

Understanding English Communicative Competence in Health Vocational High Schools through English Proficiency Test

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia must prepare the high-skill categories-needs for every aspect. One of the aspects is the ability to compete in this era, the ability to communicate with others. Indonesian needs English communicative skill to face the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The aims of the study are to understand Vocational High Schools students' English communicative competence and to understand the teaching method on Improving English Communicative competence for Health Vocational High Schools. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The study used an English Proficiency Test (EPT) to know the result of the study, the populations are 552 students from 6 schools in Central Java. The results of the study are the students' English Communicative competence is still on score 186-250 (Memorized Proficiency). The teachers have applied many methods to improve the English Communicative competence, most of them applied Discovery Learning Method.

KEYWORDS:

Communicative competence, english proficiency, vocational high school.

Introduction

Rabeh Morrar, Husam Arman (2018) state that industrial revolution brings benefit, opportunities and challenges to the socioeconomic status of countries around the world. The Industrial revolution can increase economic growth, productivity, and advanced welfare if the countries can obtain the positive impact. In the era, many industries use automatic operations and connectivity in many segments that cause job losses and cybercrime. Moreover, Ślusarczyk (2018) explained that the industrial revolution 4.0 relates to all fields of life, and it processes and commercializes the exchange of information. It exchanges information between

people, information between people and objects and also information between objects themselves.

Paprocki (2016) in Ślusarczyk (2018) added that there are three important points in the 4th Industrial Revolution era is (1) an era of common digitization and ensuring constant communication, (2) an era of disruptive innovations, (3) and an era of development of autonomous machines and the use of artificial intelligence in the process of their control. Rodliyah (2018) explained that the rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought about some changes in almost all aspects of our life, including education in general and ELT in particular. While Chun, Kern, & Smith in Rodliyah (2018) added that this is because technology offers easy access to different people, languages, cultures, and social practices. The importance of English Communicative Competence is stated by Rickheit and Strohner in Rochim (2019) that the ability to reach people goals in social life depends on their communicative competence. It means that people communication is important and people must have competence to be communicative. In this case, the ability to communicate using English is necessary for English learners to compete in this modern era.

Kermode in Ting, Marzuki, Chuah, Misieng, & Jerome (2017) stated that one of the high unemployment rate among graduates is because of their lack of English proficiency and communication skills. Graduates who have good communication skills in the workplace context can transmit and receive information clearly, and read comprehensibly to avoid and resolve conflicts. Astawa, Mantra, & Widiastuti stated The ability of the students to perform communicatively is essential to do due to the fact that we can only compete in the era of globalization if we have high ability English (2017). Mahbub (2015) stated that the government regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 29 of 1990 concerning secondary education, chapter I general provisions, article 1 (3), implies that vocational education should focus on the development of students' skills in specific field. In article 3 (2), it is clearly stated that vocational education should give the priority to prepare vocational high school students to enter the workplace and developing professional behavior.

Indonesian English is still a foreign language that's why students still find difficulties on studying the language. They think that English is difficult subject,

actually they have studied the language since they were at Elementary School. They are still passive English users but they are good listeners. English Communication is one of the needed skills for Indonesian graduation because the market needs the skill for facing the era. Improving students' communicative competence is not an easy thing for lecturers or teachers although they have done many researches on special methods, technique and style to improve students' communicative competence, the competence of Indonesian university graduation is still poor in English communicative competence. Based on the explanation above the problem statement of this research is: how is English Communicative competence in Health Vocational High School? The aims of the study are to understand Vocational High Schools students' English communicative competence and to understand the teaching method on Improving English Communicative competence in Health Vocational High Schools.

English language

According to Mahbub (2009) language is a means of communication. It varies in two forms, oral and written communication, oral a between the speaker and the hearer in transforming ideas for reaching the goal of communication. Oral language is commonly assumed as the productive skill of language.

Zainollah (2015) adds that "English is international language. It is used by many people in the world as means of communication. It is also widely used in various fields, from mass-media to scientific field. As one of the major languages in the world, English is significant in international relation and used as media of communication among countries in international relationship. Today rapid technological development inevitably makes English more important".

Communication Competence

Josée Bloemer, Mark Pluymaekers (2013) said that "We define communicative competence as the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively in foreign languages and to convey information in a manner that is easily understood by foreign customers"

Sipra (2013) stated that the importance thing in English language teaching is communicative competence because achieving communicative competence in a second language is both learning the grammatical rules of a language and learning when, where, and with whom to use the language in a contextually appropriate way. This needs more than knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary; it is about how to use English in communicative situations. Communicative competent person will know how to do things in English, for example purchasing something, selling something, convincing someone and expressing personal feelings. He will also know how to speak formally and informal language styles. There are some scholars had adopted Hymes's opinion about Communicative Competence such as Hymes in Cetinavci (2012) stated that the term communicative competence is the knowledge of both rules of grammar and rules of language use. Hymes in Saleh (2013) explained that communicative competence is a level of language learning that the language users can deliver their messages to others and understand others' messages within specific contexts.

