

Needs Analysis for Designing English for Hotel Management Students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar

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Abstract

This study investigates the English language needs of Hotel Management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar to develop a more relevant English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus. Using a qualitative design, data were collected through questionnaires administered to 29 first-grade students, structured interviews with two teachers, and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that students need stronger speaking, listening, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills to perform key front office tasks, including greeting guests, handling reservations, managing check-in and check-out, telephone communication, and responding to complaints. Students also preferred interactive learning methods such as role-plays, simulations, and group discussions. However, the existing curriculum still focuses on General English, creating a mismatch with workplace demands in the hospitality industry. Based on these findings, the study recommends an ESP-oriented syllabus emphasizing Front Office English, authentic materials, and performance-based assessment to enhance students' communicative competence and career readiness in hotel services.

Keywords: needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes, hotel management, vocational high school, hospitality industry

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's tourism sector is a key driver of economic growth, contributing to foreign exchange earnings, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship (Yakup & Haryanto, 2021). According to Badan Pusat Statistik (2025), Indonesia welcomed 13.9 million foreign visitors in 2024, representing a 19.05% increase from the previous year and the highest figure in the last five years. This growth highlights the expanding scope of tourism, which affects sectors such as hospitality, transportation, culinary services, and tour guiding. Graduates entering this industry require strong communication skills, particularly in English.

As English serves as a global lingua franca, hotel staff are expected to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps when serving international guests (Crystal, 2003). Proficiency in English is therefore not merely an advantage but a necessity for delivering services that meet global standards. Moreover, these skills extend beyond casual conversation to include reading, writing, and understanding key documents such as reservation emails, guest requests, standard operating procedures (SOPs), safety guidelines, and customer service communications.

However, English teaching in vocational schools often prioritizes General English over English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Studies by Rahmawati et al. (2020), *A Needs Analysis of Computer and Network Engineering Program in Mataram Vocational Schools*, and Nurhasanah and Kurniawan (2023), *ESP Needs Analysis of Computer and Network Engineering in Vocational High School*, highlight the importance of ESP-based English learning to meet students' vocational needs. The current materials remain too general and do not adequately address the needs of students in specific majors, while limited facilities and teacher competence also hinder students' English development within their vocational context. Both studies emphasize the importance of needs analysis in designing ESP-based English

instruction to improve students' readiness for professional demands and the workplace.

Based on these findings, a similar situation occurs at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar, where English is still taught as General English. In contrast, the language demands of hotel staff differ significantly from general English use. Hotel staff are responsible for welcoming guests, assisting with reservations, guiding them through check-in and check-out procedures, managing visitor data, resolving concerns, overseeing transportation needs, handling payment administration, communicating with other departments, and providing all necessary services for a comfortable stay. This creates a gap between industry needs and what students learn in school, resulting in limited confidence and ability in handling hospitality-related responsibilities.

Therefore, this study proposes conducting a needs analysis to determine the precise English language requirements of hotel management students in order to close this gap. The results are expected to provide recommendations for more relevant and contextual English learning materials that better equip students to communicate effectively in the real-world hospitality sector.

Rahmadhani et al. (2022) argue that the English curriculum in vocational schools should focus on practical communication skills relevant to industry needs. English mastery is crucial for students pursuing careers in the hospitality industry; however, challenges arise due to the dominance of General English curricula, the lack of real simulations, and limited exposure to English-speaking environments. This is consistent with the findings of interviews with the English teacher and questionnaire data collected from graduates of SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar, which indicate that English learning is still general in nature. Therefore, the selection of English learning materials should be tailored to students' needs, focusing on communication

practices relevant to the workplace, such as professional email writing, presentations, and business conversations.

