

English Communication Readiness: a Case of Pre-service Flight Attendants in a Private Vocational Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Flight attendants play a crucial role in airline operation, being responsible for both delivering hospitality and ensuring safety. Therefore, effective English communication is essential throughout the journey. In Indonesia, where English is a foreign language, this study aims to assess the English communication readiness of pre-service flight attendants during in-flight service. The study was conducted at an aviation college offering a specialized training program for future flight attendants. All enrolled pre-service flight attendants participated in three steps of assessments: (1) English proficiency test, (2) an English interview test, and (3) intercultural sensitivity scale test (ISS). The result of the first test shows that 86% of the pre-service flight attendants were classified as novice English learners. Furthermore, a mere 31% of participants surpassed the moderate threshold in showcasing their English-speaking abilities during in-flight service. Merely 10% showed a high level of sensitivity while engaging with passengers from other countries. Ultimately, approximately 26% of them have the necessary English communication skills to effectively assist passengers throughout the flight. Therefore, this study proposes several implications. Firstly, English training for pre-service flight attendants should prioritize the practical aspects of in-flight services to passengers. Secondly, it should equip pre-service flight attendants with the necessary interpersonal skills to effectively interact with foreign passengers. Lastly, there is a need to enhance vocabulary proficiency in areas related to in-flight service, emergency situations, and safety. y.

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Introduction

In the civil aviation industry, flight attendants are indispensable to the efficient administration of airline services. Servicing as the principal intermediary between airlines and passengers, they

perform an essential function in guaranteeing a favorable passenger experience during the entirety of the voyage. The reputation of an airline is significantly impacted by passenger satisfaction Shafiee et al (2014); passengers' general well-being is profoundly influenced by their in-flight experiences An and Noh (2009). Consequently, airline evaluations frequently hinge on passengers' perceptions of in-flight service quality Park et al (2004). In response, airlines have implemented stringent candidate selection procedures for these critical service positions.

The excellence of in-flight services rendered by flight attendants can be classified into two main categories: operational aspects and human elements. Human elements consist of characteristics such as personality traits, language proficiency, attitude, physical health, and financial support and welfare. Workload, working conditions, equipment, training, corporate policies, and quality control are all operational aspects (Mellert et al., 2008; Widyanti and Firdaus, 2020). Additionally, passengers' perceptions of aircraft comfort are substantially influenced by pre-flight and in-flight conditions, social interactions, and interactions with others, according to an abundance of research on the factors that affect passenger comfort Patel and D'Cruz (2018). The significance of effective cabin crew-to-passenger communication in determining passenger contentment with airlines becomes apparent.

Indonesia has emerged as a substantial aviation industry market due to a confluence of factors. Its expansive topography, comprising nearly 17,000 islands and extending over 5,120 kilometers west to east and 1,760 kilometers north to south, provides an alluring and varied panorama. The aesthetic appeal of Indonesia has emerged as a significant attraction for vacationers in search of a place to spend their days. Furthermore, Indonesia was named the most immaculate nation worldwide by Forbes in 2022. Notwithstanding the obstacles presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, passenger and tourist inflows to Indonesia have exhibited a gradual recovery. According to Indonesia Statistics, there was a significant increase in operations at two prominent airports in Indonesia between March and July 2022. In July 2022, the Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali served 40,8296 passengers, whereas Soekarno Hatta International Airport in Jakarta handled 1,566,582 passengers. The statistics presented here are the greatest in history as recorded at any airport in Indonesia.

The dynamic pattern of international vacationers to Indonesia from 2019 to 2022 is depicted in Figure 1. This pattern is mirrored in the fluctuations in passenger counts at arrival terminals. Indonesia's allure as a tourist destination persisted despite a substantial decrease in arrivals throughout the pandemic, as demonstrated by the meteoric surge in arrivals in 2022. This highlights

the increasing appeal of Indonesia as a dream vacation spot for travelers in search of an unforgettable experience.



Fig 1: Number of Foreign Visitors in Indonesia 2019 – 2022

The proliferation of new airlines operating in Indonesia has consequently led to a significant surge in the demand for flight attendants. As a result, this situation motivated the researcher to examine the extent to which pre-service flight attendants were equipped to fulfill the necessary standards. The objective of this essay is to showcase the level of readiness exhibited by pre-service flight attendants in conversing proficiently in English while providing in-flight services. The predominant mode of communication within the cabin is intercultural, involving sources and recipients of information who are of various cultural origins (Bennett, 2017; Nunez et al., 2017).

"Communicative competence" is the integration of the social dimension into the language-learning process, according to D. Hymes (2005). The tenets of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, which are concerned with the study of language acquisition, formed the basis of his proposal. Communicative competency encompasses not only grammatical but also sociolinguistic proficiency.

The research employed three variables to assess the level of readiness of pre-service flight attendants to engage in English-language communication during the provision of in-flight services. 1) English employability proficiency; 2) functional English-speaking abilities while in flight; and 3) intercultural sensitivity are the three primary areas of emphasis. This study sought to quantify the intercultural sensitivity rate, English in-flight service skill performance, and pre-service flight attendants' English language proficiency in order to provide a comprehensive and comprehensible explanation of their readiness to provide in-flight service.