Cetinavci (2012) added that there are several researches that have developed the specific components of communicative competence. The specific components are (1) grammatical competence, it is the knowledge of the language code in a way that refers to sociolinguistic competence. (2) Sociolinguistic competence is language learners' knowledge about the sociocultural rules when the language used. (3) Strategic competence is a (i.e. communication strategies in communication. (4) Discourse competence is understanding a spoken or written text. (5) Pragmatic competence is essentially included in this model under sociolinguistic competence. Larsari (2011) stated that the Communicative Language Teaching approach is learners' ability to express their ideas efficiently in the target language and they can communicate successfully in real-life situations.

Canale & Swain in Saleh (2013) added that communicative competence was Hymes' ideas that was later developed by Canale and Swain in 1980 who introduced a 'communicative competence' theory. There are two concepts of communicative competence; they are the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or understanding the rules of grammar, and

sociolinguistic competence, or understanding the rules of language use". Saleh (2013) explained that communicative competence based on Canale and Swain's model has three domains of knowledge and skills. The three domains are 'grammatical competence', 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'strategic competence'. Grammatical competence is the learners understanding of sentence formation and vocabulary. Sociolinguistic competence is the learners understanding and ability to apply the language in different social contexts. While Strategic competence is the ability communicate the goals of the communication effectively.

English Teaching Method

Agbatogun (2014) stated that Second language (L2) learning needs to use the target language in interaction among the learners, and needs their active participation in authentic context. It means that the learners do not only study about the theory but also study how to practice in a more authentic context. Emerson & Taylor; Johnson in Agbatogun (2014) added that different strategies influence the improvement of the students' success in learning language. Students' active engagement in the classroom can influence the students' academic performance positively. Clawson & Haskins in Rifandi (2013) said that there are 7 major factors that influence the teaching learning effectiveness, they are: culture in the institution, kinds of programs, facilities, media, teachers, and methods.

Arends in Wahyuni, and Basri (2014) stated that "Teacher needs many approaches to meet their goals with a diverse population of students. A single approach or method is no longer adequate. With sufficient choices, teacher can select the approach that best achieves a particular class of students, or the models that can be used to promote the students' motivation, involvement and achievement". Communicative language teaching approach requires that the teaching of English should enable students to master the communicative competence. Consequently, the objective of language teaching is to develop students' communicative competence. Communicative competence is the competence which enables students to transmit and interpret messages and give

meanings in the interaction between individuals in a specific context (Astawa et al., 2017).

Method

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The study used an English Proficiency Test to know the result of the study: the researchers tested the participants using English Proficiency Test. In this research, the populations of the research are the third grades of Health Vocational High Schools at Internusa Institution in Central Java, there are 552 students. There are 6 Health Vocational High Schools, the schools are: School A (a school in Surakarta), School B (a school in Magelang), School C (a School in Klaten), School D and E (2 schools in Sukoharjo), and School F (a school in Sragen). The researchers used two steps to know the English Communicative Competence of Health Vocational High Schools graduates, the steps are: test the students by using English Proficiency Test and interview the English teachers. There are 14 teachers from 6 schools.

Result

To know the English communicative competence, the researchers tested all of the populations using English Proficiency Test. English Proficiency Test. There are six test results categories: score 905-990 as an International Proficiency category, score 785-900 as a Working Proficiency Plus category, score 605-789 as a Limited Working Proficiency category, score 405-600 as an Elementary Proficiency Plus category, score 255- 400 as an Elementary Proficiency category, score 186-250 as a Memorized Proficiency category, and score 10-180 as a No Useful Proficiency category. The results of the test are:

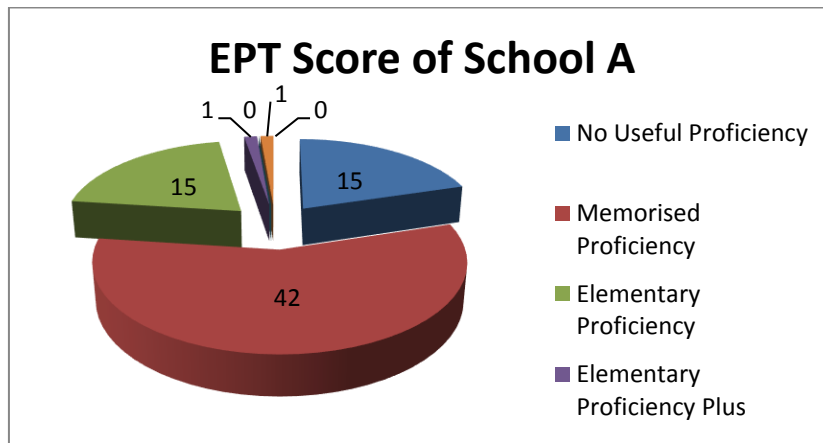


Figure 1: EPT Score of School A

The school has 74 students, there are 15 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 42 students who get Memorized Proficiency, there are 15 students who get Elementary Proficiency, there is a student who gets Elementary Proficiency Plus and there is a students who gets Working Proficiency plus.

