
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR SHOPEE VENDORS**Fenny Feronica¹, Kasianus Yoga Prianto², Yeni Natasari³, Windy⁴**

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Having excellent communication ability is required to enter the global market. In order to step in, English as an international language is needed as the primary means of worldwide communication tool. Shopee as an online market including Shopee vendors are crucial to have the effective communication to step in into the worldwide market. The research is aimed to find out the significance of English communication skill is for Shopee vendors. The research also purposes to search ways to face the global challenges and to examine the impact of English communication skill towards business in the global market. The main purpose of the research is to know the perception toward the significance of English communication skills especially in the transaction process in Shopee. The research is conducted in qualitative method with the data collected through questionnaire by using Google form. 60 samples are involved in this research and English as a communication tool is important to help develop and expand the marketing to reach the global market.

Keywords: *communication skill, international language, English, Shopee, significance*

Introduction

Communication becomes essential for people because they use the communication as a part of their lives. People communicate for exchanging information, messages, and ideas. No one can deny that communication is really important in life. As well as effective communication becomes important as it plays a crucial role in gaining success in any business. In other words, by having effective communication, success will be gained in any business. And to have effective communication, a language is needed.

As mentioned before, language plays a crucial role in communication as well as in running a business. Language takes an important role to bridge people, to become a media in human interactions (Windy et al, 2022). English as one of the international languages is widely used by people to ease their jobs, not to mention in running business as well (Windy, 2022). In other words, English has become a handy language to connect people who are from different countries or even background to meet, talk, and do business. English is chosen for it is not only an international language in the world. English is one of the 10 most spoken languages and among 6,000 languages in the world (Kenneally, 2007). Thus, there is no doubt that having great or effective communication means is having English as the communication tool in running a business.

After knowing that English has a crucial role in running or doing a business, we might come to one point that English is a must language to study for running a business. However, learning a language means learning other aspects of the language itself. Other aspects of a language include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Those four basic skills needed for having effective communication (Sadiku, 2015).

Communicating by using English means using English as the tool to communicate. Communication itself is the act of delivering information that contains the meaning of one party to another party to achieve mutual understanding (Wursanto, 2001). In short, communication is a process of exchanging thoughts and information in social activity such as conversation and interaction. Meanwhile, Brown and Atkins (2002) stated that there are some abilities namely listening, explaining, questioning, and responding that support communication.

Moreover, McPheat (2010) confirmed that having communication skills enables us to remove the obstacles for having effective communication. Obstacles can cause difficulties for people to have effective communication since it might lead to miscommunication. In conclusion, mastering communication skills enables us to have more effective communication. It also avoids us from having obstacles in communication especially communicating using English. Imagine someone who is from another country, doing or running a business with someone else from another country. They might have obstacles to solve in which the language they have to use in having effective communication. Therefore, a lingua franca is needed here, and English is the solution to bridge the gap of communication.

Running a business means providing someone's needs. It has become human's basic needs that they always need something in their lives. Some basic needs, namely clothing, food, and shelter have become the essential things to be fulfilled. Therefore, by doing or running a business, those basic needs might be provided. And to obtain those needs, the activity of shopping is born. Shopping is an activity in the form of buying and selling transactions to obtain goods and services. Nonetheless, the transaction made in a business has drastically changed over years, from offline to online, from the conventional to digital. One of the conventional shopping activities is visiting goods and service stores. Meanwhile, the rapid development of technology has allowed humans to do shopping without visiting the shops through digital transaction or e-commerce. The digital transaction or e-commerce is the activity of buying and selling using digital media (Ferrera & Kessedjian, 2019). Therefore, people can do shopping with the help of the internet, which makes people easier in doing it.

E-Commerce becomes very popular especially during and after pandemic. According to the table shown by Alcedo et al (2022), e-commerce reached its highest peak during pandemic. Moreover, e-commerce grows rapidly in Indonesia after pandemic. When the pandemic hit in 2020, we were made to stay at home for our safety while we kept doing activities to fulfill our daily needs, both materially (working) or in consumption (buying). There, online shopping became an alternative option for us to fulfill our needs. It is still happening now that e-commerce has become one of the options although the pandemic has been over. And one of the famous online shopping platforms that is used nowadays is Shopee.

Shopee is a popular online platform for shopping that exists in various countries. Shopee runs on mobile platform and simplify people to browse, purchase, and list items through their cell phones. For its ease, more people choose online businesses to conduct buying and selling goods and services locally even also internationally. By running a business internationally, effective communication should be mastered in gaining success in business. It means language that is considered understood by most people in the world for its international language needs to be mastered. This phenomenon raises some questions which are: if the Shopee vendors ready or not with the role of English communication skills in the transactions on this platform. Also, to see how significance English is towards the communication skills especially to Shopee vendors, strategies of English communication skills to deal with global market, and how English communication skills affect business in global market.

Theoretical Review

Communication is a process that requires comprehension, mutual exchange, and significance. The act of exchanging information, thoughts, or creativity among two or more

people or entities. Barker (2010) stated that communication is the process of sending and receiving information. Therefore, we are able to both receive and transmit information simultaneously through communication.

