

**School of Education
Faculty of Humanities**

**English as a Lingua Franca in the Vietnamese Hotel Industry:
Communicative Strategies and Their Implications for Vocational Education**

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:



Vu, Thi Hong Van

Date: March 10, 2015

Abstract

English has been used as a *lingua franca* of tourists and travellers worldwide. In the Vietnamese hotel context, comprehensible communication in English plays an important role in facilitating hotel business. The hotel staff communicate daily with guests from different linguacultural backgrounds. Yet, very little is known about how the Vietnamese hotel staff, particularly the reception staff, communicate with foreign guests in English. To address this lack, the current study examines the characteristics of English as a *lingua franca* spoken by the Vietnamese hotel Front Office staff when they interact with foreign guests. The study attempts to provide a contribution to the under-researched field of ESP in Vietnam and serve as a background for similar research in other fields and settings.

One hundred and eighty-two naturally-occurring interactions were recorded in four hotels in three cities in southern Vietnam. Principles of conversation analysis were adopted for the study design and analysis which aimed to identify the communicative strategies that were most frequently employed by the Front Office staff to facilitate their communication with guests. By closely examining the interactions based on the next-turn proof procedure, key communicative strategies: repetition, reformulation, requests for clarification and confirmation, backchannels, minimal queries, lexical suggestion and the functions of these strategies emerged in the interactions were identified.

There is a high demand for the competent use of English in the hospitality industry. The second part of the study explores whether the English courses in hospitality – the ESP courses – developed the macro skills that graduates needed in the workplace, particularly listening and speaking. Examination of the English textbooks and accompanying audio materials used in the hospitality courses revealed that the language skills developed through coursework and the language used in the real-life hotel setting are not fully aligned. In order to respond to the call from the Vietnamese Government, through the *National Foreign Language Project 2020*, for innovation in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, primarily English, the findings of this study will assist curriculum developers to adapt ESP courses to the authentic needs of students and the industry.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BCL	Backchannels
CA	Conversation Analysis
CD	Compact Disk
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CS	Communicative Strategies
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EL	Experiential Learning
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EU	European Union
ETS	Educational Testing System
FO	Front Office
G	Guest(s)
GE	General English (or English for General Purposes)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IT	Interaction
L1	First (native) Language, the Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language (ESL) or a Foreign Language (EFL)
MQs	Minimal queries
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NFLP 2020	National Foreign Languages Project 2020
NS	Native Speaker(s) of English
NNS	Non-native Speaker(s) of English
S	Staff member(s)
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
VNAT	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
VTOS	Vietnam Tourism Occupational Skill Standard System
WB	World Bank
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Globalisation has had a major impact worldwide on service industries, with tourism and hospitality being two of the most affected sectors. With beautiful natural scenery and stunning heritage, Vietnam has become one country in Southeast Asia that is attracting a growing number of foreign visitors – and this number is increasing by 10% every year (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism [VNAT], 2014). The hotel industry has been identified as a key service sector which provides hospitality services to different kinds of guests for their travel needs. This industry, as Sparks (1994) observed, is “very much a communicative encounter” (p. 39) and “customers evaluate the quality of service, at least in part, on the manner in which information is communicated” (p. 48). Consequently, comprehensible communication is a necessary skill for the hotel staff and it is central to the success of the hotel industry.

Within this industry, English is the most commonly used language for communication and it has become the *lingua franca* of tourists and travellers worldwide. As Blue and Harun (2003, p. 77) observed, English ‘*hospitality language*’ is not only a means of communication, it is a professional skill through which hotel routines and transactional activities are performed by the staff. Competent use of English in communication therefore plays an important role in facilitating the hotel business. As a result, developing and improving the quality of graduates in tourism and hospitality has been a priority for the hotel industry. In particular, the industry recognises the need to have graduates who are competent in the English language, especially those who work in reception positions.

Yet, very little is known about how Vietnamese hotel reception staff communicate with foreign guests in English, particularly as the language of interaction is not the mother tongue (first language, L1) for one or both parties. To address this lack, the current study examines the characteristics of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) spoken by the Vietnamese hotel Front Office (FO) staff when they interact with foreign guests. It also considers the appropriateness of the teaching materials in

providing opportunities and activities for hospitality students in ESP courses to practise the relevant skills for working in a hotel FO position.

The study is organised into seven chapters. This introductory chapter will describe the background to the study, outline its objectives, provide an overview of the research methodology, discuss the significance and the scope of the study and, finally, present the organisation of the thesis. Definitions of key terms used in the study are also provided.

1.1 Background to the Study

1986 marked a turning point in Vietnam's development due to the *Doi Moi* (renovation policy) being approved by the Communist Party at its Sixth Congress. *Doi Moi* triggered Vietnam's transition from a centrally-planned economy to a market-oriented economy, the objective of which was the establishment of a multi-sector economy operating under market mechanisms (T. C. Nguyen, Nguyen, Le, Boothroyd, & Singer, 2000, p. ix).

Since the implementation of *Doi Moi*, the country has invited investment and cooperation with many countries in the world. As a result, more and more foreign visitors come to Vietnam seeking opportunities to do business, as well as for tourism and travel. With a growing number of foreign visitors coming to the country every year, tourism and hospitality is making a substantial contribution to Vietnam's economic development and Vietnam is increasingly keen to compete with other popular tourist destinations in the Southeast Asian region; for example, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. For that reason, there is a high demand for the competent use of English in workplace settings, and in the tourism and hospitality sectors in particular.

Policy governing the learning of foreign languages has been changed (Do, 2006), and the role and status of English in the country's economic development since *Doi Moi* has been acknowledged. English has been recognised as an important means of facilitating the country's economic development and boosting its cooperation with the rest of the world (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006). English is also viewed as the major means to access research and development in all areas of scientific, education,

technological and commercial settings (Denham, 1992). Due to its importance in the country's economic development, strategies for promoting the teaching and learning of English at the national level have been put in place since the early 1990s (Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; S. Wright, 2002). The most recent is the project '*Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020*', also called '*The National Foreign Languages Project 2020*' (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008) which aims at improving the quality of the teaching and learning of English in the national educational system at all levels, from primary schools to higher education. English language proficiency for tourism and hospitality students is particularly emphasised in the project known as '*Vietnam Human Resources Development in Tourism*' (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism & the European Union [VNAT & EU], 2009).

Higher education has been the sector which is most influenced by globalisation pressures (Marginson & van der Wende, 2006). Vietnam, having proactively transformed itself into a market economy, has generated an increased need for skilled labour to meet the demands of the labour market (Reddy, 2012). Improving the quality of higher education has been one of the major goals of the Government which has focused on updating and modernising the curriculum of higher education institutions, with the intention of promoting innovation in curriculum.

The main problem that continues to plague higher education in Vietnam, apart from insufficient funding and the high ratio of students to teachers, is the slow rate of curriculum renewal (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Thousands of students are trained and graduate every year, however, possessing a tertiary level education does not ensure that the graduates have the necessary skills to perform the work their course (allegedly) prepares them for. A situation of 'job mis-use' exists – a mismatch between the skill demands of a job and the training provided, a situation that results in graduates from higher education (HE) institutions being employed in positions for which they are over-qualified or their training is not relevant to. Such situation has happened, as reported by the World Bank (2008), due to a mismatch between the training provided in vocational courses and the needs of industry in the Vietnamese education. Reddy (2012) contends that many graduates are not 'job-ready', lack some of the skills to perform adequately in the workplace and require special

training or re-training to meet the needs and requirements of industry. These limitations are the result of the ineffective development of educational objectives, continued employment of traditional teaching methods and the continued use of outdated or inappropriate curricula (Hayden & Lam, 2007; T. Hoang, 2008; World Bank, 2006).

More details of the study context, the English courses and the outcome benchmarks for tourism and hospitality students will be provided in Chapter Two of this study.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

This study was designed to investigate the characteristics of the English language spoken by the hotel FO staff when interacting with guests in the Vietnamese hotel setting. ELF speakers have been observed to display a high degree of cooperation and involvement (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2010a). By focusing on functional effectiveness rather than on a particular linguistic or code-related target, ELF speakers demonstrate greater concern for the interaction's work-related outcomes and the interactional skills needed to ensure the success of communication (Firth, 1996). Shared understanding is constantly negotiated, monitored and jointly constructed by the speakers on a turn-by-turn basis, thereby the interaction is kept moving and the flow of talk is maintained. Thus, cooperation, collaboration, joint-construction and engagement of the speakers are the characteristics of ELF communication. Although it has been predicted that misunderstanding or communication breakdowns would be frequent in ELF settings, due to the hybridity and diversity of speakers' linguacultural backgrounds and the varieties of English that they bring to their communication (Bae, 2002; Kaur, 2011a), a number of studies have indicated that there is in fact very little misunderstanding in ELF communication, as ELF speakers use proactive strategies to prevent problems of understanding from occurring (Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2010, 2011b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006, 2007; Pitzl, 2005; Watterson, 2008).

The focus of this study was on identifying the frequently-used communicative strategies (CS) adopted by the staff working in the hotel FO and the functions these strategies serve in facilitating the communication between the staff and guests.

The study also examined the extent to which hospitality students were prepared with the requisite communicative skills to work in a hotel FO position by the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. The examination focused mainly on the opportunities the students were provided with to practise listening and speaking skills – the two skills that were most frequently used by the hotel FO staff in face-to-face interactions with guests. It is hoped that the findings from the study will inform the way in which ESP courses for hospitality students are taught in Vietnam. To achieve this goal, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What communicative strategies are frequently employed by the Vietnamese hotel front office staff when they are interacting with foreign guests using English as a lingua franca?
2. What functions do these strategies serve in facilitating communication between the staff and guests?
3. What kinds of language activities are included in the ESP teaching materials and how appropriate are these activities to the communication needs of the hotel industry?
4. How might the ESP courses for hospitality be improved in relation to the development of English communication skills relevant to the hotel industry?

1.3 Research Methodology

This is a qualitative descriptive study which applied the principles of conversation analysis (CA) to the study design. The stages of the study were: data collection, data transcription, data analysis and report of the findings.

The data came from two sources: the audio recordings of naturally-occurring interactions in English between the Vietnamese hotel FO staff and guests in four hotels in southern Vietnam; and the desk-top review of course outlines and textbooks commonly used in the ESP courses for hospitality students.

To address the first two research questions, a micro qualitative analysis of the audio recordings was conducted to determine the communicative strategies (CS) used in the interactions based on “the next-turn proof” procedure of CA (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 15). Following this procedure, any “next” turn in a sequence displays its producer’s understanding of the “prior” turn (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008,

p. 14). Thus, the production of the staff's utterance in the local sequential organisation displayed his/her understanding of the guest's prior utterance and was "the proof" (i.e. the context) for the next talk produced in the subsequent turn. Based on this procedure, the strategies and the patterns of use that emerged from the data were identified and categorised. Although the analysis was qualitative, some frequency counts of the strategies and their functions were undertaken to support the presentation of the findings and to give the reader an idea of the extent to which different types of strategies were used (Björkman, 2014). Presentation of the findings for each strategy is descriptive and is illustrated with examples taken from the transcripts.

To address Research Question 3, course materials – outlines and textbooks – used in ESP courses for hospitality were reviewed. The aim of the analysis was to examine the extent to which the course materials provided hospitality students in ESP courses with activities which allowed them to practise communicative skills, especially those of listening and speaking.

The findings of the study were used as the basis for making suggestions about the ways in which ESP courses for hospitality students can be improved. This addresses Research Question 4.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study investigates how the spread of English is linked to the globalised economy by examining the nature of ELF communication and communicative needs in the Vietnamese hotel setting. What is transacted in this sector is information exchange manifested through the use of English as a lingua franca between the hotel staff and guests.

The study attempts to provide a contribution to the under-researched field of ESP in Vietnam and serve as a background for similar research in other fields and settings. There has been very little research into the English language use in the hospitality sector, especially in Vietnam. Cooperation and co-construction focusing on the functional effectiveness (i.e. providing hospitality services and satisfying guests' multiple requirements) is the nature of ELF communication between the hotel staff and foreign guests in the Vietnamese hotel setting. By investigating the authentic

spoken English used by the Vietnamese hotel Front Office staff – the reception and the concierge, (those who have the most frequent face-to-face contact with guests), this study aims to provide an insight into the nature and the characteristics of ELF communication and to contribute to the body of knowledge about the ways in which ELF is used in this specific professional context.

The study was undertaken at a time when demand for competence in communication in a foreign language, especially in English, in workplace settings was growing exponentially. It occurred at a time when a major initiative – *The National Foreign Languages Project 2020* – was taking place to change the way English (or any other foreign languages) was taught in Vietnam and how it was realised or performed in workplace settings (VNAT & EU, 2009). By examining how English is authentically used in the hotel setting and by illustrating ways in which this knowledge can be better integrated into the curriculum of ESP courses for hospitality, the aspirations of the foreign language project proposed by MOET (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008) and the demands of industry for more competent English language users have been acknowledged and responded to.

It is also possible that the findings of the study will be a basis for hotel management to review and to improve the language training they provide in-house.

Finally, the findings of the study will provide ESP teachers in Vietnam with an enhanced understanding of how the English language is used in a real workplace setting. This knowledge has the potential to inform course design, the structure of the ESP curriculum for hospitality, the selection of textbooks, and the design of the experiential learning or internship segment of the course.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited. There are three divisions in the hotel – the FO, the housekeeping and the restaurant and bar – where the staff have direct contact with guests. However, only one of these sites – the FO – was chosen for this study. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalised and applied to other settings. In the other two divisions, there might be specific characteristics of the English language used in interactions between the staff and guests and, had the study embraced these divisions as well, a more complete picture of how the English language is used by

the hotel staff would have emerged. In addition, the data collection site for the study was limited to four participating hotels in the south of Vietnam, therefore the regional diversity of the data was not fully reflected in the study.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters.

Chapter One, the introductory chapter, presents the background to the study, the statement of research objectives and research questions, the scope of the study, the significance, and the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two provides an expanded background and context. It outlines the dominance of English in international settings, the importance of, and demand for English in the hospitality industry in Vietnam and the current structure of ESP courses for hospitality. It examines broadly the textbooks commonly used to teach ESP.

Chapter Three reviews the research literature relevant to the study, focussing on the spread and varieties of English, spoken communication in ELF and its characteristics, and the success of communication in ELF in professional settings. The concept of '*hospitality language*' is introduced and some of its specific characteristics are described. The chapter provides an extended review of communicative strategies employed in ELF communication. A review of training provisions in relation to the development of English language competencies for hospitality students completes the chapter.

Chapter Four describes in detail the research methodology and the design of the study. The rationale for identifying and categorising the communicative strategies is described. The study followed the principles of CA in relation to study design, data collection, data transcription and data analysis. Detailed descriptions of the setting, the participants, data collection methods, data transcription and data analysis are provided.

Chapter Five presents the findings and consists of two sections: findings from the analysis of naturally occurring interactions which focused on identifying the communicative strategies and their functions; and, an analysis of the ESP course

outlines and textbooks, particularly the extent to which the activities enabled students to practise and develop listening and speaking skills.