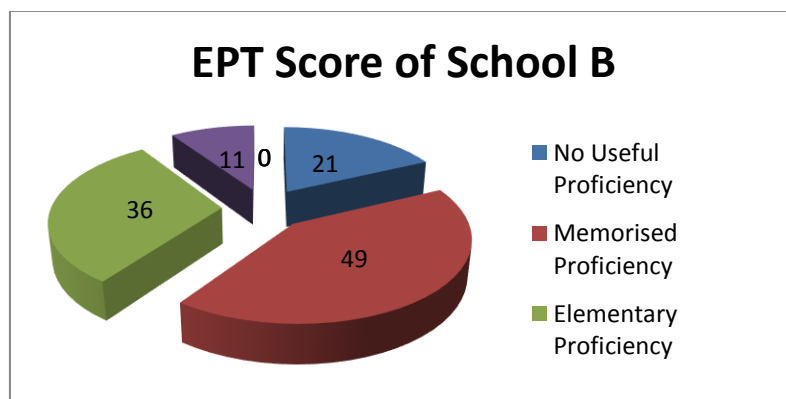


Figure 2: EPT Score of School B

The students who join the test are 117 students and their English Proficiency is: there are 21 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 49 students who get Memorized Proficiency, there are 36 students who get Elementary Proficiency, and there are 11 students who get Elementary Proficiency Plus.

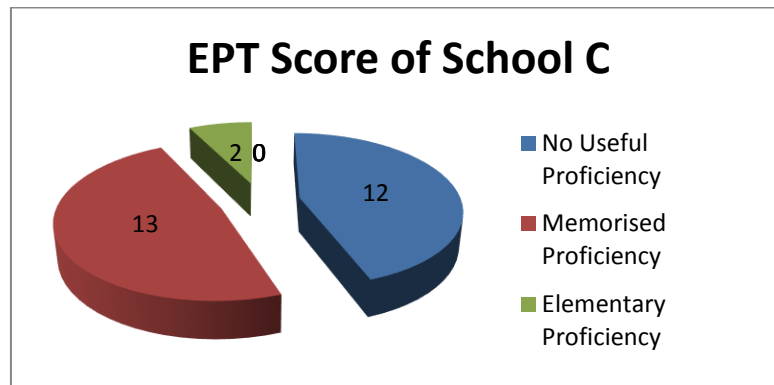


Figure 3: EPT Score of School C

It is a boarding school and for the third grade there are 27 students, and their English Proficiency is: there are 12 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 13 students who get Memorized Proficiency, and there are 2 students who get Elementary Proficiency.

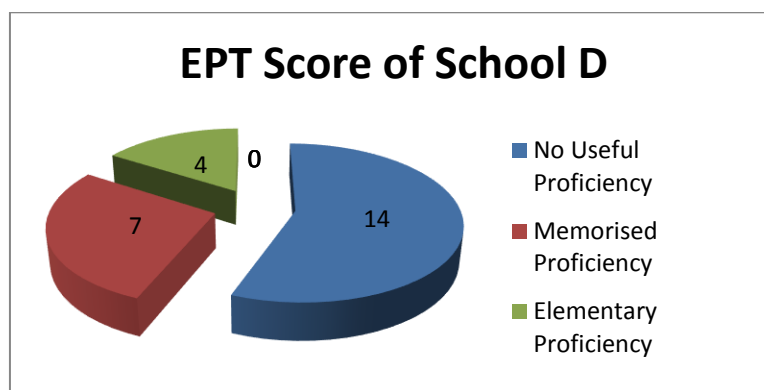


Figure 4: EPT Score of School D

The school has 25 students, there are 14 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 7 students who get Memorized Proficiency, and there are 3 students who get Elementary Proficiency.

