

An Investigation of the Needs Analysis and English Learning Process for the Hospitality Students at a Vocational High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the needs of the Hospitality students in learning English pertaining to the learning needs, present situation, and target needs. Furthermore, these findings would be elaborated on and find out the compatibility with the current learning process and the current condition of the Hospitality industry needs. The research was conducted in one vocational high school in Cirebon employing a mixed-method case study. The data were derived from the observation; questionnaire to thirty-five students in the 11th and 12th grades of Hospitality major; interview with one English teacher, six selected 11th and 12th grade students, one hotel general manager; and document analysis such as syllabus, handouts, and students' assignment sheet. The findings revealed that speaking skills and vocabulary related to the specific terms for a Hospitality major are most needed by the students. In addition, the learning process in this study does not meet the needs of students specifically related to their major. This is also supported by the hotel general manager based on the Hospitality industry needs. The result suggests that English teaching for Hospitality majors in vocational schools should be provided with adequate knowledge and skills and, thus, the students possess the competencies needed in the current Hospitality job markets.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), hospitality industry, needs analysis, speaking skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Needs analysis in language learning develops within certain objectives based on the purpose of the research (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). Fundamentally, needs analysis is primarily to find out the learners' target with learning situations so that teachers can offer students with the needs of specific language to have successful courses and careers in the future (Johns, 1991).

The hospitality industry directly influences the English language since English is mostly used both as a written and spoken language in international tourism in the 21st century (Zahedpisheh, Bakar, Zulqarnain, & Saffari, 2017; Raju & Rana, 2020). Hospitality has a primary role in producing quality services, thus, employees of the hospitality industry need to be aware of specifically the significance of English language skills in occupational areas. This paper provides an overview of developments in needs analysis for the vocational level.

Jawhar in Yasin, Shaupil, Mukhtar, Ghani, and Rashid (2010) stated that many Hospitality graduates are

unemployed because of the lack of proficiency, particularly in English skills. Hospitality graduates found difficulty in the work finding for many reasons such as the limitation in mastering the foreign language, and the inability in the transactional and interpersonal type of communication. Those are caused by a lack of vocabulary, lack of interest or motivation in practicing English, and the time limitation for studying English in the learning process at school.

Furthermore, the fact from Katadata (2020) which is one of the news platforms in Indonesia, showed that the highest unemployment rate still comes from vocational high school graduates around 10.42% in August 2019, but the trend is starting to decline. It was stated by Suhariyanto in Katadata as the Head of the Central Statistics Agency in a press conference in Jakarta. However, according to the Indonesian Hospitality Learning Center, they reported that Indonesia will need workforces in Hospitality around 1.8 million workforces until 2022.

Hence, teaching at the level of vocational education must consider English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as the teaching approach. ESP refers to the approach in language teaching because the different methods and content are arranged in line with the learners' intention and purpose of learning (Strevens, 1988; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, teaching ESP teaching is considered as integrated teaching at the vocational level.

Based on those issues, the researchers would like to find out the needs of the Hospitality study program and identify the compatibility between the current learning processes with the students' present and future needs of Hospitality at the vocational level. The findings of this study can be useful as a way to apply the knowledge, give valuable experience, and improve the competency by doing the research in terms of finishing the education level. Needs analysis helps the students to measure their ability in terms of their knowledge, competencies, and skills, know their career path, and ensure their goals or objectives in their English learning. Through needs analysis, students can measure their weaknesses so that could improve their competency as well.

In addition, by knowing the needs of students particularly in studying English as Hospitality students, the English teachers can find out more methods and contents of teaching and learn in the classroom which is appropriately needed. They ensure whether the materials of English, the content of the existing textbook, handouts, and other learning resources suit the students' needs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to an approach of language teaching which involves the content and the method that has been decided based on learners' intention to learn (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP can be presented as the activity of learning and teaching English, particularly as a second or foreign language with the aim of using ESP in a certain domain (Otilia, 2015). In language teaching, the ESP approach responds to several practical issues, for example, the necessity to organize teaching materials to teach mastery students in General English (GE) but further need English to use in a specific workplace.

