

The Role of English Communication Competence and Speaking Motivation Perception toward Employee Performance of Hotel Staffs

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ABSTRACT: Considering the needs of preparing human resources toward the issue of Asean Economic Community and Asian Games 2018, it is necessary for each potential hotels to produce qualified and competitive human resources. Language is believed as a means of communication among this upcoming international events. People around the world would stay at certain hotel and English communication competence might relate the conversation between hotel guests and the employees as service provider agent. This study aims to excavate the role of English communication competence and speaking motivation perception toward the employee performance. About three hundreds and fifty three employees from forty four different star hotels in Palembang were involved as the sample. The data is collected by administering three kinds of instrument, namely speaking test (to obtain the condition of their communication competence), questionnaire concerning the employees' perception toward their speaking motivation and questionnaire concerning the superior judgment on their employees' working performance. The results were obtained through the descriptive, percentage, and statistical analysis which is aimed to find out the significant influence of English communication competence and speaking motivation toward employee performance. The implications of the findings of this study will be discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Business organizations must implement adaptation and reinforcement in order to accomplish future challenges in this globalization era. Thus, companies require competent and qualified human resources. Employees as the real representation of human resources present the role as designer, performer as well as determiner of organization goal attainment. This concept is discussed briefly in the field of human resources management which covers: planning, organizing, actuating and controlling as well as staffing. Since this field is also considered very important in achieving the organization goal, results of experience and sistematic research are published to develop references in practical human resource. As stated by Rivai (2005), management is a set of knowledge on how to manage the human resources.

In the field of hotel marketing, employees often experience difficulties in communicating available services. The use of English terms is one of practical obstacles which provoke ineffective communication between hotel staffs and customer and ultimately generate incorrect meaning perception. This situation indicates the need of English language mastery and communication improvement.

Manager as part of organization structure would take responsible of this communication problem by having sufficient competence to proceed the effective working environment. This demand is in line with Davis, et al.(1996) about several communication competencies should be possessed by a manager, namely speaking effectively, developing open communication, listening others, presenting paper, and preparing written communication. These language competencies would also be useful in socialization context of company's new policy toward employees. Changing resistance as the reaction toward new policy would

enable manager to activate their language competence to build employees' conviction and comprehension. Manager is also required to develop their language competence in building good interaction for cooperation need with other companies. It is clearly seen that a communicative manager with good language communication competence might ensure a successful business.

Language is an important aspect in human interaction and social contact. It is also viewed as someone's personal reflection which is interpreted into sense, thought and attitude. Occasionally, someone might be very intelligent with brilliant ideas but they cannot deliver the ideas due to experiencing communicating problem. Developing language communication competence is the answer to this situation. The presence of language attitude (the awareness of language norms) and thinking is the hub of consideration why people speak the language; in addition, knowledge is objective of all. Furthermore, English language mastery is not always priority possessed by employee in starting their career in the new working place. The demand of language mastery would be intensively requested by the time someone is promoting to better position and more challenging working performance.

In this globalization era, English is used around the world. It is considered as a means of communication to relate people among nations and it covers many sectors including business, education, engineering, technology, banking, tourism, etc. Moreover, the communication tools available around us are supported by the use of this language. Amongst various potential benefits of English language use, EF EPI (2015) claims that the most essential concern is the communication teaching practices. Based on the survey which was analyzed from more than 910.000 adults who took online English test in 2014, the average level of adult English proficiency in the world has risen slightly since 2014. Thereupon, it is also reported that the gap between the highest and lowest proficiency countries has widened. Europe countries are identified as they dominate the index which means that they fill the highest proficiency bands. Meanwhile, Asia has a high level of English skill diversity, with three countries in the High Proficiency bands as well as several in the lowest proficiency band. Sixteen Asian countries were analyzed out of seventy subjects by the EF EPI and only six countries higher English proficiency score than the average point (53.21). Indonesia is in the 32nd rank with EF EPI score of 52.91 and categorized in moderate proficiency. With the increasingly international economies, Asian countries invest in English training as a tool for accelerating globalization. Some of the effective strategies to obtain higher English proficiency level are: focusing on practical communication skills, training English for communication, developing effective English assessment tools, and investing in technology and online learning tools.