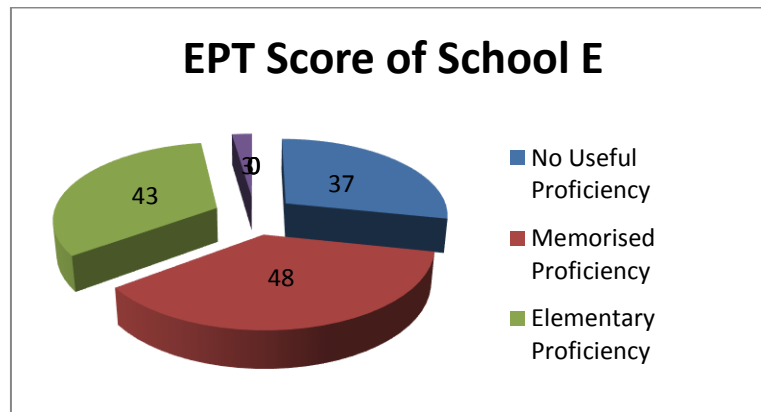


Figure 5: EPT Score of School E

The school has 158 students, there are 37 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 48 students who get Memorized Proficiency, there are 43 students who get Elementary Proficiency, and there are 30 students who get Elementary Proficiency Plus. The school has 151 students, there are 46 students who get No Useful Proficiency, there are 55 students who get Memorized Proficiency, there are 30 students who get Elementary Proficiency, and there are 20 students who get Elementary Proficiency Plus. The data results showed that there are 552 students from 6 schools, there are 214 students have Memorized Proficiency, 145 students have No Useful Proficiency, 130 students have Elementary Proficiency, 17 students have Elementary Proficiency Plus and 1 student has Working Proficiency plus. It means that most of the students' English Communicative competence is still on score 186-250 (Memorized Proficiency). Thus, the first research question of the study is verified.

Discussion

Sipra (2013) stated that the importance thing in English language teaching is communicative competence because achieving communicative competence in a second language is both learning the grammatical rules of a language and learning when, where, and with whom to use the language in a contextually appropriate way. In the Communicative Approach, Language is a set for the expression of meaning: primary function-interaction and communication, and the Activities involving real communication: carrying out meaningful tasks: and using language which is meaningful to the learners promotes learning. While in Community Language

Learning, Language is more than a system for communication. It involves whole person, culture, educational, developmental, communicative processes. The Learning in Community Language Learning involves the whole person. It is a social process of growth from child-like dependence to self-direction and independence.

Based on the result of the study, the average EPT score of students is still on score 186-250 (Memorized Proficiency), and according to International Center for Language Studies in *icis.edu*, Memorized Proficiency means that the students are able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances, sufficient comprehension to understand memorized utterances in areas of immediate needs, unable to read connected prose but may able to read numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations. In the study, based on the observation and interview, the functional aspects that influences communicative competence are (1) Discourse competence because the students still focus on studying grammar and they are not able to associate a range of sentences in discourse to form a whole meaning of utterances series and everything from simple conversation to written texts at length and (2) Sociolinguistic Competence because it is related to an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the role of participants, the information they share and the interaction function

Moreover, the interview with the English teachers shows that each school has some teachers who are competent in English. School A has 2 English teachers, school B has 3 English teachers, school C has 2 English teachers, school D has 2 English teachers, school E has 3 English teachers and school F has 4 English teachers. They have already prepared and discussed the material and the teaching methods to improve the students' English competence since the students were in the first grade. They join some workshop and they have Forum Group Discussion to improve their knowledge as well. The interviews' result is School A has 2 English teachers and they apply mostly on "Discovery Learning", the method focuses on how to make the students more active by discovering, searching and making generalizations by themselves. The phases of the learning process are: stimulation, problem statement (problem identification), data collecting, data processing, verification, generalization (conclusion). School B has 3 English

teachers, and the methods for teaching English are role play, demonstration, PLB (Problem based Learning), Discovery learning, discussion, presentation, head to head and games. They said it depends on the material. School C has 2 English teachers, and the apply role play and dscussion methods for teaching English. School D has 2 English teachers, and the apply discovery learning and PLB (Problem based Learning) methods for teaching English.

School E has 3 English teachers, the teachers focus on each grade that they teach. The teacher in the first grade focuses on grammar and speaking ability, the second grade focuses on reading and memorizing vocabularies and in the third grade focuses on reaching high score on national Final Test, what we call UN. The teachers focus on guiding the student on how to do the test and memorizing vocabulary that can support the test. School F has 4 English teachers, and the apply some methods for teaching English, the methods are TAI (Team assisted Individually), TPS (Think Pair Share), Role playing, Direct Method, Experience task, Discovery learning and Genre Based Learning. They divided the method based on each grade and each purpose . The situation is like what Ruwandi (2011) explained about the ways to determine the teaching English method: (1) the learners' necessity, (2). the language-learning target, (3). Teachers should consider the way of achievement of the subject matter, (4). the fusion between linguistics and psychology

Conclusion

Although the English teachers of vocational High Schools in Internusa Institution has applied good methods on teaching English Communicative competence, the score of students' English Communicative competence is still on score 186-250 (Memorized Proficiency). Actually, English communicative competence must be the first target for the English teachers at the Health vocational High Schools but the purpose cannot be achieved well because the teachers focus on preparing the students to get or to pass government final test.

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