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Online and Face-to-Face Mentorship Capsule as Mechanisms to Improve Public Speaking Towards English Language Through SAPAK Program

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ABSTRACT

This action research examined learners' experiences of online and face-to-face mentorship capsules implemented through the Students' Awareness, Practice, Attitude, and Knowledge (SAPAK) Program to support English-language public speaking. The study was conducted at Hagonoy National High School in Guihing, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, Philippines, during School Year 2022-2023. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was employed. Fifteen Grade 7-Charity learners who accessed the mentorship sessions were selected purposively, while English Master Teachers facilitated the program. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using the six-phase thematic analysis procedure of Braun and Clarke. The learners' experiences were organized into five themes: trepidation and hesitation, quick and easy access to learning, enhanced agile partaking, relief from language anxiety, and zeal to practice public speaking acumen. Participants also described five perceived effects of the SAPAK Program: refinement in speech delivery, reduced negative perceptions about public speaking, built-up confidence, acceptance of constructive criticism, and escalated motivation. The findings indicate that blended mentorship provided accessible opportunities for practice, feedback, and encouragement. The study recommends continued implementation, documentation, and advocacy for context-responsive mentorship activities that support learners' confidence and English-language speaking development.

Keywords: *blended mentorship, English-language public speaking, language anxiety, SAPAK Program, action research, qualitative phenomenology*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an important component of communicative competence. Learners are expected to express ideas clearly, respond appropriately to audiences, and participate actively in classroom activities. However, speaking in a second language can be difficult because it requires learners to organize ideas, use appropriate language, and communicate spontaneously. Hammad (2020) emphasized the value of oral presentation activities in English-language learning, while Horwitz (2020) discussed the anxiety learners may experience when using a foreign language.

Language anxiety can affect participation, motivation, and performance. Brown (2020) associated anxiety with feelings of unease, self-doubt, and worry. Liu and Jackson (2018) linked reticence and anxiety with oral English lessons, while Dana and Aminatun (2022) examined the relationship between speaking-class anxiety and English proficiency. These concerns are relevant in contexts where learners hesitate to speak because they fear mistakes, criticism, or embarrassment.

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In the Philippines, English serves as an important language of instruction. Learners nevertheless continue to encounter difficulties when participating in English-language public speaking activities. Pabro-Maquidato (2021) described speaking anxiety and coping strategies among English-language learners, while Rauf et al. (2021) examined oral communication apprehension. These studies underscore the need for supportive approaches that provide learners with opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and gradually develop confidence.

The SAPAK Program was developed to address this concern among Grade 7-Charity learners of Hagonoy National High School in Guihing, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. SAPAK refers to Students' Awareness, Practice, Attitude, and Knowledge. The program combined online and face-to-face mentorship capsules. Facebook, Messenger, Google Classroom, and online meetings supported virtual access, while scheduled in-person sessions allowed learners to practice public speaking with mentors. This action research documented the learners' experiences and examined how they perceived the contribution of the blended mentorship approach to their English-language public speaking development.

Literature Review

Public Speaking Anxiety in English-Language Learning

Speaking anxiety is a persistent concern in second-language learning. Learners may hesitate to participate when they anticipate negative evaluation, feel uncertain about their language ability, or lack confidence in spontaneous communication. Basic (2021) identified speaking anxiety as an obstacle to second-language learning, while Pabro-Maquidato (2021) described how learners experience and cope with English-speaking anxiety.

Anxiety can be observed through silence, hesitation, unusual pauses, and reluctance to interact. Horwitz (2020) discussed foreign-language classroom anxiety, while Liu and Jackson (2018) examined reticence and anxiety in oral English lessons. Dana and Aminatun (2022) likewise explored the relationship between speaking-class anxiety and English proficiency. These studies suggest that learners need emotionally safe opportunities to practice oral communication.

Instructional approaches that reduce pressure and increase participation may help learners become more comfortable speaking English. Atas (2018) reported that drama techniques can reduce speaking anxiety among English-language learners, while Hammad (2020) examined oral presentations as a way of improving speaking performance. These findings support structured opportunities for guided practice and feedback.

Blended Mentorship and Learner Support

Mentorship can provide learners with individualized support, timely feedback, and encouragement. A blended approach combines the accessibility of online communication with the immediacy of face-to-face interaction. Online platforms allow learners to review materials, send questions, and participate in virtual discussions, while in-person sessions provide opportunities for direct demonstration, rehearsal, and coaching.

