



## How Public Speaking Promotes Critical Thinking Skills: Manuscript Method

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### ABSTRAK

*Kemampuan berpidato dalam bahasa Inggris sering dianggap sebagai hal yang sangat menantang di kalangan sekolah menengah atas. Kegiatan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (PKM) ini bertujuan untuk memberi solusi atas permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh Pondok Modern Al-Ghozali dalam mewujudkan salah satu tujuan pembelajaran yaitu santri mampu berbahasa Inggris dengan baik, khusus berpidato. Pondok Modern ini berada di desa Curug Kecamatan Gunungsindur kabupaten Bogor, dan kegiatan ini diikuti oleh 30 santriwati. Dari hasil observasi melalui diskusi dengan mitra, kendala utama para santriwati dalam melakukan pidato berbahasa Inggris adalah kurangnya pemahaman teknik berpidato dalam Bahasa Inggris, kurangnya kosa-kata dalam menyampaikan pokok pikiran, kurang percaya diri, kurangnya kemampuan berpikir kritis, serta kurangnya kesempatan mempraktekkan apa yang telah mereka pelajari. Maka dari itu, kami memberikan solusi antara lain: mengajarkan teknik berpidato yang baik dan benar, memberi bimbingan setiap group oleh mahasiswa yang dimulai dari memilih topik yang mereka sukai, memberi kosa-kata yang mereka perlukan untuk topik bahasan yang mereka pilih, membuat kerangka pidato, membantu menyusun manuskrip berdasarkan hasil diskusi group, serta mempraktekkan di depan kelas. Metode Manuskrip ini diharapkan bisa menjadi panduan yang mudah untuk dilaksanakan oleh para santriwati. Oleh sebab itu dalam PKM kali ini kami mengusung tema 'How Public Speaking Promotes Critical Thinking (Manuscript Method).' Hasil dari kegiatan ini menunjukkan bahwa para peserta tidak hanya semakin berani menyampaikan pemikirannya di depan umum, tetapi juga menunjukkan kemampuan mereka dalam berpikir kritis khusus dalam melakukan improvisasi berpidato.*

**Kata Kunci:** Berpidato, Berfikir kritis, Metode Manuskrip.

### ABSTRACT

Public Speaking skills are often thought of as a challenging skill for secondary students. This community service aimed to provide a solution for the challenge faced by Pondok Modern Al Ghazali in endeavoring the better learning achievement: enabling the students to gain English skills, particularly speeches. This school is located in Curug–Gunung Sindur, Bogor Regency, and this activity is participated by 30 female secondary students. The observation results, based on the discussion with a partner, show that the primary challenges for these female students in acquiring English speeches are unfamiliarity with the technique, minimum vocabulary in expressing their main ideas, being unconfident, minimum critical thinking ability, and lacking the opportunity to practice. Hence, we aim to offer resolution as the following: teach the public speaking technique appropriately and correctly, provide guidance for each group by the university student beginning from choosing the topic they like, introduce more vocabulary items associated with the topic, create a speech outline, assist the composition of the manuscript based on the group discussion, and provide an opportunity to practice the speech in front of the class. This manuscript method is expected to be an easy guidance for the participants to practice the speech. Having this, our title for this community service is 'How Public Speaking Promotes Critical Thinking (Manuscript Method).' The results showed that the activity not only boosted the participants confidence in expressing their ideas in front of the class, but also promoted their critical thinking especially in improvising their speech.

**Keywords:** Critical Thinking, Manuscript Method, Public Speaking,

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54832/judimas.v2i1.261>



## Introduction

Public speaking skills are now crucially important not only for those studying in a public school but also students studying in Islamic Boarding Schools. Islamic boarding schools need more support to achieve their goals of having equal quality with many other types of schools as they study not only general state curriculum but also Islamic studies which are blended together. The students studying in Islamic Boarding Schools have more subjects and need longer hours to finish. Therefore, ideally, they have boarding schools to provide the needs. However, the plentiful number of subjects learned has caused insufficient exposure to particular skills, especially public speaking. To be able to speak fluently and confidently the students need sufficient exposure like having the habit of building small talk (Taman, et al., 2023) and having the natural custom of speaking English in their daily activities.

