

# English Instructional Strategies in EFL Hospitality Departments

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This research aims to discover the variety of instructional strategies applied by English lecturers of EFL Hospitality Departments in Indonesia, because there is no singular best strategy for all learning settings.

**Methodology:** Subjects of this research were two English lecturers, fifty-five students, and two heads of hospitality departments. Data was collected by doing in-depth interviews, giving open questionnaires, doing observations, and analyzing documents. The Persson's Model (2006) that is VSAIEEDC (Variation, Specification, Abstraction, Internal verification, External verification, Exploration, Demonstration, Conclusion), was applied to analyze the data.

**Main Findings:** The English lecturers applied strategies that can be categorized based on ten macro strategies by Kumaravadivelu (2006). These are variety of strategies to maximize learning opportunities, facilitate negotiated interaction, minimize perceptual mismatches, help students understand the form and function of language, foster language awareness, contextualize linguistics input, integrate language skills, promote students' autonomy, raise social relevance, and ensure cultural consciousness

**Applications of this study:** Many professions in the hospitality industry require the mastery of English. Thus, English lecturers hold an essential role in facilitating hospitality students and in enabling them to provide services to foreigners. The results are expected to uncover strategies that lecturers have implemented in the Hospitality Department to improve English mastery of EFL students who traditionally face constraints.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The previous studies have not revealed the various English development strategies for the field of tourism at the university level. Furthermore, most of them are experimental studies that aim to test the effectiveness of strategies applied to the students of the experimental group.

**Keywords:** English instruction, strategies, students' perceptions, EFL, hospitality department

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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers, including lecturers, hold an essential role in language instruction. They can support students' achievement by creating an effective instructional design that increases students' involvement and discipline (Sharma, 2016). Research by Mehdipour dan Balaramulu (2013) shows that there is a significant correlation between teacher behavior and learning results of university students. Polirstok (2017) more specifically argues that teaching strategies is one of the factors that can help students improve their academic performance. In other words, learning results can be affected by the teachers because of their choice of instructional strategies.

The previous research studies also show that instructional strategies are needed to support the development of language skills. The strategies applied by teachers have indicated improvement in students' listening skills (Chen, 2011; Bozorgian and Pillay, 2013; Gebre and Tadesse, 2015; and Zanjani and Siros, 2016), speaking skills (Kosar and Bedir, 2014; Lestari, 2016; Idayani and Rugaiyah, 2017; and Purjayanti, 2019), reading skills (Lindawati, Tantra, and Ratminingsih, 2017; Afrizatama, 2018; Oktarina, 2019; and Hui, 2020), and writing skills (Khoshshima and Nia, 2014; Suriyanti and Yaacob, 2016; Juwita, 2019; and Yusuf, Jusoh, and Yusuf, 2019). Therefore, selecting the appropriate strategy to optimize students' English skills is essential, but not easy to perform. Tulbure (2011) asserts that one of the challenges for lecturers is to choose instructional

strategies that fit different student learning styles in order to improve their learning outcomes.

An effective teacher may select a variety of appropriate instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003). Awang (2013) adds that it is highly unlikely that a single strategy would fit every situation. The most probable step to be taken by a teacher is to use a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate all learners (Jose and Galang, 2015). In addition to facilitating the diversity of students, various instructional strategies are required due to different school and class conditions.

The use of a variety of instructional strategies is reinforced by the need to accommodate diversity of school and classroom conditions. Such diversity, as Eltanahy and David (2018) claim, include differences in curriculum, learning hours, learning materials, school facilities, classes, and number of students. Akani (2017) adds more items into the list: differences in ICT knowledge, staff, instructional materials, class size, physical facilities, staff remuneration, professional training/qualification of teachers, exposure/orientation of teachers, the nature of the concept being taught and educational funding.

Another difference between this research and previous research is the setting. Previous research was not conducted in the Hospitality Department. Even though, English in this department is studied intensively. English mastery in this department is considered essential as a means to support students to be able to provide services to the guests (Prabhu and Wani, 2015). Therefore,

English holds an important role in students' career. It is reinforced by the research results of [Erazo, et al. \(2019\)](#) indicating that the hotel staff needs to have English proficiency in order to make the guests feel comfortable. Therefore, [Erazo, et al. \(2019\)](#) suggests that furthermore, there is research that digs deeper into the various English development strategies for the field of tourism at the university level

However, in Indonesia, English is only learned in a classroom context. Students might encounter some constraints. [Farahdiba and Asrifan \(2016\)](#) mention language barriers experienced by the EFL students from the department of Hospitality, among others a lack of vocabulary and communication strategies. This resulted in the students being unable to exchange information with foreign guests and posed a misunderstanding. Furthermore, they found if the EFL students suffered from psychological barriers, such as anxiety that caused nervousness, worry, shame, and emotional distress that elicited a sense of anger and fear.

