



DOES EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND INFLUENCE STUDENTS' PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILL? REALITY VS STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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KEYWORDS

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perspective

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study are to investigate the substantial difference in public speaking abilities between students with a natural science and social science background in their high school, and to investigate the students' point of view related to this issue. This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative, which involved 163 students of English Education Study Program, at one state university on North Sumatera province. Semi-structured techniques were used for data collection. The data collected in this study then were inspected out by using two methods; statistical count for quantitative data related to students' senior high school educational background, and particular substances analysis for qualitative data related to students' performance in their public speaking. Questionnaire and interview were conducted to assemble the data related to students' experiences and involvements in taking the public speaking subject and its practice based on their educational background in senior high school, and to collect the students' opinion related to this difference. The analysis resulted that natural science students in average achieve score 3.58, meanwhile social science students in average achieve score 3.51. The difference is 0.07 point or 1.4%. The average score between the students in natural science and social science can be stated as not significantly different. In addition, generally, all the students who were interviewed believed that public speaking competency is not correlated with majoring in senior high school.

KATA KUNCI

Public speaking,
Ilmu Pengetahuan
Alam,
Ilmu Pengetahuan
Sosial,
Perspepsi

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki perbedaan substansial dalam kemampuan berbicara di depan umum antara siswa dengan latar belakang ilmu pengetahuan alam dan ilmu sosial di sekolah menengah mereka, dan untuk menyelidiki sudut pandang siswa terkait dengan masalah ini. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus dengan pendekatan studi kasus yang bersifat kualitatif, yang melibatkan 163 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris pada salah satu Perguruan Tinggi Negeri di Provinsi Sumatera Utara. Teknik semi-terstruktur digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Data yang terkumpul dalam penelitian ini kemudian diperiksa dengan menggunakan dua metode; penghitungan statistik untuk data kuantitatif yang terkait dengan latar belakang pendidikan sekolah menengah atas siswa, dan analisis substansi khusus untuk data kualitatif yang terkait dengan kinerja siswa dalam berbicara di depan umum. Kuesioner dan wawancara dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data terkait pengalaman dan keterlibatan siswa dalam mengambil mata pelajaran public speaking dan praktiknya berdasarkan latar belakang pendidikan mereka di SMA, dan untuk mengumpulkan pendapat siswa terkait perbedaan ini. Hasil analisis siswa IPA rata-rata mencapai skor 3,58, sedangkan siswa IPS rata-rata mencapai skor 3,51. Selisihnya 0,07 poin atau 1,4%. Nilai rata-rata antara siswa IPA dan IPS dapat dikatakan tidak berbeda nyata. Selain itu, secara umum, semua siswa yang diwawancarai percaya bahwa kompetensi berbicara di depan umum tidak berkorelasi dengan jurusan di SMA..

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INTRODUCTION

The *Public Speaking* subject is one of the compulsory subjects that must be taken in the English education study program at one of the universities in North Sumatra. The subject of Public Speaking in this study program is a sequence of graded courses that begin with *Basic Speaking*, progress to *Intermediate Speaking*, *Advanced Speaking*, and finally to *Public Speaking*. This course is part of the study program's sixth semester curriculum.

In the syllabus of this Public Speaking course, it is stated that the final achievements or outcomes of this course is "students are able to master basic concepts, theories, and are able to implement Public Speaking skills both in open public situations and with technology media." Consequently, this learning achievement will be simple to put into practice if students have truly mastered all of the speaking skills taught from "basic" to "advanced".

In case public speaking is the final or outcome of series of speaking skills, this skill can be achieved when the students have mastered all speaking skill series, in case public speaking means that someone must speak in the front of public. Speaking capacity should be backed up by the ability to talk in front of an audience.

