



"Sculpting The Sculpture Of Self: Polishing The Diamond Within Through Mirror Practice And Mic Mastery".

“A classroom-Based Action Research on Overcome Public Speaking Anxiety”

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Abstract

Public speaking is a foundational skill that strengthens communication competence, confidence, and leadership among learners. However, many students continue to struggle with stage fear, hesitation, and limited self-expression. This action research, conducted at PMSHRI GHSS Seri over three months (January–March 2025) with 30 female Class 9 students, aimed to reduce public speaking anxiety through structured interventions such as mirror practice, microphone-use sessions, storytelling, poem recitation, novel reading, and morning assembly presentations. Using the Plan–Act–Observe–Reflect (PAOR) framework, data were collected through pre- and post-intervention Likert scale questionnaires, observation checklists, student feedback forms, and reflective journals. Findings revealed a shift from high anxiety and hesitation in the pre-test to significantly improved confidence, articulation, and stage presence in the post-test. The study concludes that consistent speaking opportunities and reflective practices support learners in developing communication skills and overcoming public speaking anxiety.

Keywords

Public Speaking anxiety, Confidence Building, Mirror Practice, Stage Fear, Action Research, Self-expression, Communication Skills

Introduction

Background of the Study

Public speaking is widely recognized as both an art and a vital life skill. It not only enhances communication but also fosters confidence, leadership, and critical thinking among learners. In school settings, effective public speaking serves as a cornerstone for personality development and academic success. Yet, many students experience intense anxiety, self-doubt, or stage fright when asked to speak

before an audience. This condition, often referred to as glossophobia, limits their participation and restricts their ability to express ideas confidently.

At PMSHRI GHSS Seri, classroom observations revealed that a considerable number of students hesitated to participate in discussions, class presentations, or morning assemblies. This lack of confidence often stemmed from fear of judgment or making mistakes. Recognizing that communication competence is essential for holistic development, the researcher initiated an action research project titled "Sculpting the Sculpture of Self: Polishing the Diamond Within through Mirror Practice and Mic Mastery". The metaphor of polishing the diamond reflects the belief that every student has an inherent brilliance that, when nurtured through practice and encouragement, can shine through with confidence and clarity.

Need and Rationale of the Study

Despite the inclusion of communication skills in educational frameworks, many students continue to struggle with stage fear and self-expression. This gap highlights the need for practical, low-cost, and classroom-friendly interventions that build confidence and reduce public speaking anxiety.

The study was conducted to address the following pressing needs:

1. To provide students with a safe and encouraging environment for expression.
2. To help learners overcome hesitation and stage fear through continuous exposure.
3. To integrate simple tools such as mirror practice and microphone use as part of classroom activities to improve fluency and confidence.
4. To strengthen teacher-student interactions through positive reinforcement and high expectations.

By implementing these strategies, the researcher aimed to transform hesitant and withdrawn students into expressive, confident communicators — an outcome that directly supports the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes experiential learning and skill-based education.

Theoretical Foundation

The present study is grounded in two key psychological and educational theories:

1. The Pygmalion Effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968)

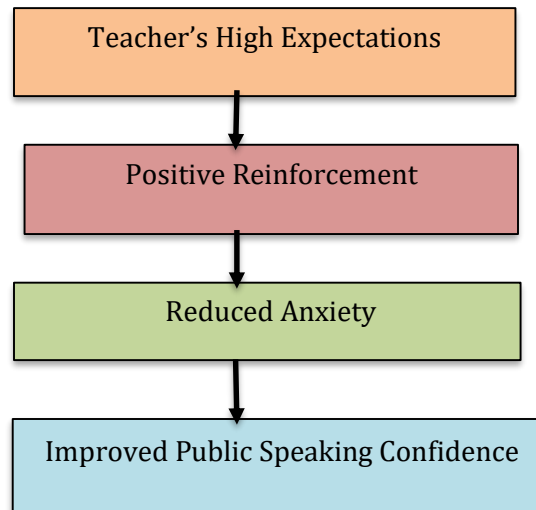
The Pygmalion Effect explains how elevated teacher expectations can positively influence students' performance. When educators communicate belief in a learner's capabilities, students internalize these expectations, which enhances motivation, self-efficacy, and achievement. Within the context of public speaking, consistent encouragement, trust-building, and acknowledgment of students' effort help reduce anxiety and foster confidence.

2. Public Speaking Anxiety (McCroskey, 1970)

Public speaking anxiety, a form of communication apprehension, affects an individual's ability to speak effectively before an audience. It commonly stems from fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem, or inadequate practice. This study addresses public speaking anxiety by integrating mirror practice to enhance self-awareness and microphone use for gradual desensitization to audience pressure, enabling students to build composure and confidence over time.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the following chain of influence:



This model demonstrates how the teacher's positive expectations (Pygmalion Effect) create an encouraging learning atmosphere, where feedback and reinforcement reduce anxiety levels. As students feel more secure and supported, their participation and fluency increase, leading to measurable improvements in confidence and overall communication ability.

The use of mirror and mic practice serves as the operational tools within this framework, acting as daily or weekly interventions that help “polish the diamond within” — transforming inner potential into outward performance.

Objectives of the Study

To improve students' self-confidence and reduce stage fear during public speaking.

To enhance articulation, fluency, and clarity of speech.

To provide opportunities for self-reflection and peer feedback through structured speaking activities.

To evaluate the effectiveness of mirror practice and mic-use in developing communication competence.

Review of Literature

Public speaking has long been associated with leadership and effective communication.

