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An Analysis of Students Speaking Skill in Check-in Process for Twelveth Hospitality Major Vocational High School 4 Bojonegoro

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Abstract – Verbal communication is a crucial skill in the hospitality industry that requires mastery of polite, clear and professional speech. Examining students' speaking skills is an important step to develop soft skills that are vital in this sector. This study aims to evaluate the extent of the speaking skills of students in class XII of the Hospitality Department at SMK Negeri 4 Bojonegoro in handling the check-in process of hotel guests. This research applied a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection was done through a speaking test that refers to Douglas Brown's assessment rubric, which includes Pronunciation, Fluency, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. In this study, there were 10 respondents, and the assessment of ability level was taken through a video simulation of the check-in process conducted by the students. The findings showed that the majority of students demonstrated good speaking skills. Of the 10 students involved, 7 students showed satisfactory performance with an average score above 70. They managed to convey check-in information with clear articulation, appropriate word choice, as well as a confident demeanor. On the other hand, the other 3 students performed adequately with an average score of 60, but still needed further coaching as they faced challenges in pronunciation and grammar. Therefore, although the students' results show good achievement, they still need coaching and practical exercises to improve their professionalism in the hospitality sector.

Keywords – speaking skills, Douglas Brown, communication, hospitality students

abstrak – Kemampuan berkomunikasi secara verbal merupakan keterampilan krusial dalam industri perhotelan yang memerlukan penguasaan cara berbicara yang sopan, jelas, dan profesional. Memeriksa kemampuan berbicara siswa menjadi langkah penting untuk mengembangkan soft skills yang sangat vital di sektor ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi sejauh mana keterampilan berbicara siswa kelas XII Jurusan Perhotelan di SMK Negeri 4 Bojonegoro dalam menangani proses check-in para tamu hotel. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes berbicara yang mengacu pada rubrik penilaian Douglas Brown, yang meliputi Pelafalan, Kelancaran, Tata Bahasa, Kosakata, dan Pemahaman. Dalam penelitian ini, terdapat 10 responden, dan penilaian tingkat kemampuan diambil melalui video simulasi proses check-in yang dilakukan oleh siswa. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa menunjukkan kemampuan berbicara yang baik. Dari 10 siswa yang terlibat, 7 siswa menunjukkan performa memuaskan dengan rata-rata nilai di atas 70. Mereka berhasil menyampaikan informasi check-in dengan artikulasi yang jelas, pilihan kata yang tepat, serta sikap yang percaya diri. Di sisi lain, 3 siswa lainnya menunjukkan performa yang memadai dengan rata-rata nilai 60, tetapi masih memerlukan pembinaan lebih lanjut karena menghadapi tantangan dalam pelafalan dan

tata bahasa. Dengan demikian, walaupun hasil siswa menunjukkan pencapaian yang baik, mereka tetap memerlukan pembinaan dan latihan praktik untuk meningkatkan profesionalisme mereka dalam sektor perhotelan.

Kata kunci – kemampuan berbicara, Douglas Brown, komunikasi, siswa perhotelan

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a very important ability in daily life, communication also plays an important role in various fields, one of which is hospitality. Effective communication skills play a very important role in the hospitality industry.

In the hotel sector, a key element is the courteous interaction through language between staff and guests. The use of polite language, whether spoken or through body language, significantly influences how satisfied guests feel. Employing respectful language along with effective non-verbal cues can foster a pleasant experience for visitors and, in turn, enhance the hotel's image and standing. (AB et al., 2024). Furthermore, effective communication abilities will enhance the value of the hotel staff. As stated by NSC Surabaya Polytechnic, strong communication skills lead to positive outcomes, such as boosting self-esteem, improving self-regulation, and enhancing quick thinking. For someone in the hospitality industry, these skills are essential in various circumstances. Consequently, possessing excellent communication skills will significantly influence the success of a hotelier's professional journey.

Effective communication training stands out as a crucial element in the hospitality sector. Research carried out at the Puteri Gunung Hotel highlights that ongoing communication training can significantly enhance the communication abilities of staff members. This training equips employees with the knowledge and application of effective communication strategies, ultimately elevating the service quality provided to guests (K. Putri, 2017).