The initial metric was evaluated by considering the results of their English Proficiency Examination. Communication involves the encoding of information via appropriate verbal, non-verbal, or gestural expressions; therefore, the second alternative was duly considered. However, the primary emphasis of this research was on language proficiency, with limited attention given to additional variables including non-verbal communication and gestures. The ultimate evaluation was chosen to assess the readiness of potential flight attendants to provide in-flight service, given that each interaction involves a contextual factor that requires sensitivity to various cultural backgrounds. The emergence of intercultural context in international communication environments requires an approach that is cognizant of cultural differences Nunez et al (2017).

English Proficiency in Aviation Industry

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) operates as a specialized agency under the United Nations, established in 1944 by the United States of America to oversee the implementation of the Chicago Convention, which governs international civil aviation. Its primary mandate includes formulating global strategies to enhance safety and navigation for multinational airlines, monitoring and documenting air transport performance indicators, and conducting audits of airline operations to improve safety and security measures. These responsibilities fall under the overarching mandate of the organization. Additionally, ICAO plays a crucial role in setting linguistic regulations governing the use of English as the universally recognized language in aviation through its "ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements" Estival and Molesworth (2009).

The ICAO language proficiency requirements are integral to the aviation industry, as they mandate that all professionals achieve at least Operational Level 4, equivalent to Independent User B2 in the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) for Languages, to be eligible for employment. These requirements encompass six domains: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and interaction. Clear and comprehensible communication is particularly emphasized for tasks such as greetings, assisting passengers with boarding, ensuring cabin readiness, providing in-flight service, addressing post-meal service, and managing various hospitality-related situations, including handling passenger complaints.

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), individuals classified as Independent Users at level B2 are capable of delivering clear and well-structured explanations and presentations. They possess the ability to offer continuous monologues, especially when providing information, and are capable of delivering advanced knowledge and guidance on a diverse range of topics related to their duties as airline stewards or stewardesses. Furthermore,

proficient users are divided into two sub-levels: C1 and C2. C1 level individuals can produce articulate, well-organized discourse with a compelling logical framework, while C2 level individuals can deliver lucid and comprehensive explanations and speeches on complex subjects.

Within the category of Independent Users, two sub-levels exist: B1 and B2. B1 level individuals can provide reasonably fluent and straightforward explanations on various subjects within their field of study, while B2 level individuals can deliver well-structured descriptions and presentations with coherence and systematic organization. Additionally, basic users are categorized into sub-levels A1 and A2. At the A1 level, learners can produce basic sentences primarily consisting of individual words related to individuals and places, while at the A2 level, they can present or describe individuals, living or working conditions, daily routines, preferences or dislikes, etc., using straightforward phrases and sentences linked together in a list. English proficiency level based on Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) explain in Figure 2 below.

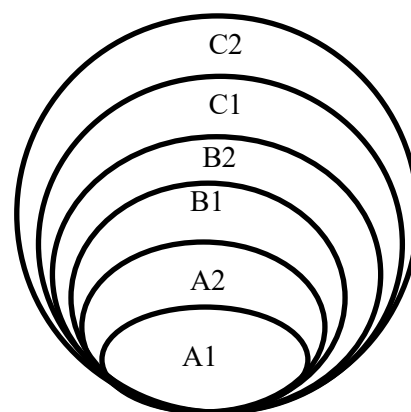


Fig 2: English proficiency level based on Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

In-Flight Service Speaking Performance

This research was conducted based on the English communication problem that are usually encountered by flight attendant during the flight. There are three main problems occur namely a) problems concerning language functions; b) problems concerning English usage; and c) areas of language difficulty that flight attendant came across Uraipan (2011). However, this article only focused on the first problem in which flight attendant commonly encounters with the language functions. The language function that are used in these situations including welcoming and departing passengers, boarding assistance, cabin readiness, in-flight service, form distribution, and miscellaneous situation.

The Table 1 presented below displays the functional language used by flight attendants and the specific activities they carry out during in-flight service, as documented by Uraipan in 2011.

Table 1. Functional language performed by flight attendants during in-flight service

No	Language Function	Prompt
1	Welcoming and Departing Passengers	Greeting and offering helps when boarding Giving direction to the seat Giving advice to using facility such as lavatory
2	Boarding Assistance	Offering helps to keep passengers' belongings properly
		Responding to complaints Answering questions about flight itinerary such as arrival time
6	Miscellaneous Situation	Answering questions about in-flight entertainment Warning to smoke Warning to inebriated passenger Responding to passengers' health condition

Intercultural Sensitivity

A multitude of scholars across several disciplines, including education, communication, and psychology, have recently highlighted the importance of possessing intercultural sensitivity in their respective domains. The researchers reached the consensus that intercultural sensitivity can yield a beneficial impact on communication among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (G.-M. Chen, 1997; Graf, 2004; Lee Olson and Kroeger, 2001). Being culturally sensitive entails recognizing and acknowledging the existence of disparities among different cultures. However, it does not involve assigning judgments or evaluations to these differences, such as determining their superiority or inferiority, or their moral correctness or incorrectness. However, Hadley (1993) argues that learners must acquire cultural understanding through many means in order to develop sensitivity towards multiple cultures and be better prepared to live harmoniously within a society

that predominantly speaks their primary language. G.-M. Chen (1997) identified several fundamental components of intercultural sensitivity, including self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interpersonal participation, and nonjudgmental attitudes. These attitudes contribute to the assessment of an individual's intercultural proficiency.