Based on the observation conducted, many students said that they are not familiar with public speaking techniques, and the minimum vocabulary range has made it difficult to express their thoughts in their speech. The students mentioned further that the vast majority of them experienced anxiety and worries when speaking in front of many people. The observation results also do not show much critical thinking ability, particularly when they are asked questions about their reasoning ability to respond to questions about a variety of topics that are happening around us in our daily lives. They mainly are not able to relate the recent topics with what is happening in their surroundings. Another fundamental challenge is that the students have seldom been allowed to make a speech in front of the class in English. With the challenges identified, public speaking skills are one further step of achievement for this school by these female students.

Being anxious when speaking in public is actually a common thing. To become a critical thinker, to enhance the speakers' both verbal and non-verbal communication ability, and to get rid of the nervousness is to have a public speaking class ("Stand Up, Speak Out Pract. Ethics Public Speak.," 2016). The benefits of public speaking skills are known to have been varied ranging from successful communication ability which eventually impacts the academic performance to personal ability such as conquering speech apprehension, the improvement of verbal and non-verbal language, and on top of that, the development of critical thinking (Taman, 2020). In an Islamic boarding school it is very common to have *muhadarah* lessons, which is also known as public speaking for common people. This ability is crucial for them to prepare them to do *da'wah* or preaching in their later years. Having



*da'wah* in English would enable the speakers with a wider scope of audience, not only Indonesian moslem but also moslem around the world. Being critical thinkers who are able to solve problems is an obvious goal for every educator in serving school years for their students. Students who are strongly aware of their surroundings would be able to analyze the current happening and conduct research carefully to provide credible information which enhances the accuracy of the data presented (Taman, 2020). Therefore, this community services aimed not only to support the students for their public speaking ability, but more importantly to assist them to become critical thinkers.

The principle purpose of community services conducted by the tertiary level of the educational body should be orientated to solving problems in the society surrounding and upgrading knowledge and technology in order to leverage the society (Riduwan, 2016). Most obvious public speaking apprehension, and anxiety, which is experienced by many students needs tackling thoroughly by, for instance, active engagement by the trainer, interactive classroom atmosphere, rehearsal, better preparation, and positive reassurance from the audience (Rahayu et al., 2022). Becoming a critical thinker during the academic year would bring the same ability later in the students' life in their careers (Shaw et al., 2020). One example of research stated that there was a strong correlation between critical thinking ability and clinical-decision made by early-year students (İlaslan et al., 2022) in their health department. One way to help improve critical thinking ability for students is to undergo higher education. The outcome of the assessment which can be used for both formative and summative feedback would lead to students' self-reflection and improve higher level of thinking skills (İlaslan et al., 2022).

A study indicates that there are three areas (cognitive modification, systematic desensitization, and skills training) in order to reduce public speaking nervousness, and by helping improving those three abilities would allow the students to reduce their apprehension (Allen et al., 1989). The primary factors that apprehended the public speaking in Pondok Modern Al Ghazali based on the observations prior to the community service were the less engaging lessons. In other words, there has been limited interaction during the learning process due to the shyness of the students, and the learning activity has been rather monotonous. Many students have not been interested in learning public speaking in English because they could not yet relate the urgency in doing *da'wah* in English. There is a strong indication that less productive classes may also not be able to develop rapid vocabulary range



to support the students' speech. The limitation of vocabulary range may eventually cause anxiety when speaking (Taman, et al., 2023). Thus, the purpose of this community service, specifically, is to support the students' ability to make a speech in English by: (1) training them the technique of public speaking step by step, (2) broadening their vocabulary range to ease them share their ideas, (3) assisting them to increase their confidence, (4) providing them opportunity to practice what they have learned, and more importantly (5) guiding them to develop their critical thinking ability. The general roles of the community service are to participate the government's program in escalating the human resources in the vicinity campus area. Secondly, it provides opportunity for the lecturers and the university students to broaden their network and develop their teaching competency. This activity is also aimed to bring further benefits like motivating schoolchildren to be more aware the benefit of speaking English ability, and it is a further step after the previous training of prolonging the speech using small talks (Taman, et al., 2023).

