Proficiency in English for Describing Hotel Room Services: A Study of Ogan Hilir Hotel Employees

M.Taslim
taslimbrilliant9@gmail.com
Politeknik Negeri Pariwisata Palembang

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the ability of hotel employees in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra, in explaining guest room facilities using English. English is an important skill for hotel employees to improve communication with foreign guests, especially in the area's growing hospitality sector. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection through interviews, observations and documentation. The participants of this study were 15 employees from several hotels in Ogan Ilir. This study measures their ability to use terms related to hotel facilities, such as room types, equipment, and available services. The results of the study show that the majority of employees have basic skills in using English, but there are still difficulties in explaining room facilities in detail and professionally. Some of the factors that affect these abilities are the lack of language training, formal education level, and work experience in the hospitality industry. This study recommends the existence of a special needs-based English training program in the hospitality sector to improve employee communication skills. This finding is also expected to be a consideration for hotel management in improving service quality through the development of human resources who are more skilled in English.

Keywords: English Proficiency; Hotel Room Facilities; Hotel Employee; Hospitality Industry

INTRODUCTION

In hotel management, all hotel employees must be able to explain all hotel facilities to guests, especially those in direct contact with guests. Of course, the mastery of foreign languages related to the hotel facilities must be conveyed well to guests. In the management of a hotel, there is one division, namely the *room division*, which is responsible for guest service that is directly related to the reception, including explaining the facilities in the guest room during the reception process before staying, in this case not only the reception officer will be measured for his English language skills but also all hotel employees who are related to guests, How are they able to explain what facilities the hotel has in the place where they work.

According to Agustin & Purwanto (2023), based on their area of duty, the hotel is divided into two major parts, namely 1) the front (Front Office), which is divided into several sections, including reservation, reception, telephone operator,

concierge (bell boy) and information, 2) the back (Back Office) which is divided into several sections, namely: housekeeping department, food and beverage department, personnel department, engineering department, and purchasing department.

The ability of hotel employees to explain guest room facilities in English is very important to increase guest satisfaction, especially foreign guests. However, in the Ogan Ilir area, South Sumatra, which is an area with growing tourism potential, the English skills of hotel employees are still a challenge. Many employees are not fully skilled in using English, especially in specific contexts such as explaining hotel room facilities, types of services, and other guest needs. This study was conducted to analyze the ability of hotel employees in Ogan Ilir in explaining guest room facilities in English. Through this study, it is hoped that it will be possible to find out the extent of the employee's English skills, as well as what factors affect their ability. In addition, this study also aims to provide recommendations regarding more effective English skill development strategies for hotel employees in this area. Thus, this research contributes to improving the quality of hospitality services through strengthening employees' English skills.

In providing excellent service to guests who will stay at this hotel, of course, the element of communication is one of the most important (Auliana et al., 2022), especially at the front of a hotel, in this case, the receptionist or hotel employee who must have language skills, especially English as an international language used by the world's population wherever they are (Agustin & Purwanto, 2022). This is the background of the author wanting to know the ability to provide explanations of room facilities by hotel employees in English and also hotel employees in other divisions who are related to guests at the Ogan Ilir Hotel, which is the nearest district of the city of Palembang, South Sumatra. The author suspects that the abilities possessed by the hotel employee officers are at least capable of providing explanations to hotel guests in Ogan Ilir.

Meanwhile, Wisma Indralaya is located in Jl. Indralaya Raya, Kayu Agung, Indralaya District, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, has facilities for Beds, Bathroom, and Public *Mushollah* Fan, with a total of three employees in one shift (there are two shifts), has ten standard rooms. Mastery of English, especially English related to facilities and service information in a hotel or guesthouse, is essential, especially for employees on duty in the front office. Ogan Ilir is the closest district to the city of Palembang; of course, we must prepare ourselves to welcome good guests from Palembang who want to visit the nearest district, including foreign guests. Indeed, the attention of hotel or guesthouse managers to employees from the language element must be increased so that human resources who have an education level equivalent to high school feel cared for in terms of strengthening their knowledge. On that basis, the researcher raised the research theme to measure the extent of the English proficiency level of employees on duty at hotels or guesthouses in Ogan Ilir Regency. Hence, the researcher took the

study title "Analysis of the Ability to Explain Guest Room Facilities in English by Hotel Employees in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra."