Chapter Six discusses the findings of the study based on the research questions.

Chapter Seven suggests the implications from the findings of the study for the training of hospitality students in Vietnam and presents the conclusions that emerge from the findings. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study and gives suggestions for further research.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

For purposes of this study, the following terms are used and defined:

(1) Front Office Staff

Front Office staff work at the hotels' FO area - reception and concierge - and perform a variety of 'hospitality' activities for guests. In big hotels, the reception staff and the concierge are separated into two divisions. The reception staff are responsible for checking guests in and out, keeping records of room assignments, making and confirming reservations, and any other matters concerned with other registration-related information on computer systems or written in notebooks and the like. The concierge staff often help guests with their queries and requests for services and information, e.g. about facilities, events and attractions, arrange transportation for guests and so forth. In small hotels, e.g. mini hotels, or one or two-star hotels, the reception staff can cover the duties of the concierge (Hall & Schulz, 2010, p. 56).

(2) Hospitality

Lane and Dupre (1997) define *hospitality* as "an umbrella term of five components including accommodation/lodging, food and drink service, entertainment, travel agencies and transportation" (p. 32). It includes the concept of the 'guest' as the object to whom hospitality services are offered. Thus, some vocational training institutions use 'Hospitality', whereas others use 'Hotel' or 'Hotel and Restaurant' to refer to academic programs and courses (Keiser, 1998, p. 116).

For the purposes of this study, the following definition is used: *Hospitality* is what the hotel industry does to bring pleasure, comfort, and well-being to guests. Thus, the terms 'hospitality' and 'hotel' are used interchangeably in this study to describe the activities, services or the courses for students in educational institutions.

(3) *English as a lingua franca (ELF)*

ELF is defined as “a contact language”, “the chosen foreign language for communication between people who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture” (Firth, 1996, p. 240), “a medium of communication used by people who do not speak the same first language” (Kirkpatrick, 2007c, p. 7), or “a vehicle for communication between non-native speakers (NNSs) or between any combination of native speakers (NSs) and NNSs in a variety of international contexts (Berns, 2008, p. 329). In the current setting of this study, the English language spoken by the Vietnamese hotel staff to communicate with foreign guests who are either NSs or NNSs is a *lingua franca* which may have the common characteristics identified in ELF communication elsewhere around the world, especially in ASEAN countries, but it may also have specific characteristics influenced by its speakers’ L1 and cultures.

(4) *Talk-in-interaction*

People use their talk to organise their social action (Heritage, 1984), or in other words, people perform their actions through their talk. By responding to what is said by the other interlocutor in the preceding turn, a speaker displays his/her understanding of what is said, performs his/her action and at the same time projects for the next action to be produced.

(5) *Utterance*

In this study, an utterance is what is said by a participant at a particular time in a particular setting/event with a particular interlocutor in a conversation (interaction).

(6) *Turn*

A turn in this study refers to an utterance produced by an interactant at one time, and can comprise a single word, a sound, or an extended piece of discourse.

(7) *Communicative strategies (CS)*

In this study, CS are strategies, ways or methods that are manifested through language and are employed to enhance comprehension and facilitate the effectiveness of communication in ELF. They can be used to address problems of understanding (both real and potential) or display the cooperation and engagement in the interaction with the other interlocutor for the achievement of a communicative goal.

(8) Repetition

Repetition in this study refers to the restatement (exact or with a slight change in the word form or word order) of lexical items. Self-repetition is the restatement of lexical item(s) said previously by the same speaker. Other-repetition refers to the restatement of lexical item(s) from the other interlocutor's preceding turn.

(9) Reformulation

Reformulation expresses the content of the first or original utterance in a modified, reduced or changed form. It could be paraphrasing, rephrasing, explaining, summarising, using an alternative expression, or restating the original utterance using different words. Self-reformulation is a different way of expressing the content of what has been previously said by the same speaker. Other-reformulation expresses the content of what has been said previously by the other interlocutor in the preceding utterance in a different way.

(10) Backchannels (BCL)

Short response utterances used to give feedback to the primary speaker to indicate that the conversation is being followed, or the listener is interested in what is being said, or to acknowledge or agree with the speaker, so that the speaker is encouraged to continue talking.

(11) Minimal queries

Specific questions used when the listener is unclear about what has been said in the preceding utterance to elicit clarification or repetition of what has been said.

(12) Lexical suggestion

When one speaker provides a lexical item(s) or gives a suggestion of a word(s) to the interlocutor to complete his/her utterance.

(13) Internship

Also called experiential learning or industrial workplace learning – an integral component of the training curricula of vocational higher education which provides students with opportunities to participate and learn in an authentic work environment, combining theoretical and practical learning to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the training curriculum.

Chapter 2: Context of the Study

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the context of the study. It consists of three main parts. The first part describes the position and importance of English in Vietnam, particularly since the establishment of the open-door or ‘renovation’ policy ‘*Doi Moi*’ in 1986. The second part provides background on the Vietnamese hospitality industry and the use of English within it. The third part describes the current provisions for the teaching of English in a hospitality course, with a focus on some key components of the course such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the workplace-based internship.

2.1 Status of English in Vietnam

The penetration and predominance of English is evident in business, finance, science, politics, education and technology. It is widely used in a variety of global contexts and has been adopted as a working language for a large number of multinational and national companies (Melchers & Shaw, 2013; Rogerson-Revell, 2010). It is also the official language of many international and regional organisations, including the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Being used for such a wide variety of communicative purposes, English has been recognised as the *lingua franca* of communication between people who come from a range of different linguacultural backgrounds (Jenkins, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2012a; Seidlhofer, 2005).

The number of English speakers around the world has increased dramatically, to the extent that non-native speakers (NNSs) of English outnumber native speakers (NSs) (Crystal, 2001; Graddol, 2006). Graddol (2006) and Crystal (2003) have noted that more than 75% of English users in the world are NNSs.

In Vietnam, English was once studied alongside French, Russian, and Chinese. Before 1975, English and French were taught in secondary and high schools in the South as the main foreign languages, while Russian and Chinese were the preferred languages in the North of the country (Do, 2006). After the country's reunification in 1975, along with consequent changes in the political and economic systems, the language policy was changed and the number of English learners decreased dramatically. Russian became the main foreign language taught in schools and universities comprising 60% of all foreign language learners – with English learners making up 25% and French 15% (Denham, 1992). This change reflects Wright's (2002, p. 243) observation that language policy always mirrors the economic and political relationships that countries have with one another. Russian retained its dominant position as the most widely taught and learned foreign language throughout Vietnam until the late 1980s.

Since *Doi Moi* in 1986, Vietnam has seen major changes in all socio-cultural and economic fields. The economic development of the country has moved from a primarily agrarian economy to one that is market-oriented. This shift opened the door to foreign investment and diplomatic relations with many other countries. To facilitate this new global perspective, a stronger emphasis was placed on foreign language proficiency, particularly proficiency in English. Its role as an international language in the country's economic development has been proclaimed in the Government's foreign language policy. This emphasis on English has become even more pronounced since the mid-1990s, when Vietnam became a member of a number of organisations such as ASEAN in 1995, and most recently, a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2007.

To enhance the country's cooperation and competitiveness with other countries, a workforce with professional qualifications and proficiency in English was considered a fundamental requirement, the consequence of which has been an exponential increase in the demand for English language instruction.

To improve the quality of the teaching and learning of English in Vietnam, a thorough assessment of English language training provisions and their capacity to meet the needs of the workforce was conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), resulting in the establishment of a project entitled *Teaching and*

Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020.

The goals of this project were that:

... đến năm 2020 đa số thanh niên Việt Nam tốt nghiệp trung cấp, cao đẳng và đại học có đủ năng lực ngoại ngữ sử dụng độc lập, tự tin trong giao tiếp, học tập, làm việc trong môi trường hội nhập, đa ngôn ngữ, đa văn hóa; biến ngoại ngữ trở thành thế mạnh của người dân Việt Nam, phục vụ sự nghiệp công nghiệp hoá, hiện đại hoá đất nước.

“...by 2020 most Vietnamese students who graduate from secondary, vocational schools, colleges and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their study and their work in an integrated, multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment, and good skills in foreign languages will become a comparative advantage of development for Vietnamese people in the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country” (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008, p. 1).
(Researcher’s translation)

Since the inauguration of this project in 2008, there have been major changes in the English curriculum at all levels of education, much of it focused on improving the English proficiency of both students and teachers. Evidence of the project can be found in the approach to the training of teaching staff, providing them with up-to-date teaching methodology which is communication-based and student-centred. A number of workshops and seminars have been held for teachers in all regions of Vietnam. More importantly, many teachers have been sent for long or short courses in English and English teaching methodology in an L1 country or a country where English is the medium of instruction in education, like Malaysia or Singapore. Exchange programs in education between schools, universities and other educational institutions in Vietnam and other countries have been established and enhanced. Lecturers and teachers from schools and universities of other countries have been invited to Vietnam. In some primary and high schools in the larger cities, students have been provided with opportunities to study and practise their English with an English speaker who has come from either an Inner Circle (i.e., Australia, America, England, Canada, and New Zealand) or Outer Circle country (e.g., Malaysia or Philippine).

The training curriculum for schools has been re-designed and the English textbooks used for high school students have been re-evaluated and the revised version will be adopted in all schools nationally from school year 2018. Accordingly, the time given to the English subject in the curriculum has increased from an average of two to four periods a week for the normal classes and from four to eight (or more) periods for classes specialising in English. In addition, in a number of schools, classrooms have been equipped with projectors and computers, giving students more opportunities to access the internet and the online support programs in English. In some schools, particularly in the big cities, bilingual programs (i.e. English-Vietnamese or French-Vietnamese) of some subjects (e.g., Mathematics and Sciences) have also been introduced to high school students. Books, journals, newspapers and many other supplementary materials that are a vehicle for improving English are made available to students and teachers. In higher education, re-evaluation, modification, or re-design of the curriculum and teaching materials has been encouraged. Moreover, English has been used as the medium of instruction in some disciplines and programs including Business Administration, Finance and Banking, International Studies, Computer Science, and Tourism in some universities (e.g., Hanoi, Hue or Hoa Sen University).

At the national level, new benchmarks for existing outcomes have been applied. Under the Government's policy, the 6-level assessment system based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) has been adopted as the standard for assessing English/other foreign languages proficiency at all levels of education (MOET, 2014) (Appendix 1). The CEFR has been used as it is a highly respected assessment tool which is commonly accepted as the international standard in measuring language ability. Since 2010, English has been a compulsory subject from Grade 3 in those primary schools which are participating in a pilot for the new 10-year English language program, whereby English will be mandated in all primary schools by 2018-2019 (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008, p. 1). At the Higher Education (HE) level, English has become the most preferred and the first foreign language across all disciplines (Do, 2006; T. M. H. Nguyen, 2011; S. Wright, 2002); it is studied by 94% of undergraduate and 92% of graduate students (V. V. Hoang, 2010).

Competent use of English is now a requirement for most professional positions, particularly in service industries such as tourism and hospitality.

2.2 The Growth of the Tourism and Hospitality Sectors

Within the tourism and hospitality sectors, English has become the main means of communication (Blue & Harun, 2003), in the same way that it has become the LF in international business contexts (Bargiela-Chiappini & Zuocheng, 2013; Charles, 1996; Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007; Koester, 2010).

English underpins the development of tourism and hospitality: most tourism websites and tour programs are written in English; in restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, entertainment and shopping centres, and at airports, English is the language most frequently used.

The development of global tourism, particularly in countries within the Southeast Asian region, has had a great influence on Vietnam. As a developing country, tourism plays an important role in the country's overall socio-economic development and it has fuelled the development of a range of service sectors, thereby creating a substantial number of jobs, generating increased national income and contributing to a reduction in poverty levels.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council Report (WTTC, 2014), the country's tourism sector has contributed an average of 5% to the country's GDP every year since 2010. Considered one of the safest destinations to travel to in Southeast Asia (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2002, p. 135), Vietnam attracts a growing number of foreign guests to the country every year, numbering more than 7.2 million in 2014. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of this number by country of origin. The table has been adapted for the purpose of the study. The countries from the original table were grouped into three circles in accordance with Kachru's (1985) traditional classification: the Inner Circle where English is used as an L1 (native or mother tongue) language; the Outer Circle where English is used as a second language, and the Expanding Circle where English is used as a foreign language or a lingua franca – a common means of communication between people who do not speak the same first language. A review of the classification and the circles is given in the next chapter.

Table 1: International Visitors to Vietnam 2014

Countries and territories	Accrued for 11 months of 2014
Total	7,217,008
Inner Circle countries	
USA	406,769
Australia	291,610
England	187,624
Canada	95,191
New Zealand	30,667
Subtotal	1,011,861 (14%)
Outer Circle countries	
Singapore	176,216
Malaysia	293,084
Hong Kong	13,569
Philippine	95,862
Subtotal	578,731 (8%)
Expanding Circle countries	
China	1,813,646
Korea	764,835
Japan	591,663
Cambodia	366,737
Taiwan	358,945
Thailand	226,140
Indonesia	63,672
Laos	128,425
France	197,449
Russia	330,349
Germany	129,507
Holland	45,138
Spain	37,996
Italy	33,591
Sweden	28,661
Switzerland	27,354
Denmark	25,175
Belgium	21,399
Norway	20,919
Finland	12,087
Others	402,728
Subtotal	5,626,416 (78%)

Source: Adapted from the General Statistics Organisation (VNAT, 2014)

According to WTTC, the total contribution of travel and tourism to the country's GDP in 2014 was 8.9%. Tourism has become a key economic driver. The hotel industry has been a significant benefactor. Hundreds of hotels, ranging from the luxurious to the standard, have opened, particularly in the big cities. International five-star hotels demand a high standard of service from hotel staff to satisfy guests' needs.

Acknowledging the importance of English in the hotel industry has meant that improving the English language competence of those people aiming to be employed in it has been a major goal of educational institutions that offer training programs in tourism and hospitality. This requirement has raised questions about the adequacy of English language instruction in related vocational courses, as well as the relevance and the quality of the teaching materials.

In the drive to improve standards, from 2014 non-English major students in universities and colleges are required to achieve a benchmark of a B1 level (indicating an Independent User) based on the CEFR in order to graduate (MOET, 2014). This level is equivalent to 450 TOEIC, IELTS of 4.5 or TOEFL of 45 iBT (MOET, 2012) (Appendix 2). HE graduates are expected to develop their English competence to the level where they can use English independently in daily communication and at work. This pre-supposes that graduates have a sound comprehension of English, are able to communicate in English (including expressing their point of view or giving opinions on common matters) and deal with most regularly-encountered situations. An intensive language program for students of some majors, including tourism and hospitality, has been implemented since 2011.

2.3 The English Curriculum in Higher Education

English, foreign language, is a compulsory subject studied by all HE students in Vietnam. Obtaining an outcome benchmark of level B1 based on the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) is a requirement for non-English major students to graduate from a university or college. Consequently, improving the teaching and learning of foreign languages, particularly English has been a focus in the training curriculum of all levels of education.

