

Implementation of Storytelling Technique to Enhance Students' Public Speaking Skills at Public Health Study Program, MH Thamrin University

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Abstract

Public speaking is an important skill for students, especially those in the Public Health Study Program. This skill greatly supports their future professional roles in delivering health education and communication. However, many students experience difficulties such as lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and anxiety when speaking in public. This study aims to enhance public speaking skills through storytelling techniques for students. This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR), which consisted of two cycles: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The participants were 25 students of the Public Health Study Program at MH. Thamrin University. Data were collected through observation, speaking tests, and documentation. The results showed an increase in the average score from the pre-test (60.2) to Cycle I (70.5) and Cycle II (82.3). The results of this study showed an increase in confidence and participation by students. It was concluded that storytelling techniques were very effective for students in enhancing their public speaking skills.

Keywords: *Storytelling Techniques, Public Speaking, Classroom Action Research, Public Health Students*

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan berbicara di depan umum atau *public speaking* merupakan keterampilan penting bagi mahasiswa, khususnya mahasiswa Program Studi Kesehatan Masyarakat. Keterampilan ini sangat mendukung peran profesional mereka di masa depan dalam menyampaikan edukasi dan komunikasi kesehatan. Namun, banyak mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan seperti kurang percaya diri, kosakata terbatas, dan kecemasan saat berbicara di depan umum. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara di depan umum melalui teknik bercerita bagi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (Classroom Action Research/CAR), yang terdiri dari dua siklus: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Partisipasi penelitian adalah 25 mahasiswa Program Studi Kesehatan Masyarakat di Universitas MH. Thamrin. Data dikumpulkan observasi, tes berbicara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan nilai rata-rata dari pre-test (60,2) ke Siklus I (70,5) dan Siklus II (82,3). Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kepercayaan diri dan partisipasi. Oleh karena itu, teknik bercerita sangat efektif bagi mahasiswa dalam meningkatkan keterampilan *public speaking* atau berbicara di depan umum.

Keywords: Teknik Bercerita, Berbicara di Depan Umum, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Mahasiswa Kesehatan Masyarakat

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a crucial skill for students in today's era of globalization and information development. Stephen E. Lucas (2019) states that public speaking plays a significant role in academic and career success. Students are required to convey ideas, concepts, and thoughts clearly, systematically, and convincingly, both in the classroom and in professional settings.

Public speaking is a crucial skill for students because it supports academic success and professional readiness. Nina Siti Salmiah Siregar (2022) states that students are required to be able to communicate effectively both publicly and interpersonally. Furthermore, Daniel Deha (2025) emphasizes that public speaking plays a role in increasing students' self-confidence, soft skills, and work readiness in the digital age. Poor public speaking skills can hinder students' communication competency (Stevfani Rahmayanti et al., 2023).

For students in the Public Health Study Program, public speaking skills are even more urgent. They are prepared to become professionals who will interact directly with the public in health education, health promotion, seminars, outreach, program presentations, and health policy advocacy. Therefore, oral communication skills are a key competency that must be mastered.

However, many students still experience difficulties in public speaking, such as lack of confidence, nervousness, worried of mistakes, limited vocabulary, and inability to organize ideas when speaking. This condition results in low participation during presentations and class discussions.

One technique considered effective in addressing this problem is storytelling. Storytelling is a technique for conveying messages through engaging and meaningful stories. This technique encourages students to speak naturally, creatively, and communicatively. Research by Viknesh Nair & Melor Md Yunus (2021) shows that digital storytelling effectively enhances students' speaking skills, motivation, and engagement.

A Storytelling technique is increasingly recognized as an effective teaching technique for enhancing students' speaking skills. According to Fitri Khairunnisa and Anita Anggraeni (2025), storytelling provides students with meaningful opportunities to practice oral communication in a fun and less stressful learning environment. Through storytelling, students are encouraged to express ideas, organize events chronologically, and convey messages with greater confidence. Their study found that storytelling positively impacted students' speaking performance, particularly fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and self-confidence.