This study are expected to uncover strategies that teachers have implemented to improve English mastery of EFL students who traditionally face constraints. The different instructional strategies are categorized based on the theory initiated by [Kumaravadivelu \(2006: 201-208\)](#) below

- 1) Maximize learning opportunities: a teacher needs to modify learning dynamically according to students' ability to perceive input and interaction in class.
- 2) Facilitate negotiated interaction: the teacher has a role in facilitating the use of the language of students used in their interactions, both with other students and the teacher. Thus, they encourage students to be actively involved.
- 3) Minimize perceptual mismatches: the teacher needs to conduct regular question-and-answer sessions to dig up information from students about the possibility of misinterpretation and cause a mismatch of perceptions by students.
- 4) Activate intuitive heuristics: a teacher use a variety of texts as a means to show students examples of forms and functions of language.
- 5) Foster language awareness: the teacher guide students' attention to the formal property or language equipment they are learning to maximize their understanding and use.
- 6) Contextualize linguistics input: The teacher can use discourse as a means to make students understand the integrated nature of language.
- 7) Integrate language skills: The teacher needs to develop holistic learning.
- 8) Promote students' autonomy: The teacher is expected to motivate students to become independent language learners because most of the language learning process is an autonomous activity.
- 9) Raise social relevance: The teacher can make students understand the differences in the social context of the environment they live in with the cultural context. Students can be trained to recognize expressions which may have a different meaning when expressed in the target language.
- 10) Ensure cultural consciousness: The teacher needs to show learning resources that students can get information about cultural diversity to increase

their empathy for people with cultures that are different from them.

In general, the theoretical work and research studies suggest that a research into the use of a variety of instructional strategies is needed to understand critical aspects that affect student learning outcomes. Indeed, similar studies have existed with substantial differences. Most of them are experimental studies that aim to test the effectiveness of strategies applied to the students of the experimental group, while the research aims to estimate the variety of instructional strategies that have been implemented in the hospitality department.

#### METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative research. As stated by [Hatch \(2002\)](#), qualitative research aims to reveal perceptions which base individuals' actions in certain social situations. Therefore, this research is expected to explore participants' perceptions of the use of instructional strategies in the hospitality department. This research applies the case study approach. [Yin \(2014\)](#) expressed that a case study is used when a research aims to answer the questions "how" and "why". This research aims to reveal how the variety of instructional strategies are used in English lectures and why such an attitude manifest.

In a multiple-case study, [Yin \(2014:57-58\)](#) suggested to use the logic of replication as an approach in the process of analysis. In this process, each case must show the same research procedures until the results of each research can be generated. Then the results of each study are compared to determine the similarities and differences. The results are generally intended to explain the research questions and are specifically used to achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

The selection of these departments was based on the consideration of opportunity to dig necessary information according to the research objective. As expressed by [Hatch \(2002: 697\)](#) there is no best strategy in taking research samples, because everything must be in line with the research objective. Thus, the reason for choosing this department is the opportunity to get enough research data because English in the department is studied intensively.

This research was conducted in two D3 Hospitality study programs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The selection is also based on people's trust in the good reputation that both have. This is proven by the achievement of B accreditation in both study programs. However, at the request of the informants, the researcher could not name the original institution of origin, so the names were A and B.

Students from these two study programs on average study for six semesters (three years). Students of the institution A attended English classes for 5 semesters, namely General English in the first and second semesters and the English language professions that lead to practical communication needs in the field of hospitality in the third through fifth semesters. Students from institution B took English for three semesters, all semesters being professional English. In other words, the equation of institutions A and B is the provision of professional English courses for three semesters. Therefore, students selected as informants from institution A are students in semester five, while those from institution B are students in semester three.