Being influenced by Confucianism, the Vietnamese education system continues to place a strong emphasis on perfection, content and form, formal study and a defined, high-context relationship between teacher and students (Barnes, 2010). Thus, the teaching of English in Vietnam is mainly based on materials and methods developed by Inner Circle applied linguists even though these may not be appropriate for practical purposes in Vietnamese conditions (Denham, 1992, p. 61). Generally, native speaker varieties of English, i.e. either British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) are preferred for teaching in most disciplines (Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Nunan, 2003). In some disciplines, such as those related to hospitality, the content of the English component of the course is mostly based on the themes of the prescribed textbook (Brogan, 2007; Brogan & Vicars, 2009; H. H. Pham, 1999). Nearly all the textbooks used for General English (GE) courses are written and published outside of Vietnam (Duong, 2007; MOET, 2008; H. H. Pham, 1999, 2005; L. H. Pham & Malvetti, 2012). The textbook, accompanying audio materials and the teacher's guidebook are practically the only learning resources available to teachers, most of whom are NNSs (Brogan, 2007).

In recent years, although there have been substantial innovations in the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the Vietnamese educational system, the implementation of these changes has been contested, and there is still a number of issues that need to be addressed. Despite two decades of innovation policy, teaching in Vietnam's HE institutions continues to be conducted mainly in a traditional way (H. H. Pham, 2005; T. N. Pham, 2010; Phan, 2004). For the teaching of English, the teaching methods still focus on developing reading comprehension, explaining vocabulary and grammar rules or doing grammar exercises (V. V. Hoang, 2010; MOET, 2008; H. H. Pham, 1999; T. T. Tran, 2013). Since both teachers and students speak the same L1 they do not have an immediate need to use English in their local context, therefore the motivation to communicate in English is not high (Barnes, 2010). Opportunities to practise the communicative skills of listening and speaking have not been central to instruction or have been limited by poor or inadequate teaching facilities, large class size, and the wide variation in the students' competency levels (Duong, 2007; N. H. Nguyen, 2011; T. N. Pham, 2010; Phan, 2004). As Phan (2004) observed, the teaching of English in Asia in general and in Vietnam in particular, is still dominantly didactic, product-oriented, and teacher-

centered (p. 52). Consequently, many graduates from Vietnamese universities are not able to use foreign languages in their work unless they have taken extra studies in a dedicated foreign language program (T. N. Pham, 2010, p. 56).

It is a common practice for HE institutions to design their own curricula based on the curriculum framework promulgated by the MOET (Duong, 2007; V. V. Hoang, 2010). Although the MOET has provided a framework for English instruction, institutions are allowed some flexibility in order to balance their curricula in accordance with their specific training orientation (MOET, 2008; H. H. Pham, 1999). The syllabuses are normally constructed by subject teachers. A number of researchers have observed that the design of these syllabuses is strongly influenced by the teachers' own experience, particularly the pedagogical assumptions derived from their own learning experiences and their socio-economic knowledge (Dang, 2006; Duong, 2007; V. V. Hoang, 2010; T. C. L. Nguyen, 2009). Learners' needs are not often taken into account (Duong, 2007) and, if they are, they reflect teachers' assumptions about what students want or need (Brogan, 2007, p. 61). Consequently, the syllabus often fails to address learners' needs, abilities and aspirations, resulting in a lack of motivation in the students and inefficiency in the delivery of the course (Duong, 2007; T. C. L. Nguyen, 2009).

2.4 English for Tourism and Hospitality

There are more than 100 universities and colleges and a number of vocational training centres offering programs for tourism and hospitality in Vietnam (H. Nguyen & Chaisawat, 2011, p. 59). For students seeking a hospitality orientation, programs in Hotel Management or Hotel and Restaurant Management are offered. Students who study these programs will ultimately seek employment in the hotel industry, as a manager in a resort or hotel, or as a hotel receptionist.

The project, *Human Resources Development in Tourism*, was implemented by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, in partnership with the European Union (VNAT & EU, 2009). It aimed to improve the English language proficiency of employees. The TOEIC test has become the standard for assessing English-language skills used in the workplace. The project recommended a TOEIC English proficiency benchmark for six specific tourism and hospitality occupations of

between 275 and 700, separated into a low and high standard (VNAT & EU, 2009) (Appendix 3). For example, a front office worker at a 3-star hotel is required to obtain a TOEIC score of between 475 and 650. A 2-star hotel may require a lower standard and a 5-star hotel a higher standard. The ultimate aim of the TOEIC score was to provide a tool for the employers to assess prospective employees' proficiency in English. It also established a benchmark which vocational institutions could use in evaluating and adapting their English training (VNAT & EU, 2009, p. 17).

Within the parameters of the *Vietnam Tourism Human Resources Development Project* (VNAT & EU, 2009), the *Vietnam Tourism Occupational Skills Standards* (VTOS) was launched in 2009 as a guide to designing vocational training programs (Ministry of Culture, Sports, & Tourism, 2012). VTOS constitutes the performance benchmarks for 13 occupations in the tourism and hospitality industries. Apart from the professional skills, English proficiency was a particular focus of the project.

These benchmarks have been recommended to HE and training institutions, which ideally modify their existing English teaching programs so that students can achieve the necessary score and, therefore, be eligible to seek employment in the industry (VNAT & EU, 2009). To achieve these benchmarks, the English language components of hospitality courses aim to build students' general English skills, as well as those language skills needed specifically for work in the industry. Course objectives routinely declare that students will be able to demonstrate what they have learned and apply them in real-life contexts; in other words, be able to communicate on common daily topics, perform their work in English, and deal with normal work-related problems.

To achieve these objectives, English language education in hospitality courses is divided into two stages: General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In GE, students learn foundational English through the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. ESP consists of two levels: Basic ESP in which students are introduced to general knowledge about hospitality through language practice in the four macro skills and Advanced ESP, in which students continue to develop and improve their English at a more complex level with a focus on the structures, topics and the skills used in effective communication.

Based on the MOET's curriculum framework, students in vocational courses normally study English as a foreign language subject for about 14 credits (around 10%) out of a total of the 142 credits of the undergraduate program (V. V. Hoang, 2010). With flexibility allowed, English studied in hospitality courses for undergraduate level normally occupies between 14 and 21 credits (one credit hour is 50 minutes), of which 8 or 12 credits are given to GE and 6 or 9 credits are for ESP (MOET, 2008). By the end of each stage, students are required to take and pass a test (5 out of 10 is an average and pass score according to the Vietnamese grade system) which consists of two portions: an oral test in which students are required to present a monologue or a dialogue with their peers on one of the topics discussed and covered in the course, and a written test for integrated skills of listening, reading, writing, vocabulary and language use. Those students who do not obtain an average score of the test have to re-sit the test or re-enrol the course until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.

Textbooks used in ESP courses vary from one institution to another and they are subject to change. As a general observation (MOET, 2008), ESP courses at both levels often rely entirely on textbooks written by native (L1) speakers of English and published abroad, mainly in L1 countries, for example, England or America. For the ESP stage, '*English for International Tourism*' (Dubicka & O'Keeffe, 2003), '*Tourism 1, 2, 3*' (Walker & Harding, 2007a, 2007b, 2009), '*Going International: English for Tourism*' (Harding, 1998), '*Highly Recommended: English for the hotel and catering industry*' (Stott & Revell, 2008), and '*High Season: English for the Hotel and Tourist Industry*' (Harding & Henderson, 1994) are among the textbooks commonly used in Tourism and Hospitality courses. When a textbook such as the one of those listed is adopted, the activities, the language focus and the practice settings are generally not appropriate to the Vietnamese context as they are not authentically-based and the conversations are mainly spoken by L1 speakers of English (Duong, 2007; H. Nguyen & Chaisawat, 2011). Consequently, the activities and the communication practice provided in the textbooks do not address the use of English in a LF setting in which communication occurs mainly among non-native speakers of English.

There are also cases in which the ESP textbooks are compiled by Vietnamese teachers of English from different sources. As a result, the teaching materials of the

course are inconsistent in term of the language focus, the topics, the activities and the tasks designed for practising communicative skills (Duong, 2007; T. T. Tran, 2013).

2.5 Internships

The MOET's curriculum framework (MOET, 2007) specifies that all students have to complete a professional internship in a workplace setting related to the major they are undertaking at university. The internship (Kiser & Partlow, 1999) offers an opportunity to close a sometimes substantial gap between the theory presented during training and practical reality (Collins, 2002; Tse, 2010; Tynjälä, 2008). It also provides students with valuable work-centred knowledge and work-related experience (Yiu & Law, 2012, p. 379) and maximises students' ability to transfer what they have learned in the workplace setting (Lin, Chang, & Lin, 2014). Internship has become an essential component and inseparable part of the educational experience for hospitality students (Kiser & Partlow, 1999; Yiu & Law, 2012). It comprises two practicum modules – initial and final – and accounts for 10 credits of the 142 credits (~7%) of the overall curriculum (MOET, 2007).

The professional internship is designed by the HE institution based on the MOET's curriculum framework without much input from industry. Hospitality students are often sent to hotels where they spend the internship in different areas of the FO, restaurant and bar, and in housekeeping. While in the workplace for internships, students are assigned to jobs, supervised and assessed by the staff of the hotel.

For the initial internship, students are sent to visit and practise in a three-, four-, or five-star hotels or restaurants. The initial internship can take place in the first or second year of the course and may be included as part of the course syllabus of some major subjects. Observation and visits to the hotels/restaurants or other hospitality-related workplaces are also organised for students by teaching staff (Personal communication with colleagues, May 24, 2014).

Students spend the final internship, which is also called the graduation internship, in a three-, four- or five-star hotel in the final year (usually in semester 7) of the course for two or three months before they take their final examinations. The internship venues are sometimes arranged by institutions, but students are also encouraged or required to apply and look for the location of an internship in a relevant

industry/company. According to the MOET's framework, the initial internship counts for 4 credits and the final internship occupies 6 credits (MOET, 2007). The time and the way of organising the internships are flexible, influenced by the teaching schedules of each institution. After each internship, each student is required to write a report about what s/he observed and learned from the internship. This report is evaluated by the discipline teachers who are in charged with students' internships. There is no specific requirement that the English taught in the either GE or ESP components of the course be practised during the internship.

2.6 Summary

This chapter describes the position of English and its importance in the current context of the country's economic development. Since *Doi Moi* in 1986, English has facilitated the Vietnam's economic development. With an increasing number of visitors coming to the country, the tourism and hospitality sectors have made a substantial contribution to the country's economic growth. In the hotel industry, English is widely used as the preferred foreign language. In order to meet the fast-changing requirements of the industry, there is a high demand for staff who are professionally qualified and competent in foreign languages, primarily in English. Consequently, improving the English language proficiency of students at all levels of education has received much attention and investment from the Vietnamese Government, a commitment reflected in the *National Foreign Language Project 2008-2020*. As a result, there has been pressure for change in the teaching and learning English in the Vietnamese educational system, including vocational education.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature relevant to the current study. The first section describes the spread of English and its dominance in international communication. This is followed by an examination of the characteristics of communication in ELF and the factors impacting on intelligibility, particularly as they apply in Southeast Asia. The strategies employed by ELF speakers to enhance the success of communication are discussed. The nature of workplace language and communication in workplace settings, with a particular focus on the '*hospitality language*', is outlined. The second section provides an overview of English language training for hospitality students – the skills needed by hospitality students and some key elements of the training course.

Section 1

3.1 The Spread of English

English is the primary means of communication in a range of economic, financial, commercial, educational, technological and cultural settings. The increase in the use of English has fuelled and strengthened its position as an international language. The spread of English has been so pervasive that, in business settings internationally, 90% of communication takes place in English (Charles, 2007, p. 262) and there is frequently no involvement of native speakers (NSs) (Charles, 2007; Chiappini et al., 2007; Nickerson, 2005; Pullin, 2010). It is estimated that, worldwide, more than 80% of English speakers are non-native speakers (NNSs) (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Charles, 2007; Crystal, 1997).

The spread of English over an extended period of time has been represented by Kachru (1985, p. 16) as three concentric circles: the Inner Circle (IC), the Outer Circle (OC), and the Expanding Circle (EC).

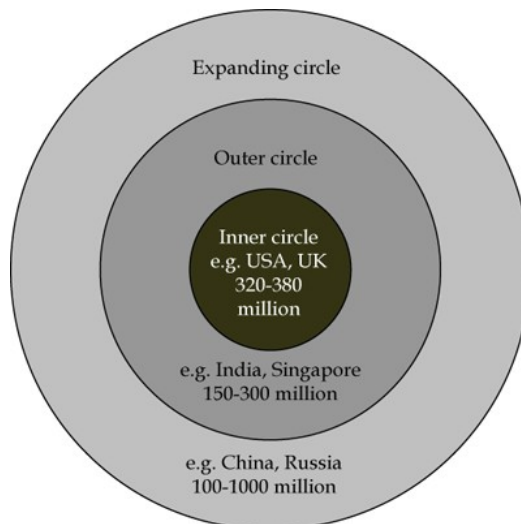


Figure 1: Kachru's Three Circles of English

Kachru's Concentric Circles model has promoted the recognition of 'Englishes' in the plural, as in 'varieties of English', 'new Englishes', and 'international Englishes' (Bolton, 2005; Burns, 2001). World Englishes (WE) is an "umbrella label" covering all varieties of English worldwide and the different approaches used to describe and analyse them (Bolton, 2008b, p. 367). It emphasises the process of pluralisation of English, the recognition of linguistic diversity, its hybridity in form and function, and the "chaos" intricately bound up with issues of behaviour and identity (Burns, 2001, p. 47).

The model of WE proposed by Kachru (1985) represents a historical perspective of the spread of English, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts. In the first diaspora, the language travelled from Britain to other English NS countries in the IC – mainly, the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand; in the second diaspora, through colonisation to countries in the OC where English is a second language (ESL), such as India, Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, and Singapore; and finally, to countries in the EC, where English has traditionally been classified as a foreign language - for example, Germany, Russia, Japan, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Taiwan (Bolton, 2006a; Kachru, 1997; Kilickaya, 2009).

The IC varieties of English are characterised as "norm-providing", the OC varieties as "norm-developing", and the EC varieties as "norm-dependent" (Bolton, 2008b, p. 376; Moody, 2007, p. 50; Pennycook, 2003, p. 519; Seargeant, 2012, p. 173).

English varieties in the OC have become institutionalised and used as a medium of instruction in education and in courts and government offices. Their “localised norm has a well-established linguistic and cultural identity” (Bolton, 2006b, p. 249).

English in the EC is also widespread and it is predicted to be increasingly adopted due to its use as an international or intra-regional language (between ASEAN countries, for example) (Crystal, 1997, 2001; Graddol, 1997, 2001). As an ASEAN country, Vietnam has a growing number of learners and users of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Canagarajah, 2012; Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2002, 2007a; Pakir, 2010).