Dale Carnegie (1936) emphasized that self-confidence in speech can be cultivated through practice and experience. **Bandura's (1977)** Social Learning Theory provides a theoretical framework for this study, suggesting that learners develop new behaviors by observing others and through self-efficacy — the belief in one's own capability to perform tasks successfully. Mirror practice directly aligns with this idea, as it allows learners to observe and correct their own gestures, tone, and expressions. **Brown and Yule (1983)** proposed that language learning is not limited to grammar and vocabulary; it is fundamentally a skill that evolves through performance and exposure. Similarly, Harmer (2001) asserted that speaking activities should be designed to lower anxiety and increase motivation. In the Indian classroom context, studies by NCERT (2019) have pointed out that many students, despite strong academic content knowledge, lack expressive ability due to insufficient speaking opportunities. Recent research by **Kumar & Devi (2022)** found that regular speech practice with constructive feedback leads to significant improvement in students' verbal communication and social confidence. In alignment with **Vygotsky's (1978)** concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, teacher scaffolding and peer support play key roles in helping learners progress from dependent to independent speakers. **Reddy and Kumar (2023)** conducted a quasi-

experimental study exploring the effectiveness of mirror practice in reducing public speaking anxiety among school learners. They reported that when students practised speaking in front of a mirror, they became more aware of their non-verbal behaviour, voice modulation, and emotional reactions. This self-observation helped them build confidence, reduce fear of audience judgment, and improve articulation. The authors concluded that mirror practice serves as a powerful confidence-building tool, supporting the idea that structured self-reflective activities can enhance public speaking skills. This study provides conceptual support to the present intervention, which also uses practice-based strategies to improve speaking confidence.

The reviewed literature collectively supports the premise that structured speaking practice — particularly through mirror exercises, self-assessment, and audience interaction — can transform communication abilities and foster holistic personality development.

Methodology

This research adopted the Action Research Model comprising the four key stages:

Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect.

- **Plan**

The problem identified was the lack of student confidence in public speaking. An initial survey and observation revealed that most students hesitated to speak even in small groups. The researcher planned a 12-week intervention focusing on daily speaking opportunities integrated into regular classroom routines primarily during English language classes”.

- **Act**

Activities implemented included:

Mirror Practice: Students practiced speeches and self-introductions while observing facial expressions, gestures, and posture.

Weekly sessions were organized to help students become comfortable using the school microphone. These sessions aimed to reduce hesitation and build confidence in amplified speaking. Initially, students were encouraged to use the mic during classroom activities such as reading aloud, delivering short introductions, or sharing their thoughts on daily topics. This consistent exposure helped students learn voice modulation, clarity, and appropriate distance from the mic—key elements of effective public speaking.

Storytelling/Novel reading and Poem Recitation: Students narrated stories and recited poems, focusing on voice modulation and expression.

Debates and Group Discussions: Students participated in collaborative discussions on current issues, enhancing logical expression.

Morning Assembly Speeches: Students ,who were shy before have now presented short speeches in assemblies, applying learned techniques in real settings.

- **Observe**

Throughout the implementation, the researcher used:

Observation checklists to note behavioral changes such as posture, eye contact, and participation frequency.

Student reflective journals to record emotions and perceived progress.

Peer feedback sheets for mutual learning.

Pre- and post-questionnaires to measure confidence and stage fear quantitatively.

- **Reflect**

After analyzing data, the researcher reflected on patterns of improvement and challenges. Reflections revealed that consistent exposure and supportive feedback were key in sustaining students' motivation and confidence.

Sample

The sample comprised 30 female Class 9 students of PMSHRI GHSS Seri, representing students of varying academic abilities. The students were selected because they demonstrated visible hesitation during classroom discussions and morning assembly participation.

Action Plan

Week	Activity	Objective	Expected Outcome
1-2	Pre-test questionnaire and orientation	Identifying speaking challenges	Establish baseline
3-4	Mirror sessions practice	Build self-awareness	Reduce hesitation
5-6	Mic-use & poem recitation	Improve articulation	Increase voice control
7-8	Storytelling & debate	Encourage fluency	Enhance logical thinking
9-10	Morning assembly speeches	Apply skills publicly	Boost confidence
11-12	Post-test feedback	Evaluate impact	Reflect on growth

Data Collection Tools

To ensure comprehensive and reliable data for the present action research on improving students' confidence and public-speaking abilities, multiple tools were employed. The use of varied instruments also enabled triangulation, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

1. Likert-Scale Questionnaires

Pre- and post-intervention Likert-scale questionnaires were administered to assess changes in students' confidence levels and speaking anxiety. Students rated statements on a 5-point scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never).

1	Never
2	Rarely
3	Sometimes
4	Often
5	Always

Sample items:

- “I feel confident while speaking in front of my class.”
- “Mirror practice helps me improve my expressions.”
- “I get nervous when I speak on stage.”
- “I can speak loudly and clearly when using the microphone.”

These responses provided quantifiable data on shifts in confidence, stage fear, and comfort with public-speaking tools.

2. Teacher Observation Checklists

Systematic observation was carried out using structured checklists during classroom activities such as mirror-practice, microphone drills, and public-speaking sessions.

Observation Indicators Included:

- Maintaining eye contact while speaking
- Reduced visible signs of stage fear
- Improved posture and body language during mirror-practice
- Increased willingness to volunteer for speaking tasks
- Clarity, volume, and articulation during microphone use

These checklists offered real-time evidence of behavioral changes.

3. Student Feedback Forms

Feedback forms were collected after major activities to capture students' perceptions, challenges, and self-reported progress.

Examples of Feedback Prompts:

- “Which activity helped you most in improving your confidence?”
- “How did mirror practice change the way you present yourself?”
- “What difficulties do you still face while speaking in front of others?”

This tool provided qualitative insights into students' emotional responses and learning experiences.

4. Reflective Journals / Short Interviews

Students maintained brief reflective journals or participated in short interviews where they described their weekly experiences with mirror practice, mic practice, and class presentations.

Examples from Reflections:

- “This week, I felt less nervous while speaking on the mic.”
- “Mirror practice helped me understand my facial expressions.”
- “I can now speak loudly without fear.”

These reflections traced individual growth over time.

5. Triangulation for Reliability

To ensure reliability, data from all instruments—Likert scales, observation checklists, feedback forms, and reflective journals—were compared.

When three or more tools indicated the same trend (e.g., increased confidence, reduced hesitation), the findings were considered validated.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using pre-post Likert -scale responses collected from a sample of 30 students.

Likert Scale: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always

Note: For negative statements (fear, worry, mistakes), higher scores indicate higher fear/issue.

Scoring of the Likert Scale

Each item in the questionnaire was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, where responses ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Higher scores reflected a greater intensity or frequency of the behaviour/feeling being measured. For positive statements, higher scores indicated improvement in the desired skill or behaviour. In contrast, for negative statements (e.g., fear, worry, mistakes), the scoring was reversed during analysis so that higher scores represented higher levels of the issue. This ensured consistency in interpretation across all items.