Other informants involved in this study were two lecturers of English and two heads of programs of institution A and B. To obtain data on various learning

strategies and students' perceptions of the implementation of these strategies, the researcher gave an open questionnaire to twenty-six students from institution A and twenty-nine students from institution B. In filling out an open questionnaire, students are expected to mention as many answers as possible. In-depth interviews were conducted with each lecturer and head of study program to obtain data on the various learning strategies and the reasons for their application. In addition to providing questionnaires and conducting interviews, the research data is derived from the analysis of documents that are curriculum, syllabus, lesson plan, teaching materials, and exam questions. Researchers also observe the profession of English lectures for 1 month in each institution. Data from observation and document analysis was also used to strengthen the validity of the data. To analyze the data,

researchers used [Persson's Model \(2006\)](#) VSAIEEDC, which stands for Variation, Specification, Abstraction, Internal verification, External verification, Exploration, Demonstration, Conclusion.

**RESULTS/FINDINGS**

In this study, different strategies that lecturers from institutions A and B adopt are categorized based on the theory initiated by [Kumaravadivelu \(2006: 201-208\)](#).

1) Maximize learning opportunities

The data shows that the strategies applied by lecturer A and lecturer B provide many opportunities for students to explore various types of texts and dialogs used in the hospitality sphere. In addition, students are also encouraged to actively communicate both verbally and in writing.

Table 2. Variety of strategies to maximize learning opportunities

Data
Elaborating some expressions from videos that have been shown before to create and perform a new dialogue in a different situation
Looking for, presenting, and discussing some texts and dialogues about hospitality industries.
Writing new texts in different situations based on samples of text that have been read before
Jotting down English terms used in the hotel where the students conducted field practice, then using them to create and perform new dialogs between the guest and hotel staff or between staff
Writing an application letter and CV based on samples of hotel job vacancy ads
Checking and discussing the diction and grammar mistakes found in students' works.
Making summary (in English) of the materials from the other subjects of hospitality department that were previously studied

2) Facilitate negotiated interaction

The results of the following interviews and questionnaire analysis show that adoption of strategies aim to encourage students to establish good communication with fellow students and lecturers. Students are also encouraged to not only respond, but also to initiate conversations.

Table 3. Variety of strategies to facilitate negotiated interaction

Data
Making a short video about activities that guests do at the hotel. Reviewed by classmates and the lecturer about the plot, setting, expressions, and the language
Creating a hotel advertisement poster and playing the role of hotel staff and prospective guests
Playing the role of guests and asking questions about the hotel advertisement poster
Taking turns reading students' own creation of a short story or an illustration about events at the hotel and guessing the description

3) Minimize perceptual mismatches

The following data shows that the strategy applied by the lecturer also aims to find out things that are not well understood by students, causing errors. The lecturer then gives additional explanations to address the issue.

Table 4. Variety of strategies to minimize perceptual mismatches

Data
Introducing grammar indirectly through mistakes found in students' sentences
Correcting students' mispronunciation during presentation
Providing extra explanation about the context or the culture when the students' expressions in their dialogue are not appropriate

4) Activate intuitive heuristics

The data below shows the lecturers' strategy of providing examples of language use then asking the students to find out the form and function of the language by themselves.

Table 5. Variety of strategies to help students understand the form and function of language

Data
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Discussing the expressions used on sample dialogs
Giving different cases for each group of students to create new dialogs by using expressions discussed before
Showing some samples of letters and looking closely at the differences about the ways to write the opening, the body of letter and the closing

- 5) Foster language awareness  
Results of questionnaire and interview analysis show that lecturers have a strategy to make students understand aspects of language that require more attention.

Table 6. Variety of strategies to foster language awareness

Data
Telling students how the words should have been pronounced when they spoke or read aloud and mispronounced some words
Discussing some words that have similar spelling, but are actually different

- 6) Contextualize linguistics input  
The following table shows how lecturers develop language learning contextually

Table 7. Variety of strategies to contextualize linguistics input

Data
Watching a video about various hotel services via mobile phone and creating students' own dialogs
Discussing guests' complaints and asking them to choose the appropriate words, intonation, and attitude to remain polite in a new dialogue
Creating and performing a new dialogue of introducing a new staff and a guest to procedures of using hotel tools and facilities in the laboratory.
Discussing the language used on an application letter
Writing an application letter showing students' appropriate abilities and experience
Discussing the up to date terms found on the videos and texts

- 7) Integrate language skills  
The data below shows that the lecturers developed language skills by connecting them to one another, not separately.

Table 8. Variety of strategies to integrate language skills

Data
Reading texts and writing new texts or modifying texts
Watching videos first before practiced making new dialog to be performed in front of the class and to be commented on by the lecturer and classmates.

- 8) Promote students' autonomy  
Lecturers help students to use learning strategies, to plan learning, and to set targets. The following are the results of the questionnaire and interview analysis.

