

## Understanding and Pronunciation of Speaking and Making Speeches Using English in Junior High School Children

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**Abstract.** *This journal delves into the linguistic prowess of junior high school children in English speech construction. Through quantitative methods utilizing structured questionnaires, the study evaluates the proficiency of students in speaking and delivering English speeches. Findings reveal a spectrum of abilities: from confusion and difficulty among some students to proficient articulation and comprehension among others. Notably, a significant portion of students exhibit self-directed learning through mediums like online gaming, contributing to their language acquisition. The study underscores the diverse pathways through which junior high school children acquire English proficiency, with approximately 60% - 70% demonstrating the ability to construct and deliver English speeches effectively, showcasing varied speaking styles.*

**Keywords:** *English Speech, Junior High School, Language Proficiency*

**Abstrak.** Jurnal ini menggali kecakapan linguistik anak-anak SMP dalam konstruksi pidato bahasa Inggris. Melalui metode kuantitatif dengan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur, penelitian ini mengevaluasi kemahiran siswa dalam berbicara dan menyampaikan pidato bahasa Inggris. Temuan mengungkapkan spektrum kemampuan: dari kebingungan dan kesulitan di antara beberapa siswa hingga mahir dalam artikulasi dan pemahaman di antara siswa lainnya. Khususnya, sebagian besar siswa menunjukkan pembelajaran mandiri melalui media seperti game online, sehingga berkontribusi terhadap penguasaan bahasa mereka. Studi ini menggarisbawahi beragam jalur yang dilalui anak-anak sekolah menengah pertama untuk memperoleh kecakapan bahasa Inggris, dengan sekitar 60% - 70% menunjukkan kemampuan menyusun dan menyampaikan pidato bahasa Inggris secara efektif, dan menunjukkan gaya berbicara yang bervariasi.

**Kata kunci:** Kemampuan Bahasa, Pidato Bahasa Inggris, Sekolah Menengah Pertama

### 1. BACKGROUND

Undoubtedly, public speaking is a crucial skill that every individual must master to succeed in various aspects of life. As expressed by Dale Carnegie in his renowned book, 'How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking' (1956), public speaking is not merely the ability to address an audience but also an art of influencing, inspiring, and delivering messages clearly and persuasively. It is a skill that impacts not only one's career but also shapes self-image and enhances overall confidence. Studying public speaking is not merely about mastering the art of verbal communication; it is about acquiring a fundamental skill set essential for success in today's interconnected world. As noted by

John F. Kennedy in his address at American University in 1963, 'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself' when it comes to public speaking. Embracing this challenge cultivates confidence, fosters effective communication, and empowers individuals to articulate their ideas persuasively in any setting. Public Speaking is also very useful at certain times, such as when we speak in public. Public speaking can be a special reference that can be used by every group to make conversations and pronunciations even more interesting. Especially for children who are still in junior high school, there are lots of interesting public speaking competitions which increase the children's interest in public speaking. In or while learning activities are carried out, students often provide opinions on questions and responses. Public speaking is really needed at that time. When a student can master how to do public speaking well, then the student can be categorized as a student who is able to provide his ideas and opinions are straightforward and good.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used in this research is a quantitative method with structured data collection through a measurement instrument, namely a questionnaire. This research is carried out to obtain information or opinions from junior high school children regarding their ability to analyze and also understand speaking and giving speeches in English. And this is also done outside of learning hours, guided by the topics that have been prepared. The aspects that were asked of the junior high school children were pronunciation and speaking style in English, whether they knew how to speak and make speeches using English clearly or did they not know how to speak and make speeches in English at all. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2023), Indonesia scores 492, considered "Low Proficiency." It suggests around 30.8% of Indonesians (including adults) speak English well or very well, where the percentage figure is very low. And the author also looks for references from books, journals, articles, and so on so that they can become references and strengthen the opinions that have been expressed. The author looked for data through sources such as journals and books related to junior secondary students' pronunciation in giving speeches and also speaking English. In the research that the author conducted by collecting data from junior high school students. For example, 25 percent of junior secondary students who filled out the questionnaire did not know how to speak and make speeches in English, while 50 percent understood a little, and 25 percent knew and could speak and make speeches clearly and fluently. Junior high school students' knowledge and ability to speak and make speeches in English can be a big influence in developing children's potential to understand English

widely and also be loud and not hesitate and be afraid to speak and make speeches in English in public.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

