

## Examining English Proficiency of Hotel Management Students: Study at Horison Hotel School

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to measure the English proficiency of hotel management students and to analyze the factors that influence these abilities. The research method used was qualitative. The sample for this research was hotel management students from Horison Hotel School. Data was collected through English proficiency tests, observations, and interviews. The research results showed that many students had adequate English proficiency, although there are still several areas that need improvement, especially in speaking and writing skills. Factors that influence English proficiency include learning resources and access, learning motivation, and time in practicing English skills. The implication of this research was the need to develop learning strategies that are more effective and relevant to the needs of hotel management students, as well as increasing support and resources to improve their English proficiency. This study made an important contribution to the development of higher education and the hotel industry in preparing students to face global challenges.

**Keywords:** English proficiency, hotel management students, ESP

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengukur kemampuan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa manajemen perhotelan dan menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemampuan tersebut. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif. Sampel penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa manajemen perhotelan Horison Hotel School. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kemampuan bahasa Inggris, observasi, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang memadai, meskipun masih ada beberapa hal yang perlu ditingkatkan, terutama dalam keterampilan berbicara dan menulis. Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemampuan berbahasa Inggris antara lain sumber dan akses belajar, motivasi belajar, dan waktu dalam berlatih kemampuan bahasa Inggris. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya mengembangkan strategi pembelajaran yang lebih efektif dan relevan dengan kebutuhan mahasiswa manajemen perhotelan, serta meningkatkan dukungan dan sumber daya untuk meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi perkembangan pendidikan tinggi dan industri perhotelan dalam mempersiapkan mahasiswa menghadapi tantangan global.

**Kata Kunci:** Kemampuan bahasa Inggris, mahasiswa manajemen perhotelan, ESP

## INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most widely used languages apart from other foreign languages. This happens because English is an international language and is used in many countries, both as a native language and as a second language. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. Mastering English, like learning languages in general, has been divided into four skills, they are: listening, speaking or communication, reading, and writing.

In the era of globalization and increasing international mobility, the ability to use English skills has become one of the key assets for hotel management students to compete in a competitive job market (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Ur, 2012). According to Zou et al. (2019), understanding a destination's history and culture is as important to tourism today as simply going there. As a result, employees in hotels and tourism must have strong oral communication skills to effectively assist guests. Customer service necessitates proper English usage because it influences the customer's overall experience and familiarity with the location. To summarize, in an industry that is increasingly open to international markets, the ability to communicate fluently in English. This is not only important but also becomes a necessity. This is important to ensure that students can adapt to a multicultural work environment and can interact with guests from various countries.

Mastery of English skills is very necessary in the hospitality industry, especially in the hotel industry. Prabhu and Wani (2015) researched the importance of English in the hospitality industry in India. The respondents of this research were hoteliers, lecturers, and students in the city of Pune, India. The findings of this research were that English is used as a universal medium of communication and is very important in providing quality services.

Erazo et al. (2019) studied public perceptions about the need for English in the hospitality industry. Based on interviews with 15 hoteliers, it was found that hotel staff who had sufficient English skills made tourists feel comfortable while staying at the hotel. This comfort had an impact on the length of stay and the possibility of returning to the hotel. Bobanovic and Grzinic (2011) through a questionnaire responded to by hotel employees and students majoring in business and tourism found that mastering English skills in hotels was a priority. This ability was a priority because it could make an employee steady all year round in the hotel industry.

Hotel management programs worldwide aim to equip students with the necessary skills to excel in various roles within the hospitality sector (Polisda and Wahyuni, 2022). Among these skills, proficiency in English stands out as a fundamental requirement due to the industry's multicultural nature and the prevalence of English as a global lingua franca. This study was applied to Horison Hotel School students, majoring in Hotel Management, located in Bekasi. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to learning theory and linguistic theory, especially in English as a foreign language. Practically, this research can contribute knowledge to lecturers, students, and institutions. For lecturers and learners, it is hoped that this study will be able to contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning, especially in English. For the Horison Hotel School institution, this research is expected to be able to improve the quality of education.