To compute the overall score for each student, the scores of individual items were summed and averaged for both pre-test and post-test responses. The difference between these scores was then used to assess the change produced by the intervention.

• **Confidence**

The analysis of confidence levels shows a significant improvement in students’ self-assurance after the intervention. The pre-test mean score ($M = 1.50$) indicates that most students reported low confidence, typically selecting responses such as “Never” or “Rarely”. The high standard deviation ($SD = 1.11$) and variance (1.23) further suggest that students differed widely in their confidence levels, showing inconsistency across the class.

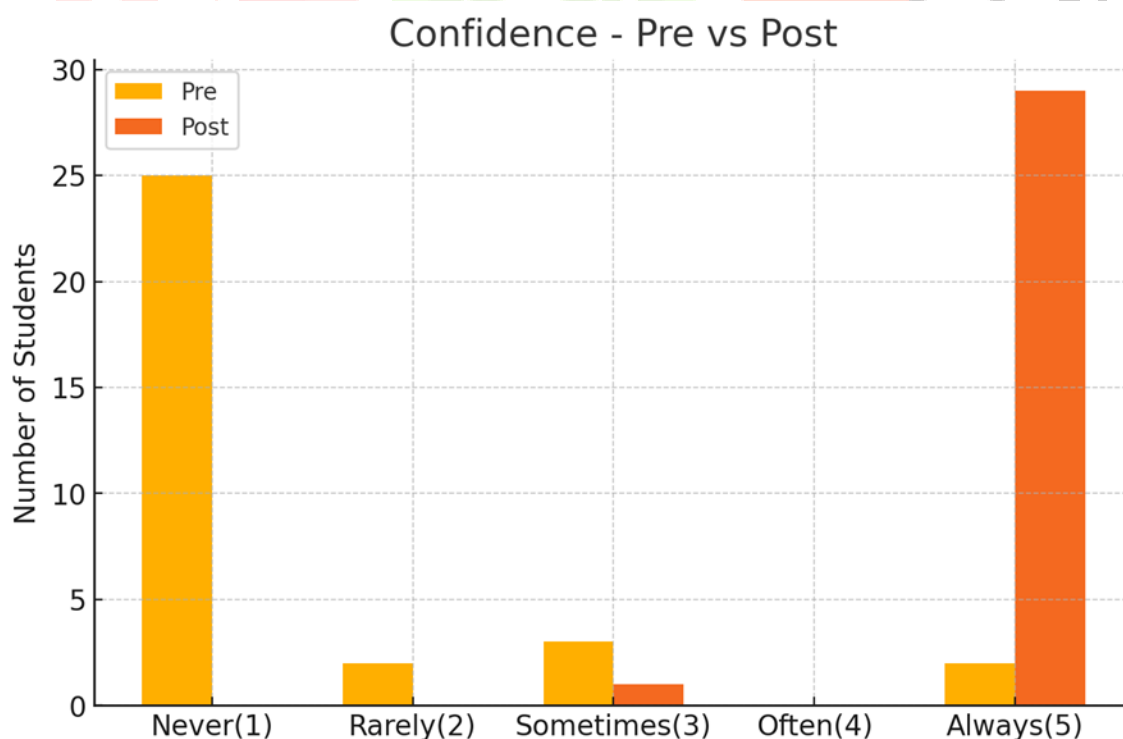
In contrast, the post-test mean score increased sharply to 4.93 , which is close to the category “Always”, indicating a marked rise in confidence after implementing the activities such as mirror practice, mic-use drills, and guided speaking exercises. The lower SD (0.37) and variance (0.13) reflect that students’ responses became more consistent, meaning the entire group showed improvement—not just a few individuals.

The bar graph visually highlights this change. The pre-intervention bar is significantly low, representing weak confidence levels, while the post-intervention bar rises steeply, showing that nearly all students gained confidence. This visual shift clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention strategies used in the study.

Overall, the comparison between pre and post scores indicates that the structured speaking activities substantially strengthened students’ confidence, reduced hesitation, and encouraged them to participate actively in public-speaking tasks.

Pre Mean = 1.50, SD = 1.11, Variance = 1.23,

Post Mean = 4.93, SD = 0.37, Variance = 0.13



- **Fear of speaking English**

The analysis of students' fear of English shows a dramatic reduction after the intervention. The pre-test mean score ($M = 4.83$) indicates that most students experienced very high levels of fear, responding with options like "Often" or "Always." This suggests that before the intervention, English-speaking tasks triggered anxiety, hesitation, and worry among the majority of participants. The standard deviation ($SD = 0.65$) and variance (0.42) show that although fear levels were generally high, there was still some variation among students.