Table 9. Variety of strategies to promote students' autonomy

Data
Asking students to find new materials outside the classroom then discuss them in the context of language use
Students jotted down new things that they have learned at the hotel
Learning from students' own mistakes and from their friends' mistakes

- 9) Raise social relevance  
The following data shows how the lecturers not only encourage students to actively communicate in speaking and writing, but also introduce the students to the culture of other countries.

Table 10. Variety of strategies to raise social relevance

Data
Presenting videos about people's favorite foods and habits from various countries.
Performing a dialogue about providing services while showing students the culture of the foreign guests
Making summaries about differences in terms of what people can do and cannot do around the world

- 10) Ensure cultural consciousness  
The following data shows how the lecturers guide students to understand the use of a variety of language to communicate in social life.

Table 11. Variety of strategies to ensure cultural consciousness

Data
Showing a video and discussing several expressions which when translated to English would carry a different meaning.
Giving some examples of wrong translated sentences in some poster advertisement

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The collected data shows that the variations in instructional strategies are in fact to give the students experience in using English in the real situation of hospitality industries. In other words, lecturers implement strategies to develop contextual language learning. Another strategy that is applied by the lecturer is to hone the language skills by exploring various learning resources so that the students can then understand the form and function of the language. In listening practice, the lecturers also introduce the students to oral language through videos about hospitality industries. By watching the videos, the students are motivated to deal with various English expressions. Besides the use of video, students' listening skills are sharpened by listening to other students who performed their own dialogs.

Instructional strategies to develop reading and writing skills are also chosen to give students experience in using written English. The lecturers used several texts, such as descriptive texts about hotel, hotel promotion posters, hotel job vacancy ads, job application letters, CV, and so on. The students were then asked to modify the texts or make new texts based on certain situations. The English written materials also promote the practice of English in a real hospitality context.

For the speaking skills practice, the lecturers provide opportunities for the students to practice speaking skills through role plays of different situations and contexts. This strategy is applied to lecturers to encourage students not only to respond, but also to have initiative in initiating conversations. The various expressions to communicate with guests and colleagues of all departments in hospitality are also studied in the English course. To provide more experience, the learning is conducted not only in the classroom but also in the laboratory to develop communication skills in the hospitality context.

In other words, the lecturers employ the learning-by-doing principle of when to use expressions in various situations and contexts. Lecturers develop many simulations and role-playing activities. Although the English lecturers said that they tried to develop all language skills, they tended to focus on speaking skills. [Van \(2015\)](#), in his research on the use of hospitality English in Vietnam also finds if the speaking skills are indispensable by graduates to be able to compete in the workforce. The importance of mastery of speaking skills in hospitality is also strengthened by the research results of [Albakrawi \(2013\)](#) and [Khoirunnisa, Suparno, and Supriyadi, S \(2018\)](#).

It is possible for the lecturers to evaluate the students' mistakes in pronunciation, use of expressions, and so on. Thus, the students can learn by identifying and correcting their own and other students' mistakes. In addition, this strategy makes students aware of certain aspects of the linguistic aspect that often causes misunderstanding or misconception so that it requires special attention.

The focus of instructional design on hospitality industries is also reflected on the introduction of vocabulary and expressions of this register. Terms centered on the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and general services are introduced and used in the English course as a means of developing language skills. The data also

shows that the English instruction is not only about grammar. Grammar is implicitly learned in the communication so that they can apply it in different conversation situations. The learning was not focus on text-based or grammar-based questions that make students only understand the classroom materials. The learning is developed creatively so that the students can understand authentic materials outside the classroom, such as field practice and information from the internet. In addition to sharpening students' language skills, the lecturers also introduce the students to different culture from various countries. The lecturers use videos to show the different habits of people around the world, identify the differences, and make a summary. The students were also asked to perform a dialogue showing their understanding about culture differences. In addition, the lecturers also showed that special terms and expressions that are translated one by one will carry a different meaning.

Through this strategy, lecturers not only demonstrate that there is a distinct foreign culture of the student culture, but also the use of contextual language in accordance with the socio-cultural life. The target culture's recognition strategy is deemed necessary by [Fielden and Rico \(2017\)](#) stating that in order to succeed in their career, hospitality students do not need to communicate languages, but also communicate interculturally with guests.

The English instruction in the hospitality department also provided the students with the opportunity to practice their skills in solving problems and to find solutions to cases found in the hospitality industries. By applying this strategy, the students are trained to think rationally, to be sensitive, and to be able to contribute to solving problems around them. This is similar to the statement [Yasmin, Sarkar, and Sohail \(2016\)](#) that students from hospitality majors also need to be encouraged to have critical thinking skills and problems solving.

