



English Speaking Training For Hotel Staffs: A Study On Perception

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Received:	05 Oktober 2024	Abstract
Revised :	11 Oktober 2024	<i>English in the hotel industry is considered crucial in order to provide service excellence in the term of communication with foreign tourists. Prioritizing the proficiency of staff in English indicates the importance of language choice in hotels to contribute to guest satisfaction, upgrade a positive brand image, and help build customer loyalty. To improve their English proficiency, an English speaking training program must be carried out. This study aims to investigate the perception of hotel staff towards English speaking training given to them. This study employed a descriptive quantitative method; data collected through questionnaires distributed to six staff of a hotel in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The result reveals positive perceptions to the English speaking training for all aspects. Participants gained positive perception. The scores reached 3.78 for both speaking improvement and English speaking training materials, while 3.53 for teaching method. It concluded that the English speaking training enhanced participants' confidence and application of English speaking skills in their daily work.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry in Indonesia has made significant growth in recent years, driven by factors such as the increase in tourist destinations and the expansion of the tourist sector (Booth, 1990). This growth has been further fueled by the rise in international tourist arrivals, with the government's efforts to attract more tourists through policies such as visa-free entry and the promotion of important events (Nahar et al., 2019). Badan Pusat Statistik recorded that the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia in 2022 reached 5.47 million, up 251.28% compared to 2021 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023) which are caused by several namely the quality of service, customer satisfaction, and trust factors (Purwoko, 2015).

As one of Indonesia's most popular cities, Yogyakarta attracts a large number of foreign tourists from all around the world with its plentiful tourism offerings, Wijayanti et al. (2021) Yogyakarta has the potential to increase tourists' spending and extend their stay. Therefore, authorities and hotels in Yogyakarta must take into consideration to provide service excellence, in this case, prioritizing the proficiency of their staff in English to ensure that foreign tourists feel comfortable and well-assisted during their stay.

English language is a crucial skill in the hotel industry, particularly in communication with guests and colleagues (Pešić, 2022; Bobanović, 2011; Prabhu, 2015). This is especially true in the tourism and hospitality sectors, where it is essential for ensuring quality service and performance standards (Bobanovic, 2011; Prabhu, 2015). In Indonesian hotels, staff needing strong English skills is important

for positive guest experiences and the hotel's competitiveness in the global tourism market. English is most important for employees when enquiring about international tourists' information and needs (Che Hassan & Ong Lok Tik, 2019). Also, English in hotels is used to serve as a universal language, promoting collaboration among staff with diverse linguistic backgrounds in the globalized hospitality industry. Therefore, staff in Indonesian hotels must have good English skills to communicate with tourists effectively.

Griya Sentana Hotel is a hotel in Yogyakarta located in a strategic place because it is in the centre of the city. Based on the preliminary study, the hotel manager expressed his concern regarding the lack of English language skills of Hotel Griya Sentana staff, particularly in speaking skills. This language limitation is known to impact effective interactions with foreign tourists, potentially hindering the delivery of services. To solve this problem, the hotel held an English training program-aiming at improving the English proficiency of the staff, especially speaking skills. Some studies in Indonesia have proven that people working as staff in hotels have varying levels of English skills, with listening and speaking being perceived as the most important (Wahyanti, 2018; Prima, 2022).

Speaking is the capability of using language, to express ideas, information, suggestions, and feelings to people orally. Through speaking, people can communicate and interact with others (Wahyuni, 2018). Speaking in the hotel industry is considered as the implementation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Ting et al. (2010) highlights the use of English in ESP context as the initial language in hotel telephone service encounters, indicating the importance of language choice in transactional speaking. Transactional speaking refers to communication that is focused on accomplishing a specific goal. Richards (2014) stated there are two different types of transactionals: first one kind relates to transactions that emphasis is on delivering and receiving information where the participants focus on the information given; whereas the second one concerns obtaining goods or services, for example hotel checking. This type of communication is essential for ensuring smooth and efficient operations within the hotel industry. Effective transactional speaking in hotels contributes to guest satisfaction, upgrades a positive brand image, and helps build customer loyalty. It is part of the hospitality industry where clear and efficient communication is focus on delivering high-quality service.