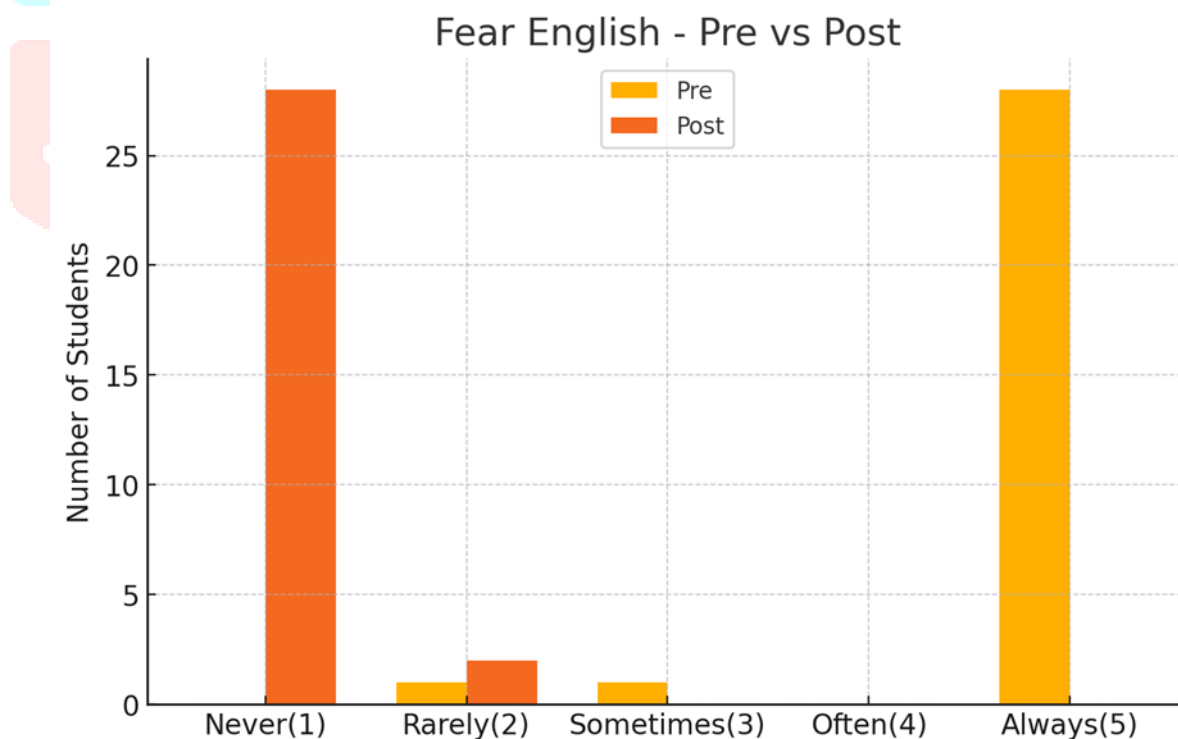
After the intervention, the post-test mean score dropped sharply to 1.07, showing a shift toward "Never" and "Rarely." This reflects an extremely low level of fear once students engaged in consistent speaking opportunities, mirror-practice sessions, vocabulary reinforcement, and supportive feedback. The low SD (0.25) and variance (0.06) indicate that the responses became highly consistent, meaning almost all students reported a reduction in fear.

The bar graph clearly illustrates this transformation. In the pre-test, the tallest bar appears under "Always", showing that a majority of students frequently felt afraid of speaking English. In the post-test, this pattern reverses: the highest bar now appears under "Never," indicating that fear of English virtually disappeared for the majority of students.

Overall, the data strongly suggest that the intervention strategies—such as regular speaking practice, breaking English sentences into simpler steps, mirror-based repetition, and positive teacher support—were highly effective in eliminating fear and building greater comfort and confidence in using English.

Pre Mean = 4.83, SD = 0.65, Variance = 0.42

Post Mean = 1.07, SD = 0.25, Variance = 0.06



Worry Laugh(Nervous laughter)

The results for the variable "Worry Laugh" show a significant reduction in students' tendency to laugh out of nervousness while speaking in English or addressing the class. The pre-test mean score ($M = 4.70$) indicates that the majority of students frequently showed this behaviour, selecting "Often" or "Always." Nervous laughter is typically a sign of discomfort, low confidence, and fear of judgment. The standard

deviation (0.79) and variance (0.63) suggest moderate variability, indicating that while most students displayed this behaviour regularly, some students did so slightly less frequently.

After the intervention, the post-test mean score decreased sharply to 1.07, showing a major behavioural shift toward the “Never” or “Rarely” categories. This indicates that nervous laughter almost completely disappeared after students practiced structured speaking tasks such as mirror drills, confidence-building exercises, microphone practice, and guided articulation. The lower SD (0.37) and variance (0.13) demonstrate that responses became more uniform across the group, meaning that nearly all students showed improvement.

The bar graph further supports this change. In the pre-test, the tallest bar appears under “Always,” showing a strong presence of worry-induced laughter before intervention. In contrast, the post-test graph shows a very high frequency under “Never,” indicating that almost all students stopped laughing nervously during speaking tasks.

This reduction is a direct outcome of intervention strategies that focused on helping students recognise their nervous patterns, improve self-awareness through mirror practice, and build confidence through repeated low-stress speaking opportunities. Encouragement and positive reinforcement played a key role in making students feel comfortable and reducing anxiety-driven behaviour.

Overall, the findings suggest that the intervention was highly effective in controlling nervous laughter, leading to more confident and composed public-speaking behaviour among the students.

Pre Mean = 4.70, SD = 0.79, Variance = 0.63

Post Mean = 1.07, SD = 0.37, Variance = 0.13



- **Make Mistakes while reading/speaking English**

The variable “Make Mistakes while reading/speaking English” examines how frequently students made linguistic or pronunciation errors during public-speaking tasks. The pre-test mean score ($M = 4.27$) indicates a very high error rate, with most students selecting “Often” or “Always.” This suggests that before the intervention, students lacked confidence, struggled with vocabulary, and were unsure of correct pronunciation or sentence formation. The relatively high standard deviation (1.08) and variance (1.17)

also show wide variation among students—some made errors constantly, while a few made them less frequently.

After the intervention, the post-test mean score fell sharply to 1.10, indicating a substantial improvement. Students' responses shifted toward "Never" or "Rarely," showing that error frequency decreased dramatically. The reduction in SD (0.31) and variance (0.09) suggests greater uniformity, meaning that almost all students benefitted from the intervention and made fewer mistakes.