Speaking is thus defined as the process of creating and communicating meaning in a range of contexts via the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols (Laisouw, 2019). In addition, the most crucial component of learning a foreign language is learning to speak it, and success is judged by the capacity to have a conversation in the language (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Syaifullah & Hardi, 2021). Speakers should really make themselves understood by the people they are communicating with in order to communicate effectively in another language, which necessitates accuracy in the target language (Hao, 2017). As a result, speakers must possess sufficient basic building blocks of the target language to work properly in such situations; otherwise, producing utterances becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Furthermore, speaking is a crucial part of communication as one of the productive abilities. The process of communication include creating, receiving, and digesting information in order to generate meanings (Brown, 1994). It is a collaborative approach in which students may share their thoughts and knowledge (Tiwery, 2019). Furthermore, speaking ability is a useful skill that allows students to generate a language when speaking. For most individuals, speaking in a foreign language is quite difficult. This issue is created not only by a lack of grammatical understanding, but also by a lack of confidence in speaking and a fear of making mistakes (Hanifa, 2018).

In addition, speaking has various barriers as a practical output, including psychological, physiological, physical, systematic, and attitudinal (Gurler, 2015). Some are psychological and attitudinal hurdles on the inside, while others are physiological, physical, and systemic impediments on the outside. Lack of self-confidence may be viewed of as both psychological and attitudinal impediments that make it difficult for learners to talk in a foreign language, even in their own tongue (Gurler, 2015).

Furthermore, while speaking ability is regarded as the most significant talent in any language, it is also the most hardest to master (Adisaputera et al, 2021). Language learners, particularly in a school situation, find it challenging to express oneself in a second or foreign language. Language learners feel they have acquired the target language when they can communicate well in it verbally, regardless of this difficulty

(Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Speaking in public, in particular, is considerably more difficult and intimidating for most individuals. It is impossible to acquire the capacity and talent to talk publicly in a short period of time. To talk fluently, it takes a long time to learn English fundamentally, intermediately, and finally publically.

Related to master the speaking ability, there are various strategies can be used by students in learning the language, include speaking skill. Oxford (1990) divided the learning strategy into two strategies in which each strategy consists of three main strategies. First is direct strategies are further broken down into three sub strategies namely: memory, cognitive, and compensation. The second one is indirect strategies which then divided into three sub-strategies: metacognitive, affective, and social. Thus, there are a total of six strategies, namely: memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social.

Likewise, public speaking ability is determined by various factors. Public speaking ability is said to be impacted by the student's educational history, in addition to motivational factors, speaking skill background, and psychological background such as introversion and extroversion. Students in this program come from a variety of educational backgrounds (in this case: majors). Several students were graduated from the scientific department, some from the social studies department, some from the vocational department, and some even from the Islamic boarding school, according to the author's data.

In this study program's student admittance method, there is no distinction between the origin of scientific and social studies majors. Candidates from both majors have an equal chance of being admitted into this department. Unfortunately, despite the fact that this is an English language education program, there is no special English entry exam, written or spoken. There are no class variances or differences in learning techniques for all students after they are approved as students and go through the programs.

In addition, there are numerous stereotype in Indonesia students society. It is undeniable that there is a phenomenon in the field of education in Indonesia, that students majoring in social studies are considered inferior to those majoring in science. Even after more investigation, it seems that the scientific department is perceived as a department with students who seldom study, enjoy counting, are good students, work hard, but do not socialize much since they spend much of their time in tutoring centers. Meanwhile, social studies students are viewed as a group of youngsters that are less interested in learning, are more fun, are better at memorizing, and have superior social skills than science students.

Therefore, the purposes of this study are to investigate whether there is a substantial difference in public speaking abilities between students with a natural science and social science background in their high school, and to investigate the students' point of view related to this issue.

METHODS

Participants

The study involved 163 students of English Education Study Program, at one state university on North Sumatera province. The sample was taken randomly from five

different classes of sixth semester students who take Public Speaking subject on their semester credit.

Instruments

This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative. Semi-structured techniques were used for data collection. The data collected in this study then were inspected out by using two methods; statistical count for quantitative data related to students' senior high school educational background, and particular substances analysis for qualitative data related to students' performance in their public speaking.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researchers asked the students to give a speech by using video in 5-7 minutes as their final semester test. By hearing their speech, the researchers then identified and made some classification based on their speaking performance. Moreover, the study also investigated the strengths and the weaknesses of the students certain public speaking performance based on their senior high school educational background through the vary variables and problem between them. Also, the questionnaire and interview were conducted to assemble the data related to students' experiences and involvements in taking the public speaking subject and its practice based on their educational background in senior high school, and to collect the students' opinion related to this difference.

