

## INTEGRATING PUBLIC SPEAKING INTO EFL TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17188610>

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### **Abstract**

Public speaking is an essential competency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education; nonetheless, it continues to be one of the most challenging talents to cultivate and evaluate. This article employs a conceptual analysis, supplemented by a comparative evaluation of significant empirical and theoretical works, together with an interpretative synthesis, to delineate the systematic integration of public speaking within teacher-education curriculum. Evidence from various contexts reveals enduring obstacles – such as speaking anxiety, diminished confidence, insufficient practice, inconsistent assessment, and deficiencies in educator preparation – coupled with viable opportunities, including learner-centered pedagogy, project-based learning, targeted training in body language and vocal control, and technology-enhanced practice. We contend that public speaking ought to be seen as a fundamental component of communication competence rather than a supplementary element. The document presents a curriculum-level paradigm that amalgamates critical pedagogy, reflective practice, and digital literacy, delineating consequences for program directors, course designers, and practicum mentors. The contribution is a cohesive, multi-faceted model designed to inform programmatic decision-making in EFL teacher education.

### **Keywords**

public speaking, EFL teacher education, speaking anxiety, learner-centered pedagogy, curriculum design, digital literacy

### **1. Introduction**

In a time of global interconnection, English language educators are required to possess not just linguistic expertise but also proficiency in public speaking as an essential professional ability. Teacher educators must equip student teachers to articulate concepts effectively, manage classrooms persuasively, and present

themselves confidently in academic and professional settings. Notwithstanding its significance, public speaking is sometimes inadequately addressed in several EFL teacher preparation programs, generally eclipsed by grammar, reading, and writing elements. Research repeatedly indicates that speaking anxiety is a significant obstacle for EFL learners, especially teacher candidates, who are required to present before peers and assessors (Abrar et al., 2016). Students often express apprehension over unfavorable assessment, language uncertainty, and a lack of enough practice chances. Furthermore, several programs continue to depend on teacher-centered methodologies, providing few opportunities for students to participate in genuine communicative activities (Li, 2018). The growing use of digital technology and novel pedagogical models, including project-based learning and cooperative frameworks, presents new potential for innovation in public speaking education (Shi et al., 2024; Zou & Wang, 2024). This study examines the critical necessity to reevaluate public speaking in teacher education. It contends that EFL teacher preparation programs must systematically include public speaking into curriculum as a fundamental aspect of communicative ability, rather than regarding it a supplementary.

**Research questions guiding this paper are as follows:**

1. What are the main challenges faced by EFL teacher candidates and educators in integrating public speaking into teacher education curricula?
2. What opportunities can be identified through theoretical perspectives and empirical research?
3. How can a conceptual framework be developed to guide the systematic integration of public speaking into EFL teacher education?

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Speaking Anxiety as a Persistent Barrier**

A prevalent finding in the literature is that speaking anxiety is a significant barrier for EFL learners, especially prospective teachers. Abrar et al. (2016) performed a study including Indonesian EFL student instructors, revealing that participants often experienced significant anxiety, mostly attributed to fear of unfavorable assessment, insufficient language confidence, and restricted practice chances. Notably, although gender was not a significant factor, competence level markedly affected anxiety levels, with more competent learners exhibiting reduced worry. This underscores the necessity of providing adequate exposure and systematic practice in courses, particularly for less skilled learners. Comparable results were noted in Malaysian contexts, where non-linguistic impediments such as shyness, low motivation, and self-doubt were recognized as

significant obstacles to speaking growth (Nadesan & Md. Shah, 2020). Their research highlighted that, despite possessing sufficient language expertise, psychological obstacles considerably impeded performance. These findings affirm that addressing the emotive elements of learning is equally essential as delivering verbal instruction.

### **2.2 Pedagogical Interventions to Reduce Anxiety**

Several studies have suggested methods to mitigate speaking anxiety and enhance learner confidence. Hawani et al. (2016) shown that instruction in body language and public speaking markedly enhanced self-efficacy in physical education trainees. Despite being performed outside the EFL setting, their findings are applicable, demonstrating that organized modules on voice projection, posture, and non-verbal communication may enhance learners' confidence and perceived communicative ability.

