

# Developing A Method of Learning English Speaking Skills Based on the Language Functions Used in the Food and Beverage Service

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*e-Journal of Linguistics*

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is aimed to analyse language functions in English, specifically those which are used in the context of Food and Beverage Service. The findings of the analysis related to the language functions are then applied in a teaching method which is designed to improve the students' abilities in speaking English. There are two novelties in this research. The first one is the theory of language functions which is reconstructed in accordance with the Food and Beverage Service context. Those language functions are: **permissive** (to soften utterances, to avoid repetition, and to adjust intonation); **interactive** (to greet, to have small talks, and farewell); **informative** (to introduce, to show, to state, to explain, to ask, to agree, to reject, and to confirm); **persuasive** (to offer, to promise, to suggest, and to persuade); **directive** (to tell, to order, and to request); **indicative** (to praise, to complain, to thank, and to apologize). The second novelty which is more practical is the design of the ASRI method which consists of four basic components, namely: **Aims** (the purpose in communicating); **Sequence** (the operational procedure in handling guests in the restaurant); **Role play** (the simulation activities in language learning); and **Interaction** (the interactive communications between participants). The method of ASRI with the application of the language functions in its ABCD procedure, namely *Acquire*,



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*Brainstorm, Chance and Develop* is proven to be effective in improving the students' abilities in speaking English, specifically in the context of Food and Beverage Service.

**Keywords:** *language functions, teaching method, speaking skills, Food and Beverage Service.*

## 1. Introduction

This research focuses on the use of English language functions in the context of Food and Beverage Service (FBS) which was aimed to design an effective learning method in improving the students' English competency, specifically speaking skills. One objective in English language learning is to fulfill the needs of English in professional areas, which is called English for Specific Purposes (ESP), for example in the sector of tourism, accountancy, medical, or others. Since this research was conducted in Bali, known as the barometer of National tourism development, the topic discussed here was the learning of ESP in the area of tourism. The position that require English the most is the the FBS department since the staff are in direct contact with the guest. English language plays an important role as the media for transferring the product knowledge and service performed by those front liners.

Communication activity actually refers to the social interaction; therefore, language learning should be focused on the use of language in daily life. Language learning is the process in gaining communicative competence which focuses on the acquisition of speaking skills and habituation of using the language in communication. Foreign language learning, specifically English, in general is aimed to develop the four language skills, namely reading and listening as the receptive skills, writing and speaking as the productive skills.

The enactment of English as the international language in ASEAN regional, to be specific in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), certainly makes English communicative skills very important. It is unfortunate if Indonesian human resources have to lose opportunities in the competition only due to their lack of abilities in English speaking. This could lead to a perception that the graduates are not able to communicate in English, which leads to an opinion that Indonesian human resources especially Balinese people are incompetent. It could affect the image of Bali as the main gate of International tourism. It is undoubtedly that the front liners are



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the main source of Balinese tourism practitioners. One way to overcome this problem is by developing the quality of English learning at schools or tourism training courses through the refreshment of learning method and materials.

In order to improve the English speaking skills, an innovative learning method is designed based on the consideration that the introduction of language functions can be helpful to promote the understanding of language expressions so that it would be easier for the students to practice speaking or role playing. By implementing the theory of language functions, it is expected that the students will improve their English speaking skills significantly so that the students become more competent in facing the competition. The method which is designed in this research is very applicative and easy to implement specifically for the weak students in communicating in English. This research is the triangulation of linguistic studies, language learning, and tourism specifically in the field of Food and Beverage Service.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 Language Functions

Language function is the communication goals for using certain language forms. In this research there are five language functions proposed by Leech (1974), namely: 1) Informational function which is used for sharing information; 2) Expressive function which is used for expressing feelings of the speaker; 3) Directive function which is used for getting someone do something for the speaker; 4) Aesthetic function, which is used for describing the language itself, example in the poems; and 5) Phatic function is used for maintaining the interaction between participants.

### 2.2 Language Learning

This research is based on *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) which consider language as a means of communication to deliver functional meaning. In order to design a learning method there are several components to be considered, such as: (a) objective, (b) syllabus, (c) learning activities, (d) students' roles, (e) teacher's roles, and (f) learning materials.