Indonesia as a part of the Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN) is about welcome the new integration program of ASEAN namely ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015. Members of ASEAN agreed to implement AEC 2015 as the creation of single market and production which enables free flows of goods, services, investment, capital and people to increase the stability of political and economic systems as well as the social cultural exchange. According to Choomthong (2013), the fields that will be firstly affected are construction, business, and medical services. Human resource capacity might be the main concern of taking on this event since the ASEAN members have different language use and social culture condition. Therefore, in the ASEAN Secretariat (2008b) English has been chosen as the language of administration for ASEAN and is additionally often the language that users across ASEAN have in common. Dulyadaweesid (2003) states that education is seen as a key factor in preparing the citizens of the Member States for the increased integration and resulting competitiveness. English language education is seen as a necessity to prepare human resources to compete effectively and make use of technical, business, and negotiation skills areas. Specifically for business area, Didiot-Cook, Gauthier, and Scheirlinckx (2000) did a survey on language needs in business for European multinational companies. It was found out that

companies expect to recruit employees with at least an advanced level of English competence. Viewed from the four English language skills, oral skills which involve listening and speaking are considered far more important than written ones. It is regarded so since business communication mostly covers the setting of meetings, negotiating, and problem solving context. Thus, the demanded English competency of AEC context is in accordance with the needs of business setting.

An international event of Asian Games 2018 would be upcomingly held in Jakarta and Palembang. Afterward, it is believed that this opportunity grabs the attention of hotel employers. About 9.704 athletes from 45 countries in Asia continent will come over and the star hotels might be in their list to stay. Hence, it is important for the hotel employers to set up a good preparation in terms of public service and human resources readiness. Hotel staffs should have good communication skill to interact with the foreign visitors by using English as the international language. Thereof, considering the requirement of setting up good preparation toward the need of having good communication skills, this study focused on digging up the role of English communication competence toward star hotel staffs' performance by formulating two research problems namely finding out the English communication competence level of the star hotel staffs and significant influence of English communication competence toward employees performance. It is expected that this study will be useful for the writers, hotel staffs and employers, and future researchers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. *English Communication Competence*

Regina & Chinwe (2014) state that in developing English communication competence, language users should not only have the ability to understand the language use but also the ability to understand linguistic variances in context. Therefore, there are various things should be known before using the language to communicate such as linguistic competence, social-culture competence, time and place of the language use, and utilization strategy.

The term communication is announced into two original words which unitely mean competence to communicate (Bagaric, 2007). Competence is one of controversial term in applied linguistics. In addition, Chomsky (1965) outlines the difference between competence and performance. Competence is defined as speaker's intuitive knowledge toward grammatical rules of mother language. Meanwhile, performance is production practice by implementing previous known grammatical rules. Other language experts offer different view on defining the competence. Hymes (1972) states that children learn the knowledge of sentence use not only grammatically but also contextually. Hymes believes that the children know when they can exactly speak, what to say, with whom, and how. In line with Hymes' idea, Radford (1988) asserts that grammatical competence is not the only element to reflect someone's language competence, but also pragmatic competence in recognizing the oral and written form.

Since communication competence also involves the social and interactional context, Spitzberg (2003) emphasizes the importance of communication skill evaluation where someone might demonstrate their skills toward wider situation.

b. *Speaking Motivation*

Liu (2010) potrays the motivation as an internalstate that initiates and maintains goal-directed behavior. Mayer (2003) also states that motivation is an inducement to action. An illustration given by Mayer is when students are motivated to learn, they try harder to understand the material and thereby learn more deeply, resulting in better ability to transfer what they have learned to new situations. In language context, motivation would offer an influence to the learners to use the language itself, possess an awareness on valuable things and encourage learners to keep using the language. Many researchers in the motivation

field proved that there was an inseparable relationship between motivational strength and oral English proficiency.

Motivation is also mentioned as a consideration between the internal and external factors (Panyajirawut:2009). The internal factor is associated with people's attitude towards English speaking. Self-acceptance is also the essential factors as people who understand their own English proficiency level will have a positive viewpoint for what they can do and speak English more often than others. While Sihera (2007) mentioned that another important characteristic is self-confidence as it would bring other good perceptions such as optimism, enthusiasm, and pride, leading to a positive perception of their own capability. The external factors represent occasions in an English speaking environment. People should expose themselves to encounter situations that require English speaking, such as conversation with English speaking visitors.

c. Contributed Factors on Speaking Motivation Perception

Referring to a study by Verapornvanichkul (2011) about problems in oral communication skills when dealing with English speaking clients, several contributed factors were drawn toward the speaking motivation perception, namely: oral communication skills, communication apprehension, intercultural communication, and motivation for English speaking.

d. Employee Performance

Performance is the employees benchmark in executing the whole given and targetted tasks, in order to conduct an assessment toward the companys performance. According to Byars & Rue (2006), performance is defined as the result of an effort achieved by someone by displaying correct abiity and action on particular situation. Working achievement is the connection of efforst, ability, and task perception. Task perception is a direction of believing whether theu might realize their effort inthe working environment.