FINDINGS

Reality: Students' Performance in Public Speaking

A questionnaire was distributed to investigate the education background of the students when they were on senior high school. 163 students involved on this questionnaire. It is retrieved that 70.38% of respondents were taking natural science and 29.62% of respondents were taking social science as their majors.

Table: 1. Respodents' Educational Background

Majoring in Senior High School	Number	Percentage (%)
Natural Science	114	70.33
Social Science	49	29.62

These 163 students then being selected as the participant to be investigated, related to their capacity in perform public speaking. The students were given the opportunity to practice their public speaking skills digitally. They were told to make a video of themselves speaking (as also their last final project of semester), openly discussing specified themes. The video should not last more than seven minutes, after which the researchers will have evaluated their work. The researchers evaluated their speaking abilities using the following grading criteria:

Table: 2. Scoring Criteria

Point	Description	Definition
0	Needs to study from the basic	No expression/conversation

Point	Description	Definition
1	Needs much more improvement	Hardly speaking.
2	Needs more improvement	Some of expressions/opinions/facts are expressed but there are a lot of mistakes.
3	Good	Most of expressions/opinions/facts are expressed but there are some mistakes in the answer.
4	Very Good	All expressions/opinions/facts are expressed but there are a few mistakes.
5	Excellent	All expressions/opinions/facts are expressed perfectly

The result of these 163 speaking performances are presented on this chart:

Table: 3. Score Average

Majoring in Senior High School	Score
Natural Science	3.58
Social Science	3.51

Natural science students in average achieve score 3.58, meanwhile social science students in average achieve score 3.51. The difference is only 0.07 points or only 1.4%. The average score between the students in natural science and social science can be stated as not significantly different.

Students' Perceptions

23 students were interviewed and questioned whether the students' major in senior high school influence the public speaking skill in university or not. The result shows that 65.2% of students believed that public speaking is not influenced by senior high school educational background.

Table: 4. Students' Perception

Statements	Number of Students	Percent age (%)
Majoring in senior high school does not influence public speaking competence in univeristy	15	65.2
Majoring in senior high school a bit influence public speaking competence in university	6	26.1
Majoring in senior high school does influence public speaking competence in univeristy	2	8.7

Their viewpoints differ from one another, as written below:

Student 1:

"In my humble opinion, majors in natural sciences and social sciences at the high school level have different levels due to the many internal and external factors that can affect the ability of public speaking of a student. For example, students majoring in natural sciences may often make presentations in front of the class about the material being studied, but for students who are in the major of social sciences will have more direct experience when talking to social communities because they learn the basic basis of how to socialize with society."

Student 2:

"Throwing back to my high school days, I was a natural science student and I did not really socialize with social science students. However, I had 3-5 friends of social science students. As we know, the learning atmosphere or the learning environment compared to both majors is quite different and may affect the students capability in many aspects, especially for their public speaking skill. Turning back to my opinion, the activities occurred in the natural science classroom is more active and the students are more cooperative than social science students. The activeness of natural science students might form their courage, discipline, and self-confidence that support them when perform public speaking. Meanwhile, from 3-5 friends of mine from social science major, there was one person that recovered his ability in many aspects (including public speaking) by engaging in such students organization. He often performed in front of us giving speeches. So, my entire opinion concludes that the learning environment of natural science influences the students capability more than the social science major."

Student 3:

"In my opinion, high school major does not affect public speaking skill in college. Because public speaking skill is affected by many factors, such as internal and external. I have many friends from both major that have a good public speaking skill in high school and they even better in their college. And I also have some friends who does not speak so much in high school, but can improve because of some practices."