Zakaria argued that individuals must possess a readiness to incorporate principles, along with qualities such as open-mindedness, a strong self-perception, non-judgmental behavior, and social ease, in order to fully grasp the importance of diverse cultures and to be attuned to the verbal and non-verbal cues in international cultural exchanges. The purpose of this is to enable individuals to comprehend the significance of many cultures (2000).

Method

The study was conducted at the College of Aerospace Engineering in Yogyakarta, which offers a curriculum in Flight Attendant. The curriculum is a one-year training program that awards a diploma degree. The curriculum is derived from the Initial Training Program established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Annually, this program admits two cohorts of flight attendant applicants. During the course of this study, a total of 38 students participated in the training program for a duration of two semesters. The researcher utilized the entire population of pre-service flight attendants in this investigation. In order to gather primary data, the researcher utilized three principal tools, including an English proficiency test, a speaking performance test, and a series of questionnaires.

Rationale for instrument selection

The choice to use three instruments – (1) English proficiency test, (2) an in-flight service speaking performance evaluation, and (3) an intercultural sensitivity questionnaire – was grounded in the understanding that communication competence is multidimensional that require social skills. Social and cultural knowledge are seriously crucial to effective communication (D. H. Hymes, 1972). He argues that the communication competence is dependent on both grammatical and social knowledge. To measure the respondent's general linguistics competence including vocabulary, grammar, reading and listening, this study use the English proficiency test developed by British Council. This test provides a reliable benchmark aligned with CEFR and ICAO standard. The result of the tests is categorized into five level based on CEFR which aligned with the proposed level by ICAO as shown on Table 2.

Table 2. The conversion of English proficiency level from CEFR to ICAO

<i>Score</i>	<i>CEFR Level</i>	<i>ICAO</i>
1	Pre-A1	0
2	A1	1
3	A2	2
4	B1	3
5	B2	4

Linguistic knowledge alone does not guarantee effective communication in real-world service setting. Therefore, the speaking performance test was administered to evaluate students' ability in applying the functional English in aviation-specific context, particularly during in-flight service interaction. The 22 speaking prompts simulated common in-flight duties, allowing a practical assessment of fluency, interaction, vocabulary usage, structure, and comprehension that shown on table 3.

Table 3. Range and Corresponding Level Designations of Rating Scale

<i>No</i>	<i>Range of Scale</i>	<i>Level of In-flight Service Speaking Performance</i>
1	1.00 – 1.80	Incompetent
2	1.81 – 2.60	Poor
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
4	3.41 – 4.20	Good
5	4.21 – 5.00	Excellent

Eventually, the intercultural sensitivity questionnaire supplemented the linguistics instrument by addressing the socio-pragmatic aspect of communication considering that cabin crews work in multicultural environments and the ability to interact sensitively and effectively with passengers with diverse background is extremely crucial. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) taken from Petrović et al. (2015) was employed for the final variable. The questionnaire that has been adopted is a simplified version of the original ISS. The simplified form of ISS comprises 15 components, whereas the original version comprises 24 pieces.

The researchers opted for the simplified version as they considered that an excessive number of items in a questionnaire could potentially result in respondents providing false answers. Nevertheless, the researcher assessed both the reliability and validity of the Indonesian translated version after doing grammar checks and seeking expert judgment. When doing an exploratory or pilot study, it is advisable to have a reliability level of 0.60 or above Straub and Gefen (2004). Hinton et al. (2014) proposed the use of four distinct threshold values for measuring dependability. The cut-off values for reliability are defined as follows: excellent reliability is indicated by a value of 0.9 or higher, high reliability falls within the range of 0.70 to 0.90, moderate reliability is between 0.50 and 0.70, and low reliability is indicated by a value of 0.5 or below. Furthermore, the device had a reliability coefficient of 0.835. Therefore, it can be concluded that the instrument utilized in this study was exceedingly dependable. All items presented in the questionnaire were deemed legitimate. Furthermore, not a single item was excluded. Collectively, these three instruments provide a holistic understanding of students' English communicative readiness – cognitively, functionally, and interpersonally – for authentic operational context in international aviation.