Furthermore, storytelling allows students to use language in authentic and communicative contexts rather than memorizing isolated phrases. By retelling stories or creating their own narratives,

students actively engage in the speaking process and become more motivated to participate in class activities. Fitri Khairunnisa and Anita Anggraeni (2025) also emphasized that storytelling stimulates creativity and critical thinking, as students need to construct a coherent story and adapt their delivery to the audience. This process is particularly relevant to developing public speaking skills, where speakers are expected to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively. Furthermore, research by Muhammad Hassan & Rosmen (2022) found that storytelling significantly enhanced students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

In the context of higher education, particularly for Public Health students at MH. Thamrin University, storytelling can be a valuable strategy for strengthening communication competencies. Public Health students are required to deliver health campaigns, presentations, and community education programs in their future careers. Therefore, integrating storytelling into speaking classes can help students build confidence, enhance their delivery, and develop audience awareness. Based on the findings of Fitri Khairunnisa and Anita Anggraeni (2025), storytelling is not only beneficial for language learning but also relevant for preparing students to communicate effectively in professional settings.

Given these conditions, this study is crucial to determine the implementation of storytelling techniques in enhancing the public speaking skills of students in the Public Health Study Program at MH Thamrin University.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which aims to enhance students' public speaking skills through the application of storytelling techniques. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to directly and systematically enhance the learning process through real-life classroom actions. The study was conducted in two cycles, Cycle I and Cycle II, each consisting of four main stages according to Kemmis and McTaggart: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In Cycle I, researchers introduced the storytelling technique through simple story retelling activities and short presentations to gauge students' initial responses to the method. The results of observations in the first cycle were then analyzed to identify obstacles still faced by students, such as nervousness, lack of confidence, and lack of fluency. Furthermore, in Cycle II, researchers enhanced learning strategies by providing more intensive guidance, more structured exercises, using topics more closely related to public health, and providing more in-depth feedback on student performance. The second cycle was conducted to ensure there had been an enhancement

in students' public speaking skills after the enhancements in learning actions.

Participants in this study were students of the Public Health Study Program at MH Thamrin University who were taking English for Public Health subject. The number of participants was 25 students consisting of first-semester students with an age range of approximately 18–22 years. The selection of participants was done purposively because students at this level still need to develop public speaking skills for academic and professional preparation. Based on the results of initial observations, most students still experience difficulties in public speaking, such as lack of confidence during presentations, unclear voice, limited vocabulary mastery, and difficulty conveying ideas coherently.

The research instruments used in this study consisted of several data collection tools to obtain comprehensive results: a speaking test, observation sheets, a public speaking assessment rubric, field notes, and documentation. The speaking test was used to measure students' public speaking skills enhancement in the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages through individual presentations or storytelling. The observation sheets were used to record student activities during the learning process, such as participation, enthusiasm, self-confidence, and interaction during the activity. The assessment rubric was used to assess students' public speaking performance based on several aspects: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence, and content organization. Furthermore, field notes were used by the researcher to record classroom situations, any obstacles that arose, and student responses during the activity. Documentation in the form of activity photos, video recordings, and grade archives were also used as supporting data to strengthen the research findings. This combination of instruments is expected to provide a valid picture of the effectiveness of storytelling techniques in enhancing students' public speaking skills.

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through several methods to ensure complete and accurate data collection, including tests, observation, documentation, and field notes. Tests were administered in the form of a pre-test, a Cycle I test, and a Cycle II test to measure the development of students' public speaking skills after the implementation of the storytelling technique. During the tests, students were asked to deliver oral presentations or tell stories in front of the class based on a predetermined topic. The test results were used to determine student enhancement in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, self-confidence, and content delivery. In addition to the tests, the researchers also used direct observation during the learning process to assess student engagement, participation, and responses to the storytelling activities.

