

**Exploring Strategies of Teaching  
Speaking Skills for Hotel Staffs  
(A Literature Review)**

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**Abstract**

The Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia recorded that the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia in 2022 reached 5.47 million visits. It means that tourism sector in Indonesia must be ready to accommodate tourists visiting the country by providing excellent service. Communication promotes positive engagement between the hospitality industry staffs and the guests. However, many hotel staffs cannot use English effectively due to many factors, such as lack of vocabulary, improper grammar, fears of mistakes and anxiety. Therefore, speaking skill enhancement is needed through effective teaching strategies. This study aimed at exploring and identifying effective teaching strategies to improve the staffs' speaking skill. The study used literature review method, which summarizes and evaluates a body of writings about a specific topic (Knopf, 2006). Based on the literature review, there are five main effective strategies in teaching speaking skill for hotel staffs; they are role play, discussion, picture describing, storytelling and interview. It is suggested that teachers can use these strategies to maximize hotel staffs' speaking skill.

**Keywords:** *speaking, teaching strategies, hotel staffs*

**Abstrak**

Badan Pusat Statistik mencatat jumlah kunjungan wisman ke Indonesia pada 2022 mencapai 5,47 juta kunjungan. Artinya, sektor pariwisata di Indonesia harus siap menampung wisatawan yang berkunjung ke Tanah Air dengan memberikan pelayanan yang terbaik. Komunikasi adalah aspek yang memberikan keterlibatan positif antara staf industri perhotelan dan para tamu. Namun, banyak staf hotel tidak dapat menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara efektif karena banyak faktor, seperti kurangnya kosa kata, tata bahasa yang tidak tepat, ketakutan akan kesalahan, dan kecemasan. Oleh karena itu, peningkatan keterampilan berbicara diperlukan melalui strategi pengajaran yang efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dan mengidentifikasi strategi pengajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara staf. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka, yang meringkas dan mengevaluasi sebuah tulisan tentang topik tertentu (Knopf, 2006). Berdasarkan tinjauan literatur, ada lima strategi utama yang efektif dalam mengajarkan keterampilan berbicara untuk staf hotel; permainan peran, diskusi, deskripsi gambar, bercerita dan wawancara. Disarankan agar guru dapat menggunakan strategi ini untuk memaksimalkan keterampilan berbicara para staf hotel.

**Kata kunci:** berbicara, strategi pengajaran, staf hotel

## **1. Introduction**

In tourism industry, mastering speaking skill is important for the staffs who are frequently in contact with the guests. They are required to speak with foreigners in many different contexts conversations, such as taking order, giving information about tourism, marketing products or services, etc. Moreover, speaking skill is required to communicate and also to build engagement with the guests. Excellent communication skills are important in the hospitality industry because they can help to build positive relationship with guests, resolve conflicts, and create a positive guest experience during their visit. Clear and concise communication helps to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications that can disrupt the flow of operations. As one of tourism destination, Indonesia has always put the best effort in providing service to the guests visiting the country.

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS – Badan Pusat Statistik) of Indonesia recorded that the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia in 2022 reached 5.47 million visits. This figure rose 251.28% compared to the last 2021 period. In contrast, in 2020 to 2022, the achievements of foreign tourists visiting in 2022 are considered to be the highest. The total number of visits by foreign tourists in 2020 reached 4.05 million, while in 2021 it only reached 1.56 million visits. Due to the fact that there are many visits to Indonesia from foreign countries, hospitality staffs need to provide excellence in tourism service.

Communication skills using English surely play an important role in this context. Blue and Harun (2003) state that English, which is associated with host-guest interaction in the service business, should be termed as the “language of hospitality” which refers to all linguistic expressions related to and represented in hospitality concerns. This brings English to main priority as it is widely used in business world. Boonyawattana (1999, as cited in Firharmawan and Andika, 2019:63) revealed that listening and speaking skills were greatly important in tourism business careers more than reading and writing skills.

Speaking was needed the most, followed by listening, reading and writing. People who worked in tourism business also encountered the most problems of using English in listening skills, followed by speaking, writing and reading skills. Therefore, speaking skill is essential for the tourism workers as they will use it frequently at work.

However, many Indonesians cannot speak English actively due to many people view English as a difficult subject. Widiastuti et al (2021) state that although English has been introduced since early education until in university level, English is still considered a difficult language to master by most Indonesian because English is still considered a foreign language. Meanwhile, Thornburry (2005: 28) states that lack of vocabularies, improper grammar, fears of mistakes are some factors that can contribute to speaking failure and causing an acute sense of anxiety when it comes to speaking. Therefore, people who work in tourism industry need to overcome this problem by learning English, particularly speaking, in an environment that is ‘safe’ for them in using the target language. It is also the teachers’ job to think about the strategies used in teaching speaking skill to maximize learning, to encourage them to speak actively in class, to put emphasis on the language use and its function, and to give them opportunities to practice English pronunciation. In relation to this fact, this study aims at identifying teaching strategies to teach speaking skill for hospitality workers so that they can build confidence to speak English to the guests and use the language effectively.