Moore's Transactional Distance Theory explains how distance-learning experiences are shaped by dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy (Moore, 1983). Abuhassna and Yahaya (2018) applied the theory to an online instructional module and emphasized the importance of learner interaction and accessible guidance. Within the SAPAK Program, online mentorship reduced physical distance by enabling communication through Messenger, Facebook, Google Classroom, and virtual meetings.

Constructivist perspectives also support blended mentorship. Lee and Lin (2009) explained that learners construct understanding through their engagement with learning experiences and instructional resources. In this view, mentors guide learning by creating opportunities for participation, practice, reflection, and feedback. The combined online and face-to-face mentorship capsules gave learners multiple ways to engage with public speaking tasks.

Qualitative Action Research as a Basis for Improvement

Action research allows educators to examine a localized concern and use the findings to refine practice. The present study focused on the experiences of Grade 7 learners who participated in the SAPAK Program. A

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qualitative approach was appropriate because the research questions required detailed descriptions of how learners experienced the intervention and how they interpreted changes in their public-speaking participation.

Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to explore participant perspectives while maintaining sufficient flexibility for follow-up questions. Brown and Danaher (2019) described dialogical semi-structured interviews as a way of facilitating authentic responses. Creswell and Poth (2018) likewise explained the value of qualitative inquiry for understanding human experiences in context.

Thematic analysis provides a systematic way to identify patterns across qualitative accounts. Braun and Clarke (2022) emphasized conceptual and design thinking in thematic analysis. In the present study, recurring ideas in the learners' narratives were organized into themes that described both their experiences and their perceived gains from the blended mentorship capsules.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological action-research design. The approach was used to document learners' experiences of the SAPAK Program and to understand how they perceived the online and face-to-face mentorship capsules in relation to English-language public speaking. The study focused on the participants' descriptions of their experiences rather than on numerical comparisons or causal testing.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Hagonoy National High School in Guihing, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, Philippines. The intervention was implemented among Grade 7-Charity learners during School Year 2022-2023. The school context was relevant because the program was designed to respond to learners' hesitation and anxiety when participating in English-language public speaking activities.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select 15 Grade 7-Charity learners who accessed the mentorship capsules and experienced the blended mentoring sessions. The source manuscript also identified 10 teachers who supported the program, including English Master Teachers who facilitated the mentorship activities. The thematic findings reported in this article are based on the learner participants' experiences. Purposive sampling was appropriate because the study required participants who had direct experience of the intervention (Obilor, 2023).

Intervention: SAPAK Program

The SAPAK Program combined online and face-to-face mentorship. English Master Teachers were oriented as lead mentors. A Facebook page and Google Classroom were created to provide accessible learning materials and communication channels. Advocacy activities were conducted to inform learners, parents, and stakeholders about the program. During implementation, learners participated in one-hour online sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays and two-hour face-to-face mentorship sessions on Fridays. Mentors documented consultations, learner difficulties, and the technical assistance provided.

Table 1. *Implementation Timeline of the SAPAK Program*

Activity	Schedule
Orientation of lead mentors	First week of February
Facebook page and Google Classroom set-up	Second week of February
Advocacy campaign	Third week of February
Program implementation	Fourth week of February
Reporting	Second week of March

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used to obtain detailed accounts from the learner participants. The interview questions were designed to elicit descriptions of their experiences and perceptions of the mentorship capsules. Experts, including the course facilitator and an associate professor, reviewed the guide for clarity and

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relevance. The semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions while maintaining consistency across participants (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission was secured from the appropriate school authority. Rapport with the participants was established before the interviews. Interviews were scheduled at times and in environments that minimized distractions. Online communication and Google Meet were used when appropriate. The participants were informed that interviews would be recorded, and the researcher also took notes. After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and organized for analysis.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2022). The process included transcription of recorded responses and field notes, meaning-based translation when vernacular responses were used, identification of significant statements, generation of codes, highlighting of key phrases, and definition and naming of themes. Recurring ideas were organized according to the two research questions: the learners' experiences of the mentorship capsules and their perceived effects on English-language public speaking.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed voluntary participation, informed consent, protection from harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. They were allowed to withdraw from participation when necessary. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities, and the collected information was handled confidentially. Because the learner participants were minors, the final submission should explicitly state the documented parental or guardian consent and learner assent procedures and provide the institutional ethics-review reference number, when available.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learners' Experiences of the Online and Face-to-Face Mentorship Capsules

The learners' accounts generated five themes. At the beginning of the program, some participants experienced trepidation and hesitation because public speaking in English was associated with earlier difficulties and fear of making mistakes. As the mentorship sessions progressed, they described easier access to learning through online platforms and direct support from mentors. They also reported greater participation, reduced language anxiety, and a stronger willingness to practice public speaking.