Student 4:

"In this example, whether or not a person's public speaking is good has nothing to do with his high school major (natural or social science). This, however, is dependent on whether or not these talents have been refined and whether or not he has the drive to do so. There are persons who excel at public speaking in high school, but their skills degrade as they progress through college. There are also some who had poor public speaking abilities in high school but improved after college. This might be attributed to a lack of desire to learn about public speaking, a lack of chance to practice, and the creation of a sense of uneasiness. Then the public speaking improved after college, it could be due to the emergence of motivation to learn, and increased self-confidence. As far as I concern, motivation and self-confidence have an influence on a person's public speaking ability."

Student 5:

"As far as I am concerned, our high school major (natural or social science) cannot be utilized as a guarantee when evaluating public speaking abilities. In case, in addition to

academic ability, there are several factors that can influence a person's public speaking ability, such as the socialization environment. For instance, the student is surrounded by people who are good at public speaking, the student will eventually become accustomed to doing so because a small number of these people will be a motivator for the student. Then there is the habit, just as the proverb goes "practice makes perfect". Likewise with public speaking, if the students do not get used to speaking, how will their ability improve? My teacher once said, if you have the intention to master a field, get used to it first to be applied in our daily life. For example, if someone wants his or her public speaking to be good, get used to inserting English words or sentences in the conversation, it does not have to be full English, the important thing is that students get used to the pronunciation first. And then most importantly, must be brave to practice."

Student 6:

"I would like to say that no matter what major you take at your previous school, it will not warrant that you can be good at public speaking nor any particular skill. Some skill can only be obtained from training or practicing. Some can be merely achieved as an inborn skill, or even just by imitating. Thus the major you took in your high school did not determine your public speaking skill due to some factors it may involve. The first thing that I would like to put forward is about confidence. You have a good confidence, you have the stage. It is just how you confidently manage to show up yourself in front of others. It is about how you put trust in your own ability. Second is about the surroundings that contribute to made up your character. If you live in an environment in which provide you good speakers, that skill will be inherent gradually, because society gives influence to your growth, development, and personality. Thirdly, it is about personal preference or interest. If someone is interested in public speaking, they will just take up some activities to boost their ability and throw themselves into it. Or, they can just join some events and perform their skill. Last but not least, some public speakers might have taken a certain course to improve their speaking skill. It probably happened in some School activity such as extracurricular or a small club at your school."

Student 7:

"It has nothing to do with it, in my opinion. Even though there are generic influences, they are classified into two categories: environment and motivation. Maybe in terms of the environment. However, it takes at least 21 days and up to 6 months (explanation from a book that I forgot the title of). If it is due to motivation, it can take a little longer (2-3 days) because there's a strong internal drive to make improvements."

DISCUSSION

The average score in natural science and social science is not considerably different from one another. According to the findings of the study, it can be indicated that all students both scientific and social science, utilize the same technique while studying languages that are not connected to natural science or social science. This issue is connected to the study program's system and curriculum, in which all students are placed in the same class, regardless of their educational backgrounds. As a result, all students learning strategies are homogeneous, and their educational backgrounds in high school are no longer relevant.

The findings of this study differ from those of Wahdah and Wulandari's investigation (2017). They examined at the learning methodologies utilized by former ordinary high school students who went to Islamic boarding schools and former Madrasah Aliyah students (Islamic-based high school). Although Wahdah & Wulandari (2017) did not particularly analyzed language learning skills and strategies based on majors, they determined that there was a substantial difference in the average techniques of students from public high schools and students from Madrasah Aliyah. The average technique of students from public high schools and students from Islamic boarding schools differs significantly. Also, the average technique of students from Madrasah Aliyah and students from Islamic residential schools differs significantly.

Moreover, the teaching learning system by the lecturers, which not consider the students' natural dissimilarity, may affect this disparity also. Lecturers use a variety of ways to educate, but they ignore other key factors such as motivation, students' educational backgrounds, and even their personalities (in this case: introvert vs extrovert, which is a discussion that is quite popular with speaking interests).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that there is a distinction between natural science students, who average a score of 3.58, and social science students, who average a score of 3.51. The difference is barely 0.07 percent or 0.07 points. The average score in natural science and social science is not considerably different. In addition, generally, all the students who were interviewed believed that public speaking competency is not correlated with majoring in senior high school.

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