community service activity 'Public Speaking' organized by the English Education Department, FKIP Unisma Malang</li> <li>3. Presentation on the definition, objectives, and examples of public speaking activities</li> </ol>
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The presentation on public speaking strategies includes relaxation strategies. Relaxation strategies consist of facial exercises, breath control, the use of a smiling voice, and engaging in positive self-talk.</li> <li>2. The participants practice these strategies during the second day of public speaking training.</li> <li>3. The presentation also covers visualization techniques in public speaking, including visualizing successful speaking, achieving goals, feeling happy, and maintaining consistency for self-improvement.</li> <li>4. The participants practice these strategies with guidance from the instructor.</li> </ol>
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practical public speaking strategies include ADLIB speaking, voice modulation, and practicing gestures. These strategies are central to the success of public speaking.</li> <li>2. Students are provided with activities to practice these three strategies directly under the guidance of the lecturer.</li> <li>3. Presentation of strategies for opening an event, introductions, and how to create intervals during public speaking practice.</li> <li>4. Students are given activities to practice these three strategies directly under the guidance of the lecturer</li> </ol>
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The presentation of public speaking strategies practically includes ADLIB speaking, voice modulation, and gesture training. These strategies are the core of public speaking training.</li> <li>2. Students are given an activity to practice ADLIB Speaking, which involves spontaneously describing objects around them for 1 minute without stopping. This activity is designed to enhance fluency and creativity in presenting information.</li> </ol>

Meeting	Activities
	3. Students are provided with examples of voice modulation and gestures suitable for public speaking activities and practice these strategies to further improve their public speaking skills
5	1. Presentation on "How to be a Master of Ceremony" through PowerPoint, videos, and lecturer demonstrations. 2. Students practice being a Master of Ceremony. 3. Students provide feedback on their peers' performance
6	1. Presentation of material on "being an English voice over" through PowerPoint, video, and lecturer demonstration. 2. Students practice as master of ceremony. 3. Students provide feedback on their peers' performance
7	1. Presentation of material on "How to be an impressive storyteller" through PowerPoint, video, and lecturer demonstration. 2. Students practice being master of ceremony. 3. Students provide feedback on their peers' performance
8	1. Evaluation of public speaking activities for high school students 2. Implementing follow-up activities for public speaking events

By following these stages, the implementation of the public speaking community service program can proceed in a structured and effective manner, and achieve the goal of enhancing students' public speaking skills at the Senior High School level or equivalent.



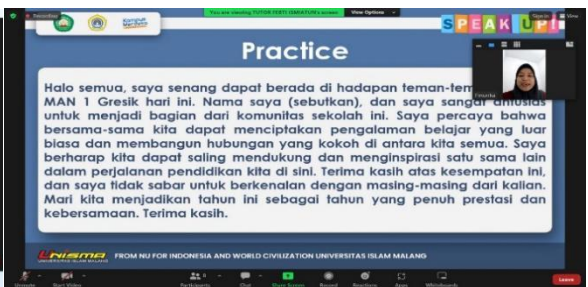
(a)



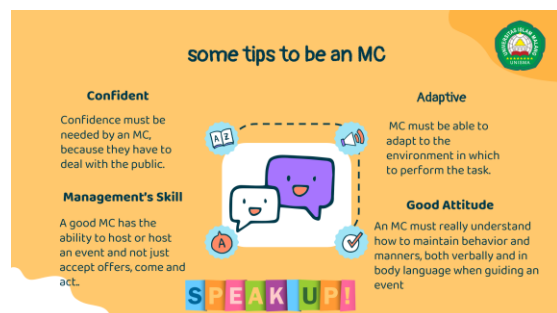
(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

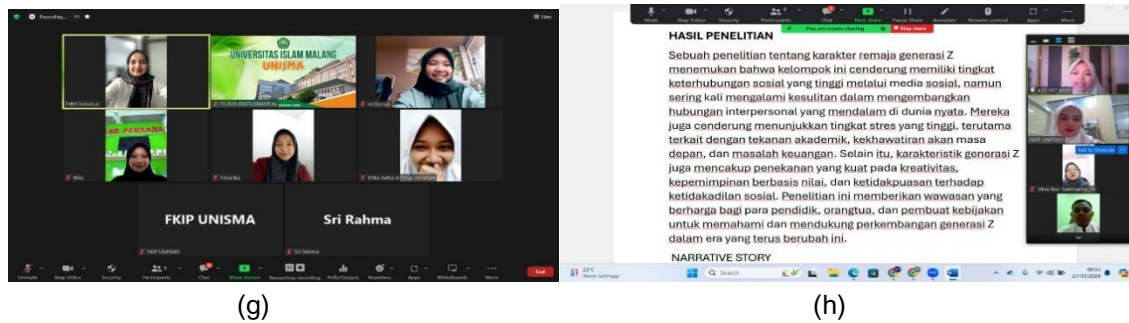


FIGURE 2. Introduction to the public speaking and the explanation (a) (b); How to be a voice over (c) (d); To be a good master of ceremony (e) (f); To be a good story teller (g) (h)

### Sustainability Strategies

- Advanced Training for Teachers by training them to engage in this program to continue public speaking training for students sustainably.
- Organizing Periodic Workshops (e.g., every semester) for students to keep their skills sharpened and maintain their motivation to develop public speaking abilities.
- Developing Digital and Print Learning Modules for public speaking that can be accessed by students and teachers anytime. This material includes strategies that have been taught, practical techniques, and examples of public speaking activities.
- Establishing a Public Speaking Club by encouraging schools to form a student-managed public speaking club with teacher guidance. This club can serve as a venue for students to continue practicing and hold internal competitions.
- Conducting Periodic Evaluations of students' public speaking skills after training. This evaluation can be carried out at the end of each semester to measure progress and identify areas needing improvement. Additionally, collecting feedback from students, teachers, and parents to assess the program's effectiveness and obtain suggestions for improvement.