Aman and Mahamod (2022) emphasized the significance of voice control—intonation, emphasis, and pronunciation clarity—in facilitating effective public speaking. Their study involving Malaysian primary school pupils demonstrated that early proficiency in vocal skills improves overall intelligibility and audience engagement. This indicates that EFL curriculum have to deliberately incorporate instruction in paralinguistic aspects, in conjunction with linguistic precision.

### **2.3 Learner-Centered and Innovative Approaches**

Conventional teacher-centric approaches have faced criticism for constraining genuine speaking opportunities. Li (2018) introduced a comprehensive instructional paradigm that amalgamates neurolinguistic programming (NLP), cooperative learning, and task-based methodologies. His research at a Chinese institution revealed that pupils not only enhanced their speaking abilities but also acquired more confidence and drive. More than 80% of participants indicated significant enhancement in their public speaking skills, highlighting the efficacy of multi-modal, interactive teaching methods. Project-Based Learning (PBL) has developed as a viable technique. Shi, Kassim, and Radzuan (2024) executed an experimental study in China demonstrating that PBL exercises markedly improved students' public speaking abilities, motivation, and creativity. Students valued the chance to cooperate, practice, and present genuine assignments, which alleviated their nervousness and promoted independence. These findings correspond with Paneerselvam and Mohamad's (2019) advocacy for interactive, stress-free learning settings that incorporate activities like debates, games, and social media integration to enhance student engagement in speaking.

### **2.4 The Role of Critical Pedagogy**

In addition to particular classroom practices, academics underscore the significance of overarching philosophical perspectives in teacher education. Shudak (2014) advocated for the resurgence of critical pedagogy, introducing a three-dimensional framework grounded on disputed territory, political commitments, and philosophical viewpoints. From this viewpoint, public speaking transcends a simple technical competence; it serves as a catalyst for discourse, critical awareness, and democratic engagement. Integrating critical pedagogy enables EFL curriculum to allow prospective educators to perceive public speaking as a professional obligation and a civic duty.

### **2.5 Digital Transformation in EFL Speaking Instruction**

Recent years have observed the swift digitization of education, significantly impacting public speaking. Zou and Wang (2024) analyzed the impact of the digital era on EFL instruction, highlighting that technology presents both advantages and obstacles. Online platforms, voice analysis software, and AI-driven feedback systems provide options for practice and self-evaluation. Conversely, some teacher applicants lack the requisite computer literacy to properly utilize these tools. This indicates that teacher education courses should encompass not just the instruction of speaking abilities but also the incorporation of digital competence training. Alghanmi (2025) corroborated these trends in Saudi Arabia, where students demonstrated a pronounced desire to enhance their speaking abilities while recognizing a necessity for increased instructor assistance, multimedia tools, and collaborative activities. Collectively, these findings underscore the significance of integrating technology-enhanced public speaking modules into EFL teacher preparation.

### **2.6 Synthesis of Meta-Analytical Insights**

Meta-synthetic studies provide a broader overview of effective practices. Salman and Yanpar-Yelken (2024), analyzing twelve research articles, concluded that group work, audiovisual materials, technology integration, and pronunciation practice are the most impactful methods for improving speaking skills. Their synthesis reinforces individual findings by showing convergent evidence across multiple contexts.

## **3. Methodology**

This study applies a conceptual framework to examine the incorporation of public speaking into EFL teacher preparation programs. In contrast to empirical research, which depends on experiments or surveys, the conceptual method facilitates the synthesis and interpretation of current theoretical and empirical studies to provide a comprehensive framework for curriculum creation.

The methodology of this article is based on three key principles:

### 1. Conceptual

### Analysis

The study identifies and interprets the main theoretical foundations of public speaking instruction in EFL contexts, particularly learner-centered pedagogy, person-centered education, critical pedagogy, and communicative competence frameworks. These concepts are analyzed to explain their relevance to the development of public speaking skills among future English language teachers.