A systematic approach to learning design is required to bridge the gap between graduates' competencies and workplace demands, one of which is the needs analysis process. Needs analysis is the systematic process of gathering data to identify learners' language needs in a specific context and to design effective and relevant learning materials. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) assert that needs analysis is a fundamental component of ESP programs because it helps identify *what* should be taught in light of *why* and *for what purpose* the language is being learned. Through a thorough needs analysis, teachers can identify skill gaps, formulate appropriate learning objectives, and select content that accurately reflects workplace realities. As a result, the materials provided become more relevant, contextual, and effective.

Needs analysis is particularly essential in understanding the types of communication most frequently used in hotel settings, such as greeting guests, explaining facilities, and handling complaints, as is the case at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar. By understanding these needs, English teachers can design curricula that provide students not only with general grammar and vocabulary knowledge but also with the practical and professional skills required in the hospitality sector. Thus, needs analysis functions as both a strategic foundation and an evaluative tool for developing workplace-oriented English learning.

To enhance the relevance and contextuality of English learning within the contemporary hospitality industry, this study examines the English language learning needs of hotel management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar. The purpose of this study is to identify the fundamental English competencies required in the hospitality sector. It also highlights that current language instruction has not yet fulfilled the audiovisual and communicative demands of the industry, thus requiring a needs analysis involving multiple stakeholders, including students, teachers, and hospitality professionals. The growing demand for professional and technical skills in the hotel sector, driven by increasing job opportunities, further reinforces the need for strong communication skills, particularly in English.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed qualitative research to analyze the learning environment and the specific requirements of hotel management students in English. It aimed to understand students' needs related to the hospitality industry. Social phenomena and human issues were investigated through participant perspectives, verbal data collection, and subjective, comprehensive theme analysis, which is characterized as qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Neergaard et al. (2009), qualitative description is a methodological approach that provided a comprehensive summary of certain events or experiences. The qualitative method was applied in this study because it enabled the researcher to gather detailed information on the learning environment and the particular requirements of students studying hotel management.

This study collects the data using questionnaire, structured interview, and documentation. The questionnaire helps a researcher to assess student's language proficiency. Interviews were conducted as part of the study to gain deeper

insights from the expert, which are English teacher and hospitality teacher. Documentation was crucial for collecting detailed data and it offers written proof.

This research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Sumbawa Besar, located at Jalan Durian No. 3, Uma Sima Village, Sumbawa District, Sumbawa Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar has 11 majors, one of which is hotel management, which is related to this research. The first-grade consisting of 29 students majoring in Hotel Management at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar and two teachers, namely English teacher (ET) and hospitality teacher (HT) were the participants of this study. Their feedback is considered critical in understanding students English language needs and the perceived effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing students for a career in the hospitality industry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

After gathering the data using the data instruments and doing the data analysis, there are some several findings about students' learning needs and the recommendation of English teaching to hotel management student. This study using Miles and Huberman (1994) framework which includes three essential steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The presentation of findings is organized based on the research questions: (1) What are the specific English language needs of hotel management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar and (2) What is the recommended English syllabus for English language teaching to hotel management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar?

1. Language Needs of Hotel Managements Students

The language needs for learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pertain to the particular needs that must be addressed for learners to effectively utilize language in accordance with real-world scenarios and workplace demands. To find about the language needs of Hotel Management, a questionnaire was given to 29 students majoring in Hotel Management also interview with English teacher and hospitality teacher and document analysis as supporting data.

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According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), conducting a language needs analysis involves identifying the discrepancies between students' existing language skills and those needs in the intended context.

Therefore, the language needs of hotel management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar consist of a range of communication expectations that include both receptive and productive skills, specialized vocabulary, and interaction strategies pertinent to the hospitality industry, indicating that language instruction should be tailored to effectively bridge the gap between students' current abilities and their future professional needs.

