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## Mitigating Student's Stage Fright in Public Speaking at An Islamic Boarding School in Samarinda

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### Abstract

Delivering a speech or presentation to an audience is known as public speaking. In general, oral interaction with a wide audience intended to transmit ideas, messages, and opinions is referred to as public speaking. This qualitative study investigates how students at an Islamic boarding school navigate stage fright in public speaking, particularly when using English as a foreign language. The study explores the methods students use to deal with stage fright, the effect that social support has on anxiety control, and the differences between stage fear in academic and non-academic environments. Through in-depth interviews with students from a high school in Samarinda, the study sheds light on students' perspectives and coping mechanisms concerning stage fright during public speaking engagements.

**Keywords:** Boarding School; Overcome Stage Fright; Public Speaking.

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## 1. Introduction

Delivering a speech or presentation to an audience is known as public speaking. This involves conveying a concept, idea, or point of view to a group of people in an understandable and structured way. In general, oral interaction with a wide audience intended to convey ideas, messages and opinions is referred to as public speaking (Chris Natalia, 2023). Effective speaking skills as well as careful planning and preparation are required for this process. In the modern globalized world, public speaking is an important communication skill because all actions are interconnected with activities that produce key speakers (Meinawati et al., n.d.). It is very important for everyone to have the ability to speak in public, especially using English, which is a foreign language that is not fully mastered, especially for those who interact with the public on a regular basis. This ability can support someone to communicate their intentions in an interesting, effective and clear way.



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Although public speaking brings initial anxiety to everyone, some people experience persistent performance jitters before each time their words are shared with others. Public speaking causes anxiety, which is commonly called stage fright. For many people, nervousness that appears before, during or after appearing in front of other people for a performance, presentation or important event can cause discomfort when the phenomenon of stage fright occurs (Timakova & Koehn, 2019). This sensation is often described as an intense feeling of tension, discomfort, or worry that can negatively impact a person's ability to perform or feel comfortable when in front of an audience. When facing the public eye, especially in important performances in front of large audiences, the term “stage fright” usually refers to the mix of emotions and stress experienced in the spotlight. In many cases, stage fright is also considered a psychological challenge that can be overcome through practice, careful preparation, and repeated experiences. General situations that arise from actual or participating in oral presentations ((Grieve et al., 2021) & (Raja, 2017)) and there are several possibilities when someone speaks in public, including nervousness, worry, and fear of interacting publicly. directly with the communicator.

Students frequently experience stage fright, particularly in institutions that promote public speaking activities. Schools with busy extracurricular programs or boarding schools frequently set up situations where students must perform in front of a crowd. Even though the goal of these exercises is to improve confidence and communication skills, many students suffer from severe anxiety in these kinds of circumstances.

Anxiety, worry, or nervousness about performing in front of people are the characteristics of stage fright, also known as performance anxiety. For example, eight out of ten students at Nabil Husein Samarinda Islamic Boarding School suffer from stage fright when speaking in front of an audience, indicating a high degree of performance anxiety among students in identical educational environments.

The pressure to do well in front of classmates, professors, or even parents is one of the primary causes of this problem. Students may become intimidated and perform less well if they



are afraid of making mistakes, being judged, or getting unfavorable comments. A student's performance may suffer drastically because of this occurrence, which can cause forgetfulness, verbal mistakes, or even freeze in front of a crowd.

Schools can put methods in place to help students control their anxiety and progressively develop their public speaking abilities by recognizing and comprehending the prevalence of stage fright. Schools can assist students develop confidence and lessen the effects of performance anxiety by providing them with anxiety management strategies including relaxation techniques, constructive self-talk, and a progressive introduction to public speaking. These techniques enhance students' public speaking skills while also promoting their general emotional health and personal development.

The feelings of nervousness and tension that arise before a performance can come from various influences, such as self-anticipation, anticipation of others, or fear of negative judgment as explained by Grieve et al., 2021. Students' capacity to communicate ideas, speak in front general, or involved in academic and social affairs in the school environment are potentially influenced by gender. For students to understand the experience of stage fright and overcome anxiety is an important aspect in their personal and scientific evolution.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. research design**

Researchers used a qualitative descriptive case study approach in this research to describe the strategies of students and accompanying teachers in overcoming the stage fright they experienced. In-depth interviews and observations were carried out to find out what strategies they used to overcome these problems. (Holandyah et al., 2022)

#### **2.1.1 Subject of the Study**

The subject of this research were Students and Teachers at Nabil Husein Islamic Boarding School. Some Students and teachers in those boarding schools was involved in an in-depth interview as participants of this study. In total, there were 5 students and 1 teacher employed in the present study.



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## 2.1.2 Technique of Data Collection

Case study research data can be obtained from several techniques, such as interviews, observations, and documents. A list of questions adopted from Razi1 et al. (2021) was prepared for the interview. The selected interview participants were 5 students and 1 teacher, with the following criteria as follows, namely students who joined the Muhadarah extracurricular activity and have practiced public speaking for more than 5 times and a teacher who served as their mentor. All the interview process was conducted face-to-face in the schools where the teachers taught. The researcher is a key instrument, so it is the researcher who can measure the accuracy and adequacy of data and when data collection should end. The researcher also determines the right informant to interview, when and where the interview is conducted.

