

Public Speaking in Professional Training: Perceptions of Graduates in Educational Sciences

La oratoria en la formación profesional: percepción de egresados de Ciencias de la Educación

ABSTRACT

Public speaking in professional training, according to graduates, is consolidated as an essential competency whose curricular inclusion is necessary to strengthen teaching performance. The objective of this study was to analyze the perceptions of graduates from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cohorts of the Educational Sciences program regarding the importance of public speaking in their professional training at the Caranavi Academic Campus of the Public University of El Alto, Bolivia. A quantitative, descriptive approach with a cross-sectional, non-experimental design was employed. The results reveal that 95% of graduates consider public speaking essential to their professional training and that 93% support its inclusion in the curriculum. It is concluded that the majority of graduates recognize the relevance of public speaking: 95% consider it essential, and 93% support its inclusion in the curriculum, which evidences the need to institutionalize this competency in teacher education.

Palabras clave: Public speaking; Professional training; Perception; Graduates; Educational sciences.

RESUMEN

La oratoria en la formación profesional, según los egresados, se consolida como competencia esencial cuya inclusión curricular es necesaria para fortalecer desempeño docente. El objetivo fue analizar la percepción de los egresados de las gestiones 2022, 2023 y 2024 de la Carrera de Ciencias de la Educación respecto a la importancia de la oratoria en su formación profesional, en la Sede Académica Caranavi de la Universidad Pública de El Alto, Bolivia. Se empleó un enfoque cuantitativo, de tipo descriptivo, con diseño transversal y no experimental. Los resultados revelan que el 95% de los egresados considera esencial la oratoria en su formación profesional y el 93% respalda su inclusión curricular. Se concluye que la mayoría de los egresados reconoce la relevancia de la oratoria, con un 95% que la considera esencial y un 93% que respalda su inclusión curricular, lo que evidencia la necesidad de institucionalizar esta competencia en formación docente.

Keywords: Oratoria; formación profesional; Percepción; Egresados; Ciencias de la Educación.

INTRODUCTION

Universities assume the commitment to train individuals who are competent in the exercise of their professional functions; moreover, they have the responsibility to ensure that the education provided fosters the comprehensive development of students' personalities. In this process, the teacher's word becomes the most accessible and widespread resource of teaching, as it stimulates students' emotions, imagination, and memory. Consequently, public speaking is consolidated as an essential competency in professional training, as it strengthens communicative abilities, pedagogical leadership, and the effective transmission of knowledge in higher education (Hernández et al., 2024).

According to Toro and Tejada (2020), in their diagnostic study on oral expression, psychological, biological, and social factors were identified that limit its adequate development and condition of the individual. Consequently, these elements, when interacting jointly, significantly influence communicative capacity and the ability to clearly articulate ideas, feelings, and knowledge on a specific topic. Thus, understanding the incidence of these factors is essential to strengthening communicative competencies. In this regard, González (2018) argues that communication promotes interaction, access to knowledge, and cultural enrichment, aspects directly linked to public speaking in teacher education.

For their part, Gallardo and Martínez (2015) maintain that oral presentations constitute a fundamental tool for learning from a constructivist perspective, as they involve the practical application of essential skills and competencies for students' academic performance. Complementarily, Suárez (2016) emphasizes that the success of oral communication depends on the clarity of the intended purpose, the sender's communicative abilities, personal qualities, level of knowledge, and the sociocultural contexts of both the sender and the receiver. In this sense, all these elements become decisive factors within the communicative process, and it is precisely in public speaking where these qualities are integrally manifested.

According to Álvarez (2007), public speaking constitutes a socio-collective oral communicative action, developed by an individual speaker toward a collective audience, whose essential purpose is to persuade listeners to adopt a specific attitude toward a particular issue. Consequently, this practice manifests in the teaching context when a professor presents a topic to students, fostering a communicative process that supports content comprehension. Likewise, Chachipanta et al. (2022) highlight that public speaking promotes effective communication and that teachers teach techniques that prepare students to exercise effective oral expression.

It should be noted that Jaramillo (2013) underscores the need for teachers to design varied strategies that promote students' active participation in public speaking activities. Such practices strengthen oral expression and, at the same time, stimulate creativity, critical thinking, and personal confidence, favoring the development of essential communicative competencies for comprehensive training. In line with the above, López (2017) emphasizes the importance of pedagogical strategies that prepare students to develop public speaking skills and abilities, thereby consolidating their expressive capacity before different audiences.