Table 2. *Themes Describing Learners' Experiences of the Mentorship Capsules*

Theme	Synthesis of Learners' Experiences
Trepidation and hesitation	Learners initially felt uneasy and reluctant to ask questions or speak because of previous difficulties with English-language public speaking.
Quick and easy access to learning	The combination of online and face-to-face sessions allowed learners to access materials, ask questions, and address difficulties more conveniently.
Enhanced agile partaking	Learners gradually became more willing to participate in activities and communicate with mentors.
Relief from language anxiety	Encouragement, support, and reassurance helped learners feel less anxious during public-speaking activities.
Zeal to practice public speaking acumen	Learners expressed greater readiness to apply the skills and techniques they learned and to move beyond their comfort zones.

The themes suggest that accessibility and supportive interaction were important components of the learners' experiences. Online access allowed participants to review topics and communicate with mentors, while face-to-face sessions created opportunities for guided practice. The shift from hesitation to participation is consistent with the view that language anxiety can inhibit oral communication and that learners benefit from supportive opportunities to practice (Pabro-Maquidato, 2021; Rauf et al., 2021).

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Perceived Effects of the SAPAK Program on Public Speaking

The learners also described five perceived effects of the mentorship capsules. They associated the program with improvements in speech delivery, a more positive view of public speaking, increased confidence, openness to constructive criticism, and stronger motivation. These findings represent the participants' perceptions and should be interpreted as qualitative evidence of how the intervention was experienced rather than as a statistical test of effectiveness.

Table 3. *Themes Describing the Perceived Effects of the SAPAK Program*

Theme	Synthesis of Perceived Effects
Refinement in speech delivery	Learners described improvement in voice volume, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.
Reduced negative perception about public speaking	Learners increasingly viewed public speaking as a useful means of expressing ideas rather than as an embarrassing activity.
Built-up confidence	Learners reported greater confidence in expressing themselves and speaking with clarity and authority.
Acceptance of constructive criticism	Learners became more receptive to feedback and used comments to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
Escalated motivation	Learners felt more motivated to continue developing their public-speaking skills.

The findings align with the program's blended structure. Online channels supported access and continuity, while face-to-face mentorship provided space for performance, immediate feedback, and encouragement. Moore's (1983) Transactional Distance Theory helps explain how dialogue and mentor accessibility can reduce the effects of physical distance. Constructivist perspectives likewise emphasize learning through participation, interaction, and reflection (Lee & Lin, 2009).

Dissemination and Utilization

The study proposed dissemination of the findings to educators and Learning Area Supervisors who encounter similar public-speaking concerns. Advocacy activities may be used to communicate the gains of the program and encourage context-responsive mentorship approaches. Continued documentation is important because consultation records can support the refinement of learning activities and identify recurring areas in which learners need assistance.

Table 4. *Dissemination and Utilization Plan*

Activity	Time Frame	Audience	Success Indicator
Research proposal and implementation	February 6, 2023	Research instructor and panel members	Completed evaluation form
Presentation of research results and approval	March 11, 2023	Research instructor and panel members	Completed evaluation form
Program advocacy and sharing of practices	After approval	Learning Area Supervisors and educators	Documentation of dissemination activity

CONCLUSION

The online and face-to-face mentorship capsules implemented through the SAPAK Program provided Grade 7 learners with accessible and supportive opportunities to develop English-language public speaking. The learners' experiences moved from trepidation and hesitation toward easier access to learning, stronger participation, relief from language anxiety, and greater willingness to practice. They also described perceived improvements in speech delivery, attitudes toward public speaking, confidence, receptiveness to constructive criticism, and motivation. The findings show the value of combining online access with direct mentorship and guided practice. Because the study used qualitative data from a localized group of learners, the findings should be understood as context-specific insights that can inform further implementation and evaluation.

Recommendation

Hagonoy National High School may continue the SAPAK Program while strengthening documentation of learner consultations, participation, and progress. English teachers may sustain the blended use of Facebook, Messenger, Google Classroom, virtual meetings, and scheduled face-to-face sessions to provide learners with accessible opportunities for practice and feedback. Learning Area Supervisors may consider sharing the program as a contextualized practice for schools that encounter similar concerns. Future studies should include larger and more diverse learner groups, document the frequency and duration of mentorship sessions, gather mentor perspectives systematically, and use appropriate pre-test and post-test measures or comparison groups when evaluating changes in public-speaking performance.

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