This study aimed to discover the perception of the staff hotel on English Speaking training conducted at Griya Sentana Hotel. This study analyzed the participants' perception in three aspects: the participant's experiences with speaking improvement, the examination of the relevance and suitability of training materials, and the effective teaching method used in English Speaking training.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach that allowed for a deep exploration of the complex and contextualized aspects of staff hotel experiences. The type of data collected is primary data. That is the result of the participants' answers to the questionnaire. The data collection method is distributing questionnaires. The use of questionnaires as a data source was an effective method of collecting the responses of six participants. A Likert data analysis technique, with

a structured rating scale, provided clarity in measuring participants' satisfaction levels and perceptions was applied in this research, According to Sugiyono (2016) the Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena. In this study, a Likert scale was used to measure participants' perceptions and opinions. Respondents were given statements related to the focus of this study and asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. By combining both methods, this research can provide a comprehensive description of the impact of training in a hotel environment and provide valuable insights for the improvement and development of future training programs.

This research was conducted at Griya Sentana Hotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The object of this research was determined intentionally because Griya Sentana Hotel is one of the hotels that provides English language training to hotel staff to improve their services to foreign tourists. The research participants were six staff of Griya Sentana Hotel staff who work in the front office and manager.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the questionnaire that have been distributed to six English training participants, who most of them work in the front office and manager are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Participants' Answers

Items	Answer Choices	Number of Answers	Percentage
Age	19 – 30	5	83,3%
	31 – 50	1	16,6%
Profession	Front Office	4	66,6%
	Manager	2	33,3%
Status	Married	1	16,6%
	Not Married	5	83,3%

The questionnaire has been developed to assess respondents' perceptions towards the English Speaking Training emphasizing on three aspects: speaking improvement, training material, and teaching method (Figure 1).

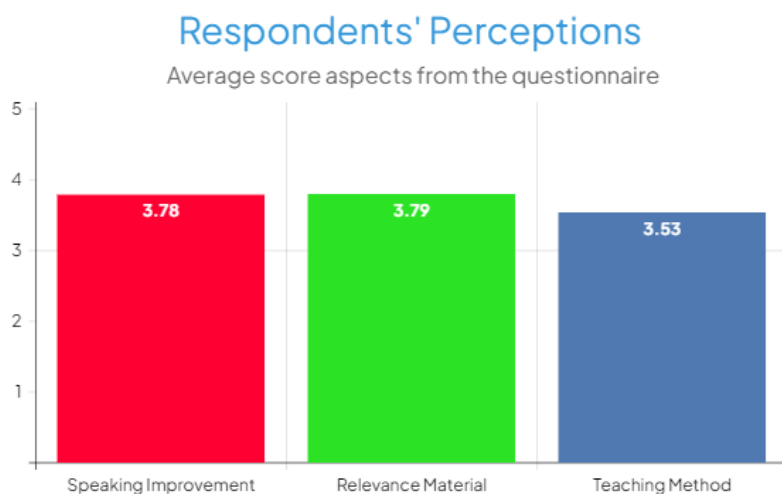


Figure 1. Respondents' Perceptions on English Speaking Training

Discussion

English Speaking training for Griya Sentana Hotel staff was held in 3 meetings within 1 month. In one meeting, the training was given in 45 minutes. The instructor for this training program is an English Education student from Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta. The training materials given to hotel staff covered check-in and check-out, hotel facilities and guest service, and how to deal with complaints and compliments.

In each meeting the hotel staff had the opportunity to practice role play consisting of two persons; for example one person became a receptionist and another one took a role as a foreign guest guided by the instructor. After the practice, the instructor gave feedback on the participants' performance.

Speaking Improvement

In Table 2, it reflects a positive impact of the speaking improvement training on participants' confidence and application of skills in both daily interactions and professional settings.