Result and Discussion

Prior to commencing the data collection process for the variables, the researcher incidentally gathered additional data as a supplement. The acquired data pertained to the curriculum that was downloaded from the campus website. According to the website, the Diploma Flight Attendant Study Program has 29 disciplines that will be taught over two semesters, with a total of 48 credits. Among the 29 disciplines covered, 20 subjects are derived from the Initial Training Program established by ICAO. The remainder are mandatory subjects mandated by the Directorate General of Higher Education - Indonesia Ministry of Education, which are not directly relevant to the flight attendants' competence. The study program includes the following subjects mandated by the Indonesia Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA): Aviation Knowledge, Cabin Practice, FA Rules and Regulation, Flight Safety, Aircraft Type, In Flight Announcement, Poise and Grace, Survival, Aviation Security, Dangerous Goods, First Aid, English Language, Mandarin Language, Food and Beverage, Documentation, Crew Resource Management, Basic Indoctrination, Swimming, Passengers Baggage Handling, and Ticketing and Reservation

To be eligible for enrollment in this study program, candidates must have a high school certificate or an equivalent qualification. Annually, this study program conducts two courses, each accommodating 20 students. The majority of students possess a high school diploma. During the

research, 28 students graduated from the high school, while the remaining students finished vocational high school. Originally, the researcher intended to conduct interview test with every student enrolled in the Flight Attendance Study Program. Nevertheless, two students were experiencing poor health, rendering them unable to participate in this investigation. Therefore, the total number of participants in this study was 38 students that shown on Figure 3.

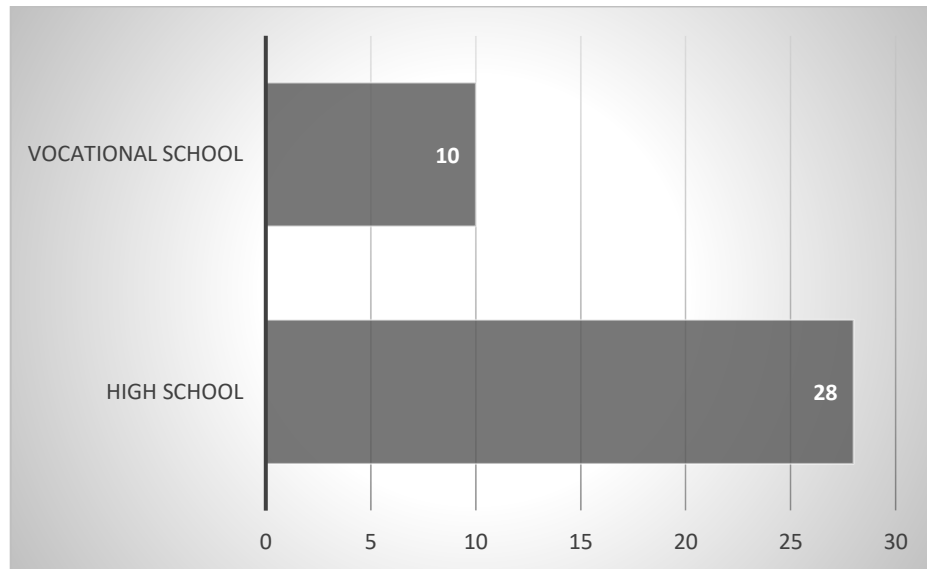


Fig 3: Education background of the respondents

It can be described that the age of the respondents varies from the youngest 17 years old to the oldest 22 years old. In fact, most of the respondents are 18 years old. Sixteen respondents are 19 years old. The purpose of collecting this data was to provide an overview of the respondents' attributes, which will assist researchers in the discussion portion of this article. It can be concluded that the respondents belong to the category of young adult learners.

Brinegar and Caskey (2022) argued that during the early stages of adolescence, there is sometimes a delay in the development of social-emotional maturity compared to physical and intellectual growth. Hence, it is worth considering the age in this discussion related to the intercultural sensitivity since it is defined that social-emotional development pertains to an individual's ability to engage in mature and meaningful interactions with both individuals and groups that just shown on Figure 4.

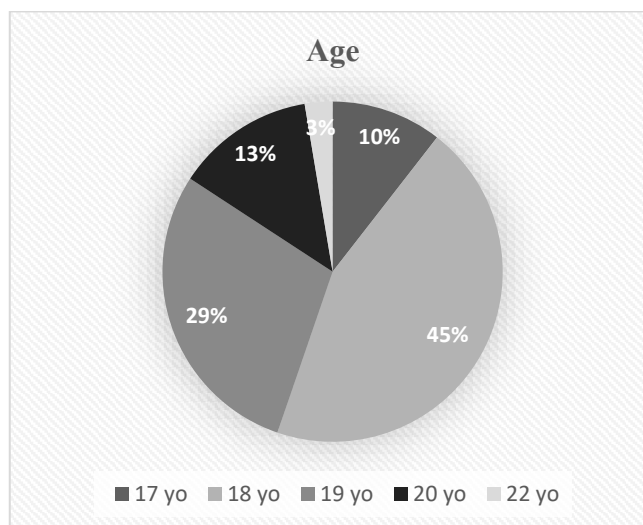


Fig 4: Age of the respondents

English Proficiency Test

The researchers utilize a mobile phone-based English proficiency exam that assesses three language skills. Vocabulary knowledge, a sub-skill of writing skills, is the initial skill assessed. The second segment of this assessment evaluates the reading proficiency of the participants. The subjects covered in this examination pertain to work-related contexts. Hence, this test not only assesses English language proficiency but also gauges the employability readiness of test takers. The British Council produced this English proficiency test, which is according to the researcher straightforward and user-friendly.