English skills are a crucial aspect of higher education, especially for hotel management students who interact with international guests and work in a multicultural industry environment. Various studies and research have been carried out to measure students' English proficiency, both globally and in

Indonesia. The study by Yuniarti (2014) highlighted the importance of evaluating the English needs of hotel management students in Indonesia. The results of this study showed that students need more opportunities to practice speaking and listening in English, while lack of resources was a major obstacle in the learning process. Like Yuniarti's study, Sari and Prayogi (2017) found that speaking difficulties for hospitality accommodation management majors are caused by linguistic factors like pronunciation, intonation, and less varied diction. Furthermore, it can be particularly difficult to master material components like relation, structure, quantity, and quality of content.

Another point to consider is research by Jenkins (2015) described the phenomenon of global English and its impact on English language teaching at the university level. Jenkins (2007) emphasized the importance of understanding the variations of English that exist around the world and adapting learning approaches to be more relevant to students' needs in this era of globalization. Additionally, the study by Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) and Harmer (2015) provided in-depth insights into effective English language teaching practices. They highlight the importance of a learner-centered approach, the use of technology in learning, and the integration of English skills into the context of the hospitality industry. In the area of English proficiency measurement, Douglas (2010) provided an in-depth understanding of English language tests and evaluation methods used in higher education. This study provided a basis for research in developing valid and reliable tests to measure the English language skills of hotel management students.

Overall, this literature highlights the importance of developing hotel management students' English proficiency in facing global challenges. By understanding the factors that

influence students' English skills and implementing effective teaching practices, educational institutions can best prepare students for success in an increasingly globally connected hospitality industry.

Based on the background above, several problems can be formulated as follows: (1) To what extent are the English proficiency of Horison Hotel School Hotel Management students? (2) What factors influence Horison Hotel School Hotel Management students in learning English?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that describes or depicts phenomena or relationships between phenomena being studied systematically, factually, and accurately (Kusmayadi and Sugiarto, 2000:29). In this research, the data sources were Horison Hotel School students, Department of Hotel Management. Data collection was carried out during the teaching and learning process by implementing and observing the factors that influence students in the teaching and learning process in class.

In this study, the writer acted as a lecturer and observer during the teaching and learning process so that she could directly assess students' abilities in using English language skills, as well as factors that influence students during English learning. This research was carried out at Horison Hotel School, which is located at Grand Metropolitan Mall, floor P8, Jln. KH Noer Ali RT 007/RW 003, Pekayon Jaya, South Bekasi, Bekasi City, West Java. The object of this research was the Intake 21 Diploma 3 students majoring in Hotel Management, totaling 12 students.

The qualitative data in this research was the results of the learning process in the classroom, which was the result of recording observations

during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Apart from that, this study tried to find factors that influence the English language learning process during the teaching and learning process. All data were presented descriptively in written form. The instruments used in this study were: (a) daily notes; (b) pretest and post-test scores for English proficiency which included aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; (c) interview guide, and (d) camera. The writer provided material according to the curriculum, syllabus, and SAP that have been prepared and directly assessed and observed the process during learning.

The data collection techniques used in this research are interview techniques and documentation in the form of recordings during the teaching and learning process in class.

The analytical technique used to analyze the data in this research was qualitative descriptive analysis. Data were presented using word descriptions to provide a clear picture of the object being studied and the problems being discussed. The data comparison, data presentation, and conclusion drawing were carried out sequentially as a series of analysis activities based on literature review, concepts, theoretical framework, and qualitative analysis methods.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### ***English Proficiency of Hotel Management Students***

Based on research findings, students' English proficiency can be divided into several main aspects, which are:

1. **Speaking Ability:** This aspect includes students' ability to communicate orally in English. The study results can identify the extent to which students can convey ideas,

interact well, and express their thoughts fluently and precisely (Thornbury, 2005).