## Methods

The implementation of public speaking in this community is to promote critical thinking, and it is conducted in Pondok Modern Al-Ghozali, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. It is done in three days, Tuesday – Thursday, 5-7 April 2023. The activities were conducted in three sections: (1) Visitation and observation which were done in the previous month. The results of the visitation and observation are then proposed to the university institution. Having been approved by the university, the lecturers team were then waiting for the schedule given by Pondok Pesantren Al Ghazali; (2) From the services proposal, the university institution assigned the lecturers team to prepare the materials relating to public speaking and how it enables the students to become more critical thinkers. The lecturer team is going to introduce the public speaking technique at the beginning using a manuscript method. The manuscript method is chosen as it provides strategic planning to attract the students' interest, and hopefully they become more motivated and dare to stand in front of the class to do a speech. One way to raise the students' attention is to provide practice time. Thus, the lecturers team set several steps as follow: (a) A speech conducted directly by the university students as part of the community services team; (b) Make a group; (c) Knowledge sharing especially on how to do a public speaking; (d) introduce and guide the students to prepare and do the speech by using manuscript method. By giving a direct example of a speech done by the university



student, we hope to show a good way to conduct a speech in English which is not monotonous.

In this modeling phase, we provide manuscripts which topics are suitable for the schoolchildren that they find the topics interesting. After the modeling, the students are divided into several groups so that each group can be guided by one university student to do the speech preparation with various different topics. They are also given an opportunity to add further information written in the manuscript that is associated with the topic through a group discussion, and given a wide opportunity to edit the content of the speech based on the brainstorming process conducted during the preparation. The brainstorming activity, the group discussion, and the freedom of adding ideas to the existing manuscript is expected to enhance their critical thinking ability; (3) The final section is the practice. The students are required to do a speech in English like what has been conducted at the beginning by the mentor, the university student, and during the group training process. The detailed procedures are as follows: divide the students into groups, discussion of speaking technique and giving vocabulary associated to the topics, practicing the speech in English, speaking practice in a group, and finally to do the speech in front of the class in turn by sending the representative of the group to the time limit.

We can see the speaking ability of the participants by observing the way they do the speech as we know that the measurement of English achievement is mainly seen from the speaking and writing ability as the productive skills. In other words, the acquisition of public speaking ability is proven when they are able to conduct the speech. The community services team uses a table of evaluation to measure if the method works well for the group. The university students along with the lecturers mark the performance of the female students in Pondok Pesantren Al Ghazali when they do the speech. The evaluation is recorded for each participant based on the simple rubric that ranks the performance for 1-5 score indicating from low to high performance. The top performers gain the average score of 5 by adding the achievement from each sub content and delivery items. Then, the total is divided by 10 to get the average (Studies & No, n.d.). The rubric can be completely seen in the following table:



Table 1. Rubric for Public Speaking

| <b>Rubric for Public Speaking</b>  |   |  |   |         |   |     |
|--|---|--|---|---------|---|-----|
| Student's Name _____   |   | Date _____   |   |         |   |     |
| Course name and number _____   |   | Professional Studies Group No. _____<br><i>(if applicable)</i> |   |         |   |     |
| Instructor:  |   |  |   |         |   |     |
| <i>Circle one number (1-5) for each category. Add the total and divide by 10 for an average. Names and courses are not included in the final report but are used for tracking purposes. Return this rubric to Tony Narkawicz at the Institutional Research Office. Edie Wagner, in Professional Studies, is the Coordinator and can also collect rubrics and answer questions.</i> |   |  |   |         |   |     |
| <b>Content</b>   |   |  |   |         |   |     |
|  |   | High   |   | Average |   | Low |
| 1  | States the purpose.   | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 2  | Organizes the content.                                      | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 3  | Supports ideas.   | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 4  | Incorporates stories and examples.                          | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 5  | Summarizes the main idea(s).                                | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| <b>Delivery</b>  |   |  |   |         |   |     |
|  |   | High   |   | Average |   | Low |
| 6  | Demonstrates awareness of listener's needs.                 | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 7  | Speaks clearly with appropriate vocabulary and information. | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 8  | Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools.                      | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 9  | Demonstrates complexity of vocabulary and thought.          | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |
| 10   | Appears comfortable with audience.                          | 5  | 4 | 3       | 2 | 1   |