### 2. Comparative Review of Empirical Findings

Evidence from scholarly studies was examined and compared across different contexts (Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, China, Turkey, Tunisia, and international syntheses). This comparative process helps to highlight recurring challenges – such as speaking anxiety, lack of practice, and non-linguistic barriers – as well as recurring solutions, including body language training, project-based learning, digital integration, and voice control strategies.

### 3. Descriptive and Interpretive Synthesis

Findings from the reviewed studies were synthesized to describe both challenges and opportunities systematically. The synthesis does not aim to generalize statistically but rather to **interpret patterns, identify gaps, and propose conceptual solutions**. This interpretive element is central to conceptual research, as it emphasizes meaning-making rather than data collection.

By combining these methods, the present article constructs a **multi-dimensional framework** for integrating public speaking into EFL teacher education. This framework integrates insights from psychology (self-efficacy and anxiety), pedagogy (learner-centered and project-based learning), linguistics (voice control and pronunciation), and educational technology (digital platforms and online tools).

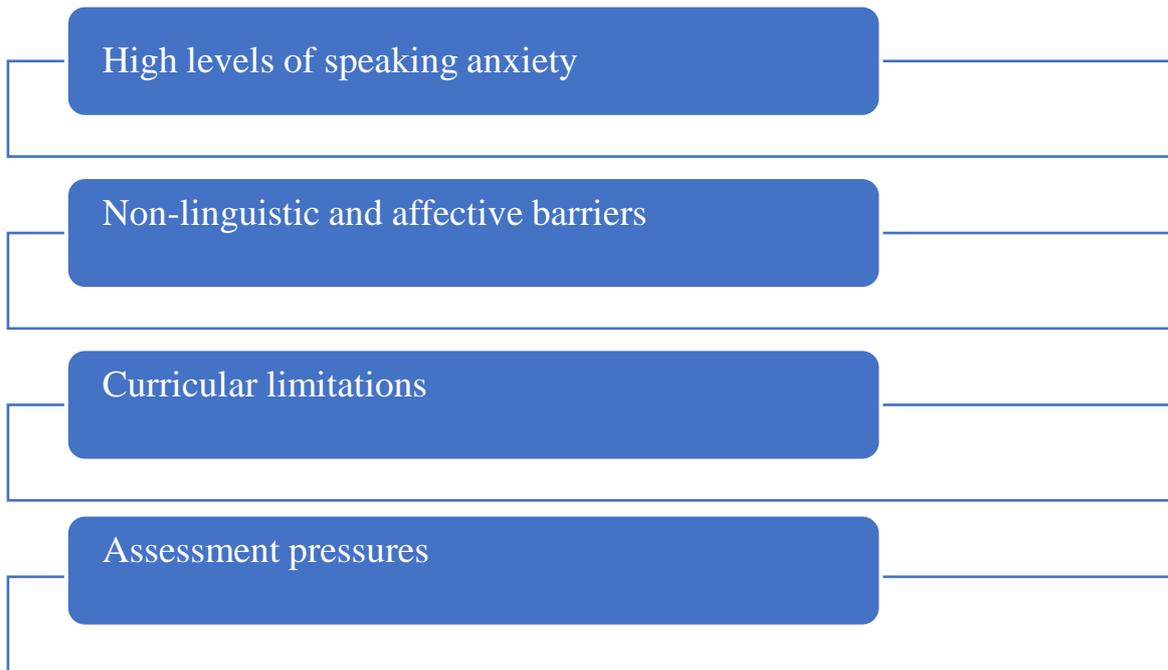
### 4. Findings / Analysis

This section presents a descriptive-interpretive synthesis grounded in conceptual analysis and a comparative reading of peer-reviewed research across EFL contexts. The aim is not statistical generalization but to surface recurrent patterns with direct implications for curriculum design. Findings are organized into two parts – 4.1 Challenges and 4.2 Opportunities.

#### 4.1 Challenges in Integrating Public Speaking

The literature research indicates that the difficulties in teaching public speaking may be categorized into some types.