In this context, Quispe and Yanahuaya (2019) show that, in higher education

institutions in Bolivia, a problem related to communicative processes at the national level exists. Indeed, students have been observed to exhibit shortcomings in their communication skills, which hinder their full performance in various academic activities. Alarming, these limitations have not been overcome to date, constituting a significant social problem that directly affects educational development and, by extension, the social progress of numerous educational units in the country.

In light of the identified problem, questions are formulated to guide the present study. First, how does the institutionalization of public speaking courses in the university curriculum contribute to strengthening the communicative competencies of future education professionals? Likewise, what is the impact of the systematic development of oral expression skills on knowledge transmission, pedagogical interaction, and academic leadership? Finally, what effects would the formal incorporation of specific public speaking content have on teaching performance?

The objective of this research is to analyze the perception of graduates from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cohorts of the Educational Sciences program at the Caranavi Academic Campus of the Public University of El Alto regarding the importance of public speaking in their professional training.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a quantitative, descriptive approach with a cross-sectional, non-experimental design, which allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time and the description of graduates' perceptions without manipulating variables.

The population consisted of graduates from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cohorts of the Educational Sciences program at the Caranavi Academic Campus of the Public University of El Alto. The sample was determined using a population-access criterion, including all available graduates, for a total of 27 participants. This methodological decision ensured the inclusion of all study subjects and avoided selection bias.

The data collection technique was a structured questionnaire administered via a survey. The instrument consisted of six multiple-choice questions designed to explore graduates' perceptions of the importance of public speaking in their professional training.

Among the most relevant questions were:

- Have you ever taken a public speaking course or workshop inside or outside the University?
- Do you consider learning oral expression important for your professional training?
- Do you think that content related to public speaking should be implemented for students of the Educational Sciences program as part of their professional training?

These questions were developed based on criteria of relevance and clarity, seeking to capture both graduates' prior experiences and their assessments and proposals for curricular

improvement.

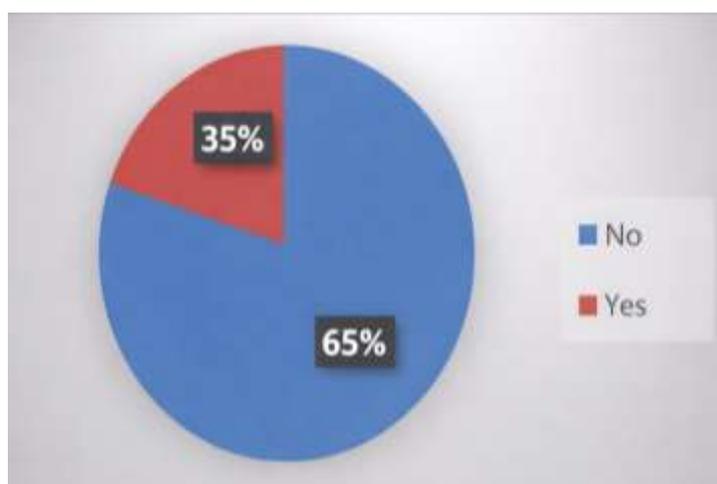
Data collection was conducted through a digital questionnaire administered via Google Forms, distributed to 27 graduates from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cohorts of the Educational Sciences program at the Caranavi Academic Campus of the Public University of El Alto. Once responses were obtained, they were reviewed and refined to ensure data consistency; subsequently, the data were tabulated and organized into descriptive tables and graphs, which enabled interpretation of participants' perceptions of the importance of public speaking in their professional training.

RESULTS

Figure 1 presents the survey results regarding graduates' participation in public speaking courses or workshops, both within and outside the university. It shows that 65% of students reported having attended some training activity in this area, while the remaining 35% indicated they had not had such experience. This finding indicates that although a majority recognizes the importance of strengthening communicative skills through training spaces, a significant group still lacks systematic training in public speaking. This highlights the need to institutionalize such content in the university curriculum to ensure that all future education professionals develop oral competencies equitably and in accordance with current academic and labor demands.

Figure 1.

Have you ever taken a public speaking course or workshop inside or outside the University?



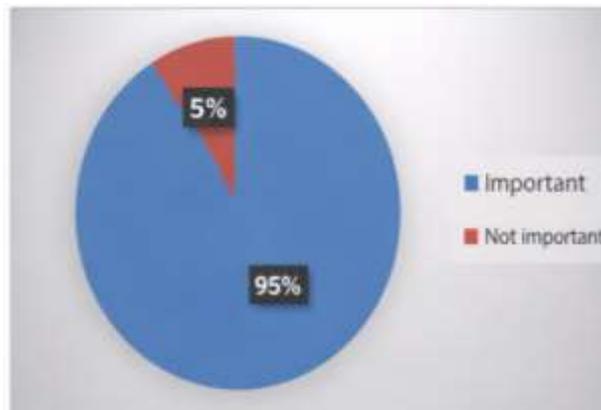
Note: Own elaboration based on the results obtained.