Dessler (2001) describe the performance as the working achievement, the comparison between real working achievement and established standard. Since the company is run by human, then human behavior is a part of the attitude standard to achieve expected working target. Furthermore, Simamora (2006) also emphasizes that performance is strongly influenced by education level, working experiences, and motivation. Keith Davis (1995) in Sedamayanti (2001) formulate it in the following:

Performance =Ability+Motivation
 Ability =Knowledge+Skill
 Motivation =Attitude+Situation

The statement above tells us that someone performance is related to ability and motivation. Personal ability is influenced by knowledge and skill, while motivation is influenced by attitude and situation which then direct the person towards their goals.

Performance is associated with the task execution and responsibility. It involves employees' working achievement in determining working target, the target achievement, working method, and employees' personal characteristics. The measurement of employees is evaluated through the four proxy dimensions, namely quality, quantity, working duration, and the colleagues. Mathis&Jackson (2000) formulate that $P=A \times E \times S$, which means that P is the employees' ability, # is the effort, and S is the support.

e. Previous Study

Previous study was investigated by Nurlaila Nim (2003) entitled "The Correlation between English Language Competence and Employees Performance in PT. Elang Express Surabaya". This crosssectional analysis research aims to examine the correlation between English language competence and working performance. By implementing total population method, forty-seven employees were involved as the sample from a shipping and forwarding company of PT.Elang Express. In addition, this

study equipped several instruments such as English written test, attitude, behavior and performance scale questionnaire, as well as interview to obtain the data. It was found out that language knowledge is not the only factor of attitude former and attitude des not directly express attitude. Better attitude of speaking English is caused by working demand and better performance is mostly influenced by good compensation system. This study proposed the issue of English language training effectiveness and efficiency in working environment since company spend higher cost for executing this program.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to find out significant influence of English communication competence toward star hotel staffs' working achievement.

The total population of this study were 2583 employees of star hotels in Palembang. Meanwhile, the sample was selected by implementing proportional cluster random sampling method, where the population is grouped based on working place. Then simple random sampling method (Sekaran: 2000) was executed to select the 30% of the total employess from particular hotel. In this case, writers involved 353 employees as the sample.

Highlighting on the problems arised in this study, writers involved three types of instruments to collect the data. First, to determine the English communication competence, a speaking test was practiced by the hotel staffs. It was designed in the form of simple conversation practice which was recorded and evaluated by raters using CSRS (Conversational Skills Rating Scale) scoring rubric. Then, to obtain the participants' speaking motivation perception, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the sample of this study. This questionnaire was adapted from a study by Verapornvanichkul (2011). It also showed additional information on oral communication obstacles, communication apprehension, and cross culture communication. Finally, to collect information on employees' performance, writers requested the managers to evaluate their employees' performance thorough a questionnaire. It was adopted from Nurlaila (2003) which consists of 25 items.

Pilot test was considered and executed to evaluate the validity and reliability of the three instruments as described in the following table:

Table 1. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

No.	Instruments	Total valid items	Cronbach's Alpha value
1	Speaking Motivation Perception Questionnaire	24	0.890
2	Employees' Performance Questionnaire	25	0.921
3	CSRS Speaking Rubric	25	0.917

Source: Primary calculated data

Furthermore, this study also involved the multicollinearity tests which consist of autocorrelation test, heteroscedasticity test, and normality test.

In addition, the independent t-test was implemented to test the hypothesis and the simple linear regression to concern with two-dimensional sample points with [one independent variable and one dependent variable](#) (conventionally, the x and y coordinates in a [Cartesian coordinate system](#)) and finds a linear function (a non-vertical [straight line](#)) that, as accurately as possible, predicts the dependent variable values as a function of the independent variables.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *Descriptive Statistics*

This study focuses on the employees of star hotels in Palembang. There were 353 employees involved in this study and they were participated on the fulfillment of three assigned instruments. Their identity would be described based on age, educational background, position, and working division.

In its connection with the individual behaviors at working environment, age commonly pictures the individual experience and responsibility. People in different age usually state different perception which influence the ability to think, work, and make decision. The data shows that 38.8% of the respondents were in the category of younger than 25 and older than 37 as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Respondents' Identity: Age

Age	Total	Percentage (%)
25-27	73	20.7
28-30	86	24.7
31-33	53	15.0
34-36	4	1.1
Others	137	38.8
Total	353	100

Table 2 implies that most of the respondents are in the average age with optimal work and good physical condition.