In the material about handling complaints, the students were provided with cases about guest dissatisfaction with the services. In so doing, the students were trained not only to produce acceptable expressions but also to identify, analyze, and find solutions to the problems. Based on the interviews with the lecturers, it was show that they tried not only to associate English with hospitality industries, but also to increase the students' ability to solve problems that are relevant to their career.

The collected data also shows that students are adult learners who can find their own learning resources. As independent learners, the students are required to follow the development of knowledge, especially in the field of hospitality industries. Various new terms in the hospitality industries can be learnt through various sources, not only from the lecturers. Thus, the students can always keep updated with new issues in the field of hospitality. [Yasmin, Sarkar, and Sohail \(2016\)](#) also voiced teachers to encourage students to become independent learners because they can hone the skills needed in the workforce.

The claim that the applied English instructional strategy can increase students' autonomy is strengthened by the data in the interviews that show the lecturers instruction is not the only source of learning. The English instruction major puts the students as the subjects. Students are

required to be active so that they can experience the learning process. They are expected to be able to develop their own learning. The students are provided with opportunities to learn English from various sources. They are free to discuss new knowledge they have found.

In general, the job of the lecturers is to provide guidance because the lecturers are not the only source of learning. New things that the students find outside the classroom can then be discussed together. They do not have full control over learning. In this case, the lecturer uses instructional strategies to be a learning facilitator. It is also disclosed Jonassen, Grabinger and Harris (1991) in stating that instructional strategies are a set of plans and techniques that the instructor uses to facilitate and make students active in learning. Through this activity, the students are indirectly trained to respect the ideas, opinions, and feelings of others. It was judged by Nicolaidis (2012) as a necessary activity especially for hospitality students to improve their social skills.

The lecturers also realize their roles as the motivators in learning. Motivation facilitates the students to develop their career. Moreover, the lecturers understand that many professions in the hospitality industry require the mastery of English. Thus, it is necessary to provide motivation for students in the process of mastering English. Furthermore, in Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is not used in students' daily life. They learn English only in the classroom. It makes English skills not easy to master. The importance of high motivation in the process of English mastery as a second language, in foreign languages is also revealed in a number of theoretical studies (Khansir and Dehkordi, 2017; Alizadeh, 2016; and Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). Consistency in learning also requires high motivation from the students themselves. In this case, educators are expected to encourage them to develop motivation.

The data obtained indicates that instructional strategies in English courses in hospitality study programs have the characteristics of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Strevens (1988) in Popescu (2010) explains the two characteristics of ESP-namely absolute and variable characteristics. Absolute characteristics include adjusting the learning objectives of English with the needs of students; adjusting learning themes and topics to the field of science of students; adjusting the linguistic aspects learned with the learning topic; and ESP development that is different from General English. Lecturers from both institutions A and B have implemented strategies that enable the study of specific material in the hospitality industry context.

Variable characteristics allow limitation to the skills developed (for example, reading skills) but do not limit the use of learning methods. This characteristic is also evident from data showing that the speaking skills are the dominant skills developed by the lecturers.

## CONCLUSION

The English course in the hospitality study program aims to prepare students to become a professional workforce that can not only provide services to domestic guests, but also foreigners. The English instruction in hospitality industries requires a lot of practice. The students are guided to develop all language skills. This is evidence done through a teaching strategy that does not separate each language skill but combines it instead. To develop the skills, the lecturers relies on English for hospitality. Instructional strategies adopted by lecturers aim to develop all language skills, although speaking is

considered the most important skill. Therefore, the lecturers do not merely give a lecture, but they resort to a variety of supporting facilities so students can produce contextual and active language. In addition to inviting students to learn languages, lecturers also have several strategies to introduce students to the culture of other countries. This knowledge is needed so that students can find out specific habits or things that are permissible and which cannot be done by people from various countries. Thus, students can provide the best service by understanding foreign guests with different cultural backgrounds.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

Nonetheless, the results of this study have not described the impact of instructional strategies on broader scope. Further research is expected to explore the perception of stakeholders, co-workers, and foreign guests to the English proficiency of the students in hospitality majors as the impact of applied strategies.

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## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

First author contibuted to collect and analyze the data and wrote the manuscript. Co-author were involved in planning and supervised the work. First author and Co-author discussed the result and commented on the manuscript.

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