



English Needs Analysis in the Hospitality Industry in Lombok: A Case Study of Hotel Receptionists and Tour Guides

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history</p> <p>Received : October, 17th 2025 Revised : Nov, 18th 2025 Accepted : Dec, 24th 2025</p> <p>OPEN ACCESS</p>	<p>The hospitality sector, as one of the vital components of the tourism industry, requires English language competence that differs from general English, as it involves a wide range of technical terms and context-specific communication. In particular, hotel receptionists and tour guides require appropriate and contextually accurate English proficiency to ensure effective and satisfactory communication with international guests. However, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific English language needs of these two professions in Lombok, particularly in terms of vocabulary, communication patterns, and language functions used in professional contexts. The main issue addressed in this study is the limited number of in-depth investigations into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs in the hospitality sector in Lombok, especially for hotel receptionists and tour guides. This study employed purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The sample size was determined based on data saturation and involved approximately 15–20 hotel receptionists and 15–20 tour guides from star-rated hotels and leading travel agencies in Lombok. The findings indicate that speaking and listening skills are the most essential competencies, as they are directly involved in interaction with international guests. Writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar remain important as supporting skills to ensure accurate and professional communication. In addition, there is a strong need for job-related vocabulary and expressions, such as those related to reservations, facilities, complaint handling, and local culture. The main challenges faced by hospitality workers include limited vocabulary mastery, differences in accents, and low confidence in using English.</p>
Keywords:	<i>needs analysis; hospitality industry; hotel receptionist; tour guide</i>

1. Introduction

The tourism industry in Indonesia, particularly in Lombok, has experienced rapid growth along with the increasing number of international tourists. As a leading tourist destination, Lombok not only offers natural attractions but also functions as a tourism service hub that requires competent human resources, especially in the use of English as an international language. English serves as the primary medium of communication between hospitality

industry practitioners and foreign tourists, making industry-specific English proficiency essential for improving service quality.

The hospitality sector, as a crucial component of tourism, requires English language skills that differ from general contexts due to the presence of technical terminology, service culture, and customer interactions in both formal and informal situations. In particular, hotel receptionists and tour guides require precise and context-appropriate English proficiency to ensure effective and satisfactory communication. However, there remains a lack of understanding regarding the specific English language needs of these two professions in Lombok, including vocabulary, communication patterns, and language functions.

The main problem addressed in this study is the lack of in-depth research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs in Lombok's hospitality sector, particularly for hotel receptionists and tour guides. This gap may lead to a mismatch between workers' existing language competencies and actual workplace demands, ultimately affecting service quality and tourist satisfaction.

The development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) stemmed from the pressing need to master English as a means of communication. Nunan (2004) points out that the emergence of ESP was driven by the specific needs of its learners. These learners needed English as a means of communication, not merely as a collection of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Furthermore, Richards (2001) explains that the development of the ESP approach stemmed from the need for students with non-English-speaking backgrounds to study at American and British universities since the 1950s. Furthermore, there was a need to design materials for students who had mastered general English but needed English for specific situations in the workplace, the need for learning materials for individuals who used English for specific purposes such as business, and the need to teach the language to immigrants so they could adapt to new work situations.

There are several definitions of English for Specific Purpose. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that "ESP is an approach to language teaching that aims to meet the needs of particular learners." Furthermore, Paltridge and Starfield (2013) emphasize that the main characteristic of ESP lies in the material and learning objectives that are built based on the needs of the learners. In short, ESP provides language learning activities that are relevant to the demands and needs of learners.

Specific English Language (ESP) is a branch of English language instruction that emphasizes language needs specific to specific professional contexts (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In the hospitality industry, ESP focuses on vocabulary, language functions, and communication patterns relevant to customer service and hotel operations (Basturkmen, 2010). Research by Chen and Wang (2018) confirms that hospitality ESP must integrate technical and social aspects of communication to be effective in multicultural environments. Global tourism continues to grow rapidly, and English has long been recognized as a primary lingua franca for cross-cultural interactions (Jenkins, 2017). In popular tourism destinations like Lombok, English proficiency is a vital asset for industry players to communicate effectively with international tourists (Wulandari & Nurmasyitah, 2021). Fluent communication not only enhances guest satisfaction but also contributes to a professional and welcoming destination image. A study by Purnomo and Budiono (2019) suggests that a lack of English proficiency among tourism staff can hinder the tourist experience and potential revenue. Therefore, ensuring that tourism college graduates have English language competencies that match industry needs is a must.