After the responders finish the test, the results are recorded in the teacher's account dashboard, enabling easy evaluation and analysis as needed. The calculated average of the EPT score is 231.79. In simple terms, the average respondents are only able to solve around 38.63% of the total questions in the test. After conducting a thorough analysis of the skills evaluated in this test, the results reveal the following average scores: grammar - 22.24, vocabulary - 263.32, reading - 216.26, and listening - 219.08. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the participants generally have a basic proficiency level of A2 according to the CEFR that Shown on table 4.

Table 4. Overall result of English Proficiency Test

<i>Score</i>	<i>Score (%)</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>CEFR Level</i>
231.79	38.63	226.24	263.32	216.26	219.08	A2

The findings of this analysis are consistently aligning with and validating the outcomes of the interview assessments, indicating that the participants' skills are still significantly below the minimum standards established by the ICAO. When examined based on level, Figure 5 provides a clear depiction of the events that occurred during the interview test, which assessed the respondent's proficiency in spoken English for in-flight service. 86% of the respondents are categorized as beginners. Out of the entire group of participants at this particular level, 15 individuals remain struggling in communicating in the English language. Regrettably, there is still one participant left behind at the lowest proficiency level, Pre-A1. Among all participants, just five are capable of advancing to the intermediate level, and only a single respondent is able to meet the minimum criteria set by ICAO van Moere et al (2009). Grafic Result of English Proficiency Test (EPT) in Figure 5 bellow.

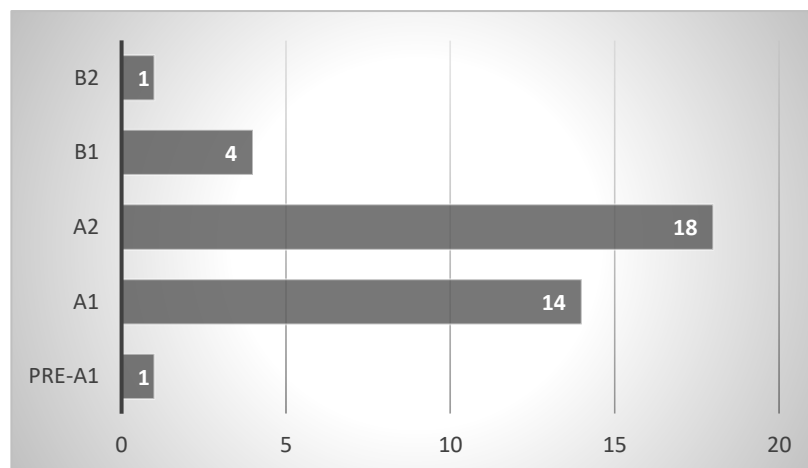


Fig 5: Result of English Proficiency Test (EPT)

In general, referring to Figure 6 the respondents' sensitivity to the cultural differences they experience during communication is moderately high. Approximately 60% of all participants are at that level. When respondents are evaluated using a scale ranging from 1 to 5, their level of intercultural sensitivity is often rated around 2.5. Table 6 provides a comprehensive description of Intercultural sensibility, focusing on five indicators: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction satisfaction, and interaction attention.

In-Flight Service Speaking Performance

After interviewing respondents to gather their performance in using English during in-flight service, based on the diagram provided, it is evident that the respondents' proficiency varied from

very low to very high, with the highest score being within the moderate range. Statistical estimates indicate that 27.5% of the respondents, totaling 11 individuals, possess a satisfactory level when performing in-flight service in English. However, the proportion of respondents with inadequate English proficiency exceeds 10%, which equates to more than 15 individuals. On the other hand, the number of respondents with excellent functional language performance amounts to 12 individuals, which corresponds to around 30% of the total. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that only two respondents possess exceptional English performance proficiency. According to the ICAO guidelines, a cabin crew member must possess at least a B2 level of proficiency or achieve a highly satisfactory outcome after undergoing a conversion process that shown on Figure 6.