Furthermore, documentation was used as supporting data, including photographs of class

activities, videos of student performances, attendance lists, and student grade archives. This documentation is crucial for strengthening evidence of the implementation of the actions and student progress throughout each cycle. The researcher also used field notes to document classroom situations, obstacles encountered during the learning process, and changes in student behavior during the activities. These notes assisted the researcher in the reflection and evaluation process at the end of each cycle.

By combining several data collection techniques, researchers were able to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data in a balanced manner. Quantitative data were obtained from speaking test results, while qualitative data were obtained from observations, documentation, and field notes. This allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of storytelling techniques in enhancing students' public speaking skills.

In addition to calculating the average score, researchers also calculated the percentage of students who achieved the minimum score or completion criteria. These results were used to determine the success rate of the interventions. Comparing scores from the pre-test to Cycle I and from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrated the level of enhancement in students' public speaking skills after using the storytelling technique.

Meanwhile, qualitative analysis was conducted on data from observations, documentation, and field notes. This data was analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on changes in student attitudes, self-confidence, active participation, enthusiasm, and challenges encountered during the learning process. The results of the qualitative analysis were used to complement the quantitative data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the research process and results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study shows that the implementation of storytelling technique significantly enhanced students' public speaking skills in the Public Health Study Program at MH Thamrin University. This enhancements is obvious not only in the quantitative increase in mean scores, from 60.2 in the pre-cycle to 82.3 in Cycle II, but also in qualitative aspects like students' confidence, participation, and fluency.

The steady enhancements across cycles shows that storytelling offers an organized yet adaptable approach to speaking practice. In Cycle I, students started to adapt to storytelling activities, although some still experienced hesitancy and anxiety. This implies that initial exposure to a new

learning technique needs an adjustment period.

By Cycle II, students showed significant progress. This can be approved to repeated practice and enhanced familiarity with storytelling elements such as plot organization, character development, and message delivery. These elements assisted students arrange their speech more coherently, which is a key component of effective public speaking.

One of the most significant findings is the enhancements in students' confidence. At first, many students were unwilling to speak due to dread of making mistakes and being considered. However, storytelling made a more relaxed and attractive learning environment.

The findings also show that storytelling technique lets students to hide behind a narrative, reducing the psychological anxiety of speaking in a foreign language. As a result, students developed more exited to convey themselves. This aligns with the idea that meaningful and contextualized speaking activities can reduce anxiety and stimulate confidence.

The data also show a notable rise in student participation, from 60% in Cycle I to 85% in Cycle II. This implies that storytelling technique is not only effective for individual skill development but also for raising an interactive classroom atmosphere. Different to traditional speaking activities, storytelling technique fosters active participation through creative thinking, emotional engagement, and peer interaction. The findings also demonstrate that students were more motivated to participate because storytelling technique made learning pleasurable and relevant. This supports the view student-centered learning approaches enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

Classroom Action Research was used in this study because it played a crucial role in achieving these enhancements. The cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting allowed the researcher to incessantly enhance the teaching strategy. In cycled I, lack of confidences, unclear delivery were identified as weaknesses. In cycle II, more guided practice and better feedback were implemented as enhancements.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of storytelling technique foster a more engaging and nurturing learning atmosphere that stimulated students to convey ideas more confidently and communicate more effectively in front of an audience. This technique not only helps in enhancing speaking skills but also boosts confidence, creativity, interaction, and communication proficiency, all of which are essential for students' academic and career development. Recommendations are offered for

lecturers, students, educational institutions, and future researchers. Lecturers are encouraged to incorporate storytelling techniques as an alternative strategy in public speaking and communication courses. Students should actively participate in storytelling activities, presentations, seminars, and discussions to improve their confidence and speaking fluency. Educational institutions are advised to support the development of students' communication competence by providing more speaking-oriented learning activities, workshops, seminars, and interactive classroom methods. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on storytelling and public speaking with larger samples, at different educational levels, or across diverse academic disciplines.

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