Needs analysis is an important aspect in designing an ESP syllabus. Brown (1995) defines needs analysis as a process of gathering important information that is useful for developing a curriculum that is suited to the needs of specific learners. Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) in Brown (1995, p. 35) define needs analysis as “the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities”, namely the process of determining the language needs of an individual or group of learners and ranking these needs according to priority. Needs assessment involves both subjective and objective information (e.g., data from questionnaires, tests, interviews, and observations).

Several experts have proposed procedures for conducting needs analysis. Basturkmen (2010) states that the needs analysis process includes: target situation analysis, discourse analysis, present situation analysis, learner factor analysis, and teaching context analysis.

Target situation analysis focuses on identifying the tasks, activities, and skills that learners will use in the context of English use. Discourse analysis describes the characteristics of the language used. Current situation analysis aims to identify learners' current knowledge. Learner factor analysis includes identifying learners' motivations and

perceptions of their needs. Finally, instructional context analysis examines environmental factors related to the implementation of the learning program.

This study aims to analyze the specific English language needs required by hotel receptionists and tour guides in Lombok's hospitality industry. By identifying relevant vocabulary, expressions, communication patterns, and usage contexts, the findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for developing more targeted and industry-relevant English training materials.

The urgency of this study lies in its contribution to improving the quality of human resources in the tourism sector, particularly for positions that directly interact with international tourists. Furthermore, this study supports the development of more relevant and applicable English curricula in training institutions and hospitality vocational education in Lombok. Ultimately, this research is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Lombok's hospitality industry at national and international levels and support the achievement of professional service standards.

2. Research Method

This study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and observations of hotel receptionists and active tour guides in Lombok. Secondary data came from supporting documents such as hotel profiles, tourist brochures, websites, and publications related to the use of English in the tourism sector.

Data is collected using three main techniques:

1. Semi-structured questionnaire to identify the frequency and context of English use and the most frequently used skills.
2. In-depth interviews with selected informants to explore communication needs and challenges faced in work.
3. Non-participatory observation at the workplace to see firsthand the use of English in real situations.

Population and Sample

The study population included all receptionists and tour guides in Lombok. The sample was selected using purposive and snowball sampling, with criteria of at least one year of work

experience and regular interaction with foreign tourists. The number of respondents was 30–40, consisting of receptionists and tour guides from various hotels and travel agencies.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through coding, grouping themes, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation (questionnaires, interviews, observations) and member checking with informants to ensure accurate interpretation.

3. Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

This study analyzes the specific English language needs of receptionists and tour guides in the hotel industry in Lombok. The main focus of the study lies in identifying vocabulary types, common expressions, communication patterns, and the contexts of their use in daily interactions between hotel staff and foreign guests. Based on the results of interviews and field observations, it was found that the use of English in the hospitality context in Lombok is closely related to three main communication areas: reception services (front office interaction), tour guiding communication, and handling complaints and special requests (*service recovery and special requests*).

The research results show that receptionists and tour guides need to master vocabulary and expressions that are directly related to the context of their work.