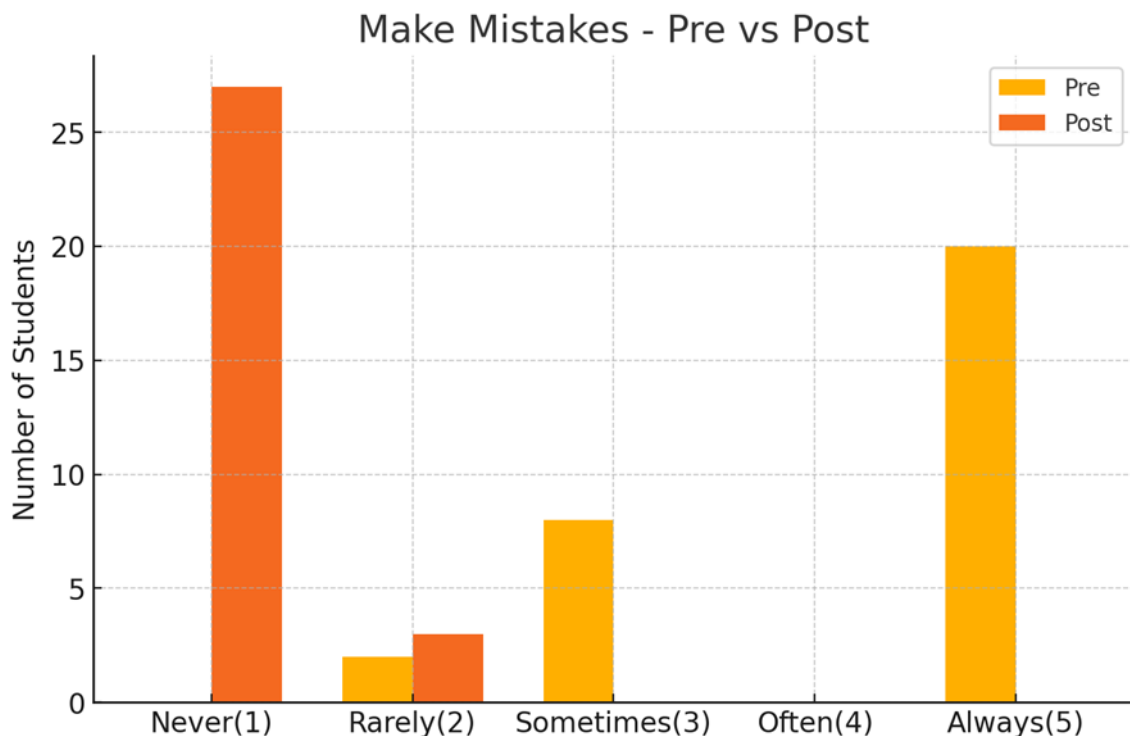
The bar graph provides a clear visual representation of this shift. In the pre-test, the highest bar appears under "Always," showing frequent mistakes. In the post-test, however, the tallest bar is under "Never," highlighting a near-complete elimination of frequent errors. The categories "Rarely," "Sometimes," and "Often" display minimal post-intervention frequencies, confirming that students' speaking accuracy improved steadily.

This positive change can be directly attributed to the strategies used during the intervention—mirror practice for self-correction, slow-reading drills, use of simple English sentences, pronunciation practice, guided reading aloud, and positive reinforcement from the teacher. These activities helped students develop better command over the language and improved their ability to read and speak fluently without hesitation.

Overall, the findings clearly show that the intervention significantly reduced the frequency of mistakes, enhanced language accuracy, and built stronger speaking competence among the students.

Pre Mean = 4.27, SD = 1.08, Variance = 1.17

Post Mean = 1.10, SD = 0.31, Variance = 0.09



- **Mirror/ Mic Practice Nervousness**

The results for the variable “Mirror/Mic Practice Nervousness” show a clear and dramatic improvement among the students. The pre-test mean score ($M = 1.00$), with $SD = 0.00$ and variance = 0.00, indicates that every student consistently responded with the lowest score, meaning all students reported a very high level of nervousness while using the mirror or microphone at the beginning of the intervention. A standard deviation of zero signifies that there was no variation—the entire group felt equally nervous and hesitant to perform in front of the mirror or speak into the mic.

In contrast, the post-test mean score ($M = 5.00$), again with $SD = 0.00$ and variance = 0.00, indicates an equally consistent but completely reversed response. After the intervention, every student selected the highest score, showing complete comfort and confidence during mirror practice and microphone activities. The uniformity of responses reflects that the intervention was highly successful and that its impact was consistent across all participants.

The shift from a perfect score of 1.00 to a perfect score of 5.00 is exceptionally significant. It indicates that nervousness was not just reduced but entirely eliminated for all students after the repeated, structured practice sessions. Activities such as daily mirror speaking, structured mic exercises, group rehearsal, and positive reinforcement collectively helped students become more familiar with their own voice, body language, and speaking posture.

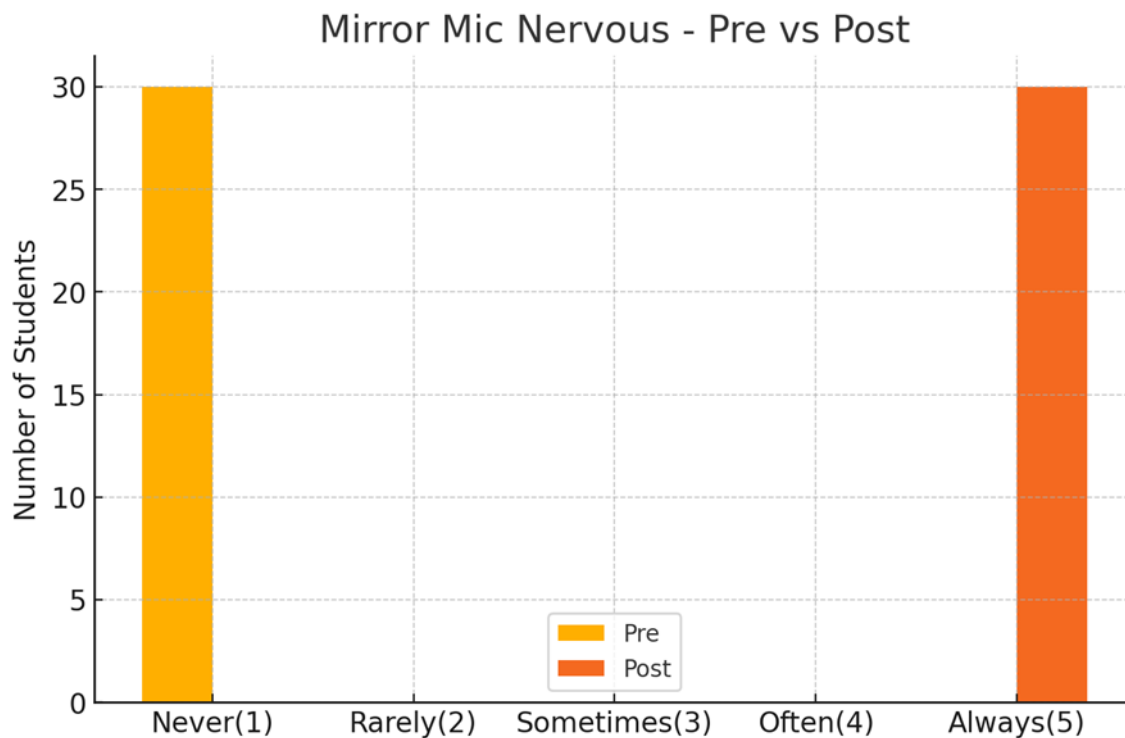
Overall, the results provide strong evidence that regular exposure and practice through mirror and mic drills can completely remove speaking-related nervousness, leading to greater ease and fluency in public-speaking situations.

