



The English Competencies of Tourism High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study was designed to investigate what are the competencies of tourism high school students in DKI Jakarta.

Methodology: There were 420 students of 21 tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta that participated in this study. Theoretical (study of theoretical literature and sources) and empirical methods of the research data obtaining methods (students and teachers' interviews, teachers and students questionnaire, and unstructured observation) and also both qualitative and quantitative data processing method were used in this study.

Main Findings: The result showed that the most needed skill to work in tourism industries is speaking skill. Students were expected to have good oral communication since it was useful when they had a job training program in real industry. They need more vocabularies which are in tourism terminology. However, the result of teachers' instruments indicated more than 75% English teachers focus on national examination which is mean that students learned more in reading rather than speaking. Teachers also followed a curriculum which is provided for all major of vocational high school. The curriculum compilers were not develop curriculum for each major. It means that the curriculum itself was in general ideas. The teachers should select and develop the appropriate materials for students' major.

Novelty/Originality of this study: It can be concluded that the tourism high school students need good oral communication by improving speaking and also listening skill to achieve both learning objective stated in Regulation Number 22 year 2006 and industry needs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of international languages. Most people use English to communicate with other people from other countries [1]. Science, technology, art, business and culture development cannot be separated to the role of this language [2]. To succeed in any field, the ability to share knowledge and to interact with other people is a concern [3]. For those reasons English has been taught at every level of education in Indonesia as the first foreign language.

Since English has become an urgent need in Indonesia as a means to develop Indonesian's quality, it is taught in any levels of schools. One of the school levels in Indonesia is vocational high school [4]. A vocational school (or trade school or career school), providing vocational education, is a school in which students are taught

skills needed to perform in a particular job [5], [6]. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocational_school). In Indonesia, vocational education is recognized in secondary program of education and it is called SMK (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan). Vocational high school provides special needs for students who will work directly after they finish their schools without higher education [7], [8]. It prepares students with some skills and competencies in order to be able to work in many kinds of businesses.

As an English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) student, the writer had experienced in teaching training program for about six months at Technical High School from August to December 2010. As a researcher, the writer noticed a phenomenon about the use of material chosen by the English teachers of that school, the way teachers taught and the result of student's score [9], [10]. The writer found the discrepancy between the materials used by the teacher and the competency needs of vocational students itself. English teachers commonly use materials which are stated in the curriculum. Most of the teachers there followed the rules of curriculum designed by ministry without trying to develop an appropriate material.

Moreover, few of them did not conduct their own syllabus and lesson plan. Teachers focused on materials which are put in the national examination. They did not focus on selective areas which are suitable to student's major; which should be taught [11], [12]. They even never ask the students; what expectations they want to achieve [13]. So, the students were only receiving all materials given by the teacher; without knowing the benefits of their study for their future. Some of the teachers were only teaching in the grammar area [14]. They almost never touched language function [15]. Moreover, their entire productive teachers were almost never trained the students to practice their materials in English. Therefore, the students' scores of English depend on the competencies based on the teachers' want and national examination problem instead of their future needs.

Based on the phenomenon found in that school, the writer then tries to compile a qualitative research to analyse the phenomenon which might also be found in other vocational schools. The writer decides to focus the subject of research on tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta. Tourism is one of majors that exist in vocational high school [16]. As one of the subjects that have been taught in vocational high school, English becomes an important subject which should be taught differently from that of a senior high school. English for Tourism is one of the elective subjects for high school students which teachers, students and others involved in the area can design the course to meet the local problems and needs.

Beside learning rules of grammar or practicing composition pieces, students should prepare themselves by reading a lot – especially on topics related to tourism and hospitality to become familiar with the concepts and vocabulary used in the study and practice these. Tourism graduates, like all graduates, need good English competencies in the workplace; such as in a hotel, travel agent, etc [17], [18]. This study investigates and describes the competencies of tourism high school student; what English competencies that tourism high school students should have in order to enter workplace. All language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and also language elements such as grammar, and vocabulary are also analyzed to give clearer result of this research [19]-[21]. The writer conducts a case study method to get the valid, reliable, and relevant data.