2.2. Needs Analysis

Generally, needs analysis forms a key component of any ESP design that operates with the learner-centered approach. Needs are some things that learners are required to deal with in a foreign language based on the target situation, and how they master the language within the training period (West, 1994). This research adopted

the needs analysis model by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) built the definition of needs analysis into two parts: "target needs" and "learning needs". Target needs describe what learners require to do in the target situation. And the learning needs mean what learners require to do with the aim to learn. They continue to classify "target needs" into three; necessities, lacks, and wants. From these three categories, needs describe the gap between the actual needs of learners which are represented as lacks and materials to be taught which are represented by necessities and wants (Brindley, 1989). Wants of learners may be unnecessary as the real needs that work effectively in the target situation. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) thus focus on learning needs, target needs, and present needs which are essential elements of ESP needs analysis.

2.3. Hospitality Major

Quipper (2019) mentioned that Hospitality refers to the study which learned about hospitality management and how to balance the tourism aspect and business management to achieve success. Some topics taught are about satisfying services for customers, conserving the local cultures, economic benefits which are gained for society, and employees' well-being. Besides, the students will learn foreign languages to face the trend of increasing international tourists. As Hospitality graduates, English is a language that must be mastered especially for those who are used to communicating with the hotel guests and personnel ranging from the doorman, receptionist, room service, chef, marketing staff, customer service, and some manager levels (Lister, 2020).

2.4. The Vocational School Curriculum in Indonesia

The curriculum is a planning program that is well-structured with the purpose as the guide in achieving education objectives (Ekaningrum & Restami, 2015). In the designing process, the main difference between ESP from General English is the application of students' need analysis. Even though Vocational High Schools (VHS) in Indonesia have various fields, the materials for each major are similar to General English in the 2013 Curriculum. There are Core Competency (CC) or Basic Competency (BC) for English subjects in general high school and VHS (Ministry of Education and Culture [MOEC], 2012). However, the actual objective of English teaching at the vocational level is to organize the students to master some skills in English including the basic knowledge which supports the students to achieve competencies and skills in both spoken and written communication at the advanced level.

2.5. Hospitality Industry Needs

To encourage the tourism and hospitality industry, the government has to develop human resources by providing English language skills for upcoming hotel personnel, including Hospitality students in VHS. Promoting the tourism and hospitality industry is determined by the ability to set up a relevant educational system that is more comprehensive, specific, and innovative. The analysis of current needs in the hospitality industry is essential to advance comprehension of the current situation for hospitality graduates in line with the prolonged time. To indicate the hospitality industry's needs, it is vital to describe the skills proficiency required by hospitality graduates.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study was carried out under a case study qualitative approach. A case study was aimed to investigate certain real-life phenomena (Cousin, 2005), while the qualitative design was employed to describe and explore phenomena in this study in the form of words, narrative/stories, and figures (Creswell, 2013). The phenomena in this study were about the compatibility of the learning process with the present and future needs of students in vocational settings. The qualitative design also provided a comprehension and explanation of existing phenomena or issues and facilitated suggestions and solutions at the end (Gillham, 2000). A qualitative case study methodology synthesizes the data analysis to gain a comprehensive methodology process systematically with practical step-by-step guidelines (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016; Yin, 2017).

3.2. Research Participants

This study was conducted at one vocational high school in Cirebon which this selected school provides the researcher access to undertake the research. The school was the institution where the researcher did the internship in the last semester. This helped the researcher in saving time and cost during undertaking the study. Convenience factors could be gained into some considerations to assist the researcher while conducting the research (Alwasilah, 2000; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The study involved the 11th and 12th grades of hospitality students which were about 35 students, one English teacher, and one hotel general manager.