2. **Listening Ability:** Listening ability is an important aspect of English communication. A writer can evaluate the extent to which students can understand spoken English in various contexts, including everyday conversational situations and work situations in the hospitality industry.
3. **Reading Ability:** Reading ability allows students to understand texts in English, including written documents, articles, or academic materials related to hotel management. This study can assess students' ability to understand information, extract meaning, and respond to the texts they read.
4. **Writing Ability:** This aspect includes students' ability to compose writing in English, regularly, and effectively. This study can evaluate students' ability to write various types of texts, ranging from reports, and letters, to professional emails that are appropriate to the context of the hotel industry.
5. **Business Communication Skills:** Apart from basic aspects of English, this study can also assess students' ability to communicate business in English. This includes their ability to craft presentations, participate in meetings, and communicate effectively in a hospitality business context.

By evaluating students' English skills in these various aspects, this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the level of readiness of hotel management students to communicate in English.

The study results showed that most hotel management students have a sufficient level of English language skills, but there were still some who showed the need to improve their skills, especially in speaking and writing. This

can be seen from the pretest and post-test results as follows:

**Table 1.** The Average Results of English Proficiency Pretest and Post-Test of Hotel Management Students

Nama	Pretest	Post-test
Raphael	70	78
Winstone	85	82
Haikal	75	72
Febyolla	70	75
Anna	80	85
Zalma	65	65
Daffa	68	70
Zaidan	75	80
Inez	80	85
Tini	82	82
Noval	60	65
Wildan	75	80

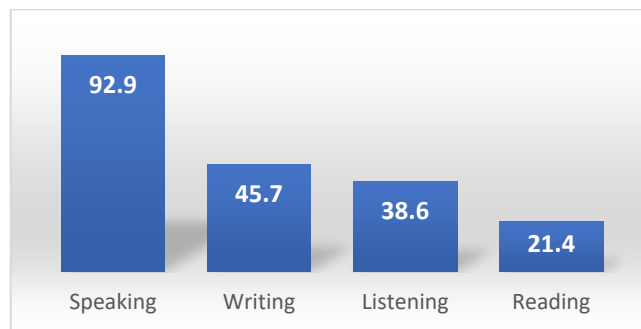
This table shows the average of overall English skills tested. This English proficiency test consisted of questions covering four English skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Pretest and post-test regarding English language skills is a method commonly used in research to measure changes or improvements in ability after students have participated in a particular learning program. This interpretation underscored the need for special attention to the holistic development of English language skills.

The term "*holistic development*" emphasizes the importance of addressing all aspects of language acquisition, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as the integration of these skills in real-world contexts (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). This approach goes beyond mere language proficiency and encompasses the ability to understand cultural nuances, adapt communication styles, and convey ideas confidently and accurately.

Moreover, holistic development recognizes the interconnectedness of language skills with other competencies, such as critical thinking,

problem-solving, and cultural competence (Piccardo, et al., 2022). Integrating language learning with these broader skills for hotel management students is essential for equipping them with the linguistic proficiency and communicative competence needed to thrive in diverse professional settings. This approach not only fosters language acquisition but also cultivates a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and enhances overall employability and career prospects.

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with students stated that speaking skills were the most needed skill, which was 92.9%. Writing skills were the second skill, namely 35.7%. The third English skill was listening skills, which was 28.6%. The fourth English language skill was reading skills, in 21.4%. This percentage can be seen in the following diagram:



**Graph 1.** English Skills Needed by Hotel Management Students

Thus, the discussion of this research provided a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in developing the English proficiency of hotel management students, as well as providing direction for the development of more effective educational programs and learning strategies. The identified challenges, such as limited opportunities for language practice and resource constraints, shed light on areas that require targeted intervention and support. Understanding these challenges is crucial for designing more effective educational programs and learning strategies that cater to

the specific needs of hotel management students.