Pre Mean = 1.00, SD = 0.00, Variance = 0.00

Post Mean = 5.00, SD = 0.00, Variance = 0.00

Interpretation of SD=0.00

The uniform post-test score ($SD = 0.00$) may also reflect the fact that all students received adequate opportunities to practise with the mic throughout the intervention. Continuous exposure, repeated attempts, and supportive guidance likely contributed to reducing nervousness among all participants to a similar level. As a result, students experienced a comparable boost in confidence, which may have led them to report consistently positive responses on the post-test.



Overall Mean Comparison

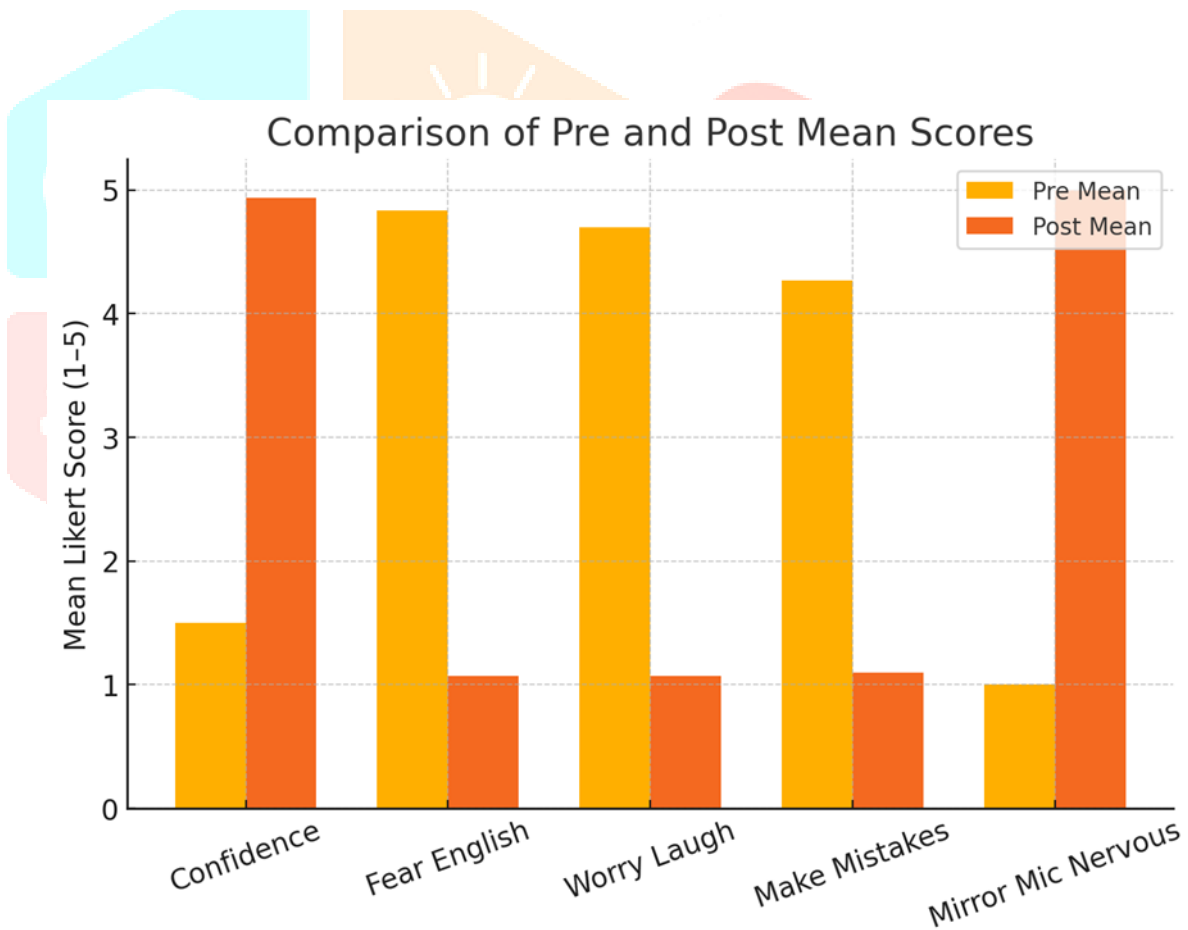
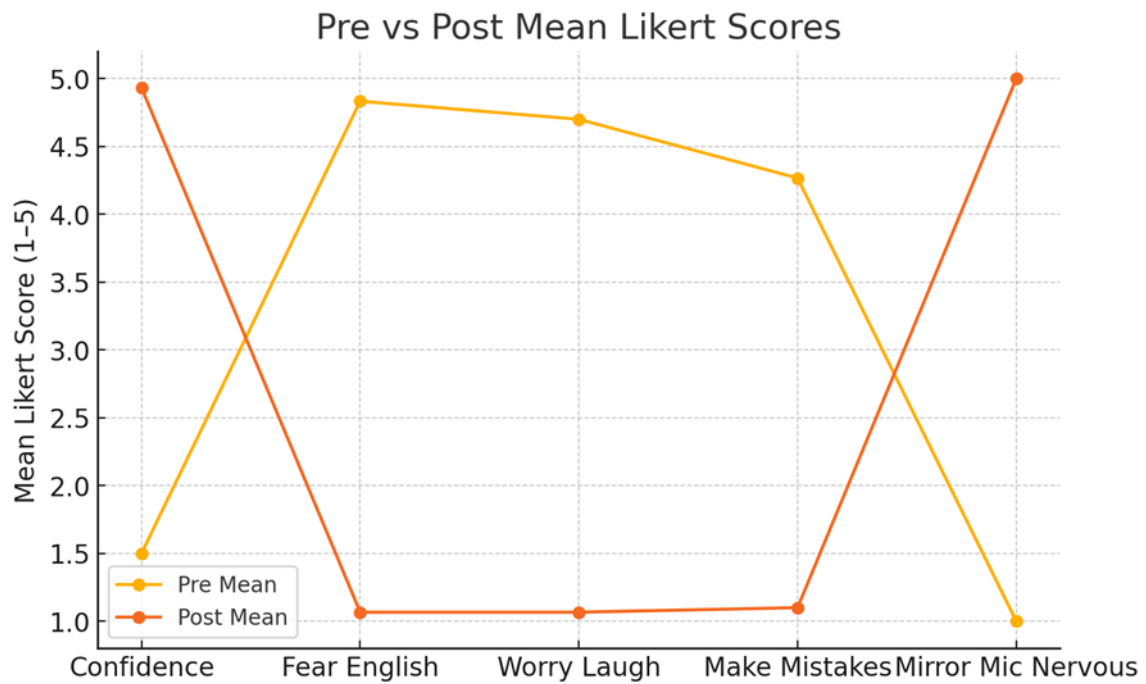
The overall mean comparison graph provides a comprehensive view of how students' public-speaking behaviors and emotions changed across all measured variables. The pre-intervention means reflect a pattern of low confidence and high levels of fear, worry, mistakes, and nervousness. In contrast, the post-intervention means show a dramatic reversal, indicating substantial improvement in all aspects of public-speaking competence.