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### 2.3 The Factors that Influence the Learning of Speaking Skills

Thornburry (2005: 25-26) states that there are three essential factors that affect the learning of speaking skills, namely: 1) cognitive factors; 2) affective factors; and 3) performance factors. These factors can be described as follows.

#### 1) Cognitive Factors

- a. Acknowledge the topic: a well known topic will be much easier to be talked about. This is why the students can easily talk about their jobs or families rather than about the topics outside their daily lives.
- b. Acknowledge the genre: giving a speech or a lecture will be more difficult if the genre is unknown.
- c. Acknowledge the participants: a conversation will be easier to do when we know the person we speak with.
- d. Processing the needs: if the speech events involve a complex mental process, for example when describing a complex procedure, then an illustration would be needed to make the description easier.

#### 2) Affective factors

- a. The topic and/or the participants are preferred: it would be easier if we like the topic and the participants.
- b. Self awareness: becoming the centre of attention can cause anxiety which lead to inappropriate performance, like in the situation of being examined or tested.

#### 3) Performance factors

- a. Mode: it is easier to talk directly, face to face, with a partner to monitor the response. Body language and eye contact are also involved.
- b. Degree of collaboration: doing a presentation alone is more difficult than doing it with a partner so they can support each other.
- c. Control of discourse: it is easier if the speaker can control the conversation rather than being under another person's control.
- d. Duration for preparation and practice: the more time given for preparation the easier the task to be done.



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- e. Time limit: it is more difficult to speak when there is a time limit.
- f. Environment condition: it is very difficult to speak with a very loud music or terrible acoustic background.

### 3. Research Methodology

This research is a Research and Development (R&D) with Exploratory Mixed Method. The design was selected since this research combines two kinds of data namely qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data is collected and analysed before the quantitative data. The product of this research is in the form of learning method design for teaching speaking skills which can be directly implemented in tourism schools in Bali. The research design follows Logan's design (1982) which consists of three stages namely Problem Determination, Design, and Develop.

The first stage was conducted at the *Mamasan Restaurant* and *The Sunset Hotel* from April to May 2015. The verbal data collected in this stage were in the form of recording of conversations among the waiters and the guests at the restaurant as well as the waiters' responses during interview. The data were collected using a tape recorder and the questionnaire find out the language functions used in the Food and Beverage Service. The method applied is the non-participatory observation method. The analysis of qualitative data was completed through data reduction and classification. The result of the analysis was then presented in transcription and descriptive explanation.

The second stage is a *library research* conducted from early June to the second week of July 2015. The analysis of syllabus and teaching materials for the Food and Beverage Service was conducted in this stage, using the observation sheet and validation sheet for the consideration of the learning method. The method used was the observation method with recording technique. The qualitative analysis was completed with the design of the learning method. The result of the analysis was then presented informally in descriptive narration.

The final stage was the implementation of the learning method which was designed on the second stage. This stage was conducted<sup>69</sup> at the Balindo Paradiso, a tourism school, from early August to late October 2015. The data collected in this stage were the verbal data and the



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tabulation of questionnaires and the speaking test. The instruments used were a tape recorder, observation sheet, and the scoring rubric to see how effective the implementation of the learning method as well as the influencing factors. The partisipatory observation method with the recording technique was used to analyse the quantitative data collected through experiment. The result of implementation was then presented formally in numbers and tables.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1 Language Functions used in *Food and Beverage Service*

Based on the observation at *Mamasan Restaurant* and *The Sunset Hotel*, there were several language functions found in the Food and Beverage Service. These language functions can be described as follows.

##### 1) Interactive function

The interactive function was used to build and maintain the relationship in communication. In this function there were no important information to be shared among participants. Therefore, this function is not informative but only for keeping good relationship. The micro functions of 'greeting', 'small talk', and 'farewell' are the sub categories of interactive functions.

example: "*Mamasan Restaurant, Good afternoon. May I help you? How are you today?*"  
(Greeting)

##### 2) Informative

The informative function contains messages to be shared from the speaker to the hearer, including every declarative statement which refers to the reality. This function is also aimed to dig any information needed, like those used in interrogative forms, or to repeat the message in order to confirm facts. The micro functions of informative function are: 'presenting', 'introducing', 'stating', 'explaining', 'asking', 'agreeing', 'rejecting', and 'confirming'.

example: "*We have holding table for twenty minutes from your reservation, and we do the smart casual for the dress code.*" (Explaining)

##### 3) Directive



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The directive function is used by the speaker to make the hearer do something for the speaker. The micro functions for this category are 'instructing', 'ordering', and 'requesting'.