The stakeholders would commonly recruit employees with appropriate educational requirement. The descriptive statistics also recorded the educational background of the samples. The following table shows that 40.2% of them were just from senior high school as in the following:

Table 3. Respondents' Identity: Educational Level

Educational Level	Total	Percentage (%)
Senior High School	142	40.2
Vocational	High68	19.3
Diploma I (D1)	108	30.6
Diploma III (DIII)	3	0.8
Bachelor (S1)	29	8.2
Others	3	0.8
Total	353	100

An information on the employees working position was also obtained in this part. 56.4 % of the employees are working as the staff. The following table would show clear information:

Table 4. Respondents' Identity: Working Position

Position	Total	Percentage (%)
Assistant/ Trainee	7	2.0
Staff	199	56.4
Supervisor	31	8.8
Managers	15	4.2
Others	101	28.6
Jumlah	353	100

4.2 Normality, Multicollinearity, and Heteroscedasticity test

The normality test was used to find out whether or not the data was distributed normally. In analyzing the normality of the data, the writer used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which was computerized by applying the SPSS version 16.00. If the normality spread is $p > 0.05$ then it is normal, whereas if $p < 0.05$ then it is considered not normal or approximately normal (Pallant, 2005).

Table 5. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		353
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.92563225
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.067
	Positive	.067
	Negative	-.064
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.255
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.086

a. Test distribution is Normal.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov value was 1.255 with the significance of 0.086. It can be assumed that the data obtained were approximately normal.

Multicollinearity generally occurs when there are high correlations between two or more [predictor variables](#). In other words, one predictor variable can be used to predict the other. This creates redundant information, skewing the results in a regression model.

The VIF value indicates the multicollinearity as the following:

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		
KOM	.755	1.325
MOT	.755	1.325

From the table, it could be implied that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables.

In addition, test implies that there is no heteroscedasticity.

Table 7. Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	-2.718	.007
KOM	1.851	.065
MOT	2.882	.400

4.3 The Results of Statistical Analysis

To obtain the influence of English communication competence and speaking motivation perception toward the employee performance, the multiple regression technique was implemented to test the hypothesis in this study. The model is illustrated as the following:

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + e$$

- Y = Employee performance
- X1 = English communication competence
- X2 = Speaking motivation perception
- b1 and b2 = regression coefficient
- e = error

Table 8. Regression Analysis

		Unstandardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	40.163	2.619
	KOM	.237	.038
	MOT	.301	.036

From the table, a regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 40.163 + 0.237X_1 + 0.301X_2$$

Regression coefficient of X_1 has a positive value of 0.237 which means the relationship between English communication competence and employee performance was positive.

In terms of finding out the determinant coefficient (R^2), the adjusted R square was 0.374. This implies that 37.4% of the rest was explained by another variable which is not included into the equation.

In this statistical analysis, it was also necessary for the writers to test the independent variable' partial influence. The following table displays the t-test result:

Table 9. T-Test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.163	2.619		15.334	.000
	CSRS	.237	.038	.301	6.196	.000
	MOT	.301	.036	.407	8.390	.000

The T-test calculation obtained with the significance of 0.000 which means that English communication competence significantly influenced the employees performance. Besides, it was also found out that the speaking motivation perception also significantly influences the dependent variable (employees performance).

Eventually, the F-test was also calculated to find out the influence of independent variables toward the dependent variable as shown by the following table:

Table 10. F-Test

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig
		Coefficients		Coefficients	t	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.163	2.619		15.334	.000
	CSRS	.237	.038	.301	6.196	.000
	MOT	.301	.036	.407	8.390	.000

Based on the table, the significance value of 0.000. In other words, it could be said that the English communication competence (X1) dan speaking motivation perception (X2) simultaneously influences employee performance (Y).

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the formulation of problems, data processing, result, and discussion of this study result, it could be concluded that: Firstly, this study showed that there was significant influence of English communication competence toward Palembang star hotel staffs' working achievement which was indicated by r^2 value. R^2 value described by model summary in table was 0.374 (37.4%) which means employee performance variable was explained by english communication competence variable. While the rest 62.6% of employee performance variable could be explained by other undefined variable. Secondly, English Communication Competence variable obtained $F_{\text{value}}(106.216)$ while the F_{table} value was 3.00 with the significance level of 0.000.

In other words, it could be said that the English communication competence (X1) dan speaking motivation perception (X2) simultaneously influences employee performance (Y).

5.2 Suggestion

Several suggestions are addressed considering the findings of this study. First, it is hoped that hotel employers should consider the development of employees' English communication competence in order to improve the working performance. Second, reflecting the necessity of hotel employees language competence development, training advancement program might be taken into account. Implementing additional regulations in hotel environment such as English speaking day program is optional to facilitate and support employees' language development toward encountering international event in Palembang (Asian Games 2018). Third, it is expected that future researchers might develop this research issue by involving other variables which might contribute to the working achievement variable.

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