#### Diagram 1. Challenges in Integrating Public Speaking



**High levels of speaking anxiety**

EFL teacher candidates regularly indicate elevated speaking anxiety across many circumstances. Abrar et al. (2016) discovered that Indonesian student teachers had dread of unfavorable assessment and self-doubt, with proficiency—rather than gender—identified as the primary determinant in reducing anxiety. Nadesan and Md. Shah (2020) demonstrated that Malaysian students encountered significant psychological obstacles, including shyness, lack of confidence, and poor motivation, which hindered their capacity to perform well before audiences.

**Non-linguistic and affective barriers**

Despite possessing sufficient verbal proficiency, non-linguistic variables such as time constraints, peer influence, and apprehension regarding errors diminish participation (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). Aman and Mahamod (2022) also asserted that inadequate focus on voice control—intonation, emphasis, and pronunciation—diminishes clarity and reduces students' capacity to engage listeners successfully.

**Curricular limitations**

Numerous teacher education programs continue to regard public speaking as ancillary rather than fundamental. Li (2018) observed that dependence on teacher-centered methodologies yields restricted possibilities for genuine practice. Furthermore, Zou and Wang (2024) noted that educators frequently possess insufficient digital literacy to effectively include contemporary resources for speaking education. In the absence of structured curricular frameworks, pupils have inconsistent or insufficient exposure.

**Assessment**

**pressures**

Summative assessment practices, where students are evaluated on a single or limited number of high-stakes presentations, exacerbate anxiety (Shi et al., 2024). Learners perceive these situations as threatening, especially in environments where mistakes are penalized rather than seen as opportunities for growth.

**4.2 Opportunities for Enhancing Public Speaking**

This subsection distills the most actionable levers for curriculum design. We foreground four strands – paralinguistic training, learner-centered/PBL structures, critical-pedagogy framing, and technology-enhanced practice – supported by cross-context evidence, alongside meta-findings on group work, audiovisuals, and pronunciation.

Diagram 2. **Opportunities for Enhancing Public Speaking**



**Training in body language and vocal techniques**

Hawani et al. (2016) established that focused training in nonverbal communication and public speaking markedly enhances self-efficacy and confidence. Aman and Mahamod (2022) asserted that voice control is a crucial factor in effective public speaking. Collectively, these data indicate that explicit modules on paralinguistic abilities may function as successful curricular treatments.

**Learner-centered and project-based approaches**

Li (2018) discovered that the amalgamation of NLP, cooperative learning, and task-based activities fostered a conducive atmosphere in which students developed both competence and confidence. Shi et al. (2024) validated the efficacy of Project-Based Learning, wherein genuine assignments stimulated learner motivation, alleviated anxiety, and enhanced creativity. Paneerselvam and Mohamad (2019) similarly

endorsed interactive strategies – such as discussions, role-plays, and social media tasks – that foster involvement and engagement.

### **Critical pedagogy and empowerment**

Shudak (2014) developed a critical pedagogy approach, asserting that public speaking should transcend mere technical performance and be recognized as a means of empowerment and democratic discourse. Incorporating critical pedagogy guarantees that student teachers cultivate both communication competence and the ability to promote critical thinking and social participation inside their classrooms.

### **Digital transformation and technology-enhanced practice**

Zou and Wang (2024) emphasized the significance of digital technology in generating novel chances for practice, encompassing online venues, AI-driven feedback, and multimedia resources. Alghanmi (2025) indicated that students want enhanced instructor help and multimedia integration to improve their speaking abilities. Digital technologies thus provide a crucial opportunity to expand practice beyond the classroom and tailor feedback.

### **Meta-synthetic evidence of best practices**

Salman and Yanpar-Yelken (2024), in their synthesis of twelve studies, found consistent evidence that group work, audiovisual support, pronunciation training, and technology integration are the most effective strategies for developing speaking competence. This convergence strengthens the case for embedding these elements into public speaking modules across teacher education curricula.

## **5. Discussion**

The synthesis of scholarly studies highlights both persistent challenges and promising opportunities for integrating public speaking into EFL teacher education curricula. This discussion interprets these findings in relation to broader theoretical frameworks and international practices, offering directions for curriculum design.