The emergence of new varieties of English indicates the complexity of the social reality of where and when English is used. Local varieties of English are developed with variations in their linguistic (i.e. phonological, lexical, and syntactic) and sociolinguistic characteristics, i.e. local varieties of English are influenced by the first languages (L1) of English users (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Kachru, 2005; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008; Yano, 2009b). English users transfer phonological and lexical elements from their L1, code-switch, and create new expressions. Variations in pronunciation, lexical choice, loanwords, collocations and non-standard forms are common and unavoidable (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Deterding, 2010; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2003, 2010b; Meierkord, 2004; Melchers & Shaw, 2003; Mesthrie, 1992, 2010).

The emergence of these varieties of English has also raised the important question of intelligibility (Modiano, 1999b; Quirk, 1990; Yano, 2009a). Quirk (1990), who is opposed to Kachru’s “tolerant pluralism” (p.9), maintained that a standard (i.e., a NS-based model) is needed to facilitate communication within the wider English-speaking community, asserting that learners do not favour alternatives to the NS norm of Standard English (SE). He maintained that, if SE is not maintained and “exposure to varieties is ill-used”, learners might become subject to what he labelled “half-baked quackery” (p. 9). Other scholars have also been concerned about intelligibility, should an acceptable standard not be established and maintained. Chevillet (1992) argued that nativised varieties, such as Nigerian English or Indian English, can result in “a total breakdown in intelligibility” (p. 27) and that it is necessary to adhere to some “yardsticks of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary” (p. 29). Widdowson (1994) believed that “SE promotes international

communication” and suggested that “the central stability of the standard must be maintained as the common linguistic frame of reference” (p. 379). Modiano (1999b) asserted that SE is characterised as the language spoken by proficient speakers worldwide; thus, NSs of English who have strong regional accents or dialects are not able to communicate effectively in an international context as they do not speak a form of SE that includes those characteristics of English which are comprehensible to a majority of both NSs and NNSs.

One response to these concerns was a proposal for a World Spoken Standard English (WSSE) (Crystal, 1997): “local Englishes are becoming divergent, while international Englishes increasingly converge to the point of merging into a single world variety based on American English” (p. 434). Crystal proposed a WSSE to promote mutual intelligibility, while maintaining the value of local accents and dialects to promote identity. Crystal (1999, p. 16) believed that some sort of WSSE with multidialects will emerge to be used as an international standard of spoken English for communication.

Within the current context, English has become a dominant means of communication in a variety of settings in which both native and non-native speakers of English are involved. It is a *lingua franca* - a common language used for international communication between speakers of different linguacultural backgrounds; thus, it may refer to all forms and varieties of English and may have its own characteristics identified as common and specific in different ELF communication settings.

3.2 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

3.2.1 Definition of ELF

In its purest form, ELF is defined as “a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language for communication” (Firth, 1996, p. 240, original emphasis). Adopting this definition, English is a *lingua franca* only between NNSs in the EC and OC. In reality, however, NSs are also involved in international communication in English with NNSs (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004). Thus, ELF is the medium of communication between participants who have

different “linguacultures”. According to House (1999), “ELF interactions are defined as interactions between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue” (p. 74). Speakers from all three circles of Kachru’s model use ELF (Modiano, 1999a; Seidlhofer, 2005; Yano, 2001). It is “a vehicle for communication between NNSs or between any combination of NSs and NNSs” (Berns, 2008, p. 329) in a variety of international contexts (Jenkins, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2002, 2007c; Seidlhofer, 2004). In the context of this study, this is the conception of ELF that has been used to describe the English language communication among the participants.

An extended definition views ELF as communication between NSs, second language users, or foreign language users, (Jenkins, 2006, p. 161; Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 211). Kirkpatrick (2007c, p. 7) emphasised the functional effectiveness of ELF and defined ELF as “a medium of communication used by people who do not speak the same first language”. Although this is a somewhat “loose definition” (Kaur, 2010, p. 193), ELF communication involves all kinds of speakers who use English for communication in LF contexts and, therefore, are ELF speakers (Cogo, 2008; Jenkins, 2006, 2009a; Kaur, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2004).

As a consequence of its widespread use, scholars have argued that English can no longer be seen as possessing one culture (Baker, 2009; Jenkins, 1998; Widdowson, 1994; Yano, 2009a); rather, it is a language that belongs to all the people who use it (Kachru, 1997; Widdowson, 1994; Yano, 2009a). Conceived in this way, ELF is part of the more general phenomenon of “English as an international language” (EIL), and the term EIL is often used as an alternative to ELF (Jenkins, 2006; Meierkord, 2004; Seargeant, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2005). Traditionally, the term EIL has been used to refer to the use of English within and across Kachru’s Circles (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2005). However, when English is chosen as the means of communication among people who come from different linguacultural backgrounds, the majority of researchers prefer the term ELF (Jenkins, 2006, p. 160; Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339).

WE shares some commonalities with ELF: both place emphasis on the pluricentricity of English, recognising varieties of English and acknowledging that language changes as it spreads and is used in new environments (Pakir, 2009). However, they are different in one important aspect. WE focuses on “exploring sociolinguistic

realities” (Pakir, 2009, p. 228) and is primarily about “the expression of identity and reflection of local culture” (Kirkpatrick, 2010b, p. 219), whereas ELF is used as a means of communication, a tool for accomplishing transactional goals in a wide range of international settings. It is therefore concerned with the success or effectiveness of communication (Cogo, 2008; Saraceni, 2008). For that reason, House (2003) argued that ELF is a language for communication rather than a language for identification (p. 560).

3.2.2 Characteristics of communication in ELF

The communication settings of ELF are heterogeneous due to the highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds and different Englishes used by its speakers (Björkman, 2013; Meierkord, 2004). ELF speakers are not geographically limited (Canagarajah, 2007; Jenkins, 2006; Modiano, 1999b; Seidlhofer, 2004; Yano, 2009b) and their communication can take place in various contexts - between NSs-NNSs or NNSs – NNSs.

The language of ELF is hybrid in terms of its linguistic features – pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse conventions (Canagarajah, 2007; Meierkord, 2004). Thus, ELF cannot be described as a single variety or single linguistic code; rather, it is characterised by a diversity of Englishes – “a multiplicity of voices” (House, as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007a, p. 120). Jenkins (2007) and Canagarajah (2007) assert that ELF does not aim to establish a monocentric model with a single norm to which all ELF users must conform, as “it never achieves a stable or even standardised form” (Meierkord, 2004, p. 129). For that reason, it is not a “one-size-fits-all” model as Saraceni (2008, p. 22) claimed, but is a flexible, variable and creative language which is inter-subjectively or jointly-constructed, and its form and the cultural norms are negotiated and developed by its speakers in each specific context of communication (Canagarajah, 2007; Cogo, 2008; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2009).

ELF exchanges are, therefore, “situated and dynamic” (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 925). However, in certain contexts of communication, there are common linguistic and pragmatic features that ELF users in a group, region or community share with one another. ELF in ASEAN countries, for example, is characterised by a number of linguistic features in pronunciation and syntax (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006, pp.

399-400) some of which are: lack of reduced vowels, syllable-based, heavy end-stress or final heavy emphasis, and in its practice - for example, ELF speakers rarely interrupt while their interlocutors are speaking (Kirkpatrick, 2012a, 2012b). ELF speakers may also use each other's vocabulary or language structures and often borrow from each other's speech, developing a hybrid language (Sampson and Zhao, as cited in Canagarajah, 2007, p. 396).

The focus of ELF communication is on success in communication rather than on formal correctness in accordance with NS standards (House, 1999; Hülmbauer, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2008). Seidlhofer (2001) regards ELF as a language "use(d) in its own right" (p. 137) and is not "norm-dependent" (Hülmbauer, 2007, p. 6). Thus, ELF speakers' proficiency is not measured in term of "correctness" in comparison with the speech of a NS (Cogo, 2008; House, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004). Seidlhofer (2004). However, to communicate successfully and achieve an outcome in ELF communication, intelligibility between ELF speakers needs to be maintained although they do not necessarily have to follow the norm or standard set by NS of English (Mauranen, 2012). Thus, negotiation for mutual intelligibility and shared understanding is of utmost importance and it is the goal that ELF speakers aspire to in their communication (Berns, 2009; Kaur, 2010). ELF speakers therefore accommodate or adapt the language they use to ensure comprehension (Firth, 1996; Meierkord, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2001). Pitzl (2005) viewed shared understanding as an interactive and jointly constructed process in which all participants of a conversation display their active cooperation and collaboration for the success of communication (p. 52). Consequently, in ELF settings, form cannot be separated from function (Cogo, 2008; Jenkins, 2009a).

Communication in ELF, however, may be a challenge for its users. They often face difficulties due to unequal proficiency levels, differences in the varieties of English they speak, and in behavioural and cultural norms – such as norms for opening and closing a conversation or for greeting and leaving (Meierkord, 2000).

Communication in ELF is sometimes characterised by cross-cultural interference (Meierkord, 2000), particularly in circumstances in which the majority of users are NNSs but come from a variety of L1 backgrounds (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) and therefore are, or used to be, learners of English as an L2. In this situation, the user

has acquired a certain level of English, based on the norms of either British or American English, and, consequently, there are at least three or more different cultures involved (Meierkord, 2000). In these intercultural settings, it is likely that communication is “fragile” (Kaur, 2011a, p. 94) and miscommunication or misunderstanding commonly occurs (Bae, 2002; Kaur, 2011a). However, research (House, 1999; Meierkord, 2002; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006) has indicated that interference from L1 norms is not as prominent as might be expected and in fact, very little misunderstanding occurs in ELF interactions as its speakers employ various strategies in an attempt to pre-empt problems and ensure understanding (Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011a; Mauranen, 2006; Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010; Meierkord, 1998, 2000; Watterson, 2008). In cases of non-understanding or misunderstanding, it is often the NS who causes the problem because of the use of idioms, complicated or obscure vocabulary, and cultural norms in communication which are not always shared by NNSs (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Nickerson, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2001).

Due to the diversity of their linguacultural backgrounds, ELF speakers are often careful about the terms and expressions they use when interacting with their interlocutors. They do not avoid idiomatic expressions; instead they use expressions they are more familiar with and which are understandable in their context (Cogo, 2012, p. 103). When they are uncertain about the norms in their interlocutors’ L1, they employ routine formulae (e.g. for greetings or leave-taking) which are appropriate and acceptable either in BrE or AmE (Meierkord, 2002, p. 127) and avoid using jargon or complex words that may be ambiguous or give rise to misunderstanding (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2007a).

Given the hybridity of ELF speakers’ linguacultural backgrounds, cooperation is a widely acknowledged characteristic of ELF communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Firth, 1996; Mauranen, 2006; Meierkord, 1998). In most cases, ELF interactions are characterised by collaboration, joint construction and engagement. Thus, communication between ELF speakers is “a two-way street” (Berns, 2008, p. 329), a description that implies a process of negotiation in which both participants are actively and jointly involved.

3.2.3 Intelligibility in ELF communication

In ELF communication, participants try “to make communication as intelligible as possible to their interlocutor” (Cogo, 2009, p. 257). Smith and Nelson (1985, p. 333) state that “intelligibility is not speaker or listener-centred but it is interactional between speaker and hearer.” Thus, “being intelligible means being understood by an interlocutor at a given time in a given situation” (Smith, 1992, p. 59). This conceptualisation inextricably links comprehensibility to context of use, a complex setting involving factors related to the speaker, the listener, the linguistic and social context, and the environment (Jenkins, 2000).

In the 1990s, ELF researchers aimed to build a new model that enhanced international intelligibility through the establishment of a common core of English which supported the diversity of English in different *lingua franca* contexts (Cogo, 2008, p. 59). Jenkins (2000, 2006, 2009b), for example, identified the main features of phonology that were necessary for intelligibility – consonant sounds, vowel length contrasts between long and short vowels (e.g. *beat-bit*), restrictions on consonant deletion (omitting sounds at the beginning and in the middle of words), and nuclear stress production. Jenkins (2009b) also identified non-core features, such as the addition of vowels between consonant clusters (e.g. *product* as *peroducuto* – Japanese English) or vowel addition to consonants at the end of words (e.g. *luggage* as *luggagi* – Korean English).

While these features are common occurrences in ELF communication, they do not prevent ELF speakers from achieving communication success. Mauranen (2003, 2006, 2007), Cogo (2009), and Mauranen et al. (2010) observed that ELF speakers often accommodate their language use to suit their interlocutors’ proficiency. Kirkpatrick (2010c) identified that Asian ELF speakers often share with one another linguistic and pragmatic features; for instance, they borrow, use, and reuse each other’s language forms, create nonce words (words created to use in a certain context or situation), switch and mix languages, invoking what Cook (1999, p. 190) termed “multi-competencies” drawn from their multilingual experiences and practices. ELF researchers have investigated these “multi-competencies”, including turn-taking and topic management (Cogo, 2009; Mauranen, 2006), the use of long pauses for topic

change or closure (Wagner & Firth, 1997), and the way laughter is used as a backchannel (BCL) (Knapp, 2002; Meierkord, 2002).

Cooperation is one of the features that is closely linked to success in ELF communication (Firth, 1990, 1996; Lesznyak, 2002; Meierkord, 2000). Seidlhofer (2003, p. 15) observed that ELF interactions seem to be “overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive.” Lesznyak (2002, p. 184) reported that participants in his study displayed their collaboration by implicitly working out common rules of communication, i.e. taking short turns, using simple, common lexical items and structures, employing more explicit linguistic markers instead of complex and abstract arguments or structures. Meierkord (1998, 2000) observed that ELF speakers preferred talking about safe topics, (e.g. the meals and life in the hostel), and they often discussed the topics briefly with around 10 turns. In addition, the speakers mainly limited themselves to formulaic, commonly-used phrases such as *how are you, good morning, hello, hi* (Meierkord, 1998) and displayed their support or cooperative behaviour by using BCL, laughter, or lexical suggestions for utterance completion.

In summary, due to the hybridity of the linguacultural backgrounds of its speakers, ELF is characterised by a number of linguistic and pragmatic features which are necessary for ensuring the intelligibility and success of communication. Speakers in ELF settings display collaboration and cooperation in order to achieve the desired communication outcome.

3.2.4 English in Southeast Asia

English is the *lingua franca* among people in ASEAN countries (Kirkpatrick, 2008, 2014) and is used as “an additional language” by ASEAN “multilinguals” for intra-national and intra-regional purposes (Kirkpatrick, 2014, p. 426). It has become the sole official working language of ASEAN since 2009 (Kirkpatrick, 2012a, p. 332).

In at least four ASEAN countries - Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei - English has developed into new, distinct varieties such as Singaporean, Filipino or Malaysian English (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2012a; Pakir, 2010; Platt & Weber, 1980). In these countries, English is a second language that is widely used in the community and as the medium of instruction in schools (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Deterding

& Kirkpatrick, 2006; Low & Hashim, 2012). In six countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam), English is taught as a foreign language and its use is limited mostly to trade, business, and tourism (Low & Hashim, 2012).

While there has been considerable research on the English language used in Southeast Asia (SEA), especially on the distinct varieties of Singaporean and Malaysian English, relatively little research has been conducted into the English language used in countries such as Indonesia or Vietnam (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Low & Hashim, 2012).