Table 2. Participants' Perception on Speaking Improvement

No	Questions	Score	
		Score	Category
1	I feel more confident in using English in daily interactions at the hotel.	3,50	Agree
2	I can apply the speaking skills I have learned in my daily work situations.	3,83	Agree
3	I believe the training provides positive benefits for my career development.	4,00	Agree
Average score		3,78	Agree

Most participants agreed that the English Speaking Training really helped them in their jobs and became more confident in using English in daily interactions at the hotel (Score: 3.50), and applied the speaking skills in their daily work situations (Score: 3.83). This positively impacts their ability to communicate using English in real life. The participants expressed a high level of belief that the training provides positive benefits for their career development, with an average score of 4.00. This suggests that they perceive language training as valuable for language proficiency and professional growth.

English Speaking Training Materials

Table 3 shows that participants perceive the training materials as relevant and beneficial for their job duties. The overall indicates a consistent positive trend across all questions related to the relevance of training materials. This suggests a generally positive perception among participants.

Table 3. Participants' Perception on English Speaking Training Materials

No	Questions	Score	
		Score	Category
1	The training materials are relevant and useful for my job duties.	3,67	Agree

2	Supporting materials such as listening to audio (vocabulary, language expression, conversation, etc.) helped my understanding.	4,00	Agree
3	The training materials were easy to access and use outside the training sessions.	3,67	Agree
4	There were enough opportunities to practice using English in practical situations	3,83	Agree
Average score		3,78	Agree

Participants generally accepted that the training materials are relevant and useful for their job duties, as indicated by a score of 3.67. This suggests that the content provided aligns well with their job duties. The supporting materials, such as listening to audio for vocabulary, language expression, and conversation, received a high score of 4.00. This implies that participants found this support beneficial for enhancing their understanding and indicates that diverse and multimedia materials contribute positively to the learning experience. Further, the training materials were considered accessible which means easy to use and obtain outside the training sessions which is indicated by a score of 3,67. Overall, the participants generally admitted that they got sufficient opportunities to practice using English in practical situations, with a score of 3.83. This is a positive indication that the training program did not only provide theoretical knowledge but also incorporated practical scenarios for application and skill development.

Teaching Method Applied in The English Speaking Training

The data in Table 4 indicates a positive perception of the teaching methods, particularly in terms of the effectiveness of role-play training and the provision of constructive feedback. The majority of participants agree that the methods used in the training are effective.

Table 4. Participants' Perception on Teaching Method Applied in the English Speaking Training

No	Questions	Score	
		Score	Category
1	The learning methods used in the role-play training were effective and interesting.	3,60	Agree
2	The learning method involves you actively in the training.	3,80	Agree
3	I received constructive feedback on my progress in the training.	3,20	Neutral
Average score		3,53	Agree

Participants generally believed that the learning methods used in the role-play training were effective and interesting, as indicated by a score of 3.60. This suggests that the learning method using role-play exercises was perceived positively, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the training. The neutral responses from participants for the categorized statement active involvement in training indicated by a score of 3,20 to the level of active involvement suggests that there might be varying experiences among participants. This suggests a lack of strong consensus among participants regarding the level of active involvement in

the learning process. Meanwhile, participants expressed satisfaction with the feedback mechanism in the training, as presented in the score of 3.80. This is a positive indicator, as constructive feedback is crucial for learners to understand their strengths and things for improvement.

CONCLUSION

The investigation on the perception of Griya Sentana Hotel staff towards English Speaking Training reveals a positive result. The hotel staff as the participants of English speaking training admitted that the training provides good benefits for them. This could be seen from the participants' confidence in the application of English speaking skills in their daily work. Moreover, training material or handout make them feel more comfortable and easier to learn English speaking skills as it was very helpful and relevant to their jobs. The method applied in the training was suitable with the participants' needs. Role-play was chosen as the teaching method used in order to make the training more interesting and meaningful because it gives real hotel simulations and scenarios.

The mastery of English in the hospitality industry is undoubtedly a major need as it is not only used as a means of communication, but also a medium when doing guiding, service, and escort particularly with foreign tourists. A real concern and action regarding English learning and proficiency has to be taken because mastering English may impact on the growth of both employees, company and even country by granting access to more business opportunities and international trade expansion.

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