LITERATURE REVIEW

General English Proficiency Level

A person's English language ability can generally be divided into three levels*: the primary level (beginner and elementary),* the *intermediate*, and *the advanced* level. At the basic level, a person can only speak and write at the word or phrase level and still have difficulty writing or speaking in its entirety or at the sentence level but can already try to repeat the pronunciation or simple sentences given (Taufiqi & Purwanto, 2024; Yuliana et al., 2024). At the intermediate level, a person can already speak and write about more complex matters, has enough vocabulary to help express what he thinks to be conveyed, and has a good understanding of grammar (Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024). However, individuals at the intermediate level still need help to talk about topics unfamiliar to them, such as the culture of a region, science, technological developments, and so on (Novia et al., 2024). In contrast to the ability at the advanced level, a person is already fluent, straightforward, and relaxed in using his English. For those who are already in the advanced level, of course, they find it easy to speak and write on various topics. However, it still needs to be clarified and broader in scope at a general level like this. Furthermore, the intermediate or advanced level is still too subjective and non-standardized to measure whether a person is at the primary level. In this case, the author will discuss a more measurable level of English that has a reference used in assessing the guest attendant or hotel employee's ability to explain guest room facilities in English.

Explaining Guest Room Facilities

The procedure for explaining hotel room facilities by a hotel employee, according to the website (https://hellopariwisata.blogspot.com/2020/05/tata-cara-menjelaskan-fasilitas-kamar.html), explained that the facilities in the guest room of a hotel sometimes differ from one hotel to another, the facilities may have similarities but may be located differently. Therefore, a Bellman must be able to explain any functions and facilities in the hotel room to the guest before the guest stays (Melinda et al. et al., 2023). Here, the author describes the guest room facilities at the Hotel in Ogan Ilir. There are things to consider before explaining to guests:

1) Before entering the room, hotel employees must ensure the room key suits the guest.
2) Furthermore, the hotel employee confirmed whether there were still room cleaners and was responsible for cleaning the guest room. The guest would enter by knocking or pressing the room bell three times while saying, "Excuse me."

3) Hotel employees open the door of the room using a key card
4) Then, guests are welcome to enter
5) Hotel employees bring guest belongings. Trolleys are left in front of guest rooms; do not bring trolleys into guest rooms.
6) Hotel staff explaining the facilities in the guest room
7) Guest room facilities are explained from the farthest position and clockwise
8) Next, explain the bathroom facilities, such as hair dryers, hot water faucets, etc.

Previous Related Study

Research from Aisyah et al. (2024) discusses Improving English Communication Skills for Hotel Employees. This study examines various approaches to improving hotel employees' English communication skills. One of the focuses is developing language training materials relevant to the work context, including descriptions of room facilities so that employees can interact more effectively with international guests. Then, research from Umar et al. (2023) Language Competence in the Hospitality Industry. This research explores foreign language competencies, especially English, needed by hotel staff. The study covers the speaking skills required to explain facilities and provide information to guests. Factors such as ongoing training, motivation, and language education background were also evaluated to improve communication skills in English.

METHOD

Design and Samples

The research conducted at the locus of the Ilaya Hotel in Ogan Ilir on hotel employees uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach that starts from an idea to obtain a complete and comprehensive picture in revealing facts, situations, phenomena, variables, and circumstances that occur during the research and present it as it is. According to (Hardani. and Ustiawaty, 2020), qualitative research examines perspectives with interactive and flexible strategies. This study interprets the results of a case study using a direct interview test given to hotel employees related to the results of the analysis of individual abilities of hotel employees who work at hotels in Ogan Ilir by referring to the international standard level of CEFR – *Common European Framework of Reference* which is a standard for a person's English proficiency and using a person's speaking ability test referring to (Brown, 2003) About *Assessing Speaking*.

The English Language Proficiency Level refers to the CEFR - *Common European Framework of Reference*, which is an international standard or level to describe and describe an individual's language ability. CEFR divides English into six levels, namely: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. In reality, usually a person is so difficult to develop their English or even fail to learn English. This is certainly not because