The writer gathers the data by spreading instruments to some tourism schools in DKI Jakarta. The writer would like to find out whether the English competencies of tourism high school student in DKI Jakarta are valid according to workplace and community needs. Interviews and Questionnaires bring about as a multiple instruments of this study. This study limits the investigation to the competencies of tourism high school students in DKI Jakarta for all levels of study in the tourism area. Furthermore, the findings might not be generalisable nor a representation of vocational high school students in general. It means that the use of different data sources might result in different findings since this study only has tourism high school students and English teacher as the subject of the study. Based on the question, the purpose of this study is to investigate and describe the English competencies of the tourism high school students in DKI Jakarta.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

As this study is to investigate and describe the English competencies of tourism high school students in DKI Jakarta, it can be categorized as mix methods; qualitative and quantitative method. In order to achieve the aims of this study, mixed methods were used in identifying the findings [22], [23]. Quantitative data was analyzed from a set of questionnaire [24], [25]. Whereas, qualitative data was analyzed from the interviews with the tourism students and English teachers. Viewed the phenomenon mentioned in the background, the writer conducts a case study.

The subjects of this study are students and English teachers of 21 tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta. There are approximately 400 students in all levels (X, XI, XII) of tourism high schools and also 21 English teachers involved in this study. The table presents the structure of sample for this study. Population as all members of well defined class of people, events or objects. In this case, the target population of the study was students of tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta.

Because of this is a small study, the samples of this research are chosen using purposive random sampling techniques that is choosing a number of units that will be examined which represent the English

competencies of tourism high school students. The writer then finds out there are 41 tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta according to direktorat pendidikan DKI Jakarta. Thus, the writer chooses 21 tourism high schools as the respondent of this research.

In order to build a clear picture thoroughly, the data of the English competencies of tourism high school students was collected through several techniques, such as; doing interview and delivering questionnaires (for teachers and students). Triangulation is intended to check out the consistency of the findings of those different data collection methods [26], [27]. In short, using triangulation will make the data consistence, complete, and accurate. Thus, triangulation makes the data stronger in validity and reliability. The writer constructs an open-ended question of interview protocol. It is also regarded more factual since the students are forced indirectly to give the explanation of what they have experienced in learning English. The writer compiles a close-ended questionnaire. The purpose is to convince the objectivity of the data which is taken from the students and English teachers of tourism high schools. The questionnaires will be spreading randomly to the students and English teachers of 21 tourism high schools in Jakarta in attempt to get the students and teachers' perspectives of English competencies.

This study is a kind of qualitative study. In qualitative research, the quality of instruments related to how the researcher collects data. Using content validity is useful to determine the correlation between the content instruments (list of questions in questionnaire) and the theories that help the writer conduct a relevant study. The content validity of this study is related to the appropriateness of the instruments and the purpose of the study; whether the numbers of the questions are interrelated. Face validity is an estimate of whether the instrument appears to measure a certain criterion; it does not guarantee that the instrument actually measures phenomena in that domain. Face validity of this study is measure on how the writers establish the instrument; the identity of respondent, instruction of questionnaire and interview, etc. Face validity is very closely related to content validity.

The definition of reliability in the qualitative research is quite different with quantitative research. According to qualitative research, one reality might have plural meaning, dynamic, and also inconsistency. It depends on personal needs. Thus, there will not a consistence data. In order to measure the consistency reliability of the qualitative data, the writer conducts a credibility test. There are 6 indicators of credibility test. 1. Long time observation. 2. Increase persistence 3. Triangulation 4. Discussion with partner 5. Analysis negative case 6. Member check And the writer uses the two of indicators of credibility test for this study; triangulation and peer discussion.

The writer conducts this study by doing some steps in order to get the relevant data of the English competencies of tourism high school student in DKI Jakarta: 1. Planning, in the first step of doing this study, the writer found out the case and determined data gathering and analysis techniques. In this session, the writer had been doing the discussions with her advisors to plan how the study would be conducted; 2. Designing research Instruments; 3. Collecting Data; 4. Classifying; 5. Analyzing

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion provides the study's results and findings. It includes in-depth discussions on data analysis, interpretation, and insights to effectively achieve the study's objectives. Additionally, it presents the cost and list of materials required for brochure production. Furthermore, a suggested framework for instructional brochure development has been incorporated based on the conduct and findings of this study.