Moreover, the discussion highlights various opportunities for improvement, including the integration of language learning with industry-specific contexts, the use of innovative teaching methodologies, and the harnessing of students' intrinsic motivation to enhance their language skills. By capitalizing on these opportunities, educators can create more engaging and relevant learning experiences that better prepare students for success in the hospitality industry.

Overall, the discussion serves as a roadmap for the development of more effective educational programs and learning strategies aimed at enhancing the English proficiency of hotel management students.

### ***Factors That Influence English Learning in The Classroom***

There were several factors encountered in learning English in the classroom, especially in the form of obstacles for students in participating in English learning in the classroom. Some obstacles may be identified:

1. **Lack of Communication Practice:** One of the main obstacles to learning English in the classroom is the lack of opportunities for students to practice speaking and writing actively. Speaking and writing skills are important aspects of English language skills, but often do not receive enough attention in the learning process. This happened because the English Hospitality course at Hotel Horison School was only given a weight of 2 credits, so the learning time was quite short.
2. **Lack of Resources and Access:** Lack of learning resources and access to quality learning materials can be a barrier to learning English. Students do not have access to adequate textbooks, online

learning materials, or technology-based training that can help them improve their English skills. This occurred because there was no textbook available in this English Hospitality course, the lecturer only provided handouts and material from ppt.

3. **Lack of Motivation and Confidence:** Lack of motivation and confidence in using English are also obstacles that are often faced by students. Fear of making mistakes or lack of confidence in English language skills can hinder the learning process and skill development. Most of the students of hotel management felt a lack of confidence in using English. They were afraid of making mistakes and laughed at by their classmates.

Identifying these factors was important for designing learning strategies that are effective and relevant to the needs of hotel management students. By overcoming these barriers, Horison Hotel School can ensure that students have optimal opportunities to develop their English proficiency and are ready to compete in the global job market.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on this research, many students demonstrated an adequate level of English language skills. However, there are still several areas that need attention to improve their English skills, especially in speaking and writing. Factors such as lack of communication practices, motivation, and lack of resources are the main obstacles in the learning process that can influence students' English proficiency. This highlights the importance of a diverse and focused approach to developing students' English proficiency. Here is conclusion that can be taken from this study:

1. In the context of the hospitality industry, research results showed that strong English proficiency is essential. The hotel industry, which is increasingly open to international

markets, requires professionals who can communicate fluently in English. Therefore, higher education needs to prepare students well, so they are ready to face industry demands.

2. Recommendations for future research: the discussion also provided a foundation for future research in this area. Further research can focus on evaluating the effectiveness of learning strategies that have been implemented, further understanding the factors that influence learning motivation, as well as further exploration of the development of student's English language skills.

From the results of this study, there were several suggestions especially for the institution, which is Horison Hotel School, that the writer can provide, including:

1. Improved Communication Practices: Horison Hotel School needs to increase opportunities for students to practice speaking and writing in English. This can be done by increasing the number of course weights from 2 credits to 3 credits.
2. Resource Development: Horison Hotel School needs to invest more resources in developing teaching materials and learning facilities that support the development of students' English proficiency. This includes providing access to quality textbooks, online learning materials, and additional English language training programs.
3. Increased Motivation and Confidence: Educational programs need to provide additional support in increasing students' motivation and confidence in using English. This can be done through the provision of mentoring programs, counseling sessions, or focused self-development activities and providing English day every day of the week.

4. Integrating the Hospitality Industry Context: Learning materials and activities should be linked to the hotel industry context to make learning more relevant and useful for students. Case studies, practical projects, and field trips to hotels or hospitality companies can be an integral part of a student's learning experience.

By implementing these suggestions, Horison Hotel School can improve its learning approach in improving the English proficiency of hotel management students and better preparing them for success in an increasingly globally connected industry.

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