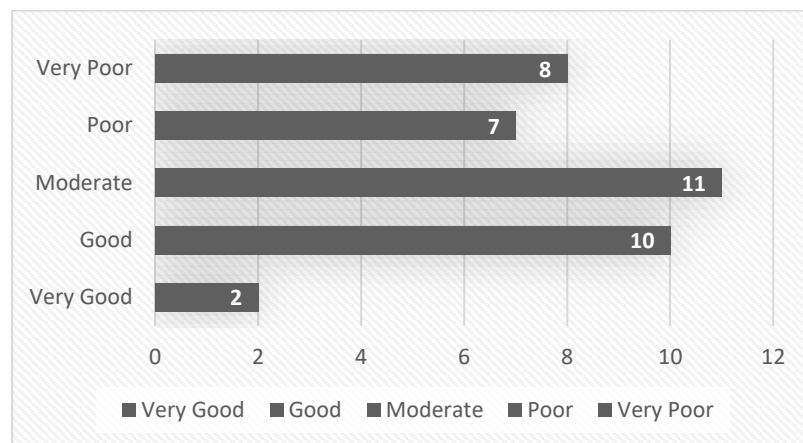


Fig 6: In-flight service speaking performance

To conduct a more in-depth investigation, the researchers attempted to provide the outcomes of interviews, displayed in Table 4., in which participants demonstrated their proficiency in 22 specific in-flight service prompts in the English language. In this interview, respondents were given the option to abstain from practicing it if they were unable to do so in English. Therefore, the interviewee received a score of 1. Once the candidates had an opportunity to demonstrate the given prompt, the interviewer evaluated their performance using a rating scale of 1 to 5. This assessment considered five key areas of oral language skills: pronunciation and vocabulary, fluency, structure, comprehension, and interaction.

Table 5. below, displays metrics of functional language proficiency, revealing the inadequate aptitude of potential flight attendants to carry out in-flight duties in the English language. The data was acquired via an interview assessment to 38 pre-service flight attendants.

Table 5. Result of English functional language performance interview test

	<i>In-flight Service Prompt</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Level of Speaking Performance</i>
1	Greeting and offering helps when boarding	3.67	Good
4	Offering helps to keep passengers' belongings properly	3.39	Moderate
2	Giving direction to the seat	3.22	Moderate
18	Warning to smoke	3.08	Moderate
5	Making suggestion to aware of safety	2.88	Moderate
8	Explaining different kind of drinks available on board	2.67	Moderate
7	Offering drinks and take orders	2.63	Moderate
10	Responding to passengers when their choices of meals are not available	2.63	Moderate
11	Recommending meal choices	2.63	Moderate
6	Giving flight information	2.61	Moderate
9	Offering and explaining choices in the menu	2.61	Moderate
3	Giving advice to using facility such as lavatory	2.59	Poor
12	Asking passengers who have reclined their seats to return them in the upright position during the meal service	2.59	Poor
13	Responding to passengers who request other services while you are serving	2.55	Poor
20	Answering questions about flight itinerary such as arrival time	2.49	Poor
21	Answering questions about in-flight entertainment	2.47	Poor
22	Responding to passengers' health condition	2.41	Poor
17	Warning to inebriated passenger	2.37	Poor
19	Responding to complaints	2.31	Poor
16	Explaining how to fill out those forms	1.88	Poor
14	Distributing entry documents like landing form	1.78	Incompetent
15	Explaining about immigration, customs, and quarantine regulation	1.47	Incompetent

The prompt displayed in the table is organized according on the mean score of all participants. The interview results are arranged in descending order based on the highest average score. The

action of greeting and extending assistance upon boarding receives the highest average score of 3.67. In other words, greeting and extending assistance are the easiest functional language they practice during the in-flight service. This is unlikely surprising since this topic have been repeatedly taught in grade seven to twelve. Meanwhile the task of explaining immigration, customs, and quarantine regulations is ranked at the lowest level at 1.47. Respondents excel in only four in-flight service tasks out of 22 tasks in total: welcoming passengers aboard, assisting with luggage storage, providing directions, and issuing smoking warnings. However, they could not reach the highest level which is excellent since they were lacking on pronunciation. In fact, their pronunciation yet remain understandable. In other words, the participants were only able to showcase their proficiency in 18% of the overall in-flight service duties that required direct engagement with passengers.

This result is echoing what Uraipan (2011) found in his research that flight attendants found more problems when they have to deal with responding to complaints, explaining regulation, and other duties that require longer and dialogues. This imply that many of them memorize the speaking template instead of understanding the meaning. In an impromptu to dialogues, speakers must have good listening skill to understand their audience. Vocabulary mastery is also another factor that a pre-service flight attendant must put as priority. On top of that, duties that are not executed well are primarily comprised of duties that necessitate expertise in English for Specific Purpose (ESP), particularly in the field of aviation.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Sensitivity to different cultures is the third variable considered. Participation in the interaction, sensitivity to cultural differences, confidence in the contact, pleasure of the interaction, and attentiveness to the interaction are the five signs that make up this characteristic. Respect for culture refers to the manner in which individuals recognize and appreciate the cultural distinctions that exist in other people. A study was conducted in which questionnaires were given to all pre-service flight attendants. The results of the survey indicated that all of the pre-service flight attendants were members of a group that had a moderate degree of sensitivity to cultural differences.

As with other aspects of relevance, cultural sensitivity is of equal significance. When compared to the other five indicators of intercultural sensitivity, the value of respect for cultural differences is the one that has the lowest average. One of these measures examines the attitudes and responses of respondents to cultural diversity in order to determine how much they appreciate the similarities and contrasts between different cultures that shown on Figure 7.