they are not capable, but the level they take is not right so that their English learning seems too easy or even too difficult.
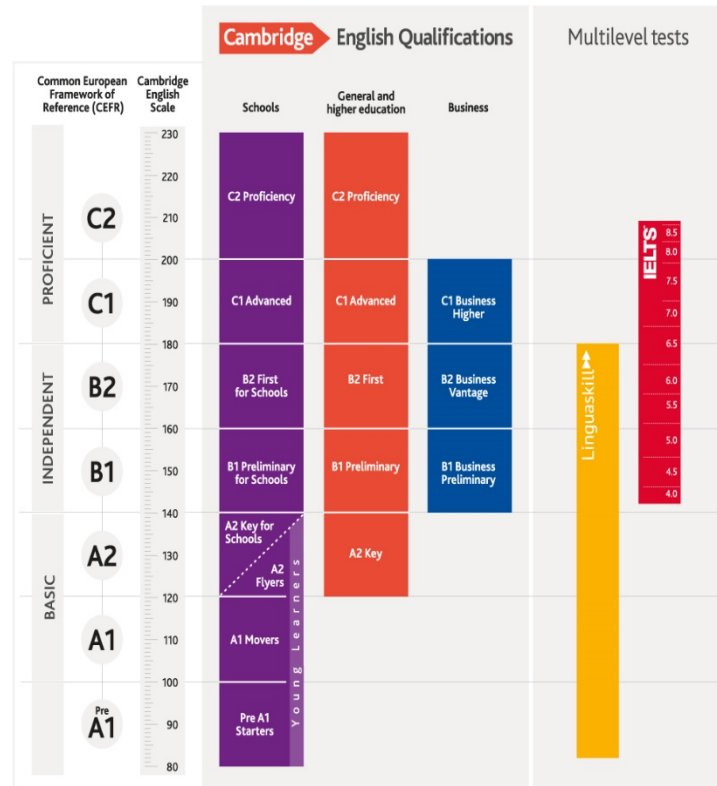
Source: Cambridge-english.org

Instrument and Procedure

Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research because the main goal is to obtain (Alwasilah, 2005), according to Hardani. Ustiawaty (2020) stated that "the fundamental methods relied on by qualitative research for gathering information are, participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, documen review," meaning that in qualitative research, data collection is carried out in *a natural setting*, primary data sources and data collection techniques are more on participatory observation (*participant observation),* in-depth interviews *and document* reviews (Afini et al., 2023; Kesumawati & Aridanu, 2017). In this study, the researcher uses data collection techniques such as the one stated, which involves observation, interviews, and direct documentation. The sampling technique will be carried out by providing interview questions to all employees of the Hotel Ilaya in Ogan Ilir. This study uses data collection techniques through observation/observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies.

Data Analysis

In conducting qualitative research, data analysis is carried out during data collection and after the collection is carried out in a certain period. According to Miles and Huberman in Sugiono, 2012, activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out continuously until the data is saturated. Activities in data analysis include 1) Data collection stage, 2) Data reduction stage, 3) Data presentation, 4) Data verification, and 5) Conclusions drawn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As an International Language or world language that is used in all parts of the world, mastery of English, especially when explaining to guests who use foreign languages both when we communicate directly and by phone, will be very helpful, especially in terms of providing information and explanations related to facilities and other services that exist in our hotel.

A hotel employee who is in direct contact with guests is expected to be able to give explanations or communicate in English; of course, at the time of initial acceptance or recruitment during the interview, it is better to have used introductions or even questions in English given to prospective hotel employees, especially for front office positions. When the author asks questions that start from simple questions according to the prepared references, the author creates a relaxed situation so that the interview goes as expected; this is needed so that the respondent, in this case, the employees of the Ilaya Hotel and Wisma Indralaya, can conduct interviews or direct communication casually and not be burdened with tasks at the time of the interview.

(P)   Hello, good afternoon, sir. How are you today?
(T)   : *(hanya tersenyum, dan mengatakan nggk bisa)*
(P)   : *Mencoba untuk memancing dengan beberapa kalimat tanya*
        What's your name? Taryono?
(T)   : Yes…
(P)   Do you like to work here? Like?
        (pewawancara memancing dengan menggunakan kata "like dan work"
        Lalu pak T menjawab….
(T)   : Like..like
(P)   : All right, sir. Regarding the facilities in this hotel, does it have a swimming pool?
(T)   : yes
(P)   : Other facilities, you know..what else..apa lagi?
(T)   : *(pak T semakin bingung dan hanya menjawab ..Yes)*
(P)   : Does this hotel have meeting room?
(T)   : yes…meeting room (*kata* "meeting room *sepertinya familiar bagi karyawan, tetapi yang diharapkan dapat menjawab dengan lengkap atau minimal merespon dengan jawaban Yes, it does atau no, it doesn't*)

(P)   : <u>Where</u>? *Dimana?*
(T)   : *hanya tersenyum dan tidak merespon…*
(P)   All right, Mr.Taryono; thank you for the time, and enjoy your work again

Analysis of hotel employees (T)

The author interviewed Mr. T using simple questions dominated by Yes/No questions; the initial question asked, "How are you today? But Mr. T only answered with a smile without responding with answers in English, so that the author can already conclude what level Mr. T's ability is, but it must be continued using several questions such as, what's your name, T? Then the answer was "yes," then the author continued with the question "Do you like to work here? Like? Then Mr. T answered "like" then the author continued the question about hotel facilities by using the sentence yes/no question, "does this hotel have swimming pool? Then the answer was "yes", then the author combined the question sentence with Indonesian to help provoke Mr. T to respond well, namely "Other facilities you know. What else. What else? However, Mr. T still looked confused (Mr. T was even more confused and only answered. Yes)