There are several types of communication, namely internal communication and external communication. Internal communication as the name it is referred to, as a means of describing and explaining organizations (Deetz, 2001). It is a vital communication since it covers the process when employees exchange information, establish connections, interpret messages, and shape the culture and values of the organization. In addition, Berger (2008) claimed that internal communication is a crucial and leading activity in organizations due to its significance.

Meanwhile, external communication is an important key in running a business. Creating brand image and identity is essential. Saunders (1999) argues that effective business practices lead to positive external communication. In other words, as companies develop and reward the habits of excellence, effective communication is increasing as well.

When a Shopee vendor started to step in into a global market, it is undeniable that effective communication is required urgently. When someone is committed to enter the global market, it means pursuing global opportunities and responding to environmental threats in the global marketplace (Keegan & Green, 2017).

Besides what have been mentioned earlier, having some strategies will benefit those who are stepping in into global marketing. According to Simbolon (2013), there are two approaches in global marketing strategies, namely standard marketing strategy and strategy marketing. These two approaches are related to the situation of the country where the company does the marketing.

Lupi (2016) stated that online shopping or e-commerce is a way to do transactions through the internet where the websites provide goods, services, and delivery services. E-commerce becomes popular since it is profitable, time saving, and it does not need a big or a lot of capital to start the business. The vendors (online vendors) do some promotions of what they are selling, goods or services. This e-commerce provides delivery which makes it easier for the customers to get the goods without having to go out and buy. Some of the popular e-commerce in Indonesia are Shopee, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Lazada, Blibli, and others.

Shopee is one of the most popular online shopping platforms or e-commerce in Indonesia. The platform was first launched in Singapore in 2015 and it has expanded to some other Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, and Indonesia. It is a part of Sea Group which has been also expanded out of Asian regions, Taiwan.

CEO of Shopee, Chris Feng stated that Shopee will give a different experience that integrates the use of social media and online shopping media, by supporting interaction between the consumers and the vendors through live chat, social sharing, and hashtags. Those are done in the aim of making it easier for consumers to browse any products and convenient in using the platform.

Shopee, which has managed to maintain its first position as top e-commerce for 10 consecutive quarters based on the average number of site visitors monthly (Sadewo & Baktiono, 2020), has become popular for several reasons. One of the reasons is discounts given, guaranteed original products, more cashback, variety of products, and free delivery programs. Kangean and Rusdi (2020) added that Shopee is one of the e-commerce companies that provides online transactions (buying and selling) which include various kinds of goods and services. Shopee has become an e-commerce platform that is not only popular to buyers, but also to sellers (vendors).

There are some ways to become a vendor or sell something on Shopee. Please make sure that the application (Shopee) has been downloaded. Tanoyo (2018) even mentioned some steps that make Shopee orders will run smoothly. First step is having a store in Shopee and products to sell. Second step is to understand the Customer Journey at Shopee. Tanoyo (2018) mentioned that Customer Journey is the buyer's journey to seek for the products, either from

the search box or from a flash sale page. The third step is to let the buyers choose the products. Some buyers are not looking for the cheapest price of a product. Instead of looking for the cheapest price, they prefer to look for the quality and service the shops offer. The fourth is the name of the product. According to Tanoyo (2018), some factors that attract the buyers to buy are product's brand, product's function, product's efficacy, product's benefits, product's series, and product's specifications. Fifth is put some unique or interesting pictures. Sixth is giving the description of the product. Seventh, have a neat and professional look of shop display. Eighth is to use some promo features. Step ninth is to promote the products. Step tenth, use Shopee ads to help in promoting. And lastly is to combine from other platforms such as Instagram, and Facebook.

Methodology

This research applies a qualitative approach in which the writers investigate, discover, describe, and explain the quality of features of social influences that cannot be explained, measured, or described through a quantitative (Saryono, 2010). Furthermore, Sugiyono (2011) stated that qualitative research is more appropriate to examine the condition of natural objects whereas the results emphasize meaning more than just a generalization.

The writers take the sample and population that are accessible. The population of the research is the Shopee vendors (sellers), and buyers and the sample are 60 respondents. The tool used to collect the data is the samples are asked to fill out questionnaires. The writers use questionnaires as the step to get the answers to be hypothesized. Creswell (2012) stated that obtaining data is a step that needs to be done in order to answer and have a hypothesis of the research. The questionnaires consist of some questions asking mostly on the significance of English in their opinion especially in reaching the global market.

The questionnaires are shared to the respondents (Shopee sellers and vendors) through google form. The respondents answer the questionnaires by clicking the options provided. After gathering the data of respondents' answers, the writers started to analyze by using the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Figure 1. The formula

\bar{x} = mean

X = raw score

Σ = sum of

N = number of respondents

Findings and Discussion

After analyzing the data collected from 60 respondents who answered the questionnaires, the writers determined the average perception value of respondents into several categories. The categories are determined by whom who select very important, not important, or less important. The average score is 85.3% of respondents who chose very important, 13% of respondents who chose for less important factors, and 1.7% of respondents who thought or considered not important. According to the data collected, it appears that individuals who use English as a language and it is a bridge to access the international market are at "high" level.