The research was carried out at 21 tourism high schools in DKI Jakarta, while the subject of this research were the first, second and third grade of tourism high school students. The amount of the respondents is quite a lot. There are 420 students and 21 English teachers included in this study. The research was conducted to get data concerning the English competencies of tourism high school students in DKI Jakarta by using questionnaire and interview protocol. There were some questions including student's questionnaire and teacher's questionnaire. Each question represents the competencies for all language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing and also language elements; vocabulary and grammar in mastering English for tourism major. In addition, the data was also taken from interview. The interview was divided into 2 parts; student's interview and teacher's interview. The interview was taken from 5 students of each school. They were chosen randomly. The interview protocol or interview questions are about similar to the questionnaire given to the students and teachers. The purpose is to ensure the legitimacy of the data..

3.1. English Competencies of Tourism High School Students in DKI Jakarta

3.1.1. Listening Skill

The writer then tried out to stated question including those micro skills in the questionnaire. Below is the result of students' and teachers' answer about listening skill which is taken from questionnaire. Based on the information above, the numbers show the amount of respondents; students and English teachers who chose the option based on their experiences in learning language. The option a "menentukan ide pokok percakapan yang

didengar, contoh; memesan kamar hotel, memesan ticket, menangani tamu, dll” has been chosen as the most widely selected by tourism students and English teachers.

The students’ questionnaire result indicates 35% tourism students learned how to recognise key lexical items related to subject/topic. The teachers’ questionnaire result shows that 80.9% English teachers also chose option a “menentukan ide pokok percakapan yang didengar, contoh; memesan kamar hotel, memesan ticket, menangani tamu, dll”. It is quite appropriate to one of micro skills of listening and also competencies for tourism specialist (Institute for Tourism Studies, 2010) which have been achieved by language learners especially for tourism students. For instance, as a vocational high school student, one might find the key lexical items related to industry and hospitality such as acquire and summarize information from customers’ dialogue. Meanwhile, the option d “Menentukan tema dan pesan moral dari cerita dongeng, fabel, dan legenda,” has been the lowest option since only 13.5% students and 14.2% teachers chose option d. It indicates that option “d” is quite suitable for senior high school material rather than vocational high school. In addition, some English teachers said that the option d is related to one of genre text that is narrative which is taught for senior high school students. Therefore the teachers were guiding the students to learn what they should be learnt as a vocational students.

3.1.2. Speaking Skill

There are 9 micro skills that should be achieved by language learner. These sub skills had also been asked to the students stated in one of the questions in the questionnaire. Based on the information above, the respondents mostly chose option a “mempresentasikan cara kerja suatu alat.” The result shows that 37% tourism students learned one of micro skills of speaking; that is how to make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what they are saying. The students studied how to deal with presenting a topic or more. It is quite suitable to the basic competence of intermediate level which mentions “presenting reports.” The teachers’ questionnaire result also shows that 85.7% English teacher chose option “a”.

Unfortunately, the topic chosen by students and teachers is quite unsuitable to the competencies for tourism specialist stated in Institute for Tourism Studies, (2010); that is to speak with authority and clarity to an audience on topics related to tourism and hospitality. . The option a “mempresentasikan cara kerja suatu alat” would mostly be used by technical students rather than tourism students. The respondents’ result indicates that the students were quite unclear about the objectives of materials they have learned. Teachers mostly taught materials which are stated in the curriculum and syllabus they had. Teachers mainly focus on the national examination. Most of teachers had similar opinion about teaching topics which should be relevant to the national examination that also been explained in the curriculum.

The writer then got additional information from teachers’ interview when they were asked this following question:

Q : how do you emphasize the delivery of material in English to the students? whether in general (general English) or or specific? Please explain it.

A : I put more emphasis in general English. Despite the fact that English is being taught to students of vocational indeed must be more specific than the high school in general; because the student should be able to use English in person to face the working world. Nevertheless, since the focus of the ultimate goal of learning is that students should also be able to pass the national exams, thus teachers should also focus on teaching materials that will be out on the national examination