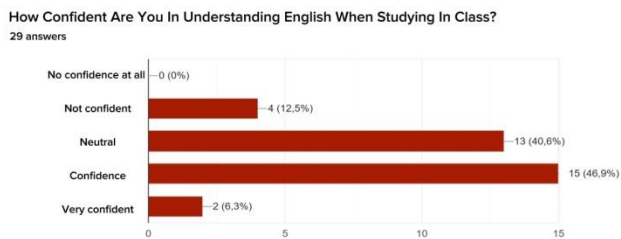


Figure 1. English comprehension in class

From the figure 1, it was reported that 13 students (40.6%) were neutral and 4 (12.5%) felt unconfident when asked about their understanding of English in class. This indicates that, in the current situation, students are still at a basic level and need to strengthen fundamental skills.

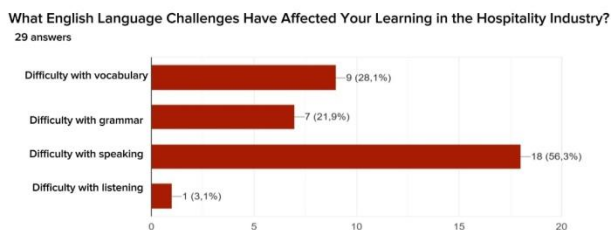


Figure 2. Challenges students face when learning ESP

Based on the figure 2, speaking was cited by eighteen (56.3%) students as their biggest difficulty, followed by vocabulary growth for nine (28.1%) and grammar for seven (21.9%). There were even some pupils who struggled with both speaking and listening or speaking and vocabulary.

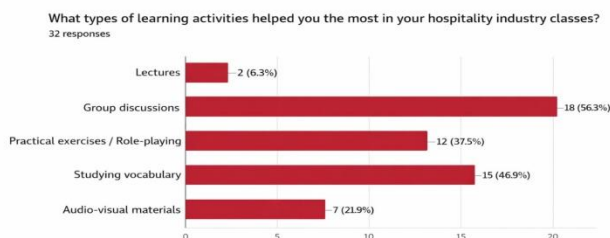


Figure 3. Learning method preferences

Based on figure 3, 18 (56.3%) students said group discussion enhanced their speaking abilities, 15 (46.9%) thought vocabulary exercises were highly beneficial, and 12 (37.5%) thought roleplaying was a very helpful technique. These results suggest that rather than only theoretical learning, students typically need more interactive and practice-based learning activities.

Students Grade Distribution

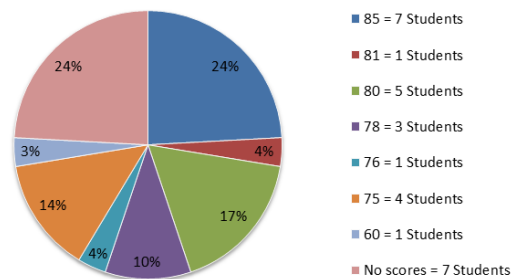


Figure 4. Students' English score

English report scores from the following figure 4 represents that most of the students meet the Minimum Competency (KKM) with average is 78.2 and a top score is 85. Although most students meet the minimum competency standards, the challenges they face in mastering technical vocabulary and practical communication highlight the importance of a specialized curriculum.

Based on the result of the interview by English teacher (ET), ET emphasized that students still have difficulty even in mastering general vocabulary. ET explained that most students come from outside the city or from rural areas, which limits their vocabulary. ET stated “...the children who enter here come from junior high schools in the city, but most of them, almost 70%, come from outside the city or villages. Therefore, even for general vocabulary they are still lacking. So, mastering vocabulary in the hospitality field still requires a lot of effort...”

Indeed, the limitation in vocabulary also has a direct impact on students' difficulties in developing their speaking skills. According to English teacher, speaking is the most difficult skill for her students to master compared to the other English skills. ET highlighted “There may be many difficulties, but what I emphasize here is speaking. Speaking is the most difficult. Speaking is the hardest skill.”

In addition, environmental factors also influence the development of students' skills, especially pronunciation. English teacher added that regional accents are still very strong in students' English pronunciation, “Pronunciation is very difficult... Vocational high school students come from schools outside the city where their dominant mother tongue is Sumbawa, so when we teach them English, their tongues are not used to that pronunciation, so it's a real challenge...”