One essential interaction between staff and visitors is the check-in procedure. This procedure provides guests with their initial exposure and perception of hotel services. A study carried out at Djakarta Hotel Padang highlighted that the receptionist's performance during check-in significantly influences guests' decisions to revisit the hotel (Musparni, 2022). Moreover, research at The Ritz Carlton Hotel Nusa Dua, Bali revealed that a welcoming and efficient check-in by the team contributes to an enjoyable experience for guests. The attentiveness, preparedness, and capability of front office personnel in executing their responsibilities are vital in shaping guests' first impressions of the hotel. Prasanthy's study at The Ritz Carlton Hotel indicated that the receptionist's role is key in ensuring a smooth check-in and check-out experience. Delivering friendly and professional assistance, along with the competence to address guests' requests and issues swiftly and effectively, is crucial for fostering loyalty and enhancing the hotel's reputation (Pratama et al., 2024).

SMK Negeri 4 Bojonegoro is a vocational high school located in Bojonegoro City. This educational institution offers a range of specialties, including a focus on hospitality. For those studying hospitality, proficient speaking and communication abilities are fundamental aspects of their field. For the twelfth-grade students specializing in hospitality at SMK Negeri 4 Bojonegoro, the ability to communicate

effectively is crucial in equipping them to meet the expectations of the professional environment they will enter.

Evaluating students' verbal expression and communication abilities is a crucial process, particularly given that soft skills play an essential role in facilitating success within the hospitality sector. These soft skills encompass qualities such as courtesy when engaging with others, behavior that exemplifies professionalism, and the capacity to communicate effectively and appropriately. Each of these components serves not only as a fundamental requirement for individuals aspiring to work in the hospitality field, but they also serve as crucial factors in providing a favorable experience for guests and enhancing the reputation of the establishment where they are employed (Mahfud et al., 2017). It is emphasized that strong communication skills significantly contribute to elevating service quality and developing an esteemed reputation, which is invaluable in the hospitality industry. Efficient communication is instrumental in fostering a rewarding experience for guests, while also bolstering the professional image of both individuals and organizations involved. Furthermore, findings from research at SMK Negeri 3 Pamekasan indicate that implementing differentiated learning strategies in language courses can markedly enhance students' speaking abilities. This educational method provides students with the opportunity to discover their potential while effectively honing their communication skills. It enables them to grow in confidence, responsiveness, and proficiency in interactions, which are critical skills required to address the expectations of professionals working in the hospitality industry. Therefore, proficiency in speaking is one of the fundamental elements that must be prioritized in cultivating a skilled workforce in this field (Sa'adah et al., 2016).

This investigation holds promise for enhancing theories of learning connected to verbal communication abilities. By assessing the speaking abilities of students, this study can contribute to the existing understanding of English instructional methods within the realm of hospitality education. The outcomes of this research may aid in developing more effective strategies for teaching communication skills, particularly in practical situations like the hotel check-in experience. Furthermore, this study can serve as a resource for other scholars interested in related inquiries. The goal of this research is to deliver crucial insights to teachers aimed at improving English instruction, particularly regarding speaking skills in hospitality students. By understanding student capabilities, instructors can tailor their curricula and activities to better meet student needs.

METHOD

In this research, the investigator employs a qualitative methodology that takes on a descriptive framework. This qualitative method emphasizes thorough investigation and comprehension of the significance that emerges from different social challenges encountered by a specific group of people (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research emphasizes the significance and mechanisms derived from the results gathered. This methodology prioritizes multiple aspects, including items, individuals, organizations, and the connections or dynamics that exist among these aspects. The objective is to achieve an in-depth comprehension of an occurrence, situation, or action (Safrudin et al., 2023).

The descriptive technique is a strategy that seeks to uncover facts through precise interpretation. This study examines a range of societal issues, including the connections between actions, opinions, mindsets, and the effects of specific phenomena. In the descriptive technique, the researcher aims to portray the research subject or object as it truly exists, without making modifications or embellishments. The goal of descriptive research is to clarify or investigate further a phenomenon, event, or prevailing social condition. This research intends to outline various factors associated with the issue being examined, but does not focus on the relationships among those factors. This approach is because descriptive studies are not structured to determine the cause of a phenomenon, symptom, or social reality as it stands (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023)

This study will take place at SMK Negeri 4 Bojonegoro, a vocational high school situated in Bojonegoro Regency, East Java. This site was chosen because it possesses attributes that align with the aims of the research, including the types of skill development programs available, the educational atmosphere, and the social circumstances of the student. The choice of candidates from this discipline relies on their appropriateness for the research emphasis, considering that students in hospitality possess particular traits that align with the research subject, including proficiency in service, effective communication, and various hands-on abilities.