ELF in SEA shares the linguistic and interactional features that are commonly found in the other varieties of English. These features occur frequently but do not cause many problems of comprehension for listeners. While analysing the speech of Southeast Asian ELF speakers and the effect these features had on intelligibility, Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) identified features of pronunciation (e.g. lack of reduced vowels or stressed syllables) that were similar to those identified by Jenkins (2000). They observed that only those features of pronunciation that were not shared by speakers from other ASEAN countries resulted in communication breakdown (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 391). Seidlhofer (2004, p. 220), based on the 2001 Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English, identified the systematically and frequently used lexicogrammatical items used by expert NNSs of English from a wide range of L1s. These items were different from those used by NSs, but they caused no communication problems to ELF speakers. Some of these features were: omission of the third person present tense *-s*; interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which*; omission or inappropriate use of the definite and indefinite articles; use of the one-size fits-all question tags *isn't it?* or *no?*; inappropriate use of prepositions; increasing explicitness (e.g. *black colour* or *how long time?*); pluralisation of uncountable nouns (e.g. *advices*, *informations*, *furnitures*); and use of *that*-clauses instead of infinitive constructions (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 220).

ASEAN speakers of ELF follow the conventions of communication that are established in their countries. For example, they rarely interrupt the other interlocutor while s/he is speaking, waiting until s/he finishes their turn to begin their own turn. They also avoid using specific lexis and local idioms that would be likely to cause mis- or non-understanding to their interlocutors (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2008, 2010a). They are collaborative and cooperative in their communication, employing a

variety of strategies to pre-empt problems; these strategies include lexical anticipation, lexical correction, spelling out the word, requests for repetition, requests for clarification, ‘let it pass’ strategies, BCL, repeating the phrase, signalling topic change explicitly, paraphrasing, and avoidance of local or idiomatic terms (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, p. 134). These strategies are not unique to Southeast Asia, however, and can be found in a range of ELF communication settings.

Although people from Southeast Asia use English as a *lingua franca* more frequently with other Asian people than with American, Australian or British people, studies have indicated that NS varieties of English, such as American or British English, are still the most desired varieties to be taught in schools in ASEAN countries, as they are considered “standard” or “formal” (Kirkpatrick, 2007b, 2010b; Matsuda, 2003; McKenzie, 2008).

3.2.5 English in Vietnam

Vietnam is located in central Southeast Asia where English is taught and used as a foreign language. After *Doi Moi*, English re-emerged, gained in status and played a particularly important role in Vietnamese economic development (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Denham, 1992; Do, 2006; S. Wright, 2002). In the past two decades, English has gained ascendancy in communication in business and trade, services like tourism and hospitality, and education (Do, 2006; Nunan, 2003). As Nunan (2003) observed, proficient English is required for most professional employment in Vietnam (p. 594). It is a must for young people to be successful in both studying and working. It is widely used as a LF for communication between Vietnamese people and people from other countries in the Asian and Southeast Asian regions. An increasing number of visitors from all three circles of Kachru’s (1985) traditional classification have come to Vietnam for business and tourism purposes as reviewed in Chapter Two. The Government’s decision to open up the country has promoted and enhanced the status of English and its importance to the country’s economic development. As a result, there has been “a feverish demand for English” in Vietnam since 1986 (Kirkpatrick, 2012a, p. 338). English has become the first and the most preferred foreign language used by Vietnamese people to communicate with foreigners – both native and non-native English speakers. It is widely spoken in the Vietnamese streets and in institutions (Do, 2006, p. 5). So far, there has been

little research about ‘Vietnamese English’ (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Bolton, 2008a; Kirkpatrick, 2007c), particularly in relation to modern business communication and the English spoken in workplace settings (Chew, 2005, 2009). In one study conducted by Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006), which investigated whether an ASEAN variety of English was developing, there were only two Vietnamese participants.

‘Vietnamese English’ shares the linguistic and pragmatic features of regional English (e.g. nonstandard grammatical and pronunciation features, or the use of repetition, paraphrase, backchannels and other strategies in communication). However, the English used by Vietnamese people is also influenced by the ways they use their L1 and a culture which has been strongly influenced by Confucianism: one that respects the social hierarchy, age and seniority, particularly in communication. Young people, children, students, or junior staff, for example, rarely ask questions or interrupt when an older person, or a person in higher authority or position, is speaking; instead, they listen and wait until s/he finishes before asking questions. When communicating with someone for the first time, they are often shy and timid (N. T. Tran, 1996). They protect “face” and “personal honour”, but are “forthright” and explicit in expression (Brower, as cited in Chew, 2009, p. 378). As Chew (2009) observed, Vietnam is regarded as “a high-context culture in which internalised rules of behaviour and communication dominated”. Building and maintaining a good relationship with a client are important for doing business with Vietnamese people. Thus, “a right, time-nurtured relationship”, which is often built on informal face-to-face communication, is often the way to business success for Vietnamese people (p. 374).

3.3 Hospitality Language as Professional Discourse

3.3.1 ELF communication in professional settings

In workplace settings, communication is mainly task-oriented (Gunnarsson, 2009; Heritage, 2004; Koester, 2010). People orient to a goal or intention that is often explicit (Gunnarsson, 2009, p. 5). Koester (2006, p. 26) claimed that workplace language normally has two functions: transactional (interactions aim at accomplishing a task, a specific outcome, or achieving concrete results) and

interactional (fostering social relationships). Hülmbauer (2007, p. 10) suggested that communicative success depends on the degree to which participants were satisfied with the “communicative work done”, and Kasper and Kellerman (1997b, p. 348) termed it the achievement of a “mutually acceptable outcome”. Viewing successful talk from the participants’ point of view, Cogo and Dewey (2012) defined successful communication as “any exchange that proves to be meaningful for the participants and that has reached the required purpose or purposes” (p. 36). Thus, a conversation is successful when the goals of the speakers are achieved.

Where communication is a dyadic face-to-face interaction, there is a clear role distinction between the participants which can be reflected in the way the language is used and determined by the professional settings in which the communication occurs (Koester, 2010). Cheng (2004), for instance, in a study into checking out discourse in hotel interactions, taken from the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English, found that there were certain words used exclusively by hotel staff in their interactions with guests, for example, *sir/madam* and *minibar*. Cheng noticed that the word *minibar* was never used by a guest and most of the questions to the guests concerning the minibar were used with rising intonation. According to Koester (2010, p. 58), rising intonation often indicates an assumption of shared knowledge.

The growth and widespread use of English has promoted an interest in the way in which English is used in lingua franca communication. Numerous studies have examined how successful communication in ELF is achieved in the workplace and researchers have found that, in most cases, interactions between ELF speakers were smooth and orderly, with little misunderstanding or few repairs (Firth, 1996; Pitzl, 2005; Rogerson-Revell, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2004) and ELF speakers employ a wide range of strategies, e.g. repetition, paraphrase and code-switching to ensure mutual understanding switching (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009, 2010).

3.3.2 Hospitality language

Traditionally, the word 'hospitality' referred to a social interaction involving entertaining visitors in one's home. This concept has changed over time and the word 'hospitality' is now associated with business-oriented interactions focussed on services that satisfy guests' needs for accommodation, food and entertainment

services. Thus, the term 'commercial hospitality' was introduced and is now widely used to describe all activities involved in the 'guest cycle' from arrival to departure (Blue & Harun, 2003). Merritt (1976) described 'hospitality' as:

... the face-to-face interaction between a server who is 'officially posted' in some service area and a customer who is present in that service area, that interaction being oriented to the satisfaction of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service (p. 321).

Wiley and Wrigley (1987) observed that, in any service industry, verbal communication is very important in facilitating optimum outcomes for the business. The interaction is purpose or goal-oriented, as the customer requires some service and the server provides it. King (1995) defined hospitality in a commercial setting as "a specific kind of relationship" within which the host understands and anticipates what would give pleasure to the guest and tries to "deliver it generously and flawlessly in face-to-face interactions, with deference and tactfulness" (p. 229).

Hotels, in particular, are settings where the transfer process of the hospitality product takes place (Reuland, Choudry, & Fagel, 1985). In the 'hospitality industry' the exchange process is designed to generate mutual benefits for the parties involved (Brotherton, 1999, p. 168). The hospitality service encounter is a "people business" in which staff play an important role in defining the customers' experience (Wolvin, 1994, p. 195). Sparks (1994) argued, hospitality service is "very much a communicative encounter" (p. 39) and the quality of service is, (at least in part), evaluated by customers, based on the manner in which information is communicated (p. 48). Blue and Harun (2003) commented that the register of hospitality language is rich in standard vocabulary and formulaic expressions, including greetings and expressions of gratitude.

Communication in a hospitality setting is inherently subject to misunderstanding or non-understanding, as guests come from different countries, but are communicating through a common language. However, despite some deficiencies in the language used, Blue and Harun (2003) found that there were no profound cultural problems in the interactions between hotel staff and guests, as the staff always looked for ways to forestall any possible communication problem and tried to help the guests to feel that "the hotel is truly a home away from home"(p. 86).

It is clear that the capacity of staff to communicate in English has a direct influence on a guest's satisfaction with the services provided (Sparks, 1994; Sparks & Callan, 1992). Sparks and Callan (1992) also emphasised that the quality of the information that is communicated is very important and it influences customers' level of satisfaction. Consequently, communication in the hospitality industry must be "clear, straightforward and candid, but not garbled" (Sparks, 1994, p. 22).

The use of effective English in cross-cultural encounters has gained more recent attention, especially in relation to customer service. As Carper (as cited in Yuen, 2009, p. 92) observed, it costs much more to attract a new customer to the business than to keep an existing one. As a result, establishing a substantial base of loyal customers is important and challenging for service providers (Yuen, 2009). Leung and Lo (1996) found that assessment of hotel service quality is determined by the quality of the guest's experience during the brief face-to-face interactions with service staff, and is especially influenced by a staff member's ability to perform specific tasks and to meet customer needs (p. 71). The language used to perform these functions is both transactional and interactional in nature and these functions are intrinsically linked (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Applied linguistics research has recognised tourism and hospitality as important contexts for the study of interpersonal and intergroup relations (Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005). Dann (1996, p. 3) referred to the "language of tourism" as a "language of modernity, promotion and consumerism". According to Dann (1996, p. 4), the language of hospitality and tourism is the language of meeting needs, providing high level of service, understanding people, delighting people, and of solving problems. In a broader sense, Blue and Harun (2003) have conceptualised '*hospitality language*' as "all linguistic expressions which relate to and represent hospitality concerns" (p. 73), a professional skill since it is used not only as a means of communication but also as a way of providing services and satisfying customers. Prachanant (2012) viewed '*hospitality language*' as the specific English language used to perform the functions that employees use when providing information, services or help to guests.

Hospitality language is often formal and the degree of formality depends on the level of familiarity among the participants (Blue & Harun, 2003). In certain circumstances,

hospitality language can be relatively informal; for example, with a regular guest who has been to the hotel before. In this situation, “general chat” or “small talk” is often in evidence and interlinked with transactions (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 83).

3.4 Communicative Strategies in ELF Settings

3.4.1 Definition and perspectives on communicative strategies

Communicative strategies (CS) were first mentioned in Selinker’s (1972) work on interlanguage, which introduced and discussed strategies connected with “errors” in learners’ interlanguage systems in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (p. 215). CS can be viewed from the two perspectives: psycholinguistic and interactional.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, CS are ways to negotiate a communicative deficiency or inadequacy and are generally understood to be the ways speakers attempt to address a gap or solve communication problems to achieve a particular communicative goal (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Tarone (as cited in Dornyei & Scott, 1997, p. 177) conceived CS as tools employed by an individual “to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual’s thought”.

Færch and Kasper (1983) viewed CS as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”(p. 36) . Poulisse, Bongaerts and Kellerman (as cited in Kasper & Kellerman, 1997a, p. 2) viewed CS as “strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic shortcomings”. The problems might be resolved by adapting the message to suit the communicative purpose or by employing linguistic tools – “verbal or nonverbal first-aid devices” to compensate for breakdowns in communication (Dornyei & Scott, 1997, p. 177). Overall, psycholinguistic approaches focus on CS as “problematicity” (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997a, p. 2) related to the speakers’ cognitive processes (Wagner & Firth, 1997, p. 325).

The interactional perspective sees CS as the “mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (Tarone, 1980, p. 420). They are a joint effort between both the speaker

and the interlocutor to negotiate an agreement on meaning “to ensure that both interlocutors are talking about the same thing” (Tarone, 1981, p. 288) and are used “by offering alternative means of communicating one’s message” (Dornyei, 1995, p. 59). This conception views CS as “attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second-language learner and the linguistic knowledge of the target language interlocutor in real communication situations” (Tarone, 1981, p. 288). Various repair or meaning-negotiation mechanisms (Dornyei & Scott, 1997) are considered to be strategies if they aim to “clarify intended meaning” rather than simply to “correct linguistic forms” (Tarone, 1980, p. 424). Studies based on an interactional perspective have pointed to the value of learner-learner conversation, in which the speakers negotiate meaning by using interactional modifications or adjustments to ensure shared understanding (Bell, 2006; Varonis & Gass, 1985) and seek to explicate how the participants collaboratively overcome the difficulties of their interaction through joint social action.

Wagner and Firth (1997) have posited that CS primarily viewed from an interactional perspective see interaction as an ongoing and contingent meaning-creating process. These strategies are “an overt phenomenon” performed by the participants (p. 325).

3.4.2 CS in ELF communication

From an ELF perspective, CS are viewed as the means employed to address both problems and potential problems (Björkman, 2011; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006). Speakers in ELF settings frequently and skilfully employ various strategies to pre-empt and resolve problems (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011b). They are strategies which are efficiently used “when there are gaps in both information and code” in communication (Björkman, 2014, p. 124).

Researchers, for example, Cogo (2009); Cogo and Dewey (2012); Hülmbauer (2009); Kaur (2010); Mauranen (2006); Pitzl (2005); and Watterson (2008) have observed that ELF speakers frequently employ various strategies to prevent and solve the problems of non-understanding – a point in a conversation “when the listener realises that s/he cannot make sense of (part of) an utterance” (Pitzl, 2005, p. 52) or misunderstanding – “when the listener arrives at an interpretation which

makes sense to her/him but it is not what the speaker meant” (Bremer, as cited in Pitzl, 2005, p. 53).

Firth (1990, 1996), adopting an interactional approach using conversation analysis, observed that ELF participants in his study focused on the work-oriented target and cooperated with one another to achieve the communicative goal, despite linguistic anomalies used by their interlocutor (e.g. dysfluencies, unidiomatic phrasings or non-standard pronunciations and word stresses), and that the interaction was co-constructed and agreed upon by the participants. In doing so, the participants employed the “let it pass” strategy (Firth, 1996, p. 243) – letting an unclear or unknown word or utterance pass as long as the main content was comprehended – and the “make it normal” strategy (Firth, 1996, p. 245) – focusing on the content and treating the non-standard as normal or, in Firth’s words, “*make the other’s ‘abnormal’ talk appear ‘normal’*” (Firth, 1996, p. 245, original emphasis). These strategies appear to be commonly deployed in ELF communication (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011; Meierkord, 2000).