Then continued with the question sentence, "Does this hotel have a meeting room; the author gave an affirmative question: "...<u>meeting room</u>? (the word "meeting room seems familiar to employees, but those who are expected to be able to answer completely or at least respond with the answer Yes, it does or No, it doesn't) Then the question "Where? Where?" (Deliberately added the word Where? So that Pat T understands the word Where, and then tries to explain the facility's location. However, Mr. T only smiled and needed to explain in English the location or position of each meeting room. Finally, the author closed the interview with Mr. T.

The results of the analysis of interviews with five employees, namely the level of ability to explain hotel facilities in English is still at the Basic Level, which is divided into two categories, namely three employees are at the Elementary – basic A2 level, namely Mrs. Anggun, Mr. Didi Candra, and Mr. Rendra Subri, while two employees are at the Elementary – basic A1 level because they still cannot interact by using simple sentences well. What obstacles are faced by hotel employees to improve their individual English skills? Of course, employees do not have an essential English-speaking basis before working in a hotel and have never taken an English course before, let alone lack training and getting used to using English in the work environment

The results of a study on the ability of hotel employees in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra, in explaining guest room facilities in English show that the level of English proficiency of employees is still varied. Most employees have basic skills in using English, especially for simple words related to public facilities, such as "bed," "bathroom," and "air conditioner." However, when asked to explain room facilities in more detail, such as differences in room types, additional services, or

instructions for using certain room facilities, many employees have difficulties. They tend to stutter and are unable to use proper terminology or construct clear sentences.

The main difficulty employees face is the lack of mastery of specific vocabulary related to the world of hospitality. For example, terms such as "in-room safe," "minibar," and "laundry service" are often not explained in detail and are often conveyed in less informative sentences. In addition, their ability to convey information professionally is also limited, especially when it comes to responding to questions or requests from foreign guests (Purwanto et al., 2023). Many of them are only able to give short answers or directly translate words from Indonesian, which sometimes sounds unnatural in English (Hidayad et al., 2023).

The study also found that English education and training factors greatly affect employee ability. Employees with higher education backgrounds and who have attended previous English language training tend to have better abilities in explaining room facilities. In contrast, employees who do not have adequate formal education or have never received specialized English language training are more likely to experience difficulties (A. Umar et al., 2016). In addition, work experience factors also affect their abilities, although not as much as the influence of education and training (Brunton, 2009; Martin & Davies, 2006). Another influencing factor is the lack of English practice in the workplace. Although many employees interact with foreign guests, the frequency of use of English is still limited. Dense tasks are also one of the obstacles for employees to develop their language skills further. A work environment that is less supportive for everyday English practice poses an additional challenge to the development of these skills.

Based on these results, it is recommended that hotels in Ogan Ilir provide English language training that is more targeted and relevant to hospitality needs. This training should include practical aspects, such as simulating conversations with foreign guests, so that employees can be more confident and used to using English in real situations. Ongoing training is also necessary to ensure that their English skills are constantly evolving, given the importance of effective communication in the hospitality industry. With the right training program, it is hoped that employees can provide more professional services and increase guest satisfaction, especially foreign guests, which in turn will improve the reputation and competitiveness of the hotel in Ogan Ilir.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that in general, the ability of employees to explain guest room facilities in English still needs to be improved. Although most employees have basic skills in using English, they still struggle when it comes to conveying more complex and specific information related to room facilities. This is especially evident in the proper use of hospitality terminology, the drafting of clear sentences, and the detailed explanations required to answer foreign guests'

questions or requests. Some of the factors that affect the English language proficiency of hotel employees in Ogan Ilir include the level of education, work experience, and access to English language training. Employees who have a better formal education background and have attended English language training show higher abilities compared to those who do not have the opportunity. In addition, another obstacle identified was the lack of practice of using English in real-life situations in everyday work environments, which slowed down the development of their communication skills. To improve the ability of hotel employees to explain room facilities in English, a language training program focused on hospitality needs is required. The training should include practical exercises such as simulating conversations with guests, using specific terminology, and improving the ability to explain services in a polite and professional manner. The implementation of this training program is expected to not only improve the language skills of employees, but also contribute to improving the quality of hotel services, guest satisfaction, and hotel competitiveness in Ogan Ilir. Thus, the development of human resources through continuous English language training is an important key in supporting the progress of the hospitality industry in this region.

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