The method for gathering information in this research utilizes the Douglas Brown Speaking Rubric as a key tool for measuring students' oral communication skills. This strategy was selected due to the rubric's ability to offer a detailed and organized evaluation system for analyzing different facets of speaking abilities, particularly within an educational setting.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description

This research seeks to examine the oral communication skills of twelfth-grade learners participating in the Hospitality program at SMKN 4 Bojonegoro in managing the guest check-in procedure. Information was gathered via video simulation evaluations utilizing a rubric developed by Douglas Brown, which assesses five key areas: Pronunciation, Fluency, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The outcomes of the evaluations, in addition to the scores attained by the students, are displayed in the table below.

Table 1. Assessment of Students' Speaking Abilities in Handling Guest Check-In

Nama siswa	pronun ciation	Fluen cy	Gram mar	Vocabu lary	Compre hension	Total	AStu dent 9ge	Score	Category
Student 1	8	7	8	7.5	8	38.5	7.7	77	Very Good
Student 2	6.5	6.5	7	6.5	8	34.5	6.9	69	Very Good
Student 3	7.5	7	8	7	8	37.5	7.5	75	Very Good
Student 4	8.5	8	8	8.5	8	41	8.2	82	Very Good
Student 5	7	6.5	8	6.5	8	36	7.2	72	Very Good

Student 6	6.2	6.5	7	6	6.5	32.2	6.44	64.4	Good
Student 7	8	7.5	8	8	7	38.5	7.7	77	Very Good
Student 8	5.5	5	5.5	5	6.5	27.5	5.5	55	Good
Student 9	6.5	6	7	6	7.5	33	6.6	66	Good
Student 10	8	7.5	8	7.5	8	39	7.8	78	Very Good

Based on Table 4.1, the assessment categories are derived from the Douglas Brown assessment rubric found in the appendix. The researcher evaluated the students' speaking abilities using this rubric, followed by calculating the average scores, which were then analyzed according to the criteria outlined in Table 4.2.

Table 2 . Assessment Categories for Speaking Ability

No	Category of Speaking Skill	Score
1.	Excellent	84 - 100
2.	Very Good	68 - 83
3.	Good	52 - 67
4.	Poor	35 - 51
5.	Very Poor	20 - 35

(Adopted from Sugiyono; Trisna, 2022)

According to the information provided, Student 1 Arum secured an average of 7.7 and a total score of 77, which qualified her for the "Very Good" classification. Student 1 displayed clear pronunciation and sufficient fluency, despite encountering minor issues with pronunciation, and her grammar was acceptable. Her vocabulary was perceived as quite professional, and her understanding was evaluated as very good. Following this, Student 2 achieved an average score of 6.9, culminating in a final score of 69, which also placed him in the "Very Good" category. His speaking evaluation reflected fairly good pronunciation, though it was occasionally unclear, and his fluency was relatively smooth yet showed some signs of confusion. In addition, Student 2 demonstrated competent grammar usage, with vocabulary that tended to be rather ordinary and somewhat rigid, while his comprehension of communication was assessed as good. Student 3 performed at an average of 7.5, leading to a concluding score of 75, thus categorizing her in the "Very Good" group. Student 3 exhibited clear and effective pronunciation with minimal mistakes; her fluency was notably smooth, she used grammar effectively, and her vocabulary, while common, served well for guest understanding. Her grasp of the check-in conversation showcased a very high proficiency level.

According to the details shared, Student 1 Arum attained an average score of 7.7, resulting in a cumulative score of 77, which allowed her to achieve the "Very Good" classification. She exhibited clear enunciation and adequate fluency, even though there were some minor difficulties with pronunciation, and her grammatical skills were considered satisfactory. Her choice of words was viewed as notably professional, and her comprehension was rated as very good.

Subsequently, Student 2 obtained an average score of 6.9, leading to an overall score of 69, which similarly positioned him in the "Very Good" category. His speaking assessment indicated fairly decent pronunciation, albeit at times unclear, while his fluency was generally smooth but exhibited some moments of confusion. Furthermore, Student 2 showed effective grammar usage, though his vocabulary was often seen as rather average and somewhat inflexible, and his understanding of communication was judged to be good.

Student 3 achieved an average score of 7.5, culminating in a total of 75, which places her in the "Very Good" category. Student 3 demonstrated precise and effective pronunciation with few errors; her fluency was distinctly smooth, her grammar usage was appropriate, and her vocabulary, though basic, effectively aided guest comprehension. Her understanding of the check-in dialogue indicated a very high level of skill. Student 7's average score was 7.7, resulting in a final score of 77, also placing her in the "Very Good" bracket. Student 7's pronunciation was clear and commendable, her speech was fluid despite minor moments of confusion, her grammar was solid, her vocabulary appeared professional, and her understanding was relatively strong. In contrast, Student 8 scored an average of 5.5, leading to a final score of 55, thus categorizing him as "Good." Student 8's pronunciation was sufficient but included some unclear segments and often felt rapid. His fluency was low, causing significant confusion, his grammar fell short, and his vocabulary was quite basic, occasionally hard to follow, while his comprehension level was deemed adequate.