## **2. Research Question**

Based on the background of this study, a research question was formulated. The research question for this study can be observed below:

1. What are the effective strategies of teaching speaking skill for hotel staffs?

## **3. Method**

This study uses literature review to obtain the data. Knopf (2006) states that a literature review summarizes and evaluates a body of writings about a specific topic. Meanwhile, Rowley and Slack (2004) assert that a literature review needs to draw on and evaluate a range of different types of sources including academic and professional journal articles, books, and web-based resources. This study uses various academic articles from reputable sources to evaluate the topics. Results of the reviews were analyzed to identify relevant strategies in teaching speaking skill for hotel staffs.

#### **4. Findings & Discussion**

According to Brown (2004: 141-142), there are five basic types of speaking, they are imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive. Imitative speaking is the ability to imitate (a word or a phrase or possibly a sentence. Intensive speaking includes a practice of some phonological and grammatical aspect of language. Responsive speaking is interaction at the somewhat limited level of a very short conversation, standard greeting and small talk, simple comment and request. Interactive speaking means complex interaction which sometimes includes multiple exchanges and/or multiple participants. Extensive speaking is oral production; include speeches, oral presentation, and storytelling. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention and promote activities that are in line with these aspects.

To maximize English learning in class, one of the teaching strategies that can be applied is role play. Negara (2021) defines role play method is a series of learning that can provide opportunities for students to build interaction, communication, cooperation, discussion, develop and express ideas to others, and train proficiency in speaking orally. Through role-plays, the staffs were given roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter in the hotel (e.g. a waiter to a guest, a spa therapist to a customer, a tour guide when explaining a tourism object, etc.) As role plays are an imitation of real life, the language functions that the staffs use were put into highlights. Also, role plays and simulations make the staffs, more motivated

and confident in using the target language. In a stress-free environment, the staffs can learn the language effectively.

Role play can be applied into two forms, scripted and unscripted (Negara, 2021). In scripted role play, the script usually comes from a dialogue book or text in the form of a speech, with this text script functioning as a means of conveying language meaning in a way that is easy to remember. Meanwhile, in unscripted role play, the implementation does not depend on a script or textbook. Consequently, the students must improvise.

Besides role play, discussion can also be a great activity to enhance speaking skill. Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt (2008) researched how discussion can enhance oral and written communication skills. The findings provide evidence that active preparation and participation in class discussion can be linked to students' reports of improved oral and written communication skills. Therefore, discussion as a teaching strategy can be used to enhance speaking skill, particularly for the hospitality workers. In discussion method, students are engaged in a group or in pair to discuss about the materials. Discussion involves ideas sharing, stating opinion and communicating thoughts. Several activities that can be applied in the classroom are discussing about products and how to promote the products to guests.

Crisianita and Mandasari (2022) state that small group discussion is one of way for teacher and students to use it while the students learn how to improve their speaking skill and teachers easily to focus on students and help the teacher to give feedback for students individually. The activity may include group forming, discussion about a particular topic, and presenting it in front of their friends. For example, students can become involved in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussions, the teacher can form groups of students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like "people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel". Then each group works on their topic for a given time period, and presents their opinions to the class (Kayi, 2006). By doing this activity, the students will focus on the topic and therefore, minimize noise in class.

To make the staffs speak can be very challenging; therefore, describing a picture can be a solution due to this problem. The activity included is by showing them one or two pictures. The staffs discussed the picture in detail: the stories, the physical description, what they think about the object, etc. It can be conducted in pairs or individually. This activity fosters their pronunciation. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills (Kayi, 2006).

To promote speaking skill, storytelling is also an effective teaching strategy. Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human communication, being used for entertainment, and for the promotion of education and cultural values (Lucarevski, 2016). Storytelling stimulates the learners to do imitate speaking, intensive speaking as the preparation before they perform the storytelling (Hidayati, 2019). Furthermore, it was also stated by Hidayati (2019) that storytelling makes the learners comprehend how to speak with the good gesture and intonation. It is useful for the learners to continue to the extensive speaking. In relation to tourism as a business sector, storytelling is seen as a powerful tool because it creates an emotional connection between a company, its products and its customers. Effective storytelling enhances engagement and relationship between a company and its customers. When the guests are pleased during their stays in the establishment, they will leave good comments and recommend the hotels to others which ultimately increase hotel revenue.

Another way of teaching speaking skill is through interview. Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. The interviews can use real-life topics to be discussed with a partner or even more than one partner. This way, students use question and answer technique, in which they can prepare the questions (supervised by the teacher). Students take roles and swap roles to hear various opinions. One of interview techniques that can be used is the Three-Step-Interview. The procedures in Three-step interview is learners are grouped into small groups consist of three. Each student in the groups assumes the role of interviewer,

interviewee and note-taker; and each student should turn to play (Aristy, Apsari and Hadiansyah, 2019). It allows students to practice their speaking ability not only in class. It also helps them become more socialized outside the classroom.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are many teaching strategies that promote students' speaking skill. In this study, it discusses five main strategies, they are role play, discussion, picture describing, storytelling and interview. The use of these teaching strategies are extremely helpful for teachers so that they can create a fun, safe and stress-free learning environment without forgetting the target skill. It is hoped that speaking skill of the people who work in hospitality industry can be enhanced through the implementation of these teaching strategies in English for Specific Purposes. Further research is suggested to explore other teaching strategies, particularly in teaching speaking for hotel staffs.

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