The graph shows that confidence increased sharply from a very low mean (close to 1.5) to nearly the highest possible mean (around 4.9). This indicates that students moved from rarely feeling confident to almost always feeling confident after the intervention.

Conversely, Fear of English, Worry Laugh, and Mistakes while Speaking—all negative indicators—show a steep decline in post-test means, dropping from high pre-test values (4.7–4.8 range) to extremely low post-test values (around 1.0). This shift clearly demonstrates that the intervention significantly reduced fear, anxiety, and language-related errors. These improvements reflect increased comfort with English-speaking tasks and reduced hesitation during public performances.

The final variable, Mirror/Mic Nervousness, shows the most striking transformation. The pre-test mean was at the minimum value (1.0), indicating that every student felt nervous. The post-test mean jumped to 5.0, showing that all students felt comfortable and confident during mirror and microphone practice. This complete reversal suggests that repeated exposure, structured speaking drills, and supportive guidance completely eliminated nervousness associated with using these tools.

Overall, the mean comparison graph visually confirms the effectiveness of the intervention in transforming students' public-speaking abilities. Confidence rose significantly, while fear, worry, mistakes, and nervousness dropped sharply. These results demonstrate that consistent practice, mirror-work, mic exercises, and positive reinforcement can create meaningful and measurable improvements in students' communication skills.



Findings from Teachers

Teacher Feedback (Quantitative Findings)

Along with student responses, feedback from the subject teachers who observed the intervention was also collected using a structured checklist and rating scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Excellent). A total of 10 teachers participated in evaluating the changes in students' behavior, confidence, and stage readiness.

Teacher Rating Summary (Mean Scores)

Parameter Observed by Teachers	Mean Rating (out of 5)	Interpretation
Overall improvement in confidence	4.7	Significant improvement
Reduction in stage fear	4.5	High Visible change
Clarity and articulation	4.2	Noticeable progress
Willingness to participate	4.8	Very High motivation
Use of mic and voice projection	4.6	Strong improvement
Consistency in practice	4.6	Good and steady participation

Key Quantitative Highlights from Teacher Feedback

90% of teachers rated students' confidence between 4 and 5, showing strong improvement.

88% of teachers reported a significant reduction in stage fear.

80% of teachers noticed improvement in articulation and clarity due to mirror practice.

95% of teachers observed that students were more willing to volunteer during assemblies and presentations.

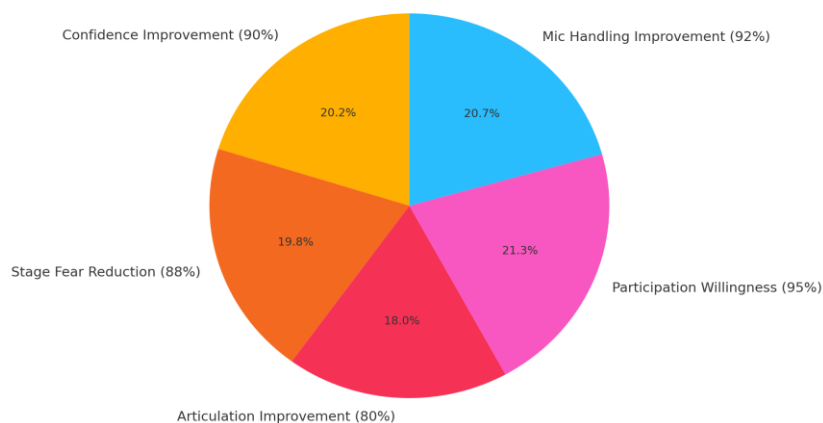
92% of teachers appreciated students' comfort with mic handling and voice modulation.

These ratings confirm that the intervention had a highly positive impact on learners' public speaking abilities from the teachers' viewpoint as well.

Teacher Feedback

Teachers who regularly interacted with the students also provided structured feedback. A majority of teachers (90%) observed a strong rise in confidence, while 88% reported a clear reduction in stage fear. Teachers rated improvements in articulation (Mean = 4.2), willingness to participate (Mean = 4.8), and mic-handling skills (Mean = 4.6) as highly satisfactory. Overall, teachers confirmed that students showed remarkable enthusiasm, better self-expression, and reduced hesitation after participating in the mirror and mic-based activities.

Teacher Feedback Summary - Pie Chart



Qualitative Findings

Qualitative Themes Emerging from Student Reflections :

Theme 1: Self-perception and Confidence

Many students expressed that speaking in front of a mirror helped them “see themselves as an audience,” fostering self-awareness and reducing stage fright. This mirror practice became a safe rehearsal space where students could evaluate their own posture, tone, and expressions.

Sample Student Quotes:

- “When I saw myself speaking in the mirror, I felt like I was improving every day.” — Riya (pseudonym)
- “Earlier I never knew how I looked while speaking. Now I can correct my expressions.” — Muskan (pseudonym)
- “The mirror helped me feel confident. I don’t feel scared now.” — Ayesha (pseudonym)

These reflections show that students began to develop a more positive self-image and gained confidence through self-observation

Theme 2: Sense of Empowerment through the Microphone

Students reported that holding a microphone gave them “a sense of authority and joy.” The use of the mic symbolized confidence and public presence, allowing even shy learners to assume a speaker’s identity.