After the data is considered perfect, the researcher performs data processing, namely checking the correctness of the data, compiling the data, classifying the data, correcting unclear interview answers. This stage is done to facilitate the analysis stage. After the data in the form of transcripts of interviews and observations, as well as pictures, photos, student report cards and so on are considered complete and perfect, the researchers conducted data analysis. By organizing, sorting, grouping, and categorizing it into parts based on certain groupings so that a finding is obtained on the formulation of the problem posed. Through this series of activities, qualitative data that is usually scattered and piled up can be simplified so that it can be understood more easily.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

The results were presented into two parts based on the research questions of the study as follows:



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1. What are the effective strategies students use to overcome stage fright during public speaking especially using English, which is a foreign language that is not fully mastered?
  2. How does social support from teachers, and peers help students deal with stage fright during public speaking?

In order to probe Research Questions, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews regarding the public speaking strategies that the students used. There were 5 students and 1 mentor teacher purposively selected to participate in the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and lasted about 5-6 minutes for each student.

The first time attending a public speaking class, all students feel the same way as the author. They respond with excitement on the first day and are impressed by speakers who can speak in public properly.

Excerpts 1: "Speaking in public in front of an audience sounds cool and exciting" [Student 1]

Excerpts 2: "Confidence is needed to be able to perform in public" [Student 2]

Excerpts 3: "Standing in front of a large audience is my greatest challenge, but they help me overcome it little by little" [Student 3]

Excerpts 4: "I want to be like them" [Student 4]

Excerpts 5: "Their way of speaking impresses us greatly" [Student 5]

Excerpts 6: "Being a senior serve as motivation for other students because you can perform exceptionally in front of everyone." [Teacher]

However, there are several factors that disturb students internally when doing public speaking: inadequate self-preparation, poor vocabulary, lack of knowledge about the topic being presented, and anxiety. There are also feelings that arise when a student makes a mistake for example, fear of being ridiculed, fear of the mentor teacher scolding them, and embarrassment within oneself.

Excerpts 1: "I feel like I've been doused with ice water from above Shivering" [Student 1]



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Excerpts 2: “Standing in front of many people, their gazes disturb me and make me uncomfortable” [Student 2]

Excerpts 3: “I am more afraid of failure when I am already standing in front of many people” [Student 3]

Excerpts 4: “I am more comfortable they took eyes over me” [Student 4]

Excerpts 5: “I am frozen and can’t talk” [Student 5]

Excerpts 6: “Beginners will definitely experience stage fright and that is normal They simply do not know what to prepare before doing public speaking.” [Teacher]

For those who are experienced, there are effective strategies that they apply to anticipate stage fright Practicing speaking in front of a mirror, reciting prayers before starting an activity, repeating difficult words, asking someone to be a listener and correct any potential mistakes, and doing a small physical warm-up if anxiety starts to arise.

To empower students' skills, the Nabil Husein Islamic boarding school holds public speaking classes or better known as MUHADAROH. In this class, students will be gathered with a schedule of two meetings a week and always accompanied by a companion teacher. The relationship that exists between schoolteachers who accompany public speaking classes at the Nabil Husein Islamic boarding school is closer so that students can easily be open to asking for facilities and solutions regarding public speaking. The role of peers is also important because their support is closer than that of a companion teacher.

Referring to all the data that the author has included in this research, as well as the analysis that has been presented, to answer the problem formulation " the effective strategies students use to overcome stage fright during public speaking especially using English, which is a foreign language that is not fully mastered " (Universitas et al., 2017b) based on the theory used, the author can conclude that there is--- Students use several methods to overcome stage fright, such as: fright Practicing speaking in front of a mirror, reciting prayers before starting an activity, repeating difficult words, asking someone to be a listener and correct any potential mistakes, and doing a small physical warm-up if anxiety starts to arise. Then, to answer the



second problem formulation " How does social support from teachers, and peers help students deal with stage fright during public speaking " the author found empowerment that was built by the school to empower students' skills, the Nabil Husein Islamic boarding school holds public speaking classes or better known as MUHADAROH. In this class, students will be gathered with a schedule of two meetings a week and always accompanied by a companion teacher. The relationship that exists between schoolteachers who accompany public speaking classes at the Nabil Husein Islamic boarding school is closer so that students can easily be open to asking for facilities and solutions regarding public speaking. The role of peers is also important because their support is closer than that of a companion teacher.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study aims to figure out the mitigating student's stage fright at an Islamic Boarding School in Samarinda. The researcher employed five students from three different high schools and a mentor's teacher from same public speaking class in a case study through in-depth interviews. The student was purposively selected because they experienced speaking in front of audience (Agung Dwisatoto et al., n.d.).

The results of the study showed that students raise effective strategy in public speaking. Teachers claimed that certain students have difficulty dealing with the stage fright things, which had bothered them to talk easier, challenges namely inadequate self-preparation, poor vocabulary, lack of knowledge about the topic being presented, and anxiety in public speaking class. However, students use a variety of successful strategies to get over their nervousness and enhance their public speaking abilities. These techniques include repeating challenging words to increase fluency, employing spiritual activities like prayer for mental clarity, studying in front of a mirror to increase confidence, and taking constructive criticism to improve performance. To provide supportive environments that foster students' academic and personal development, educators must have a solid knowledge of different coping mechanisms.



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For teachers, researchers recommend that the results of this study can enhance insights into teaching and learning activities related to speaking by utilizing the most effective teaching techniques and minimize any challenges that may arise during teaching and learning activities, so that the activities can proceed even better. With the limited depth of information offered about this research, it is hoped that future researchers will carry out additional studies, particularly with focus on the most effective learning strategies, to make the knowledge gained more thorough and useful for the future of education.

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