### Discussion

In the community service activity titled 'Strategically Speaking English: Enhancing Public Speaking Skills Through Speech Strategy Training at High Schools,' a series of preparations and implementations were carried out to ensure the smoothness and effectiveness of the training program. The following is a discussion of the results of this activity.

Preparations began with identifying students' needs through surveys and discussions with teachers from various high schools in Malang and its surroundings. Teachers from SMA Islam Nusantara, MA Ma'arif Singosari, MA Ma'arif Kota Batu, SMA Negeri Senduro, SMA N 1 Banyuwangi, and SMA N 1 Lamongan recommended students who were interested in and needed improvement in public speaking skills in English. After identifying the students who would participate in the training, the organizers gathered them into a WhatsApp group to facilitate coordination. In initial discussions via Zoom meetings, several challenges faced by the students in public speaking were identified, such as lack of confidence, articulation issues, fear of making mistakes, and pessimism. This information served as a basis for the organizing team to develop relevant and targeted training materials.

The community service team then developed training materials that included basic public speaking theory, speech strategy techniques, practical exercises, and self-evaluation. The materials were supplemented with public speaking videos and PowerPoint presentations to support interactive learning. The training was designed to address the issues faced by students and help them master important

strategies in public speaking. Afrilia & Arifina (2022); Razali et al. (2023); Rusliyawati et al. (2022); and Vidiadari et al. (2021) public speaking training becomes an effective medium for improving communication skills as learners understand the strategies applied in presenting opinions in front of the public.

The implementation of the activity was divided into several meetings with different focuses. The first meeting involved introductions between students and lecturers and provided an understanding of the public speaking activities that would be conducted. Subsequent meetings focused on public speaking strategies such as relaxation, visualization, ADLIB speaking, voice training, and gesture practice. Students were given direct practice activities to apply these strategies. The training also included sessions on becoming a master of ceremony, voice-over, and storyteller. At the end of the training, an evaluation was conducted on students' public speaking abilities to measure their progress.

To ensure the sustainability of the program, several strategies were designed. Follow-up training for teachers was organized so they could continue the program independently. Periodic workshops were planned to continuously sharpen students' skills. Fitrananda et al. (2018) dan Maspuroh et al. (2023) state that public speaking workshops are a crucial means for students to increase their courage and confidence in speaking in public. Digital and printed public speaking learning modules were also prepared for access at any time. The establishment of a public speaking club at the school was encouraged as a platform for practice and internal competition among students. Regular evaluations of students' public speaking skills were conducted to measure progress and improve the program based on feedback from students, teachers, and parents.

This community service activity was successfully conducted in a structured and effective manner, with the main goal of enhancing students' public speaking skills at high schools. Through thorough preparation, relevant material development, and systematic implementation, the program provided positive impacts for students in overcoming public speaking challenges and developing public speaking skills. The sustainability strategies applied also ensure that the benefits of this program can be experienced in the long term.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the community service activity titled "Strategically Speaking English: Enhancing Public Speaking Skills Through Speech Strategy Training in High Schools" successfully provided in-depth understanding and practical skills in public speaking to high school students. This activity covered various aspects of public speaking, ranging from basic introductions to the application of practical and specific strategies. Students were introduced to relaxation strategies, visualization techniques, ADLIB speaking strategies, voice modulation, and gestures. Additionally, the training included sessions on how high school students could become masters of ceremony, voice-over artists, and storytellers. Each session was accompanied by demonstrations from the lecturers and hands-on practice by the students, followed by feedback sessions to enhance their performance. The final evaluation showed a significant improvement in the students' public speaking abilities, particularly in terms of confidence, fluency, and the use of appropriate strategies when speaking in public, especially in English.

Therefore, several aspects that need attention are: a) **Expanding the Training Reach** to ensure that similar activities are held regularly and cover more high schools in other regions to provide broader benefits to students, b) **Developing the Training Module** that has been used, which can be refined and further developed, including the addition of materials on the use of technology in public speaking, such as presentations with multimedia tools, c) **Ongoing Mentorship** with continuous mentoring programs for students who show great interest and potential in public speaking. This can help them further develop their skills and provide more personalized guidance, d) **Collaboration with Public Speaking Practitioners** by involving public speaking practitioners or professionals in the training, which can provide different and more practical perspectives to students. It can also be a good networking opportunity for them, and e) **Continuous**



**Evaluation** of the progress of students who have participated in the training to ensure that they continue to develop the skills taught and can apply them in various contexts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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