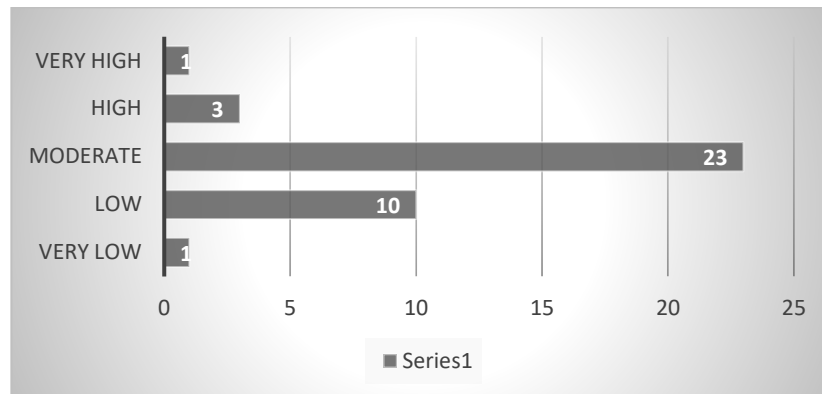


Fig 7: Pre-service flight attendants' Intercultural Sensitivity

In view of the fact that pre-service flight attendants will have direct encounters with passengers on the plane who come from a variety of nations located within the hemisphere, this particular component is of considerable relevance to them. In the event that the highest score is determined from the average of all of these traits, then the pre-service flight attendants who are taking part in this study have a large potential for professional progress as a result of their ability to maintain an attentive manner when interacting with customers. In addition to this, pre-service flight attendants did not have as much trouble with their confidence. By looking at the score that is provided for Interaction Confidence, it is possible to see this. Pre-service flight attendants were at a level that was considered to be moderate in this region.

Knowing the facts, it shows that a potential flight attendant needs to improve their ability to be patient while attentively listening to the complaints of passengers. Additionally, research has shown that intercultural sensitivity is closely connected to ethnocentrism and intercultural communication apprehension, both of which are essential for comprehending the personal motivation and behavior that is involved in intercultural communication G.-M. Chen, (2010).

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that pre-service attendants need to better their ability to listen. Nevertheless, the relevance of each of the five characteristics of intercultural sensitivity would be considered equal. Pre-service flight attendants, in a nutshell, are expected to be prepared to interact with passengers of a wide variety of ethnic origins and to provide exceptional service to those customers. Please refer to Table 6 for a comprehensive breakdown of the results of the poll on each component.

Table 6 bellow, Once all the variables in this study were averaged, the researchers subsequently aggregated them and sought the mean values for each responder to ascertain their level of preparation. Based on these computations, the resulting average values consistently fall inside the

'extremely unprepared' group. Out of the total of 38 responses, it is evident that 16, or around 42.1%, fall into the category labeled as 'very not ready'.

Table 6. Minimal, Maximum and Mean for each indicator

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Level</i>
Interaction Engagement	1	4	2,53	Low
Respect for Cultural Differences	1	5	2,26	Low
Interaction Confidence	1	4	2,78	Moderate
Interaction Enjoyment	2	3,33	2,47	Low
Interaction Attentiveness	1,66	3,33	2,76	Moderate

Furthermore, the level 'not ready' has nine responders. Therefore, around 65% of prospective flight attendants lack the necessary proficiency in English to effectively communicate with passengers in the aircraft cabin. Approximately 10 individuals, constituting 26% of the total, possess the necessary skills to cater to passengers who understand English that shown on Figure 8.