Meanwhile, Student 9 secured an average score of 6.6, leading to a final score of 66, which positioned her in the "Good" category. Her pronunciation was clear and fairly competent, her speech maintained a reasonable flow but was slightly hurried, her grammar was adequately good, her vocabulary was commonplace, and her understanding of guest interactions was satisfactory. Then, Student 10 achieved an average score of 7.8 with a total of 78, placing her in the "Very Good" classification. Student 10's pronunciation was clear with few mistakes, her fluency was regarded as good, her grammatical proficiency was strong, her vocabulary was adequately professional, and her grasp of the guest check-in process was rated as very good.

Speaking Ability of Students in Handling Check-In

According to the evaluation carried out using the speaking rubric created by Douglas Brown, the speaking skills of twelfth graders enrolled in the Hospitality program at SMKN 4 Bojonegoro regarding the guest check-in procedure can be divided into two distinct levels. Among the ten students assessed, seven of them (70%) achieved a score categorized as "Very Good" (ranging from 68 to 83), whereas the other three students (30%) were placed in the "Good" category (with scores between 52 and 67). This suggests that a significant portion of the students possesses a reasonably strong speaking proficiency in hospitality accommodations.

a. Pronunciation

Most learners were capable of showing distinct and comprehensible pronunciation. This is highlighted by Student 4's score of 8.5, followed closely by Student 10 and Student 7, both achieving scores of 8, demonstrating a solid grasp of pronunciation. Articulate pronunciation is vital for facilitating efficient interactions with guests, as clarity significantly contributes to the way professionalism is perceived within front office operations. This perspective resonates with the insights of Wulanda et al. (2023), who examine front office communication and stress that clear articulation, including effective pronunciation, is key to boosting guest satisfaction and leaving a professional impression in hospitality services. Efficient communication enables staff to grasp guests' requirements and deliver suitable services, thus improving the overall experience for guests.

However, certain learners, like Student 8 and Student 6, still struggle with articulating words correctly, which may cause misunderstandings, particularly in customer service scenarios that demand prompt and precise replies. Mistakes in pronunciation within the hospitality sector can create unfavorable views of employee professionalism. This aligns with the findings of Putri et al. (2024), which suggest that inadequate pronunciation abilities in foreign languages among front desk personnel can result in confusion about guest requirements, communication failures, and harm the organization's reputation. Hence, it is essential for those in hospitality roles to achieve proficiency in foreign languages and accurate pronunciation in order to prevent miscommunication and enhance service efficiency and precision.

b. Fluency

Students possess a fairly strong level of speaking fluency overall. Student 4, scoring an 8, and Student 10, with a 7.5, demonstrate the ability to communicate smoothly without significant delays or lengthy breaks. This suggests that these individuals are adept at sustaining an appropriate tempo in their speech, which meets the standards of the hospitality sector. As highlighted by Firharmawan et al. in 2022, fluency in speaking is vital for fostering pleasant and professional exchanges between hotel staff and visitors. On the other hand, individuals like Student 8, who has a score of 5, and Student 9, who scores a 6, continue to struggle with fluency, as seen through frequent pauses, repeated words, and indications of uncertainty while they speak. A lack of fluency can result in unfavorable impressions from guests regarding the quality of service, regardless of whether the conveyed message is accurate, according to Wulanda et al. in 2023.

According to Gani (2014), obstacles in communication, like incorrect pronunciations or hesitations, frequently cause confusion between employees and patrons. These obstacles have an adverse impact on the perception of employee effectiveness and the standard of services offered by hotels. Consequently, there is a necessity for focused educational strategies to tackle these fluency challenges, including training in communication skills and exercises aimed at problem-solving, along with ensuring sufficient resources are available to establish a more practical learning atmosphere for future hospitality personnel (Yosep & Septemuryantoro, 2023). By implementing this blend of approaches, students are anticipated to enhance their verbal fluency, thereby fostering the development of a more competent and efficient front office service.

c. Grammar

Overall, the students' grammatical abilities can be classified as proficient. Student 1, Student 4, Student 3, and Student 7 achieved a score of 8 in grammar, reflecting their strong grasp of sentence organization in verbal communication. This proficiency contributes to more transparent, coherent, and easily interpretable messages for visitors. As highlighted by Taslim (2023), the necessity of properly using English grammar is a fundamental element of the communication expertise expected in a high-rated hotel. This competence is instrumental in delivering clear and understandable services to guests.