Based on the teachers’ interview result above, the teachers admitted that they teach English as General English. Moreover some teachers said that their responsibility was to teach English to face the national examination rather than to face work field. They conveyed that responsibility to teach professional competencies was on the productive teachers, for instance front office and house keeping teacher. Even though, the option a “mempresentasikan cara kerja suatu alat” is listed in basic competence for level intermediate of vocational high school curriculum that is “understanding the use of manual equipment,” every teacher should select the most suitable topic to develop material which related to students’ major. For example, students should be able in presenting the facilities of hotels, resorts, or interesting places that can be visited by the 36 tourists. The option b “mempresentasikan pemasaran tempat wisata,” option f “Menjelaskan tempat – tempat yang ada di brosur,” option h “Memberikan informasi tentang arah (direction),” option i “Merekomendasikan tempat yang menarik untuk dikunjungi,” and option j “Memberikan informasi tentang jadwal perjalanan” are the options which appropriate to the competencies for tourism specialist stated in Institute for Tourism Studies (2010); that is to solve problems for customers, colleagues and contacts. It should be chosen more than the option a since they are tourism major. Besides, tourism major especially will likely often face the foreigners or tourist as their customers and also job partners.

They mainly sell services rather than products. Here is some interview result of students expectation of learning English as a tourism major :

Q : as a tourism high school students, what is the desire and hope for your future after graduation?

A : as a tourism high school students of course I want to have a job in a hotel; whether become a hotel manager, receptionist, even room boy/room girl. However, I want to have my own hotel. In order to actualize my

wants, I have to be able to master English, especially in conversation or speaking. I got my experienced when I had job training program in a hotel. There, I met many guests who came from various countries. They certainly used English as their daily language. They asked many question, for instance how to get laundry service, how to order food, even how to get to the restaurant of the hotel. I realized that my English is not good enough, so that my senior and manager of the hotel had helped me a lot. After finishing my job training program, I expect myself to improve my English in order to get a successful career.

Thus, speaking skill is the most essential skill for them. So that, they have to master the oral communication competence in order to communicate to their customers or job partners.

3.1.3. Reading Skill

There are two sub-skills of reading; scanning and skimming. Both sub-skills were asked to the students in each option of questionnaire. According to the result above, 29,7% tourism students and 90.4% English teachers chose option a “menentukan isi pesan surat pemesanan dan pembatalan barang” as the most option. Related to sub-skills of reading by (Richards, 1992)., it means that students mostly learned how to get the main idea or ideas from a passage; that is skimming. As tourism major, students should master both of sub-skills; scanning and skimming. For instance, students might find the discourse related to resorts of places which might be provide detail information of the price, time, and facilities included the places. It was mentioned in Institute for Tourism Studies (2010), the reading competency of tourism specialist is to read, understand, digest, and utilize standard reference material to a high level of sophistication relating to the tourism and hospitality industries. Thus, tourism students especially should be able not only to get the main ideas from passage but also to figure out the detail information of the discourse (scanning). There was an additional information gathered from students’ interview :

Q : are there productive subjects which use English as daily conversation of the classroom context and also used for study the materials?

A : yes, there are some productive subjects using English both in conversation during classroom context and also for learning the materials. For example, in front office subject we had a role play a reservation room. Some of the students became receptionists, room boys, and guests. We learned how to fill the registration form. In housekeeping subject, we learned how to explain the facilities in a room or even hotel. We must know all equipments in a room in English. And in food and beverage service subject, we learned the menu which might exist in a restaurant of a hotel. What are the names of the food and drink, how to cook them, and also the materials and tools of kitchenettes.

According to the additional information above, the needs of tourism students in case reading skill are to face the industry duties, for example reading the registration form of a reservation, reading the menu and receipt, etc. Whereas the option c “membaca nyaring cerita dongeng, fable, dan legenda” in teachers’ questionnaire and option d “membaca nyaring cerita dongeng, fable, dan legenda” in students’ questionnaire had been the lowest option which was chosen by the teacher and students. There were only 9,2% teachers and 15.4% students who chose option “membaca nyaring cerita dongeng, fable, dan legenda.” Similar to listening skill, in learning skill the option “membaca nyaring cerita dongeng, fable, dan legenda” is unsuitable to vocational high school students. It is more useful for senior high school. And the option e “Memahami isi brosur tempat wisata dan hotel” and option f “Memahami istilah-istilah dalam buku panduan perjalanan (travel)” are the suitable choices to be chosen in order to be able to master scanning reading since they are tourism students.