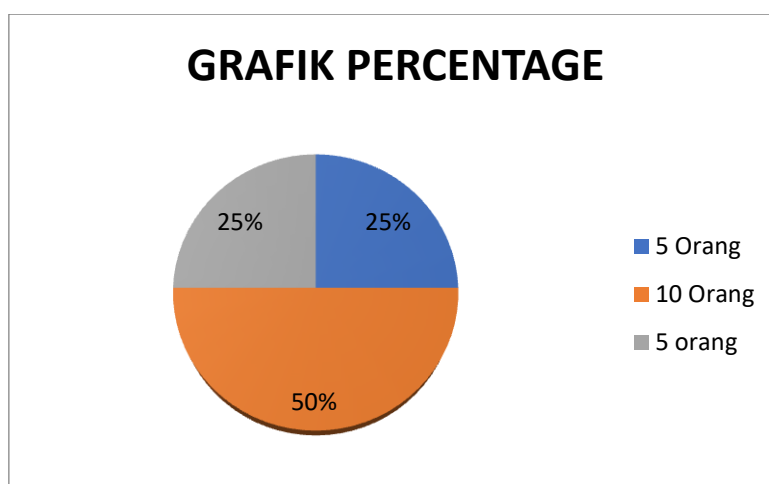
#### ***The Results of the Research***

According to Dr. Gillian Sandstrom, Communication Coach and Author (2023): "Public speaking is a vital life skill, regardless of your career path. It empowers you to share your ideas confidently, connect with others on a deeper level, and influence change. Effective communication can open doors to opportunities and allows you to make a positive impact in the world." From this expert's opinion, we can see that Public Speaking is very useful anywhere, in looking for work, building relationships with other people, expressing our ideas and opinions and also making us more confident when we are among many people. While according to the opinion of James C. Humes, Professor of Communication Studies, Purdue University (2020): "In today's interconnected world, the ability to speak publicly is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Whether you're presenting a business proposal, pitching an idea, or simply leading a team meeting, strong public speaking skills give you the edge and increase your effectiveness. It's essential for career advancement, personal growth, and building strong relationships." Here, James says that Public Speaking can give us an edge and increase our effectiveness. This also influences career progress, personal growth, and building strong relationships, be it with colleagues, other people, officials, or even our friends. While according to the opinion of Patricia Friman, President and CEO of The Voice of Your Business (2022): "The fear of public speaking is often cited as one of the most common phobias, but overcoming it can have a transformative effect on your life. Strong public speaking skills can boost your confidence, build your credibility, and help you achieve your goals. It's not just about delivering presentations, but about communicating authentically and persuasively in all aspects of your life." According to Petricia, fear of speaking in public has become a common thing, but if we can overcome it well, it can be transformative and can change our lives for the better. Similar to the two previous opinions from experts, Strong public speaking skills can boost your confidence, build your credibility, and help you achieve your goals. Speaking in public is not just about explaining what we want to say in public, but how we build good communication, communicate authentically and persuasively in all aspects that we explain.

In the research that the author conducted here, after the author got answers from 20 junior high school students from the questionnaire given, the author got different answers and

results. First, the question the author asks is how do you know English? with answer options of friends, family, social media, or online games. Of the 20 students, 4 of them answered that they knew from their families, where the four of them had family members who were fluent and spoke English fluently. Meanwhile, 6 other people answered from online games. The answers given by junior high school students explained that when they were still in elementary school, they used gadgets and played online games. Where they know and are also curious about a language they don't understand and they autodidactically find out what English is, by asking their parents. For the other 10 people, they know English from online platforms or social media such as Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, Facebook and Twitter, they recognize English with slang which is often used on social media such as WDY, WYATB , CMIW, BTW, OFC, and others. Second, the author also asked about their pronunciation and knowledge and ability to speak English. The question the author asked was how well you rated yourself in speaking and making speeches in English. Here the author got various answers from junior high school students, 25 percent or 5 of them were very doubtful and even thought they did not know how to speak and also make speeches in English well and correctly. The quantitative data that the author obtained from the questionnaire showed that the five students still had difficulty pronouncing and pronouncing them clearly to speak English. They can only interpret, understand and also translate when someone speaks English with them. They cannot speak with perfect pronunciation, but behind that understanding when listening and translating English can be allocated in the sufficient category and being able to understand what a speaker or speaker is saying. Meanwhile, for the other 50 percent or 10 people, the author got quite satisfactory answers, where they had a little understanding and understanding of how to speak and make speeches in English properly and correctly. But the problem they face is that, when giving a speech, they are more likely to memorize the text given or created by them. They still have difficulty putting words together well and still tend not to reach the 50 percent mark in terms of speaking and making good English speeches. With different problems and pronunciations that are still categorized or allocated in the word sufficient, these children have little ability to speak and make English speeches well and correctly. For another 25 percent or 5 people, they can understand and understand how and how to speak and make good English speeches. Here the answers that the author received were very good, where they spoke eloquently and also made good speeches. These five students had also taken part in English language tutoring and speech competitions that had been held at their school. With good pronunciation and pronunciation, these five people have excellent potential and talent in the general sphere and can also be a reference in building

careers and relationships in the future. Currently we are entering the digital world in the era of society 5.0 and industrial revolution 4.0. Emphasized to be able to compete both materially and non-materially, physically and mentally. Therefore, Public Speaking is also an important reference for making the transition develop better and more correctly. When someone can speak clearly, well and structured in public, it can be said that that person can become a reference in their life. It can also be concluded that of the 20 students who have filled out the questionnaire that the author provided, we can conclude that 25 percent of them are not and are not able to speak and make speeches in English well, but in the context of listening and translating, they are classified as capable. Meanwhile, 50 percent of junior high school students can be said to be capable and able to speak and make speeches using English, even though in context they are still limited and only rely on the ability to memorize texts and find it difficult to put words together. And for another 25 percent, it can be said that they are classified as very capable in speaking and making speeches using English, with good pronunciation and pronunciation which is also correct and structured.



**Picture 3.1.** Grafic of Students

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Public Speaking has an important role for everyone, be it children, teenagers or even adults. It cannot be denied that public speaking can reflect a person's character when he is speaking. A person's behavior can be judged from their actions, behavior and even more so from the words they say. Especially for millennials or the younger generation, especially junior high school children. In the era of society 5.0 and industrial revolution 4.0, the younger generation and millennial children are required to be able to adapt and have the courage to speak up and dare to give opinions on everything they see, not just mere discourse. Public Speaking is expected to be able to develop the potential of a child's character, not only from

behavior, but from actions and also communicating with each other. By knowing how to make speeches and speak English well, junior high school children will definitely be able to adapt to their environment and be able to form better relationships with others. A broad understanding and understanding of how to speak English well can make junior high school children more independent in all things.

## **5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The author thanks the lecturer in the Public Speaking course, as well as the mentor and tutor in writing this article. Where because they have helped the author from start to finish, until the author can finish this article well. The author also thanks the sources who took the time, energy and thought to fill in several of the questionnaire questions that the author asked.

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