3.3. Data Collection

The researcher combined a number of techniques in collecting the data to answer the research questions; observations, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The data originated from one vocational high

school in Cirebon. Direct participant observation and direct non-participant observation were combined. Note-taking was used as the technique to collect and record the data. The questionnaire was administered to 35 students from 11th and 12th grade Hospitality majors in an online mode through *Google Form*. In addition, the interview was conducted for both one English teacher, six selected 11th and 12th grade students, and one hotel manager. In this study, the interview dominantly follows a set of prepared semi-structured and open-ended questions. Several documents were also analyzed, including syllabus, handouts, and students' assignment sheets. The rationale to select a syllabus can be a teacher's reflection about the learning objectives that have been made (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Thus, the content of the materials of the syllabus is needed to reflect both the context and the needs of the target situation.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Learning Needs Analysis

Learning needs analysis is considered as the needs of learners in order to learn (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). First, according to Robinson (1991), the expected ESP learning outcomes were not only the students fluent in English, but also demanded professional language in order to be competent users in communicating specific language for their field. In line with this, teaching English at the level of vocational school ideally had to be integrated with the professional and formal language needs in the classroom (Akbar & Sulisty, 2018). Unlike general high schools, vocational schools have several different majors which might have a diverse focus on language. Each of these majors established different learning objectives. In line with the data from the interview section with the students, the background of students in learning English is that they intended to work after graduating.

Second, learning media, materials, and teaching methods is one integrity unit that cannot be separated in the learning process and those affect each other to the expected learning outcomes and students' learning needs. Related to the learning media, the students need to be exposed more to technology-based multimedia. The students tend to use whiteboards rather than the projector itself, while the use of a smartphone was used beyond the teacher's supervision. Therefore, the fact that learning media or technology in the classroom should ease the learning process does not well-functioned in this context. Conversely, today's condition forces the educational institution to implement online learning, this one vocational high school could not facilitate their students with adequate subsidies such as internet data and the teacher with good skills in utilizing the technology-based

media. In line with this, the teacher considered only using one media – E-learning – without trying to elaborate with other learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Padlet, and other online media which could improve learning effectiveness and students’ motivation.

Additionally, the teacher merely gives the students tasks such as summarizing the materials either from YouTube video, an internet, and other online sources and asks the students as well to do the assignments of the topic without giving any feedback directly through virtual meetings as an illustration. Therefore, the students were unable to comprehend the materials themselves. Nonetheless, the type of textbook was similar to general high school and clearly written on the cover of the textbook that it was for “general/vocational high schools”. Some provided handouts also did not specifically cover the needs of students’ English skills concerning their major. Conversely, appropriate teaching materials are used to develop the students’ English skills and are expected to achieve learning objectives accurately. Not only did assist the students’ English skills, (Palmero, 2003) but also assist the teacher in delivering updated learning courses based on the students’ major field.

Third, the syllabus, handout, and student’s assignment sheet were still for general English class. The examples in part of text structures were still for general English such as “*Insects are considered dangerous animals*” and “*Tsunami is caused by earthquakes affecting the seabed*”. These examples did not reflect on the needs of students where ESP materials should be based on the needs of learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The proposed instances could change into some examples based on the field of hospitality. It could relate to the topic of hotel departments such as sales, business, customer service, front office, and others. For example: “the email should be written in formal language”, “the reservation has been made for the guest”, “the rates of extra bed has been changed”, and so forth.

4.1.2. Target Needs Analysis

The questionnaire of 35 Hospitality students and semi-structured interview section to the three selected students from each of 11th and 12th grade were used to be the findings of target needs analysis and fundamentally established in three points of target needs based on Hutchinson & Waters (1987): needs, lacks, and wants.