3.1.4 Writing Skill

The next basic skill of language is writing skill. All four skills have their own micro skills. There are 9 micro skills of writing. Most of micro skills of writing needed for tourism students were asked in the questionnaire. Based on the result above, 35.4% students chose c “menulis surat pribadi” and j “menulis karangan tentang pengalaman pribadi / kegiatan sehari-hari.” The highest result indicates that in learning sub skills of writing, tourism students learned how to make the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader and how to make the main ideas distinct from supporting ideas or information. Nevertheless, it was quite unsuitable to writing competencies for tourism specialist stated in Institute for Tourism Studies, (2010) that is; they should be able to write, compose and originate substantial documents and correspondence relating to the tourism and hospitality industries; it means that students should be able to differentiate between general vocabulary and technical vocabulary which mostly used in different context and discourse. The option c and j were not directly stated in all level of basic competence and also would not appropriate for their future job. This following interview result can be added as supporting information gathered from students :

Q: in order to learn writing skills, what materials are usually being taught by your teacher and how to study?

A : I actually quite seldom learn writing skill in the classroom. The most common ways in learning writing in my class are writing a dialogue and practice in front of the class, answering a comprehension question based on a text, or even making a short story about holiday or experiences.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that students were not exactly understand what skills that they have to achieve in learning writing skill, especially for their jobs in the future. They must not only able to make a dialogue, but also to do some writing activities. Even though speaking skill is the most essential skill for tourism major, they also should be able to do some writing activities that are useful for the job, for instance making brochure, writing menu in a restaurant, filling a registration form, etc. Comparing to teachers' questionnaire result, 80.9% teachers were chose option L "membuat percakapan singkat tentang reservation, booking hotel, dll." It is quite appropriate to competencies for tourism specialist stated in Institute for Tourism Studies, (2010) that is; write, compose and originate substantial documents and correspondence relating to the tourism and hospitality industries. However, the result from teachers was really different to the fact that students had.

3.1.5 Vocabulary and Grammar

Mastering language is not merely master the language skills but also language elements; that are vocabulary and grammar. The most familiar wise word above means that vocabulary and grammar are the important parts of learning language. Before studying all the language skills, one must be having vocabularies in his/her mind. In this study, the writer asked simple questions to the students stated in the questionnaire.

Based on the information of vocabulary question above, the result then indicates 50,2% students and 76.1% English teachers chose option b "guru meminta saya mencari artinya melalui kamus." It means that most tourism high school teachers trained students to learn technical vocabulary which is related to their major by finding the meaning in dictionary.

The result means 48% tourism students chose option a "mengidentifikasi struktur bahasa yang terdapat pada brosur hotel/tempat wisata" and option e "berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan tata bahasa yang tepat." The option "a" is quite suitable to student's major since they might work as a marketing of a hotel. And the option e is the most desired by most language learners. Those options chosen by students show that student saw grammar as its function which is suitable to their needs in the future. Meanwhile, the English teachers chose option c "mengerjakan soal-soal grammar yang terdapat pada buku TOEIC / TOEFL" as the most option since they are focusing on national examination and or passing standard from ministry of education.

The interview was conducted to add and support the information of questionnaire given to the students. All the questions were basically ensuring student's answer in the questionnaire. The interview was taken from 5 students of each school. They were chosen randomly. The question came up with the wants and needs of the students. Most of interviewee said that they like and need English as it is an international language and widely used everywhere, especially for their jobs in the future. English is so important since they are prepared to face the industry directly rather than continuing school. Tourism students need English to communicate to their partner, boss, customer, tourist, etc. The next question which is function as additional information is whether their schools provide productive subjects which is using English regularly as their officially language in classroom context. Most students said there are some productive subjects in which use English as daily communication; such as front office, house keeping, food & beverage, kitchen service, etc. As their explanation, those subjects were useful to help them learning English as their major rather than English subject itself.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on analysis result, the writer comes to conclusion that most of vocational high school students especially tourism major needs to achieve their professional competence, communication competence by improving language skills and also language elements especially speaking. According to the result both from questionnaire and interview protocol, tourism high school students need more English for specific purpose rather than general English since they are trained to be service officer such as tour guide, waitress, receptionist, etc. The competencies that are required by the industries will determine the professional and communicative competencies that students must have. For the next researchers, the writer suggests to do similar but deeper investigation study of competencies for different major of vocational high school. It is also possible to conduct this kind of research in broader context that is outside Jakarta since the result may indicate different perception of students and English teachers.

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