Figure 2 presents graduates' perceptions regarding the importance of learning oral expression as part of their professional training. The results show that 95% of participants consider the development of these skills to be fundamental or highly relevant, while only 5% perceive them as of little importance. This finding reflects an almost absolute consensus regarding the value of oral communication as an essential competency in the educational

field, demonstrating that students recognize public speaking not only as an expressive tool but also as a strategic resource for knowledge transmission, pedagogical interaction, and academic leadership. The marked difference between those who value public speaking and the small group that minimizes it highlights the need for higher education institutions to systematically integrate this competency into their curricula, ensuring that future professionals develop communicative skills aligned with current labor and educational demands.

Figure 2.

Do you consider learning to express yourself orally important for your professional training



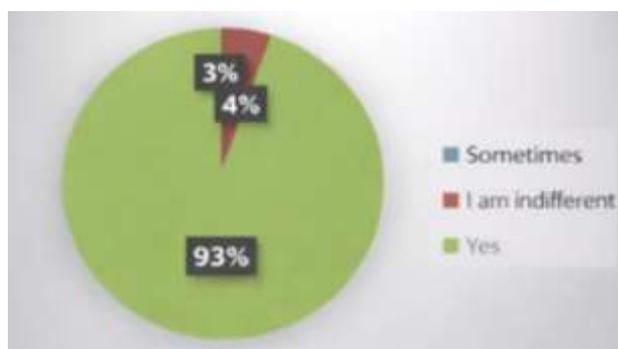
Note: Own elaboration based on the results obtained.

Figure 3 shows graduates' opinions regarding the need to implement specific public speaking content in the Educational Sciences program. The results indicate broad consensus: 93% of participants agreed with incorporating such training into the curriculum, while 3% expressed indifference and 4% opposed the proposal. This strong support demonstrates that students recognize public speaking as an essential competency for their future professional practice, directly linked to the ability to transmit knowledge, lead pedagogical processes, and perform effectively in academic and social settings. The small proportion of indifferent or negative responses reinforces the relevance of including public speaking courses in the academic offering, not merely as a complement but as a structural component of teacher education.

In this sense, the results indicate that institutionalizing public speaking within the university curriculum could significantly contribute to the comprehensive development of future education professionals, aligning their communicative competencies with current demands for quality and performance in labor and educational contexts.

Figure 3.

Do you consider that content related to public speaking should be implemented for students of the Educational Sciences program as part of their professional training?



Note: Own elaboration based on the results obtained.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained allow for a clear panorama of the value that graduates of the Educational Sciences program assign to public speaking in their professional training. The evidence shows a majority consensus on the importance of developing communicative competencies, reinforcing the need for higher education institutions to systematically integrate public speaking content into their curricula. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting oral expression as a key skill for teaching performance and academic leadership.

The results are consistent with those reported by Roque et al. (2018), who argue that pedagogical oral communication has a transcendental importance in shaping modes of professional action, given its impact on graduates' future performance. Moreover, from the cognitive-affective interrelation generated in the communicative process, the need to strengthen this competency across all educational contexts becomes evident. Consequently, its proper attention guarantees the comprehensive preparation of university students and responds to the social mandate of higher education. Complementarily, Vila et al. (2022) emphasize that actors within the higher education community must develop solid communicative competencies to efficiently assimilate learning, establish satisfactory interactions, and enhance their personal, academic, and professional development.

According to the findings of Maldonado et al. (2022), a favorable experience is reported in the implementation of an effective communication workshop. Their results show that psychoeducational strategies strengthened oral competence and fostered an environment of active classroom participation. Likewise, one of the most significant effects was the reduction of anxiety and fear among students. Consequently, gradual exposure and motivation toward classroom interventions contributed to improved expression of ideas, arguments, and opinions, both individually and collectively. Similarly, Pompa and Pérez (2015) argue that pedagogical communicative competence guarantees comprehensive training, fosters effective social interaction, and constitutes an essential tool for professional teaching performance, reinforcing the relevance of addressing this dimension in higher

education.

In relation to the above, Tumbaco et al. (2025) highlight the need to strengthen communicative skills through training spaces. Their findings show that such competencies are significant for academic training, not only for university students in Education programs but also for other disciplines in higher education institutions in Manabí, Ecuador, contributing to the comprehensive and sustainable development of future professionals. Complementarily, Moreira and Guzmán (2022) report a study highlighting the development of verbal communication through innovative didactic strategies.