The target analysis presented the most specific needs by students in the Hospitality field. There are two most needed skills namely speaking skills and specialized registers which are regularly used in the Hospitality industry in many departments such as front office, food and beverage, sales, marketing, and so forth. Specifically, speaking fluency and doing role-plays was the highest target needed by the students. Speaking fluency will

influence the employees’ performance. They could handle the problem of speaking fluency by increasing their speed rate production, elaborating grammar accuracy with the variety of sentences, and exploring interpersonal language (Albino, 2017). Another highest need of students' speaking skills is in the form of role-plays related to the Hospitality field (for instance: handling the guests’ complaints). Role-play is one of the techniques to assess students’ linguistic skills for their future professionals (Erazo, Ramírez,, Encalada, Holguin, & Zoun, 2019; Rojas, 2018).

Additionally, the students need to learn specialized registers based on their major which also being the core registers. Essentially, hospitality students need to learn specialized registers in order to understand frequent words that have different meanings in a general context, such as register for hotel facilities, food and beverages, front office, and so forth which need to be learned during their language course.

4.1.3. Present Situation Analysis

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) consists of the gap between the present situation and the target needs of students. According to Robinson (1991), PSA explores to discover the students’ language proficiency following their strengths and weaknesses when the language course begins. Apart from answering the needs of students as the first research question, this part also answered the second research question that is the compatibility of the English learning process with the present and future needs of students in the Hospitality industry.

Table 1. Strengths and weaknesses of English learning in vocational school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning objectives in the classroom could be achieved based on the syllabus arrangement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher and the students do not fully understand ESP for hospitality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are slightly authentic materials to be developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher merely developed a certain topic, not for the whole materials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The students and teacher have a good understanding related to the ESP field theoretically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Both teacher and students lack learning motivation and critical thinking concerning the students’ needs and ESP learning environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Face-to-face learning is considered implementing a partial ESP-based learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The online learning system did not implement ESP teaching and learning-based.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students have been exposed to adequate practical activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students need to do more practices

Based on the result of the questionnaire and present situation analysis above, the students mostly lack English speaking ability while this is actually completely needed by the industry. Considering the fact that students lack English speaking skills, the hotel general manager stated that English is an essential skill that is needed. It was caused by English having influenced many industries; moreover, the entire hospitality field used English for their services. Hotel personnel have to be able to communicate in either spoken or written form. The most highlighted words are “Today’s needs of industry are continuously and highly developed...” indicating that the requirement for hotel employees is highly demanded to have both excellent communication and services proficiency.

Meanwhile, there will be position differentiation for employees who are fluent in English communication proficiency. Employees with excellent English communication are often selected in the context of handling the guests such as giving information, caring, and interacting with them. Apart from it, hotel employees are needed to handle their guests with the best performance by considering values, etiquette, and polite behavior to other people. Hence, they are demanded to have good communication skills with foreign guests. To meet the needs expectations, it seems fit with the present condition to filter new employees with more specified qualifications. Employees who are able to speak English fluently would have higher positions. This means that the ideal employees based on the statement of the hotel general manager simply could communicate without any problems and confidently using their English skill.

Therefore, he suggested how to compete in the hospitality industry, particularly for vocational high school students.

In order to compete with the industry field, vocational high school students are emphasized on their practical skills because this skill is the most used in the future. Unlike general high school, vocational high schools must be ready with the work field. Sometimes, I suggested vocational schools to learn with many practices, not the theories...Skill is the first and this language skill is additional. However, language also can be the main skill if they compete with the global industry which is more highly competitive. (General Manager, Mr. H)

The words “...emphasized on...” signified that GM underlined vocational high school students were demanded and necessitated doing many practices because they will compete in the future industry. And his statement could be the solution for the learning process improvement at the vocational level. Moreover, in the present situation analysis, students mostly have a low level of English competency because of the challenges of

the current situation caused by pandemic disease. The students lack practices caused by the teacher’s method and facilities limitations. The practice is not merely concerned with major skills, but also improving the students’ communication ability. In the last statement, he mentioned that English can be the main skill so that the students could compete with the broader job market. Considering his statement, English language ability provides great advantages for employees to work in the hospitality field.