Nonetheless, some students, including Student 8, demonstrate deficiencies in grammatical application, especially concerning verb tenses and sentence construction. Mistakes in these aspects can hinder effective interaction with guests and may result in confusion (Taslim, 2023). Sari et al. (2020) assert in their study that prevalent issues with pronunciation and grammar among students in hospitality create barriers to effective guest communication. Such errors can obscure the clarity of messages and negatively affect the perception of staff professionalism. Therefore, there is an imperative to bolster the grammar abilities of hospitality students through integrated oral practice emphasizing grammar, particularly through conversational engagement and simulations of guest service. Research by Andini (2024) also advocates for the implementation of task-oriented learning and role-playing as key methods to enhance grammar and speaking skills concurrently.

d. Vocabulary

Students such as Student 4 and Student 7 exhibit a command of technical language suitable for the hospitality setting, which strengthens the perception of their professionalism when serving guests. Understanding industry-specific terminology is essential, since the hospitality sector demands careful wording to express courtesy, ensure clarity of communication, and maintain an image of exceptional service (Sabiku, 2024). According to Wirawan et al. (2020), proficiency in formal and specialized vocabulary plays a vital role in boosting the effectiveness of service interactions and elevating the professional reputation of employees in the perception of patrons.

On the other hand, certain learners like Student 8 and Student 9 continue to employ language that is quite basic and not sufficiently formal for service environments. Relying on informal or vague terminology can lessen the professional image presented to customers. This is supported by findings from Yahya and Siahaan in 2023, which demonstrate that insufficient command of formal and technical language during service interactions often results in unfavorable views regarding staff reliability. As a result, it is crucial for students to persist in enhancing their vocabulary capabilities. According to Nappu et al. in 2019, approaches such as the 3P method (Presenting, Practicing, Producing) are recommended, which incorporate English vocabulary and educational videos to teach and practice essential terms routinely encountered in the tourism and hospitality sectors, including courteous phrases, bookings, and client assistance. This approach boosts students' motivation and their capacity to learn and consistently rehearse vocabulary. Therefore, it is anticipated that students will not only expand their vocabulary base but also refine the precision of their language usage in structured service scenarios.

e. Comprehension

The capability of understanding is a notable strength for many students. Student 1, Student 3, Student 4, and Student 10 all achieved a comprehension score of 8, showcasing their competence in grasping instructions, inquiries, and dialogue in check-in scenarios effectively. This contextual awareness plays a vital role in the hospitality field, where guest interactions frequently involve intricate details that need to be absorbed swiftly and accurately. This finding supports the study conducted by Indrayani et al. (2024), which emphasizes the necessity for hospitality personnel to have critical thinking and problem-solving abilities to manage the nuances of communication within the industry. The skill to perceive context and digest information significantly enhances the effectiveness of interactions with guests, aligning with the demand for professional and efficient communication in the hospitality arena.

At the same time, learners such as Student 6 continue to struggle with understanding the broader dialogue, especially when encountering intricate vocabulary or complicated sentence forms, as well as while engaging with visitors. These understanding challenges can impede the service speed and increase the chances of misinterpreting messages with patrons. Lumbangaol et al. (2024) report that these obstacles contribute to misinterpretations and hinder the efficiency of service, which can lead to diminished customer contentment. As a result, it is crucial for those studying hospitality to grasp cultural and linguistic contexts in order to surmount these hurdles, promoting more efficient service and enhancing guest satisfaction.

Speaking is one of the four language skills which learners must acquire in order their competence in the use of English language. However students consider it as one of the most difficult skills for it requires the applications of the knowledge of the other skills. There are many reasons why speaking is difficult such as students limited vocabulary and grammar mastery, among these factors the teaching strategy was considered the most urgent problem since teaching speaking (Kensasi, et al. 2022).

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings indicate that a significant number of students have sufficient speaking abilities to manage the guest check-in procedure, showcasing notable strengths in understanding, pronunciation, and fluidity. However, enhancement in grammar and vocabulary is still necessary to align with the communication standards required in the hospitality sector. These improvement initiatives are in agreement with the research by Yosep and Septemuryantoro (2023), who highlight the significance of simulation training based on industry standards to elevate the quality of service interactions. Furthermore, the implementation of task-oriented learning and role-playing techniques, as recommended by Andini (2024), has been effective in refining students' speaking capabilities in a comprehensive way. By maintaining this continuous, practice-based, and contextual strategy, the expectation is that students will cultivate speaking skills that are not only proficient and precise but also professional, allowing them to satisfy the requirements for effective communication within the competitive and globally regulated hospitality industry.

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