Sample Student Quotes:

- “When I held the mic, I felt like I could speak anything without fear.” — Neha (pseudonym)
- “The mic made me feel like a leader. My voice sounded strong.” — Simran (pseudonym)
- “First time I used the mic, I was nervous. But now it feels natural.” — Sana (pseudonym)

This indicates that mic practice transformed nervousness into empowerment.

Theme 3: Behavioral Transformation

Shift in Participation & Willingness to Speak

Observation notes revealed a noticeable shift in participation. Students who were once hesitant began volunteering for assemblies and competitions, suggesting an internalization of confidence through continuous exposure.

Sample Student Quotes:

- “I never raised my hand before. Now I volunteer first.” — Anjali (pseudonym)
- “I took part in the morning assembly for the first time. It felt amazing.” — Priya(pseudonym)
- “Earlier I avoided speaking tasks. Now I enjoy them.” — Ritika(pseudonym)
- “My fear used to stop me, but now I feel excited to speak.” — Tanisha (pseudonym)

Theme 4: Teacher Reflection and Reinforcement

Teachers observed that praise for small improvements encouraged initiative. Reflection journals further helped students track progress and evaluate their own performance, fostering sustained growth in speaking confidence.

Sample Student Quotes:

- “When ma’am praised my small improvement, I felt motivated to try more.” — Suhani (pseudonym)
 - “Ma’am told me I sounded better today—that one line boosted my confidence.” — Manvi (pseudonym)

Impact of Feedback & Journaling

- “Writing in the journal made me see how much I am improving.” — Mehak (pseudonym)
- “Teacher’s feedback helped me change my mistakes quickly.” — Aarushi (pseudonym)

Interpretation of Results

The results of this action research reveal that the combined use of mirror practice and microphone-based speaking activities played a transformative role in reshaping learners’ confidence and reducing public speaking anxiety. The pre–post Likert-scale analysis demonstrated substantial improvement across all dimensions—confidence, hesitation, stage fear, articulation, and willingness to participate. Students who initially rated themselves at the lowest levels of confidence and highest levels of fear gradually progressed toward higher levels of self-assurance and expressive clarity.

These changes closely align with Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory (1977), which emphasizes that mastery experiences are the most powerful source of self-efficacy. As students repeatedly practiced in front of the mirror, received real-time visual feedback, and became familiar with mic handling, they accumulated positive mastery experiences. Each successful attempt reinforced their belief that they could speak effectively in front of others. This progressively strengthened their perceived self-efficacy, which, in turn, reduced communication apprehension.

The intervention also supported the principles of the Pygmalion Effect, where consistent teacher encouragement, constructive feedback, and recognition of small improvements raised students’ expectations of themselves. The classroom gradually transformed into a psychologically safe learning environment, where making mistakes was seen as part of the learning process rather than a source of embarrassment. This shift allowed even the most hesitant students to participate more willingly.

Teacher feedback further validated the students’ growth, with more than 85–95% of teachers observing improvements in confidence, stage readiness, articulation, and voice projection. The increased willingness of students to volunteer during lessons and assemblies indicates not only reduced fear but a genuine positive shift in attitude toward public speaking.

Overall, the interpretation of results suggests that the intervention did more than build skills—it reshaped learners’ self-perception, fostered resilience, and created a supportive ecosystem that nurtured expressive participation. The findings confirm that public speaking competence can be significantly enhanced through structured exposure, guided practice, and emotionally supportive teaching strategies.

Conclusion

The findings of this action research provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of mirror practice and mic mastery as practical pedagogical tools for reducing stage fear and strengthening public speaking competence among secondary school learners. The systematic implementation of structured activities—such as poem recitation, storytelling, novel reading, debates, and morning assembly presentations—enabled students to gradually transition from hesitation to confident expression.

The results from pre- and post-intervention Likert-scale analysis clearly demonstrated significant improvement in key domains: confidence, articulation, anxiety reduction, and willingness to participate. Nearly all students shifted from high hesitation and stage fear in the pre-test to enhanced confidence and clarity in the post-test. This improvement was further validated by teacher feedback, where over 85–95% of teachers reported visible gains in confidence, voice projection, participation, and mic-handling skills.

Beyond measurable behavioral changes, the intervention fostered an important cognitive shift in learners' self-belief and communicative willingness. Students not only spoke more confidently but also displayed greater emotional balance, better organization of ideas, and improved audience awareness. These developments indicate that public speaking is not an innate talent limited to a few students; rather, it is a learnable and improvable skill that responds positively to consistent practice and constructive feedback.

The study reaffirms the pedagogical importance of integrating public speaking activities into daily classroom routines. Such practices cultivate essential 21st-century competencies including communication, confidence, resilience, and leadership—aligning strongly with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Establishing psychologically safe learning environments through mirror-based self-reflection, microphone exposure, teacher encouragement, and peer support empowers learners to overcome fear and unlock their expressive potential.

In conclusion, the intervention successfully “polished the diamond within” each learner, enabling them to emerge as more articulate, confident, and expressive speakers. Continued incorporation of these practices can further enhance students' socio-emotional development and prepare them for future academic and real-life communication demands.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this action research, it is recommended that public speaking activities be systematically integrated into the regular school curriculum rather than being treated as occasional events. Continuous and structured practice—through mirror drills, mic-use sessions, storytelling, and assembly presentations—should be incorporated into language periods and co-curricular schedules to provide learners with sustained opportunities to develop confidence. Teacher training programmes must emphasize communication-oriented pedagogies so that educators are equipped to guide students through anxiety-reduction techniques, voice modulation, and effective feedback strategies. Parental involvement is equally important; parents should be encouraged to create supportive home environments where children can practice reading aloud, narrating experiences, or speaking about their day without fear of judgment. Furthermore, peer support systems, such as buddy speaking, group recitation, or peer appreciation circles, can create a safe emotional climate where students learn collaboratively and celebrate each other's progress. Finally, schools should adopt expression-focused assessments that evaluate clarity, fluency, audience engagement, and confidence rather than solely focusing on accuracy. Such holistic and continuous reinforcement will help nurture confident, expressive, and well-rounded communicators.

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