### **5.1 Addressing Anxiety through Pedagogical Design**

A predominant motif in the research is the prevalence of speaking anxiety (Abrar et al., 2016; Nadesan & Md. Shah, 2020). This is not a novel phenomena; nonetheless, it endures after decades of investigation. The findings indicates that alleviating anxiety necessitates a pedagogical overhaul rather than sporadic treatments. Methods like Project-Based Learning (Shi et al., 2024) and interactive techniques (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019) indicate that anxiety decreases when learners engage in genuine activities, receive practice chances, and obtain constructive feedback. Consequently, anxiety should not be seen just as an individual psychological concern but rather as a systemic issue in curriculum design.

### **5.2 Empowerment through Critical Pedagogy**

Shudak's (2014) paradigm emphasizes that public speaking transcends mere technical proficiency; it serves as a means of empowerment. Integrating critical pedagogy into public speaking education enables prospective educators to perceive speaking as a vehicle for promoting conversation, social critique, and democratic engagement. This holds twofold significance for EFL teacher candidates: it enhances their confidence and prepares them to establish interactive classrooms in their future endeavors. Incorporating critical pedagogy guarantees that programs transcend mere fluency and correctness to foster voice, agency, and accountability.

### **5.3 Developing Paralinguistic and Performance Skills**

A frequently overlooked aspect of public speaking in EFL curriculum is the proficiency in paralinguistic elements, such as nonverbal communication and vocal modulation. Research conducted by Hawani et al. (2016) and Aman & Mahamod (2022) substantiates that systematic training in these domains fortifies self-efficacy and improves clarity and audience engagement. However, the majority of teacher education programs do not include specific modules on these competencies. Incorporating paralinguistic training—via seminars, rehearsal laboratories, and peer feedback sessions—enables programs to more effectively equip prospective educators for the realities of classroom communication and professional discourse.

### **5.4 Leveraging Digital Transformation**

Digital technologies are both an opportunity and a challenge. Zou and Wang (2024) and Alghanmi (2025) observed that online platforms, AI-driven technologies, and multimedia materials can enhance practice beyond the classroom and tailor feedback. Nevertheless, inadequate digital literacy among educators constrains their efficient utilization. Consequently, including digital competency into teacher education is imperative. Public speaking programs must encompass training in recording, evaluating, and enhancing speeches using digital technologies, alongside the examination of online collaboration platforms that replicate genuine communication settings.

## **6. Conclusion**

The analysis and integration of twelve academic papers reveal that public speaking is an essential skill and an ongoing difficulty in EFL teacher education. Student instructors frequently have elevated speaking anxiety, typically stemming from non-linguistic impediments such as diminished self-assurance, reticence, and apprehension over unfavorable assessment. Curricula sometimes lack structured chances for practice, resulting in many students being inadequately prepared for the professional communication requirements of teaching. The literature concurrently underscores a variety of interesting options. Training in vocal modulation and nonverbal communication can enhance clarity, self-efficacy,

and engagement. Learner-centered methods, including project-based learning and cooperative tactics, diminish anxiety while promoting autonomy and creativity. Critical pedagogy reconceptualizes public speaking as a means of empowerment and conversation, while the use of digital tools broadens practice possibilities outside the classroom. Meta-analytical research substantiates that collaborative work, audiovisual resources, and pronunciation exercises are reliably successful elements of speaking teaching. Collectively, these findings necessitate a comprehensive framework for incorporating public speaking into EFL teacher preparation courses. This framework should:

1. Methodically tackle psychological and emotional obstacles, especially anxiety.
2. Integrate explicit modules on paralinguistic competencies, encompassing vocal and nonverbal communication. Incorporate project-oriented and participatory activities that replicate genuine conversation.
4. Provide foundational teaching in critical pedagogy to enable teachers to function as democratic communicators.

By applying these concepts, EFL teacher education programs may elevate public speaking from a marginal talent to an essential aspect of teacher competency. This method guarantees that future English teachers graduate as excellent language users and as confident, thoughtful, and socially responsible communicators, able to exemplify good communication for their students and contribute to wider educational and civic settings.

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