Firth’s (1990, 1996) ground-breaking work on strategies in ELF communication was followed by a number of studies in which ELF participants displayed their mutual cooperation in communication (House, 1999; Meierkord, 2002), negotiated meaning (Firth, 1996; Meierkord, 2002; Pitzl, 2005), pre-empted and resolved problems of non-understanding (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006; Watterson, 2008), facilitated each other’s comprehension and supported the smooth development of their conversation by using various interactional/communicative strategies (Mauranen, 2006; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009).

3.4.3 Types of CS evident in ELF communication

(1) Repetition

Repetition is a natural behaviour that occurs in everyday interactions. Participants employ repetition to support one another and maintain the flow of conversation (Tannen, 2007). Repetition has been found to serve a wide range of functions, particularly in ELF settings, in English communication among NSs, as well as NNSs

(Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987, 2007). It is a “multifaceted phenomenon” performing various strategic functions in ELF communication (Cogo, 2009, p. 260).

Based on the work of Norrick (1987) and Tannen (1987), Lichtkoppler (2007) focussed on the forms and functions of repetition, identifying three types of repetition: “exact repetition”, “repetition with variation”, and “paraphrasing” (pp. 44-45). Lichtkoppler’s categorisation was adapted from previous research in the field: exact repetition derives from the research of Johnstone (1994, p. 14) and Tannen (1987, p. 586) – it is also referred to as “full repetition” (Brody, 1994, p. 5); repetition with variation (Tannen, 1987, p. 586) is referred to as “non-exact repetition” by Johnstone (1994, p. 14); and as paraphrase – the restatement of “similar ideas in different words” (Tannen, 1987, p. 586). These types of repetition serve a wide range of functions in ELF communication. Lichtkoppler (2007) described three macro-functions of repetition: production, which facilitates the accomplishment of utterances; comprehension, which helps to achieve mutual understanding; and interaction, which shows speakers’ participation, solidarity or attitude (p. 48).

Two other forms of repetition were also identified in Lichtkoppler’s study: one, known as “same-speaker” repetition (as used in Norrick, 1987, p. 246) or “self-repetition” (e.g. Johnstone, 1994, pp. 15-16; Murata, 1995, p. 345; Tannen, 1987, p. 586) and the “other-repetition” (as used in Johnstone, 1994, p. 15), also labelled “allo-repetition” by Tannen (1987, p. 586) or “two-party repetition” by Murata (1995, p. 345). Self-repetition is employed to pre-empt the possibility of misunderstanding (Kaur, 2009, 2010; Mauranen, 2007), to buy time to search for a specific word (Kaur, 2009; Merritt, 1994) or to signal a word-search moment (Cogo & Dewey, 2012), or to frame what is to be said next (Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2007; also see Norrick, 1987; and Johnstone, 1994). Self-repetition also serves an interaction-oriented function, by contributing to turn-management or bridge interruption (Lichtkoppler, 2007; also see Johnstone, 1994; Norrick, 1987; and Tannen, 1987). One of the most important functions of self-repetition in ELF communication is to make the utterance explicit and more intelligible so that the interlocutor’s understanding is enhanced (Björkman, 2011, 2013, 2014; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006, 2007, 2012). It can also be used

for confirming understanding, emphasising or drawing the interlocutor's attention to the important point of the talk (Björkman, 2011, 2014; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2009; Lichtkoppler, 2007; also see Johnstone, 1994). As Johnstone (1994) commented, repetition serves to direct a hearer back to something and say "pay attention to this again..." (p. 13).

Other-repetition also serves a number of functions – to signal problems of hearing or non-understanding, and to check and ensure the accuracy of understanding while also signalling close attention, interest or listenership (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2009, 2012; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006; Watterson, 2008; also see Murata, 1995). Other-repetition confirms the accuracy of understanding, displays acknowledgement, agreement, cooperativeness and engagement with what has been said by the primary speaker (Björkman, 2011; Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Lichtkoppler, 2007; also see Murata, 1995; and Tannen, 1987). It is used as an accommodation strategy in order to achieve efficiency in communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2006, p. 70). Generally, repetition is viewed as "a vital constituent of ELF talk" (Lichtkoppler, 2007, p. 59), and plays a significant role in negotiation and construction of shared understanding between the participants (Kaur, 2010; Mauranen, 2006; Pitzl, 2005; Watterson, 2008).

Lichtkoppler (2007) also emphasised that repetition may occur in forms which may perform "overlapping and interacting functions" (p. 59). Time-gaining repetition, for instance, can also contribute to the development of an utterance, as the speaker is trying to refine to make it more explicit in order to enhance the other interlocutor's comprehension.

In most cases of ELF communication, where speakers may possess different levels of English proficiency and do not share the same linguistic variety, repetition is crucial in attaining the communicative goal. As Kaur (2009, 2011b) observed, a re-statement of the key words is an effective way to enhance the clarity of the utterance, as it narrows down the range of items, making the information more explicit and more intelligible. In addition, repetition also promotes the interlocutor's understanding and engages the interlocutor's attention more fully (Johnstone, 1994; Kaur, 2009).

In summary, repetition occurs frequently and in different forms in ELF interactions and it performs different functions, all of which enhance understanding and facilitate communication between ELF speakers. It also displays the involvement and cooperation of the participants in the interaction.

(2) Reformulation (paraphrasing)

Reformulation (paraphrasing) is regarded by most researchers as a type of repetition (Johnstone, 1994; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987).

Others, however, consider it to be distinct from repetition (e.g. Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2010; and Kirkpatrick, 2007a), and further identify paraphrasing (Kaur, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2007a), rephrasing (Mauranen, 2006, 2007) or reformulation (Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts, as cited in Pitzl, 2005, pp. 55-56; Svennevig, 2003; Watterson, 2008; Williams, Insoe, & Tasker, 1997). According to Neil (as cited in Kaur, 2010, p. 198), paraphrase expresses the same content in a modified or changed form; that is, it is the restatement of the original utterance produced by the same speaker in different words, “either by simplifying the form of the message or by expressing it in different words.”

For that reason, paraphrase or reformulation has also been referred to as an “interpretive summary” strategy (Jamshidnejad, 2011, p. 3762), designed to clarify what has been heard or to check understanding (Kaur, 2010, p. 199). Svennevig (2003) argued that reformulation displays understanding by the speaker saying more or less the same thing using other words and is “a situated interpretation formulated from the other speaker’s perspective”(Svennevig, 2003, pp. 287-288).

Paraphrase or reformulation has been categorised in various ways: self-initiated paraphrasing (Björkman, 2014, p. 131) – also known as self-rephrasing (Cogo, 2009, p. 256) or self-reformulation (Chiang & Mi, 2011, p. 140; Williams et al., 1997, p. 313) – and other-initiated (Björkman, 2014), or other-reformulation (Chiang & Mi, 2011, p. 142; Williams et al., 1997, p. 313).

In summary, reformulation is a way of restating the original utterance produced by the same speaker or other interlocutor in an alternative way. It can be an expanded or reduced form of the original utterance and is categorised in various ways.

Reformulation or its alternatives are employed as a strategy to check or ensure understanding in ELF communication.

(3) Requests for confirmation

Requests for confirmation – confirmation checks – are used to ensure that the received information from the previous utterance has been heard or understood correctly (Björkman, 2014; Cheng & Warren, 2007; Jamshidnejad, 2011). This CS involves a formulation of the prior utterance using a discourse marker or a questioning tag, or a summary of the content of the prior talk, or the use of an alternative lexical item(s). Jamshidnejad (2011) observed that the participants in his study often used “question repeat”, for example, *do you mean ...?*, *you mean?*, or *you said ...?* to check understanding or to ask the speaker to confirm whether what they had heard or understood was correct (p. 3762).

(4) Requests for clarification

Requests for clarification are employed when understanding is incomplete or when there is some uncertainty about the meaning of what has been said (Kaur, 2010, p. 202). In ELF communication, clarification requests are used to elicit clarification of meaning, to check and ensure understanding or to pre-empt non- or misunderstanding (Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006; Wolfartsberger, 2009). Björkman (2014) maintains that clarification requests are different from confirmation checks as speakers have not fully understood what has been said in the preceding utterance and are asking for an explanation or for more information, rather than simply confirming that what they had heard was right (Jamshidnejad, 2011; Williams et al., 1997). A clarification request can also be employed for maintaining the conversation and keeping the talk flowing (Jamshidnejad, 2011, p. 3766). The respondent has to do more interactional work than in confirmation checks, as the request is often open ended (Williams et al., 1997, p. 312).

Requests for clarification often involve the use of questions in various forms (e.g., a single *wh*-question word is used in combination with a questioning repeat, i.e., repeating part of a preceding utterance or asking other explicit questions) (Kaur, 2010, p. 202). ELF speakers often repeat a part or the whole of the interlocutor's preceding utterance or paraphrase/reformulate it and use it with a rising intonation as

a clarification request (Björkman, 2014; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Kaur, 2010). When a clarification request is responded to and understanding is negotiated, the ongoing topic can be continued (Kaur, 2010).

(5) Minimal queries

Minimal queries (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p. 121), or “minimal incomprehension signals” (Mauranen, 2006, p. 132), are specific questions used as indicators of a problem in hearing or understanding, for example, ‘*huh?*’, ‘*hm?*’, ‘*Pardon?*’, ‘*Sorry?*’, ‘*What?*’ (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p. 121; Mauranen, 2006, p. 132).

These queries are “clarification markers”(Corsaro, 1977), “checking” (Stenström, 1994) and “repair initiators” or “open class repair initiators” (Drew, 1997; Schegloff, 2000; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). They are ‘open’ as they do not indicate what specific word(s) or part of the preceding utterance needs to be clarified (Drew, 1997, p. 71). Following these indicators, a repetition or reformulation is often used (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006; Watterson, 2008). In some cases, a mere repetition would not be sufficient to clarify the request, so other strategies – for example, repetition with variation, or repetition with reformulation – are used to assist the negotiation of meaning (Cogo & Dewey, 2012).

(6) Backchannels (BCL)

BCL, the term initially suggested by Yngve (as cited in Bjørge, 2010, p. 193), are short response utterances used to give feedback to the speaker to indicate that the conversation is being listened to, that the interlocutor is interested in what is being said, and that the speaker can continue speaking (Bjørge, 2010; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Drummond & Hopper, 1993; Gardner, 2001; Heinz, 2003; Wolfartsberger, 2009). BCL can be utterances as well as turns, but when BCL are used as an utterance it does not involve a speaker shift; on the contrary, the listener acknowledges that the primary speaker is speaking and generally encourages him/her to continue with his/her talk (Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Stenström, 1994).

BCL have also been observed frequently in ELF interactions (Björkman, 2011, 2013; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Meierkord, 1998; Wolfartsberger, 2009) to show support, attention, agreement, acknowledgement or encouragement to the primary speaker.

There are different types of BCL – short verbal responses (Drummond & Hopper, 1993), acknowledgement tokens, e.g., ‘*yeah*’, ‘*okay*’ (Jefferson, 2002), continuers, e.g., ‘*yeah*’, ‘*uh huh*’ (Gardner, 2001; Goodwin, 1986), news-marking items (e.g., ‘*oh, really*’ and assessment (Goodwin, 1986). Supportive laughter is also employed by participants in ELF interactions as a substitute for verbal BCL (Meierkord, 1998, 2002). There are also non-verbal BCL which may be signalled by facial expressions including eye-glances, leaning toward or away from the interlocutor, or head nods (Bjørge, 2010; S. Maynard, 1986; Stenström, 1994).

While engaging in face-to-face interactions with one another, ELF speakers display their attention by employing interactional devices such as BCL. BCL do not usually provide any new information but they are important in highlighting the relationship between the speaker and the listener (Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012; Meierkord, 1998, 2000).

The functions of a BCL depend on the circumstances in which it is used in the interaction. These functions can be both positive and negative (Bjørge, 2010). On the positive side, they signal support, attention, agreement, acknowledgement or understanding of what is being said by the primary speaker (Björkman, 2011, 2013; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; S. Maynard, 1986; McCarthy, 2003; Schegloff, 1982; Stenström, 1994; White, 1989; Wolfartsberger, 2009; Wong, 2000). Mauranen (2006, p. 147) points out that minimal responses, for instance, ‘*yes*’, ‘*yeah*’ and ‘*uh huh*’, or ‘*ok*’ are frequently employed to signal understanding in ELF interactions. Meierkord (1998) observed that participants in ELF interactions use BCL not only to support each other, but that they also ensure a certain meaning regarding the topic under discussion is shared. On the negative side, BCL may be used to indicate lack of interest or even indifference and impatience (Schegloff, 1982; Stenström, 1994). Having made that point, the most common function that BCL serve in an interaction is acknowledgement (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Gardner, 2001).

BCL also act as “continuers” (Drummond & Hopper, 1993; Gardner, 2001; Schegloff, 1982; White, 1989) through which the listener acknowledges what the primary speaker is saying and signals that s/he can continue talking. In doing so, the flow of conversation is maintained and the primary speaker holds the floor and the other interlocutor displays attentive listenership. Drummond and Hopper (1993)

observed that acknowledgement tokens such as *'yeah'*, *'uh huh'*, *'um hm'* appear overwhelmingly at the beginning of turns or at the turn-initial position. Some are freestanding turns, whereas others are followed by further same-speaker speech (p. 166). *'Uh huh'* is often used as a freestanding token and *'yeah'* tends to be followed by further same-speaker speech more than *'uh huh'* (Drummond & Hopper, 1993, p. 168).

BCL may be inserted almost anywhere in ongoing speech and can be overlapped with the speech of the primary speaker (Stenström, 1994, p. 321). BCL can take both lexical, at both phrasal and syntactic levels, and non-lexical forms (Bjørge, 2010). Lexical, phrasal and syntactic items include, for instance, *'okay'*, *'yeah'*, *'no'*, *'right'*, *'sure'*, *'absolutely'*, *'excellent'*, *'definitely'*, *'really'*, *'that's right'*, *'I see'*, *'that's interesting'* (Gardner, 2001; S. Maynard, 1986; McCarthy, 2003; Stenström, 1994). Non-lexical verbalisations include, for example, *'ah hah'*, *'ah'*, *'mhm'*, *'uh huh'*, and their variations.

(7) Lexical suggestion

Lexical suggestion is often employed in ELF communication. It is used when an interlocutor tries to jointly complete the utterance of the current speaker by suggesting a lexical item or by correcting the word(s) used by the speaker (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). As Jamshidnejad (2011) observed, participants sometimes have difficulty in finding an appropriate word or expression and a speaker will often employ a "requesting help" strategy or use a direct request seeking suggestions from their interlocutor (Jamshidnejad, 2011, p. 3765). When involved in utterance completion, a speaker does not intend to take over the turn of their interlocutor or change the topic (Cogo & Dewey, 2006). On the contrary, the intent is to show their engagement with and support for the interlocutor and indicate that s/he shares the same interests. Together with the interlocutor, they co-create the message (Björkman, 2014, p. 133; Cogo & Dewey, 2006, p. 68; 2012, p. 154) or collaboratively complete the turn (Mauranen, 2006, 2007; Meierkord, 2000; Wolfartsberger, 2009).