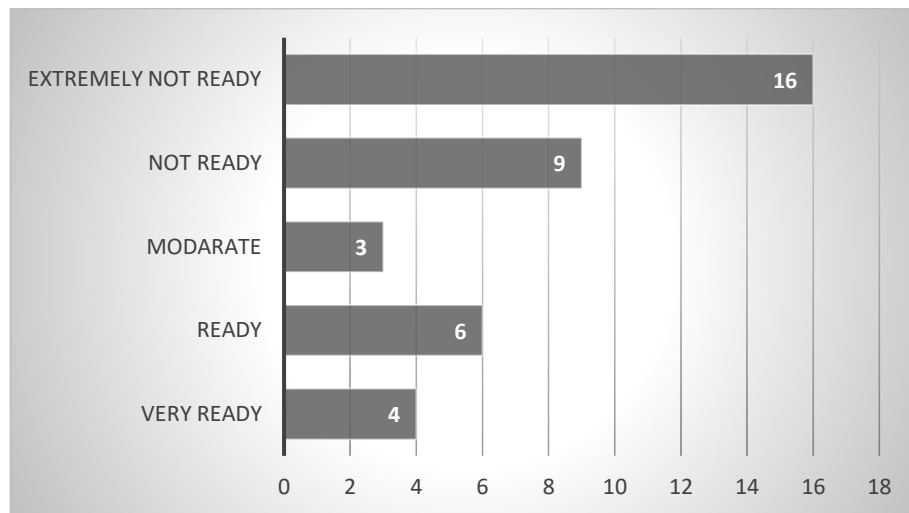


Fig 8: Pre-service flight attendants' English Communication Readiness

Upon computing the mean value of the three variables for each participant, the outcome becomes sufficiently evident for interpretation. Out of all the flight attendants in training, a majority, specifically 65%, were aspiring flight attendants who were not proficient in English and hence unable to communicate with passengers during cabin service. Table 6 indicates that they receive enjoyment and attention while communicating with international passengers, specifically. Assessing someone's readiness to communicate in English cannot be solely based on interpersonal variables. It should also consider their proficiency in language skills, such as understanding context

and using specific phrases in accordance with language functions. Therefore, the readiness score was determined by aggregating the three characteristics described earlier in the previous section. Indeed, just a mere 10% of pre-service flight attendants may be deemed fully prepared to cater to passengers' needs in English.

Discussion

The few numbers of students meeting the ICAO proficiency standards calls attention to the effectiveness of current English training administered in the program Van et al (2009). In fact, the curriculum has been aligned with ICAO's Initial Training Program. However, the English training appears to foreground technical instruction while marginalizing immersive language practice. Meanwhile, according to Krashen a foreign or second language learner must be exposed more to real-world English communication to promote language acquisition. Therefore, it is crucial to provide more interactive, practical, and contextualized English learning environment for future professional in aviation including pre-service flight attendants Estival and Molesworth (2009).

Implementing immersive simulation such as inflight service in a mockup cabin, pairing pre-service flight attendants with native-English speaking mentors, and integrating more aviation-specific situations into daily practice may improve language proficiency and boost communication confidence (Malihah, 2010; Salas et al., 2009). In addition, utilizing digital tools like virtual simulation and AI-based conversation application can offer practicing authentic situation that emulate the in-flight service interactions (C.-M. Chen and Chung, 2008; Reinhardt and Thorne, 2020).

The findings of this study suggest that the communication challenges encountered by the pre-service flight attendants are not an isolated result of the language proficiency. However, the findings on their cultural sensitivity showing that they are in moderate level also raises concerns. This points to social-emotional factors restrict effective communication. For example, in Table 6 low scores in interaction enjoyment and respect for cultural differences could imply that some pre-service flight attendants feel inconvenience or hesitation when interacting with people from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds.

This implication is in line with Chen's findings intercultural sensitivity is strongly connected to communication apprehension and ethnocentrism. Such discomfort can lead the pre-service flight attendants to move away, avoid, or even withdraw from communication, even if they have the language skills to engage. This implies that language training program for flight attendant should

not only focus on the language ability but also strengthen the intercultural empathy, adaptability, and confidence skills since they are crucial for delivering quality in-flight service in internationalized environment.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that a significant proportion of the participants are pre-service flight attendants who lack the necessary expertise to perform their responsibilities in the cabin, specifically with regard to delivering English-language passenger service. A mere 10% of the participants voiced their discontent regarding the standard of care delivered in domains including safety, emergency protocols, and hospitality.

This study evaluates candidates' cultural sensitivity during passenger interactions, their English proficiency, and their ability to communicate effectively in a service-oriented context, in addition to their general English language proficiency. These factors are regarded as significant predictors of their preparedness for the role of flight attendants. Ultimately, the research establishes that individuals aspiring to become flight attendants are not adequately equipped to provide English-language compartment service.

The prospective flight attendants' inadequate functional English language proficiency serves as an indication of their lack of readiness. Unfortunately, many of these aspiring flight attendants have difficulty performing even the most fundamental duties in English, such as providing passengers with food and drink. Additionally, a considerable proportion of them articulate apprehension regarding their interactions with unfamiliar individuals, which is worrisome considering that flight attendants should not tolerate any form of discrimination on the basis of culture, religion, or language.

According to the findings, the researcher recommends that education institution in aviation revise their English training to provide more contextualized and immersive in terms of learning experiences. Specifically, it is suggested to:

1. Design immersive language program that enables in-flight service scenarios utilizing mock announcement and passenger interaction simulation.
2. Integrate digital tools in the language program such Virtual Reality simulation, AI-based conversation tutor, to emulate cabin communication environment.

Design and conduct intercultural communication workshops which is aiming at enhancing students' cultural awareness, empathy, and confidence when interacting with passengers from

different cultural backgrounds.

The future research could investigate real-inflight communication interactions through cabin crew interviews, ethnographic observations, and or audio recording since this research, in fact, focused on the test-based assessment. Therefore, the nature of miscommunication in terms of linguistics, pragmatics, or cultural misunderstanding would be clarified.

Eventually, future studies may also explore the long-term career trajectories of flight attendants with differing English proficiency levels. Investigating the relationship between English language proficiency and outcomes such as promotion opportunities, employability, and passenger satisfaction could yield compelling support for refinement of aviation education policy.

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