Contoh: *"Could I see the menu again, please?"* (Requesting)

#### 4) Persuasive

The persuasive function is used for persuading and affecting the hearer (the guest) to try or buy the products offered. The micro functions of this category include 'offering', 'promising', 'suggesting', and 'persuading'.

example: *"I recommend you for the Pork Vindaloo and then the Crispy Whole Fish, that's very popular in our restaurant and very tasty, madam."* (Food recommending)

#### 5) Permissive

The Permissive function is the function that frame the text by focusing on fluency rather than accuracy. This function allows the use of non standard / informal language (colloquial) which is still accepted. The realization of permissive function can be seen from the use of intonation and stress, cohesive devices, and language choices to avoid monotonous repetitions.

Example: *"The reservation is for Sarong or Mamasan?"* (rising intonation)

*"Your fried noodle is still being cooked."* (passive voice)

#### 6) Indicative

The indicative function is used when the speaker intends to indicate or express his/her feelings. This function is represented in micro functions 'praising', 'complaining', 'thanking', and 'apologizing'.

Example: *"We do apologize about your food."* (Apologizing)

The six language functions are formulated based on the speech events taking place at the restaurant. The informative function was the most used function since the interaction among the waiter and the guests required information sharing, like in 'asking' for reservation or during 'explaining' the menu.

## 4.2 The Method of ASRI





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This research proposes an innovative design of learning method which is called the method of ASRI. There are four fundamental components in the development of this method, namely: 1) *Aims*, the objective or purpose intended by the speaker to achieve through the use of language functions which are represented in language expressions; 2) *Sequence*, derived from *sequence of service*, the operational procedure in serving the guests at the restaurant; 3) *Role play*, a simulation activity where the students practice using the language functions being learnt in the conversation; and 4) *Interaction*, the interaction among students by paying attention to paralinguistic elements.

The learning procedure in the method of ASRI is named the ABCD Procedure which stands for *Acquire, Brainstorm, Chance, and Develop*. The first step in the Method of ASRI is called *Acquire*, the initial stage where the students are introduced to the use of the language in a certain topic. The students acquire the language input from dialog in the audio/video recording. The second stage is the discussion (*Brainstorm*), involving the interaction of teacher-students. In this stage the teacher explains the language functions used in the given topic. In the third stage (*Chance*) the students start to use the language functions and forms being learnt by completing tasks, oral or written. The students who understand the use of language functions will be able to develop conversations, not only imitating the sample dialogues but also interact communicatively. The last step is called *Develop* where the teacher gives suggestions or corrections about the students' performances. This terminology is used in order to give the students more chances to develop themselves independently (*independent study*) even after the class is dismissed.

#### 4.3 The Implementation of the Method of ASRI

The implementation of the Method of ASRI was done through an experiment to a control group (by applying the conventional learning method) and an experiment group (by applying the method of ASRI). The correlated T-test formula which was applied to measure the learning output of both group shows that T count is bigger than T table, that is  $1,71 > 2,74$ . Thus it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in achievement between the control group and the experiment group, so that it can be generalized that the method of ASRI is more effective than



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the conventional method. It can be seen from the speed of students' comprehension of the learning, creativity, and the students' achievements.

### Conclusion

Based on the discussion and the findings of this research, there are three points to be concluded:

- 1) There are six language functions used in the Food and Beverage Service, namely permissive function, informative function, interactive function, directive function, persuasive function, and indicative function.
- 2) The method of ASRI with its ABCD procedure is proven to be effective in improving the students' English speaking skills specially in the field of the Food and Beverage Service.
- 3) There are three factors affecting the method of ASRI such as: a) the cognitive factor: the students have not known the topic well so they have difficulties in developing the conversations; b) the affective factor: anxiety or being afraid in making mistakes slow down the students to use the language function being learnt; c) the performance factor: lack of teacher's guidance in preparing the role play so the students tend to only copy the sample dialogue given previously.

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