Regarding graduates' perceptions of the importance of learning oral expression as part of their professional training, López et al. (2022) report an experience in which the application of a pedagogical proposal significantly contributed to the development of oral expression among university students. Likewise, Monte et al. (2015) note that students achieved notable improvements in verbal language and in the aptitude demonstrated during public speech presentations. Consequently, both findings reinforce the idea that systematic practice, combined with didactic strategies and teacher support, is a decisive factor in strengthening essential communicative competencies in academic and professional contexts.

In line with the results of the present study, Marrero et al. (2024) argue that graduates' perceptions confirm that learning oral expression is an essential component of professional training, as it strengthens academic interaction, improves interpersonal communication, and ensures competent performance across diverse social, educational, and labor contexts. Notably, their findings show a progressive improvement in communication skills as students advance in their academic training, reflected in an increase in the mean ease of conversation. Correspondingly, the homogeneous valuation of the importance of speaking correctly reaffirms that oral communication is fundamental for academic, professional, and social performance.

The need to incorporate specific public speaking content into the Educational Sciences program is evident, as it would strengthen future teachers' communicative competencies. In this sense, integrating such a training axis would improve oral expression, increase confidence in public speaking, and enhance the ability to convey knowledge clearly and professionally. According to Vázquez (2022), university students lack these competencies; however, participating in public speaking programs results in significant improvements. Therefore, the implementation of such programs is closely linked to the strengthening of communicative competencies.

Morita et al. (2020), Fernández et al. (2021), and Chaparro (2022) agree on the need to include, from the outset, content on the structuring and characteristics of oral discourse, as well as pedagogical resources that promote verbal fluency and expressive clarity. In this sense, the authors emphasize that such practices not only strengthen communicative competencies but also foster critical thinking, argumentative capacity, and collaborative interaction in the classroom. Collectively, these researchers highlight the importance of public speaking as an essential part of students' academic and professional training.

Sánchez et al. (2023) highlight the implementation of a methodological strategy to strengthen oral production among Education students in the first cycle of a private university

in Lima. Their findings demonstrate a positive impact on participants' communicative performance, confirming the relevance of this type of intervention. They also indicate that the activities with the greatest impact on the development of oral skills were discourse planning, case analysis, transversal metacognitive practices, and collaborative work. Likewise, the teacher's role as facilitator and advisor proved fundamental, enabling continuous, personalized monitoring of students' progress, supported by previously established formats and criteria.

Becerra (2014) conducted a study aimed at strengthening students' oral expression at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. As a result, it was concluded that when students are stimulated through basic activity programs, a significant improvement in oral performance is observed, confirming the effectiveness of these programs in developing communicative competencies. Complementarily, Arévalo (2023) found that a large proportion of Ecuadorian university students exhibit deficiencies in oral skills; however, participation in public speaking programs results in substantial improvement.

The evidence analyzed allows us to affirm that public speaking constitutes an indispensable component in the training of future education professionals. In line with the reviewed findings, programs and strategies aimed at strengthening oral expression yield substantial improvements in communicative competencies, reduce anxiety, and promote confidence in public speaking. Therefore, integrating specific public speaking content into curricula is a strategic move to ensure strong academic and professional performance.

CONCLUSIONS

It is confirmed that 65% of graduates reported attending public speaking courses or workshops, compared to 35% who did not. This finding evidences partial coverage in communicative training, suggesting the need to institutionalize these spaces within the university curriculum to ensure that all future education professionals access systematic preparation in oral competencies.

95% of participants consider the development of oral expression skills to be fundamental or highly relevant, while only 5% consider them of little importance. This near-unanimous consensus confirms that public speaking is recognized as a strategic competency for knowledge transmission, pedagogical interaction, and academic leadership, reinforcing its relevance for formal integration into curricula.

93% of graduates agreed with incorporating specific public speaking content into the Educational Sciences program, compared to 3% who were indifferent and 4% who opposed the proposal. This majority support demonstrates the high demand for training in oral communication and legitimizes the proposal to include it as a structural component of the curriculum to strengthen the academic and professional performance of future teachers.

It is recommended that higher education institutions systematically incorporate public speaking content into the curricula of Educational Sciences programs. The results show that 65% of graduates have received training in this area, 95% recognize its importance, and 93% support its inclusion in the curriculum. Addressing this demand will strengthen the communicative competencies of future teachers, ensuring academic and professional performance aligned with current demands.

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