Additionally, the learning process in this one vocational high school in Cirebon city, based on those three findings, is recognized as a general English class. This statement was supported by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) which is based on fundamental principles to be categorized as an ESP class: learning is continuous progress and learners have to be competent in communication skills. Hence, an ESP class cannot be carried out beyond considering the students’ condition in English learning. Particularly in part of present situation analysis, it could simply answer that the English learning process does not meet the present and future needs of Hospitality students.

4.2. Discussions

The purpose of vocational institutions is to prepare and set up the learners’ future career in the work field (Gunderson, 2004; Clarke & Winch, 2007; Pavlova, 2009; Rojewski, 2009; Billet, 2011; Soliman, 2014; Syakur, 2015). The analysis of learning needs is not entirely achieved by the students because of general English implementation. In fact, the role of the teacher in ESP context is highly demanded to significantly help the students in developing specialized language knowledge and skills to reach excellent needs of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and learners’ academic competence (Wulandari & Muhsin, 2019; Ghafunia & Sabet, 2014 cited in Mulleneaux, 2017), not only in this school but also other vocational schools in Indonesia generally. The materials learned by the students should focus on a specific target field, and connect with the skills needed in the industry (Basturkmen, 2006; Ranasuriya & Herath, 2020; Syakur, Zainuddin, & Hasan, 2020). Materials are essential and could determine the type of class implementation whether general or specific English (Dudley Evans & Johns cited in Eddine, 2016). The analysis of supporting documents such as syllabus, handouts, and students’ assignment sheet shows a good correlation. However, this is in the case of general English classroom implementation. General English is not appropriate to be applicable in vocational high school (Oktarin & Harahap, 2019; Sari & Wirza, 2021).

In addition, based on Hutchinson & Waters (1987), target needs were established by the students’ necessities, lack, and wants. Hospitality students need certain activities to improve their speaking skills and specialized

registers list. Regarding speaking skills, they required speaking fluently and doing role-plays.

Furthermore, Present Situation Analysis (PSA) was required to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the learning process. The students need to improve their practical skills particularly speaking skills and enrich specialized registers at school. This school absolutely needed some improvements in developing authentic materials, learning media, teaching methods, and other supported documents (Sanmugam, 2013; Oktarin & Harahap, 2019; Salisna, Harahap, & Sofyan, 2019; Syakur et al., 2020; Sari & Wirza, 2021)

5. CONCLUSION

To begin with, students' learning needs including the learning process itself had to be advanced in order to meet the skills needed for industry. Essentially, the students would like to use their English skills for the needs of industry when they have graduated from this school. Despite the fact, the learning media, materials, and teaching method did not work effectively and well-functioned in order to fulfill the students' needs. Learning sources such as textbooks and handouts were based on general English settings which are irrelevant to Hospitality students' needs. Additionally; the syllabus and student's assignments were designed for the general English classroom. Similarly, the teaching method used by the teacher was getting poor since the implementation of the online learning system. To conclude, the Hospitality in this one vocational school in Cirebon could not meet future needs.

Furthermore, the target analysis presented the most specific needs by students in the Hospitality field. There are two most needed skills namely speaking skills and specialized registers which are regularly used in the Hospitality industry in many departments such as the front office, food and beverage, sales, marketing, and so forth. Speaking skill was used to communicate with clients, guests, and other hotel employees; while specialized-registers functions to understand certain written documents, instructions, and utterances.

Last but not least, the present situation analysis (PSA) indicates the gap between the present situation and target needs. PSA suggests strengths and weaknesses of the English learning process. One of the strengths refers to the implementation of a slightly ESP-based teaching and learning process. This should assist students to reach target needs; however, it was less concentrated so that the impacts were not huge. Contradictory to this, the weaknesses are the students could not meet their specific needs especially the needs in industry and specific context.

To conclude, Hospitality students require more authentic and specific materials based on their major. These kinds of materials would assist them to reach the

target needs in a specific context, and be useful for their future career in a broader global market.

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