Based on statements from English teacher (ET) and hospitality teacher (HT), it can be concluded that limited vocabulary is a major obstacle for students in mastering English. This deficiency stems from the backgrounds of students, most of whom come from out-of-town. This situation directly impacts speaking skills, which are considered the most difficult to master.

Moreover, ET emphasized several language skills needed in the industry. English teachers emphasized that speaking is a top priority because it is crucial for interactions with guests “...what I emphasize here is speaking, speaking is the most difficult.”

Meanwhile, hospitality teacher emphasized that students must master listening, reading, and conversation skills in a balanced manner, as all three are interconnected. HT stated, “As I said earlier, all three listening, reading, and conversation must be mastered because it is impossible for

one of the skills to develop optimally without the support of the others. For example, if they can only speak, how can they have a conversation if they don't listen to their guests?"

Additionally, HT also emphasized the importance of English for students' career success in the hospitality industry, *"...English is important, very, very important... Everything there, whether it's equipment, whether it's communicating with superiors or guests, automatically the communication and the names of the equipment are all in English. There are no Indonesian names, nothing."*

Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it can be concluded that speaking, listening, and reading are some of the language skills that must be mastered by students majoring in hotel management.

2. The recommended English syllabus for Teaching English to Hotel Management Students

This section focuses on recommended English syllabus for English language teaching for hotel management majors based on the results of data from questionnaires distributed to 29 students, interviews with 2 teachers and documentation analysis, which are implemented through a syllabus design

This syllabus, which places a strong emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is intended to give teachers more structured guidance when choosing learning objectives, resources, techniques, media, and evaluation methods that are pertinent to the vocational field particularly front office area.

Based on the findings of the needs analysis, the English syllabus for students studying hotel management was created. The syllabus is structured on important front office tasks responsibilities and integrates learning objectives, materials, teaching methods, media, and assessment techniques aligned with students' professional needs.

The findings show that the syllabus places a strong emphasis on the practical communication skills needed in actual hotel service settings. Essential skills like welcoming guests, handling reservations, check-in and check-out procedures, telephone handling, providing information, handling complaints, and maintaining guest relations are treated in a structured way. Every responsibility is connected to specific learning goals that emphasize students' capacity to carry out particular communicative requirements, such as greeting guests politely, confirming reservations, processing payments, and responding to complaints professionally.

The syllabus primarily uses communicative and experiential learning methods in terms of instructional design, including role-play, simulation, pair work, case studies, and guided practice. This result implies that the syllabus places a high priority on the improvement of speaking and listening abilities, which are crucial for front-office hotel operations. Genuine materials like as hotel forms, booking systems, brochures, dialogue cards, audio recordings, and videos are also included to increase pupils' exposure to language use in work situations.

Additionally, the syllabus's assessment methods primarily emphasize performance-based assessment, such as role-play assessment, performance tests, project-based tasks, observation, and peer assessment. This method suggests that rather than using only written exams, students' performance is assessed based on their capacity to use English communicatively in simulated hotel scenarios.

Overall, the results show that the syllabus is in line with the concepts of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since it directly targets the target goals of learners and synchronizes learning activities with the communicative requirements of the hotel business. The integration of job-related tasks, authentic materials, and performance-oriented assessment supports the relevance and applicability of the syllabus for Hotel Management students.

It is expected that this syllabus, which was created based on the findings of the needs analysis, will be able to address the actual needs of students in terms of learning English within the framework of the hospitality sector.

Discussion

Based on the analysis, the key language needs of Hospitality students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar can be divided into speaking, vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, and interactive and contextual learning approaches. According to the data analysis, the results from the questionnaire show that the majority of students find speaking skills to be the most challenging. This finding is in agreement with teachers' interviews indicating that speaking represents the students' biggest hurdle in learning English. This outcome aligns with Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which highlights that language acquisition occurs to fulfill the communication needs of real-world work situations, such as greeting guests or addressing complaints. Interviews with hospitality teacher further support the idea that speaking abilities are crucial for engaging with guests at the front desk, marking this skill as a priority.