Table 1. Frequency of English Vocabulary Use by Hotel Receptionists in Lombok

No	Vocabulary Categories	General Vocabulary	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Reservation Process	<i>booking, check-in, check-out, availability, confirmation</i>	17	85%
2	Hotel Facilities	<i>amenities, complimentary items, room types, housekeeping, breakfast included</i>	15	75%
3	Additional Services	<i>shuttle service, tour package, payment methods, airport transfer</i>	13	65%
4	Handling Guest Complaints	<i>apologize, issue, maintenance, refund, delay</i>	9	45%
5	General Interaction and Politeness	<i>good morning, please wait a moment, thank you for your patience, may I help you?</i>	18	90%

A survey of 20 hotel receptionists in Lombok revealed that the most frequently used vocabulary categories were general interaction and politeness vocabulary (90%) and vocabulary related to the reservation process (85%). This indicates that the primary task of receptionists is highly oriented towards direct service to guests, particularly during the reception, registration, and routine communication processes in the front office area. Vocabulary related to hotel facilities (75%) was also frequently used, particularly when receptionists explained room types, additional facilities, and services available to guests. Meanwhile, vocabulary related to additional services (65%), such as shuttle service, tour packages, and payment methods, was used by receptionists working in hotels that primarily serve international tourists. The category of handling guest complaints (45%) showed a lower level of use because communication in this context is situational and does not occur routinely. However, this category has high strategic value in creating guest satisfaction and maintaining a positive hotel image, thus requiring a dedicated portion of English language training for reception staff.

Overall, the survey results confirm that mastery of functional vocabulary and polite expressions is a key requirement for hotel receptionists in Lombok. Therefore, the development of English language training materials should focus on front office service situations, encompassing conversations related to reservations, providing facility information, handling special requests, and simulating professional communication with foreign guests.

Table 2. Frequency of English Vocabulary Use by Tour Guides in Lombok

No	Vocabulary Categories	Vocabulary	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Tourist Attraction Description	<i>scenic view, cultural heritage, traditional market, waterfall, temple</i>	18	90%
2	Tourist Activities	<i>snorkeling, trekking, cultural performance, diving, cycling tour</i>	16	80%
3	Local Culture Explanation	<i>customs, rituals, traditional cuisine, local handicrafts, community life</i>	15	75%
4	Tourist Services and Safety	<i>safety equipment, first aid, please follow the guide, stay together, emergency contact</i>	13	65%
5	General Interaction with Tourists	<i>welcome to, let's move on, please take a picture here, thank you for joining the tour</i>	19	95%

A survey of 20 tour guides in Lombok found that the most frequently used vocabulary was vocabulary for general interactions with tourists (95%) and descriptions of tourist attractions (90%). This indicates that English language skills related to information delivery and interpersonal communication are a key aspect of a tour guide's work. The tourist activity category (80%) also had a high usage rate because most guiding activities in Lombok involve outdoor activities such as snorkeling, trekking, or diving. Mastery of this vocabulary is crucial for explaining procedures, giving instructions, and ensuring tourist safety during the activity. Furthermore, vocabulary related to explaining local culture (75%) holds a crucial position in the context of culture-based tourism. Tour guides need to explain cultural values, traditions, and regional culinary specialties in appropriate language to enable tourists to gain a deeper understanding of the richness of the local culture.

Meanwhile, the tourist service and safety category (65%) is used contextually, particularly during high-risk activities or when guides need to provide safety guidance. While this percentage is lower than the other categories, this aspect remains crucial for building tourist trust in the guide's professionalism.

Table 3 Results of the English Language Skills Needs Survey

Skill Area	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
Speaking	25	25%
Listening	22	22%
Writing	19	19%
Reading	18	18%
Vocabulary	13	13%
Grammar	10	10%

The table above shows the level of English language skill needs in the hospitality industry based on a survey of 20 respondents consisting of receptionists and tour guides in Lombok. Based on the survey results, Speaking (25 respondents, 83%) ranked highest as the most needed English skill, followed by Listening (22 respondents, 73%), Writing (19 respondents, 63%), and Reading (18 respondents, 60%). Meanwhile, Vocabulary (13 respondents, 43%) and Grammar (10 respondents, 33%) were considered relatively less needed skills compared to other skills, although they remain important in the context of professional communication. Overall, these results indicate that oral communication skills (speaking and listening) are the

main focus of English language needs in the hospitality industry, in line with the characteristics of the jobs of receptionists and tour guides that require direct interaction with international guests. These findings can be the basis for designing more targeted English language training materials, especially with an emphasis on improving practical communication skills and mastery of contextual vocabulary in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Hotel receptionist and tour guide Hotel receptionists often face various challenges in communicating in English, which can affect the quality of their service to guests. Differences in accents and dialects, limited vocabulary, the ability to handle complaints quickly and appropriately, and the level of confidence in communicating are some of the main challenges faced by hotel receptionists and tour guides.