To be specific, there were 37 respondents (61.7%) for sellers and 23 respondents (38.3%) which means there were more sellers (vendors) than buyers who filled out the questionnaire.

Meanwhile, 56 respondents (93.3%) agree that Shopee is a great place to sell although they also mentioned that the fee is quite high. It indicates that Shopee has become a great place to sell or to promote the products, but they also have to pay the fee as the regulation set by Shopee. They think the fee is quite high for them to pay. In another side, 2 respondents (3.3%) thought that Shopee is moderately helpful.

Some respondents agree that the use of English is significant for the users, vendors (sellers) and buyers (consumers). On the matter of the significance of English language being used, 47 respondents (78.3%) agree that it is important of having English to be used for users (both vendors and buyers). However, there are 2 respondents thought that communicating in English is not really necessary since the market is still local. It can be said that these respondents do not have a willingness to expand further their business, especially to overseas where anything can happen, which might become something success.

Related to the previous question, 47 respondents (78.3%) are aware that use English is important in the process of transaction. Meanwhile, 13 respondents (21.7%) thought that English is less important in the process of transaction. Moreover, 55 respondents agree that the mastery of English is helpful in the transaction process to reach the global market. 4 respondents feel it is less helpful (6.7%) and 1 person (1.7%) feel it is not helpful at all for mastering English. When someone masters English, transaction by using English, even he is a vendor or a buyer, English is handy at that time. By using English as the bridge language, it helps the transaction process runs smoother for there is no problem related to the gap communication.

16 respondents (26.6%) selected understanding consumer needs as the preferred strategy. 8 respondents (13%) chose to understand the target market strategy, while only 5 (8%) chose promotion. 30 respondents (50%) chose all the mentioned strategies, while 1 respondent (2%) decided to provide an offer (offering an extra bonus to buyers) instead of selecting the mentioned strategy. Most people preferred the tactic of grasping consumer needs, comprehending the target market, and executing promotions to tap into the global market.

51 respondents (85%) had great motivation to learn English. 9 respondents (15%) were less motivated while not a single respondent was unmotivated. It indicates that the majority of respondents have a strong desire to learn English so they can access the global market. It also means something good which they are aware of how significance of English in international. Along with the status of English, they believe by learning English, their faith is gradually changing into something better. This awareness needs to be developed more and it is expected that they spread to others, to make them realize more how English is important, and it is bad to have mastered English.

The aim of this research is to investigate individuals' perspectives in using English to step in international market. According to the research mentioned earlier, individuals show favorable reactions to English language proficiency in accessing the worldwide audience. The previous table demonstrates that participants are of the opinion that they can access the global market with their English language proficiency.

Based on the findings of this research, over 85.3% of respondents strongly believe in the importance of English. English is a globally spoken language. They have the same and are in one agreement that acquiring English language skills will assist them in facing their international consumers. However, different from the previous one, 13% of respondents disagree that learning English can help them to achieve the global market objectives. They believe that having English skills in Shopee is not highly necessary as their focus is not for the international market. They feel satisfied enough having a business locally, meanwhile, others

would think how to grow or develop more their business not only locally but also internationally.

However, although the target is global market, Shopee offers a system that can really help those who are incapable to use English. There is a system that automatically translate text, allowing users to reach the global market without needing to learn English. It helps a lot, especially those who have lack of English abilities though it is not suggested since having a natural language skill is much better than to rely on a system.

1.7% of survey participants disagreed with the idea that learning English can enhance their ability to reach the global market; instead, they believed that adding or varying more products, providing discounts, and offering free gifts to customers were more effective strategies.

In summary, based on the data collected, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents believe that using English can help them in global market, making them to learn the language eagerly with the confidence of expanding their reach worldwide.

Conclusion

The respondents' answers from the research show that by having strong English communication skills, it becomes essential for entering the global market. They also view mastering English as crucial for international transactions, but not as significant for local transactions. They are also made to learn English so that they can access the global market.

In the purpose of accessing the international market, Shopee vendors need effective strategies to expand their reach globally. Generally, various approaches are available for reaching the international market. The strategies include comprehending consumers' needs, understanding the target market, implementing promotions, and offering bonuses to the product.

Moreover, there are some suggestions for some parties, namely Shopee vendors, and Shopee buyers. It is suggested for Shopee vendors to learn English as well as communicating English to ease them in doing transaction with the buyers, especially to expand and develop international marketing. Whereas for Shopee buyers are suggested to learn English so they could understand more about the products both locally and internationally.

Besides that, readers can also gain benefits on how crucial English is in the business world. Their acknowledgement on the significance of English communication plays a crucial role in our everyday lives. In business operations, communication is essential for the exchange of ideas and information between different parties. English is a crucial element in conducting global business as it is generally used worldwide. Additionally, this platform can be functioned by readers to enhance their English communication abilities and provides information for individuals especially for those who wish or even has started to access the international marketplace.

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