In addition to speaking, another essential need identified is hospitality-specific vocabulary. The next identified needs pertain to hospitality specific vocabulary. The questionnaire results revealed that students still find it challenging to grasp hospitality related terms like reservation, check-in, check-out, and complaint handling. English teacher also validated that students show a lack of vocabulary proficiency. Document analysis indicated that classroom materials were still focused on General English, rendering them insufficient for the hospitality context. This need corresponds with Basturkmen (2010) assertion that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should prioritize field specific vocabulary as a component of professional discourse.

Closely related to vocabulary development is the need to strengthen listening comprehension. Interview with hospitality teacher highlighted the significance of listening comprehension, as students frequently have difficulty understanding guest dialogues, especially over the phone or during check-in/out procedures. Findings from the student questionnaires also suggested that listening was one of the weakest skill areas. This supports Richards (2009) perspective that language acquisition becomes more effective when classroom tasks mirror real-life scenarios, like utilizing audio/video recordings of hotel interactions to familiarize students with guests' accents and speaking pace.

Another area of concern highlighted through the findings is pronunciation practice. Interview with English teachers also revealed students' need for pronunciation practice, as their speech remains affected by regional dialects. Evidence from the questionnaire indicates that many students feel anxious about speaking due to concerns over pronunciation mistakes. This stated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which stresses the significance of recognizing

students' current weaknesses and subsequently addressing them through suitable instruction.

Beyond linguistic competencies, the data also reflect students' preferences regarding learning methods. Moreover, questionnaire findings indicate that students favor interactive and practical learning methods such as role-playing, group discussions, and simulations over traditional lectures. Teachers also corroborated that students were notably more engaged during experiential learning. This aligns with Graves (2024) which underscores the necessity of tailoring learning methods to meet student needs. Richards (2009) similarly advocates for task-based learning as a means to boost engagement and relevance.

These classroom-oriented findings are further supported by insights from document analysis. Document analysis further reveals that the curriculum continues to focus on General English, failing to adequately incorporate ESP oriented materials. This is despite the availability of a simulation hotel and laundry facility at the school, which could serve as a platform for language practice. This supports Frendo (2007) argument that needs analysis should connect student difficulties with job market expectations, as well as Markee (1993) perspective that ESP should concentrate on authentic professional communication.

Taken together, all these strands of evidence converge to highlight a clear set of priorities. In summary, the findings indicate that students' language needs encompass enhancement of speaking skills, familiarity with hospitality vocabulary, improvement in listening skills, pronunciation practice, preference for interactive learning methods, and ESP materials relevant to the workplace.

Moreover, based on the analysis of the needs above, the recommendation for teaching English for students majoring in hotel management is the syllabus that has been designed. The syllabus emphasizes the essential language skills needed for effective front office communication tailored to these specific needs, ensuring students are well prepared for the hotel industry.

Thus, the learning recommendation resulting from needs analysis is the development of a syllabus oriented towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The design compiled above represents a recommendation for English language learning for students majoring in Hospitality at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar. The syllabus was designed based on the results of the needs analysis, placing greater emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly communication skills in front office services. With this design, it is hoped that the English language learning process will be more focused, practical, and relevant to the demands of the hospitality industry, while also providing guidance for teachers in selecting materials, methods, and evaluations that suit students' needs.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to find out the specific English language needs and the recommended English syllabus for teaching English to hotel management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar. Based on the results indicated that Hotel Management students at SMKN 1 Sumbawa Besar need strong communicative competencies, especially in terms of speaking, listening, and vocabulary, to perform tasks such as welcoming guests, handling reservations, check-in

and check-out processes, telephone communication, and responding to complaints effectively.

Additionally, the recommended English syllabus for teaching English for students majoring in hotel management is the syllabus that has been designed and developed as a practical solution by integrating ESP principles and task-based approaches to create a contextual learning experience.

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