Hotel receptionist and tour guide Hotel staff in Lombok often face challenges related to limited vocabulary when providing accurate information about hotel facilities, handling guest complaints, and fulfilling special requests. Adequate vocabulary is key to providing effective and satisfactory service in the hospitality industry.

Lack of vocabulary among receptionists often leads to incomplete or even incorrect information being provided to guests, which can ultimately lower guest satisfaction and damage the hotel's reputation. Zhang (2020) found that limited vocabulary impacts hotel service quality. The study showed that receptionists with insufficient vocabulary tend to have difficulty providing accurate information and are more likely to make errors in service.

In addition to vocabulary, the challenge of accent and dialect differences in communication between hotel receptionists in the Lombok hospitality industry and foreign guests, especially those from different English-speaking countries, is a widely studied issue in the hospitality industry context. Based on interviews, hotel receptionists in the Lombok hospitality industry often experience difficulties in understanding the accents and dialects of foreign guests. For example, accents from the United States, England, Australia, and India have significant differences in both pronunciation and meaning in conversational contexts.

Discussion

The results of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the specific English language needs of receptionists and tour guides in the Lombok hotel industry. Based on the results of a survey of 20 respondents, English language skills play a central role in supporting effective communication and improving the quality of service to international guests. Speaking and listening skills emerged as the two most essential aspects, as they play a direct

role in the interaction process with international guests. Meanwhile, writing and reading skills remain important as supports for professional communication, while mastery of vocabulary and grammar plays a supporting role in ensuring the accuracy and clarity of messages.

These findings align with research conducted by Yamin (2021), which asserted that speaking ability is a key skill required in the hospitality industry to ensure successful intercultural communication. Therefore, these research findings reinforce the view that the success of hotel and tourism services in Lombok depends heavily on the staff's ability to interact effectively and responsively with international guests.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that English language needs in this context are occupational-specific. Receptionists and tour guides require mastery of vocabulary and expressions relevant to their tasks, such as the reservation process, explaining hotel facilities, handling complaints, and describing tourist attractions and local culture. These findings support the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach, which emphasizes the importance of language learning tailored to the professional context of the language user.

However, this study also identified several key challenges faced by hotel workers in Lombok, including limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding foreign guests' accents, and low communication confidence. These conditions indicate a gap between their English language skills and practical needs in the field. These findings are consistent with research by Al-Jufri et al. (2024), which states that similar obstacles are also faced by tourism workers in other regions of Indonesia.

Therefore, a more targeted English language training program based on real-world workplace needs is needed. This training should integrate authentic communication exercises through simulated work situations, role-playing, and listening activities in various English accents. This training approach is expected to significantly improve employees' communication skills, strengthen professionalism, and support the development of globally competitive tourism in Lombok.

4. Conclusion

The analysis shows that speaking and listening skills are the most needed, given their direct role in communication with foreign guests. Meanwhile, writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar remain essential to support accurate and professional communication.

Furthermore, this study identified specific needs for vocabulary and expressions related to work contexts, such as reservation processes, facility descriptions, complaint handling, and explanations of tourist attractions and local culture. Key challenges faced by hotel workers and tour guides include limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding accents, and a lack of confidence in using English.

The implications of these findings for the hospitality industry in Lombok are significant. Hotels in Lombok can take concrete steps by increasing investment in English language training for their receptionists. This can directly improve the quality of service provided to guests, increase guest satisfaction, and strengthen overall positive perceptions of the hotel. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of the importance of English proficiency can also inspire the development of more effective and targeted training programs aimed at improving hotel staff's communication skills in interacting with guests and addressing the challenges that arise in communicating with foreign guests.

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