## Results and Discussion

Having analyzed the performance of the students in Pondok Modern Al Ghazali, the team found out that the vast majority of the students so far have not maximized their potency in improving their English ability, particularly the public speaking. The public speaking technique to enhance their critical thinking is one alternative learning method which can be



the material evaluation to motivate the students and explore more about their capacity in English. As it has been mentioned previously that the steps conducting the training are: introduction (brainstorming and group discussion), practice (done in front of the class and in group), and the last one is evaluation (the team give tips and trick after watching the students' performance (what should have been or shouldn't have been done). We hope that the tips and tricks can be implemented when speaking in both daily activities and the school's one. The participants look so happy, enthusiastic, and motivated to acquire public speaking skills. It is shown by their overall performance observed by using the public speaking criteria.

Many students actually had shown a wonderful potency during the training. They may have been able to transfer their ability from the *muhaddarah* session into this public speaking session. Some of them, however, experienced anxiety during the preparation, especially when about to go in front of the class to execute the plan. Further explanation and more speaking practice in the small group was conducted to reduce the nervousness and to enhance the readiness. Despite the speech and the language ability, anxiety management was actually a crucial part for their better performance. Even though language ability was still considered as the main challenge, anxiety management cannot be taken for granted to support their spontaneous response, which is also part of critical thinking ability. Public speaking ability is not an instant process for the students that it needs a continual process to achieve. In general context, this ability would accompany broader achievement for the students not only in academic part, like explaining their ideas in front of the teacher and the class, but more specifically for personal development, like the way the share message at any occasion and events, and future potency for job opportunity particularly for job interview at the beginning or their career after graduating.



Picture 1. The Community services activity





## Conclusion

Based on the explanation on the previous chapters, it can be concluded as follow: (1) The community services on public speaking for students in secondary grade 11 in Pondok Modern Al Ghozali extend the new method in teaching public speaking particularly, teaching English in general, and more importantly leading to critical thinking skill. This method is proven to be more interesting and more interactive; (2) There are significant benefits from the activities directly experienced by the students which they can apply to knowledge directly through guided practice; (3) For the students, this activity ignite the healthy competitive feeling and confident; (4) This activity can be a reference for teachers in Pondok Modern Al Ghazali so that they can conduct the class in fun and creative ways.

The suggestion for this activity focuses on: (1) The institution, Pondok Modern Al Ghazali has been positively open towards these kinds of activities, and hopefully there will a training opportunity for teachers in conducting English class more creatively in the future; (2) The teachers' job is limited to teaching but also elevating themselves to up to date teaching method, thus it become crucial for teacher to be motivated in seeking new knowledge for both teaching and learning on their expertise. Teachers, as it is demanded, need to provide a happy teaching and learning environment for their students to succeed.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to say the most profound gratitude to Allah SWT for the blessing, love, health, and opportunity to share this community services. Allah's mercies and blessings may continuously be poured upon the beloved prophet Muhammad SAW, the most remarkable figure who has guided us way of life. This activity would not have been completed without the the guidance, advice, and support of some significant individuals and we would like to acknowledge those who contributed to the process and express the writer's sincere gratitude as follow:

1. Dr. Pranoto, S.E., M.M. as Head of Sasmita Jaya Foundation.
2. Dr. E. Nurzaman A.M, Msi., M.M as Rector of Universitas Pamulang.
3. Dr. M. Ramdon Dasuki, M.A. as dean of Faculty of Letters, Universitas Pamulang.
4. Tryana, S.S., M.A. as Head of English Department of Universitas Pamulang.
5. Setiana Sri Wahyu Sitepu, S.Pd. as Secretary of the English Department of Universitas Pamulang.



6. All the lecturers and the university students involved in the activity.

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