According to Kirkpatrick (2007a) and Cogo and Dewey (2012), when employing this strategy, ELF speakers display a high level of mutual understanding and co-operation, and show that they feel comfortable with the help of their interlocutor. In

this way, the use of lexical suggestion represents the “solidarity of ELF speakers” (House, as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007a, p. 123).

(8) Signalling importance

Björkman (2014) noted that “highlighting key information seems to be a proactive strategy employed for communicative effectiveness” (p. 131). Björkman (2011, 2014) also observed that signalling importance was a strategy to draw attention to the important points, which were often made explicit in the discourse by using lexical items such as ‘*important*’ and ‘*noteworthy*’, or by making use of modal verbs such as ‘*must*’, ‘*should*’ and ‘*have to*’ (Björkman, 2011, p. 956) or by an adverb of degree such as ‘*very*’ (Björkman, 2013, p. 131).

(9) Other communicative strategies

Other interactional or communicative strategies, including overlapping talk, laughing, negotiating the topic, simplification, or spelling out the word, have also been identified in some studies. These strategies are employed to enhance the accuracy of an utterance (Jamshidnejad, 2011) by increasing its clarity or explicitness. They function as “a way to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers in the situation” (Mauranen, 2007, pp. 257-258). In the negotiation of a topic, for example, a noun phrase and co-referential subject pronoun has been observed to introduce a new topic as a way of making it more explicit and clear to the interlocutor (Cogo, 2009, p. 256; Mauranen, 2007, p. 253).

In summary, ELF speakers cooperate with one another for the success of communication. This cooperation is reflected in the ways they use various strategies including repetition, reformulation, and requests for clarification, suggestions of a lexical item or a BCL to provide feedback to one another in the interaction. These strategies are used to help ELF speakers pre-empt comprehension problems and ensure the effectiveness of their communication.

Section 2

3.5 English Language Education for Hospitality Students

3.5.1 Language skills for hospitality students

Communication skills and competence in using English sufficient to communicate with foreign guests is an essential factor in facilitating the financial success of the tourism and hospitality sectors (Hsu, 2014; Shieh, 2012). Consequently, it is vital for universities and colleges which provide training programs in these domains to graduate students who can demonstrate English proficiency. In the context of Vietnam, for that reason, coupled with Government initiatives to improve the English language proficiency of Vietnamese people in general, achieving higher levels of English language competence has been emphasised in the training curricula of educational institutions, particularly in courses serving for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

English is essential for the work performance of the staff and it facilitates the success of business in tourism and hospitality (Chan, 2002; Hsu, 2014; Prachanant, 2012; Su, 2009). Consequently, “Hospitality English” (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 88; Hsu, 2014, p. 51) or “Hotel English” (Shieh, 2012, p. 1730), or the broader term “hospitality language” (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 75; Lo & Sheu, 2008, p. 82) has received greater attention.

Hospitality English is part of broader English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or English for Vocational Purposes (EVP) courses, which are a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, pp. 16-17). ESP is an approach to language teaching and learning in which the content and methodology are determined based on industry-specific needs (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP is an approach rather than a product, as it does not involve a particular kind of methodology, material or language. All decisions about these matters are made based on “the learner’s reason for learning” and it is, therefore, “a learning-centred approach” (built on the principle that language learning is a dynamic and active process in which the learners

negotiate in the target language through completion of relevant tasks). It is often referred to as “language learning process” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, pp. 72-73).

In ESP courses, the central focus is on developing linguistic knowledge and skills related to particular discourses (e.g. tourism and hospitality or chemical engineering) which are characterised by content and skills that the learners will need for their future careers (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 6; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 17; Jordan, 1997, p. 3). In this sense, ESP is different from English for General Purposes (EGP) or General English (GE), which is generally linguistic in its orientation and focuses on developing oral competence, an extensive vocabulary, and the ability to use a wide range of grammatical structures (Basturkmen, 2010; Jordan, 1997).

The most effective and efficient way of improving the ability of workers to use English in the workplace has been the focus of research which has examined the actual needs of industry in relation to the skills and knowledge required of graduates in ESP courses for hospitality (Chan, 2002; Jasso-Aguilar, 1999; Su, 2009). Proponents in ESP, including Munby (1978) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987), have emphasised the necessity of analysing learners’ needs. Needs analysis, by its nature, is a pragmatic activity which is highly based on localised situations (Schutz & Derwing, 1981). Based on what the learners have to do or perform through communication in English in the real-life setting, suggestions for change are designed to meet students’ needs; course content, teaching methodology, ways of testing and assessment are then designed in response to those needs. In the hotel industry, most of transactional and interactional activities take place in the form of face-to-face interactions between hotel staff and guests; thus, communication skills, particularly listening and speaking, are essential for the front office (FO) staff who have frequent, direct contact with guests. Chan (2002), for example, investigated the English language training needs of FO assistants of hotels in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and identified that listening and speaking skills were the most relevant skills for the job. Reading and writing were not ranked as important skills for the FO assistants in her study (p. 37). Thus, she suggested that listening and speaking skills should be emphasised in the English language communication training program for hotel FO assistants. Dechabun (2008) investigated the functional language skills used by Thai students during their internship in hospitality service workplaces and identified giving information about rooms and services, requesting and responding to

guests' requests, offering help/services and responding to guests' complaints was most commonly used (p. 148).

A skills-centred approach can inform course design (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and place particular emphasis on listening and speaking skills (Chan, 2002; Su, 2009). The skills-centred approach places its attention on preparing and developing students' skills and strategies so that they can develop further by themselves after the ESP course is completed (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 70). Thus, ESP course designers are often interested in finding out what types of communication activities involve the use of English and encourage students to engage in English activities which might be part of their workplace role.

In some studies, for example, Chan (2002), Shieh (2012), and Su (2009), the skills-centred approach has been found to meet the actual needs of industry. A number of communicative functions or functional activities have also been identified as those are most frequently performed by hospitality employees in the workplace, for example, providing information to guests and dealing with guests' miscellaneous requests. Thus, communicative skills and strategies including communicating ideas and information, solving problems, negotiating understanding, or dealing with complaints have a particular emphasis in the ESP courses for hospitality graduates (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 79; Chan, 2002, pp. 38-39; O'Neill & Hatoss, 2003; Su, 2009, pp. 287-288).

Emphasising the importance of communication skills, Blue and Harun (2003) argued that the English language used in the hospitality industry is not merely a means of communication – it is also a professional skill. Through the language, the staff carry out transactional work with guests. Thus, for students who are pursuing a career in the hospitality industry, where there is regular interface with guests, English competence is of utmost importance.

There are a number of “multifunctional language skills” that hospitality graduate students need to acquire, including “soft skills” like the ability to speak clearly, engage in what is said by the speaker, or make the message more explicit (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 87). Blue and Harun described three elements that contribute to the quality of hospitality service delivered by FO staff; first, their capacity to master the skills of being attentive, courteous and polite; second, their knowledge of the hotel,

the industry and the local area; and third, their ability to communicate appropriately and to appreciate cross-cultural communication needs (p. 89). While a number of these skills are beyond the remit of an ESP course, the third of the elements identified by Blue and Harun speak directly to its purpose.

The relationship between the English language being taught in ESP courses and the English language being used in the specific workplace context needs to be clearly established. Brieger (as cited in Chan, 2002, p. 128) identified the knowledge and skills which form the basis of most Business English courses: “general language knowledge”, “specialist language knowledge”, “general communication skills” and “professional communication skills”. Arguably, this is the same knowledge and skill set required by hospitality students.

3.5.2 Course materials

In Vietnam, it is a common practice for ESP teaching materials to be imported from overseas publishers. Determining course materials and textbooks is a critical component of an ESP course as it facilitates the focus on relevant topics and the functions of language needed by learners in their future jobs. However, selection of the course materials can be challenging, as the course content focuses not only on the needs of the learners and the industry, but also on the purposes of the training course. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 96) maintained that there are three possible ways of ensuring the alignment of course design and teaching materials: materials evaluation, materials development, and materials adaptation.

Materials or textbook evaluation is an essential activity and it is “basically a matching process: matching needs to available solutions” or “to particular purposes” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 97). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 125) advocated examining the teaching materials on the basis of “how language and skills are used in the target situation.” Tomlinson (2013, 2003) maintained that materials evaluation involves making judgements about the effect of the materials on the users (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 21). He also distinguishes between evaluation (subjective - focuses on the users and makes judgements about the material’s effects) and analysis (objective - focuses on the materials themselves asking questions about what the materials contain, what they aim to achieve, and what they ask the learners to do) (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 20). Generally, materials evaluation is a process of reviewing

the materials and making judgements to see how the materials match the course objectives or the needs of the users (both teachers who implemented the course and syllabus and the learners who study English for future jobs).

Many publications on materials evaluation mix analysis and evaluation, for example, Cunningsworth, (as cited in Tomlinson, 2013, p. 23). Littlejohn (2011) suggested a model which involves three levels of analysis. Level 1 describes the structure, the physical aspects, and the components of the teaching materials. This level addresses the question “what is there” in the teaching material. Level 2 addresses the question “what is required of the learners”, focusing on tasks that students are expected to do, by what means, with whom and with what content. Level 3 draws on findings from Levels 1 and 2 to come to some conclusions about the underlying principles of the materials – whether they facilitate language learning and teaching and whether they are appropriate to the target situation.

Using the principles of materials evaluation, Cheng and Warren (2007) examined authentic spoken discourse in the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) to determine the ways in which the interactional strategies of monitoring and checking understanding were linguistically realised in real life communication, in comparison with those represented in textbooks. They found that there were few examples in the textbooks that were linguistically realised in a real life situations in the same way (p. 196). They also discovered that “textbook accounts of language use are often decontextualised and lack empirical basis” (Cheng & Warren, 2007, p. 191). Blue and Harun (2003) noted that the language used in most of the textbooks dealing with hospitality was simplified and not reflective of authentic hotel encounters. They maintained that language learners need to be exposed to real hotel situations and to become familiar with the way natural conversations develop, including the use of discourse markers.

Cheng (2004) investigated the checking out discourses at a hotel reception and compared this data with the language prescribed in the ESP books on hotel and tourism. From the real-life data, Cheng found that checking-out is a key discourse in which the central mission of the hotel – making guests feel the occasion was pleasant and memorable when staying at the hotel – needs to be displayed by reception staff (2004, p. 157). However, Cheng found that many of the discourses in his study were

problematic, as they clearly did not communicate a message of customer care and concerns. Only one of the six checking-out discourses included those concerns meanwhile the other five were concerned with payment which often included utterances in the form of questions, with incorrect grammar and lack of the politeness marker '*please*' (pp. 146-147). By highlighting real life problems and issues in hospitality and discussing possible interventions, Cheng suggested the need to engage with these concerns in the teaching of English to prospective hospitality employees, particularly through improvements to the prescribed learning materials for ESP.

Habtoor (2012) and Bouzidi (2009) evaluated the degree to which set textbooks met the needs of the industry, with both sets of findings indicating that the textbooks did not completely meet the communicative needs of the hospitality industry due to inadequate opportunities for presentation and practice of the specific language functions. Other studies have also examined the alignment of course materials used to teach English with the demands of the hotel workplace (Blue & Harun, 2003; Bouzidi, 2009; Cheng, 2004; Cheng & Warren, 2007; Habtoor, 2012). The findings from these studies indicate that the efficacy of the textbooks examined was based on perceptions of the users (e.g. teachers, students). These studies collectively revealed that there was a significant lack of fit between the English language used in real life vocational settings and the language presented in the textbooks. However, most of these studies examined language skills and language competence in general, with little or no review of the way in which employees communicated in ELF with foreign guests.

Teaching materials for practical English courses are usually accompanied by supplementary audio materials which assist students to develop listening and speaking skills. Arnold (1991, p. 238) noted that the audio materials of many published courses contain NS-to-NS conversations, normally in BrE or AmE. In this sense, the conversations are not authentic with respect to the students' purposes, having the status of citation forms only and the students cannot interact with them in an authentic manner. Moreover, textbooks are often culturally-bound (Kilickaya, 2004; Kramsch, 1998) as language and culture are interrelated with one another (Alptekin, 2002). Culture is "a membership in a discourse community that shares a

common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and action” (Kramsch, 1998, p. 127). Thus, when studying a language, it benefits students to learn about the culture of the target language. Kilickaya (2004) suggests that, when selecting a textbook for learners of English as a foreign language, it is necessary to consider the learners’ needs, their learning experiences and attitudes toward the cultural content included in the textbook.

3.5.3 Experiential learning

The workplace is commonly used as a setting for acquiring vocational knowledge. Experiential learning has been defined and described in various terms: internship, field experience, practicum or workplace learning. Irrespective of the name chosen to describe the experience, it is considered as an integral component of the curriculum for hospitality students (Lee, 2008; Powers, 1980; Tse, 2010; Yiu & Law, 2012).

Billett (1995) claims that “this situated approach ... offers access to authentic vocational activities” (p. 20). Experiential learning can be a tool for increasing students’ analytical reflection and thereby increasing the chance of positive learning outcomes (M. C. Wright, 2000). Hefferman and Flood (as cited in Green, 2007, p. 51) claim that “skills are best learned by practice and learning should take place on the job”, a view supported by others who maintain that the combination of classroom learning and practice learning is the most effective model of teaching, particularly for hospitality students (Gibson & Busby, 2009; Ju, Emenheiser, Clayton, & Reynolds, 1998; Tse, 2010).

Experiential learning can demonstrate that theory reflects practice, resulting in a meaningful connection between training and practice in a workplace setting (Ciofalo, 1988; Su, 2009). As Tse (2010) observed, it helps students “gain hands-on experience, put textbook theories into action, and reflect on their future careers” (p. 251).

The benefits of experiential learning derive, in part, from the constructivist view that knowledge is constructed *in situ* where it is “mediated by social and cultural circumstances” and because of this vocational knowledge is best accessed through participation in authentic activities related to the particular vocation (S. R. Billett,

1995, p. 21). Involvement in everyday tasks offers students the opportunity to test ideas and solutions, under the direction of an ‘expert other’. Indirectly, the student can listen and observe other workers and so build their conceptualisation and approximation of workplace tasks.

The efficacy of workplace learning has, however, been questioned in a number of studies (S. R. Billett, 1993; 1994; Prawat, 1993). Criticisms derive mostly from the unequal relationship that exists between the student and other workers. A number of limitations have been proposed: learning of inappropriate work practices, the development of negative attitudes and the undesirable influence of workplace culture and values. Perhaps the most limiting are the barriers that restrict access to authentic activities or limit the amount of guidance the student is provided with. It has been strongly argued that experiential learning requires a dedicated learning curriculum (Lave, 1990) which provides structure and guides students away from peripheral activities to those more central to their vocational aspirations.

The development of skills designed to meet the needs of various stakeholders in hospitality is frequently portrayed as a partnership (Baum, 2002). A well-structured internship program would normally be jointly constructed as a three-way partnership between the university, the student and the employer (Gibson & Busby, 2009; Knud, 2010). For that reason, collaboration between educational institutions and the relevant industry is of fundamental importance for enhancing learning in both environments: class and workplace (Knud, 2010; Lin, Chang & Lin, 2014; Tynjälä, 2008).

3.6 Summary

English has an important role in Vietnam’s economic development and it has become the most preferred and the most widely used foreign language for Vietnamese people to communicate with foreigners in most domains in general and in tourism and hospitality in particular. To graduate students who are competent and able to use English or any other foreign languages independently in their communication from now and in the next decade is the major goal set by the government in *The National Foreign Languages Project 2020* (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008). Training needs must be derived from the

actual needs of industry and needs analysis must be the fundamental underpinning of English/ESP courses (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Munby, 1978). However, needs analysis in relation to course design in English/foreign language teaching has received little attention in Vietnam (Brogan, 2007; Duong, 2007).

ELF, the common language of communication in a variety of international settings including tourism and hospitality, is characterised by the hybridity of the linguacultural backgrounds of its speakers and the varieties of English they use. ELF speakers employ a wide range of communicative strategies, the most significant of which are repetition, reformulation, confirmation and clarification requests, backchannels and minimal queries.

Given the prospective employment in settings in which ELF will be the means of communication, the review of ESP courses for prospective hospitality workers indicate that there are problems with the degree of fit between the course materials and workplace needs. The significance of internship, and the limitations that experiential learning opportunities need to address, are highlighted.

The next chapter describes the research approach and the research design of the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This is a qualitative descriptive study which focuses on two areas of research: one, the characteristics of the English language used by Vietnamese hotel staff when interacting with foreign guests and, two, the implications of the findings for the teaching of English in Hospitality courses in Vietnam.

The chapter provides an overview of the participants and the sites of the research, the research approach and research design, data collection, data processing and data analysis procedures. Discussion of the validity and reliability of the study, as well as ethical issues that were considered are also addressed.

The research methodology is presented in two sections. The first section describes the methods by which the naturally-occurring interactions between staff and guests were collected and analysed. The second section describes the methods by which representative English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses for hospitality students in Vietnam were reviewed.

4.1 Research Participants

The participants of the study were Front Office (FO) staff whose first language was Vietnamese and who, on account of their position in the hotel, were called upon to interact with guests from a range of linguacultural backgrounds. The staff involved were those who had the most direct contact with guests throughout all stages of their stay in the hotel. Besides routine and administrative activities, staff also handled wide-ranging inquiries and requests from guests.

The focus of the study was on an examination of the communicative strategies (CS) employed by staff; those used by guests were not categorised, but are included in the extracts to provide the context of staff's utterances. This study did not aim to construct the identity of the speakers as the focus was on how the Vietnamese hotel FO staff interacted with foreign guests using ELF. The foreign guests had travelled to Vietnam from different countries and included both native and non-native speakers of English. It was not of concern where the guests were from and what

varieties of English they spoke. What was important in this setting was how communicative outcomes were achieved in the interactions between the staff and the guests (e.g. whether exchange for the local currency was successfully done, or a guest's request for a restaurant was booked, or directions to a shopping centre were obtained). For that reason, personal information related to the participants was not collected. However, through personal communication with the management staff of the various hotels, general background information about the participants was obtained.

The participants were both male and female. Staff were mainly graduates from vocational courses in Hospitality and Tourism, although some were graduates from foreign language departments who had an extra certificate or diploma in Hospitality and Tourism. Competence in communication, primarily English, was one of the essential requirements for employment in the hotel FO. To secure a position, staff had to meet the recruitment requirements of individual hotels. Of primary interest to this study was the requirement for staff to pass a face-to-face interview to assess (among other things) their level of English proficiency. If successful in their application, staff had to complete a trial period of between three and six months. During this time, staff were provided with internal training and were assigned to work under the supervision of a senior staff member.

Alphabetical coding was used to de-identify the names of staff, guests and the hotels.

4.2 Research Site

To seek support in the study, hotel managers from a wide range of mini-hotels, guest houses, and hotels offering standard to luxury accommodation were contacted through email. The initial requests covered hotels across Vietnam. Agreement to participate was received from six hotel managers in four cities: three in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), one each in Vung Tau, Phan Thiet and Dalat. This limited response was due to the lack of willingness by the majority of hotel managers to participate; refusal was often explained by their unfamiliarity with this kind of research (i.e. allowing an outsider to record the interactions between their staff and guests) or their concern that the presence of a stranger would interrupt or interfere with their business. Some hotels did not reply at all although follow-up emails were sent to

them. Very little research has been carried out using naturally-occurring interactions recorded in the workplace settings and Vietnamese people are very shy of being observed or recorded.

Of the six hotels, the one in Dalat was finally not used as the time suggested by the manager was inconvenient. One of the hotels in HCMC was used for the trial to check the adequacy of the recording equipment. All of them are from the top cities for tourism and attract a large number of foreign guests in Vietnam.

Ultimately, only four hotels were used as data collection sites. Two of the hotels are five-star hotels and the other two are four-star hotels. Within each hotel, the data collection site was the FO – the reception and the concierge. The FO was chosen as the site as this area is where guests had the most frequent, direct contact with staff.

4.3 Research Approach

This study is descriptive, situated within an overarching qualitative research paradigm which is predicated on the belief that reality is subjective and multiple (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research asserts that people – researchers, readers and participants – view the world differently. Researchers try to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings brought to them by the participants involved in a study (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). “Researchers [are] a key instrument” (Creswell, 2013, p. 45) in qualitative research, collecting data in multiple forms including recordings, documents, observations and experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 45; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 37).

Qualitative researchers view and analyse their data by means of an inductive, bottom-up process involving working back and forth between the categories, the specific details and the data until a satisfactory and comprehensive explanation is established (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research mostly occurs in natural settings. The qualitative paradigm was, therefore, suitable for this study. A qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to examine the real-life context and obtain data from the natural workplace setting of the hotels in order to understand how the staff at the FO communicated in English

with guests, who were either native speakers (NS) or non-native speakers (NNS) of English. The data used for this examination were audio-recordings of 182 naturally occurring interactions.

Within this overarching research paradigm, principles of conversation analysis (CA) (Drew & Heritage, 2006; Seedhouse, 2004, 2005b) were applied. CA was founded by Harvey Sacks and his collaborators Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Heritage, 1984) as a branch of sociology and “an offshoot of ethnomethodology” (Arminen, 2005, p. 11). Ethnomethodology (EM) (Garfinkel, 1967) studies people’s means of creating and interpreting social interaction. As Coulon (1995, p. 15) commented: “Ethnomethodology is the empirical study of methods that individuals use to give sense to and at the same time to accomplish their daily actions”. Adopting a thoroughly “bottom-up” approach, EM seeks to discover the methods and the procedures people use to accomplish social action which is collaboratively and jointly constructed by participants in the local context of the interaction (D. W. Maynard & Clayman, 2003, p. 174; Wooffitt, 2005, p. 73). Thus, EM emphasises the use of naturally occurring data and the local sequential context is a fundamental factor in understanding the social action. D.W. Maynard and Clayman (2003) maintained that:

Since the intelligible features of society are locally produced by members themselves for one another, with methods that are reflexively embedded in concrete social situations, the precise nature of that achievement cannot be determined by the analyst through a priori stipulation or deductive reasoning. It can only be *discovered* within “real” society (2003, p.175, original emphasis).

CA shares with EM fundamental theoretical assumptions about the nature of talk. The main focus of CA is on “discovering how participants understand and respond to one another in their turn at talk” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 41; 2008, p. 14). In the LF communication context, English is used as a common contact language between speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds. Regardless of how the language is used and what forms or varieties of English its speakers use, achieving shared understanding in this medium is of utmost importance and it is the goal that ELF speakers orient to in their interaction. What CA is concerned with is how understanding is accomplished and displayed in an interaction by the participants

(Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998), therefore it is well-suited to examining communication in ELF (Björkman, 2014; Firth, 1990, 1996; Kaur, 2009, 2010; Lichtkoppler, 2007). CA has been employed to examine naturally-occurring talk in a variety of settings, ranging from casual, ordinary conversation between friends or co-workers to talk in more formal, institutional and professional settings including courtrooms, classrooms, and business meetings (Arminen, 2005; Drew, Chatwin, & Collins, 2001; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Litosseliti, 2010; McHoul & Rapley, 2001).

Researchers approach the natural data collected from a real life setting with an “unmotivated observation” (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 38) of recordings and transcriptions, having no predetermined categories or pre-existing theories (Seedhouse, 2004, 2005b). Instead, they seek to uncover the characteristics of interactions from an emic – “an insider’s” perspective (Wong & Waring, 2010, p. 6).

CA seeks to characterise the organisation, the patterns or recurrent sequences of interaction between participants during talk-in-interaction to see how sequences of talk are organised moment-by-moment (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 13; Wooffitt, 2005, p. 42). The turn-by-turn unfolding – the “next-turn proof” procedure – is the fundamental tool (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 15) used by conversation analysts to see how participants orient to the organisation of the interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 14; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 728). This procedure demonstrates that participants display their understanding by producing an utterance in response to their interlocutor’s prior utterance and, at the same time, creates a context for the subsequent utterance being produced (Heritage, 2004, p. 109; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 14).

Sequences, and turns within sequences, are the primary units of analysis (Heritage, 1984). Turns are made up of a number of turn-constructive units (TCU). This comprises any meaningful utterance which completes a social action (e.g. a request, or an offer) – and can comprise a single sound (e.g. *huh?*), a single word (e.g. *what?*), a phrase, a clause, or an extended piece of discourse (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 702). When a TCU is completed, there is a space in which a transition to another speaker takes place called “a transition-relevance place” (TRP) (Clayman, 2012, p. 151) and, following the rule that one speaker talks at a time (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 700), the procedure is continued throughout the interaction.

Turns are designed to link to one another and are orderly and organised into a sequence of related talk. When the rule is not followed, pauses, interruptions, or overlapping talk may occur. A certain turn requires a particular type of next turn and these turns are often paired with one another into a unit called an “adjacency pair” (question-answer, offer-response, request-grant/refuse, invite-accept/decline) (Drew, 2013, p. 136). Adjacency pairs are the basic element of an interaction (Seedhouse, 2005b; Wong & Waring, 2010). They form a core sequence which can be expanded (Peräkylä, 2003, p. 155), for example by an insert expansion occurring between the first pair part and the second pair part – where a response to the primary request is deferred until an inserted request is responded to.

The “next-turn proof” procedure reveals that every action in an interaction is simultaneously “context-shaped” and “context renewing” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 289). The context is locally “built, invoked, and managed” as the talk unfolds (Heritage, 2004, p. 109) and is an important aspect of “intersubjective understanding” (Peräkylä, 2005, p. 877). “The next-turn proof” was applied to identify and categorise the CS and their functions in this study.

4.4 Research Methodology: Naturally-occurring Talk

4.4.1 Data collection

Before the data collection started, the researcher met with hotel management to discuss the schedule and obtain information about the organisation of the hotel, in each case. This also provided the researcher with an opportunity to become familiar with the data collection areas.

To maximise the possibility of capturing a wide range of interactions in which English was spoken, the data were collected in the tourist high season – December 2011 to February 2012. The data were recorded over one week at each of the four venues. To minimise the disruption to staff, recording was managed by the researcher in a manner that would make the recording as unobtrusive as possible. All the participants involved were volunteers and agreed to join at the outset of the study.

A meeting with staff from the reception, the concierge and the business centre of the FO where the recordings were to be made was held in order that they could be given

details about the study, including a written information sheet. Staff who agreed to be involved were asked to sign a consent form. In total, 30 staff members from the four hotels were involved in the study.

Permission was obtained from the hotel managers to invite guests to contribute to the study. A notice informing guests about the study was put in a prominent place on the FO counter where the recording took place. When a guest came to the counter s/he was invited by the researcher to contribute to the study and any involvement by guests was natural and spontaneous. During the stay at the hotel, some guests contributed data more than once and their agreement to continue being recorded was checked every time they returned to the counter. More than one hundred guests from the four hotels were involved.

The quality of the recording equipment was important to the data collection. A digital unidirectional recorder was used, as it had the advantages of being easy to use and adjustable, so that the clarity of the voice recordings was maximised and extraneous sounds minimised.

The recordings from each hotel were checked and stored with dates and venue in a digital file. The data were stored in two versions: original and copy. The original version was stored securely for future reference and the copy was used for data analysis, in accordance with the advice of Goodwin (1993, p. 196), that researchers should “always work from copies not originals”.

4.4.2 Data transcription

Transcribing allows analysable phenomena to emerge rather than being pre-selected by the researcher (Clifton, 2006, p. 205). Through the transcripts, the routine and transactional activities that staff and guests were involved in were re-created. Transcripts made the analysis easier and helped to communicate the findings.

The actual words spoken by staff and guests were reproduced as a standard orthographic transcription, based on the guidelines suggested by Wray and Bloomer (2013, pp. 201-212), with some specific features of speech delivery included - such as filled pauses (i.e. vocal sounds such as *er*, *em*, and *eh* used within a speaker's turn), falling intonation (marked with a full stop/period), rising intonation (indicated by a question mark), loudness (a word pronounced louder than surrounding words),

and laughing. A single slope (/) indicated a slight pause between words within an ongoing turn. Whenever these features occurred in the interactions, they were noted in the transcripts (Appendix 5).

While analysing the transcripts, repeated inspection of the original recordings was undertaken (Clifton, 2006; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; ten Have, 2007), the result of which was that some previously unnoticed features of the interactions were identified. Consequently, the transcripts were modified (Arminen, 2005, p. 65), which “increase[d] the precision of observation” (Clifton, 2006, p. 206). The researcher undertook the transcription, as it is generally recommended that researchers make their own transcriptions in order to be able to accurately capture the details of the interactions (ten Have, 2007, p. 95).

When languages other than English were spoken, there was no transcription of this conversation, except words or phrases which were reformulated or code-switched into the staff member’s L1 or where the conversation involved the use of the Vietnamese names of restaurants or geographical places. In these circumstances, the local words were put in single brackets.

In all, 182 interactions were used for this study. The transcripts from each recording were identified as an interaction (IT), numbered (e.g., *IT-1*, *IT-182*) and stored in a digital file. Every fifth line in each transcript was also numbered for easy extraction.

4.4.3 Data analysis

To address Research Questions 1 and 2, a micro qualitative analysis was undertaken (Seedhouse, 2005b). The next-turn proof procedure (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998) was adopted for purposes of identifying the CS. Sequences (Matsumoto, 2011; Peräkylä, 2008; Pitzl, 2005) of related talk in each interaction were examined on the turn-by-turn basis, with special attention paid to the preceding and the following turns (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2010). Following this procedure, CS were identified, coded and grouped into categories and sub-categories.

The functions of the CS emerged from the local sequential contexts of use. When the local context (i.e. the preceding and the following utterances) was not sufficient to enable comprehension and interpretation of the present utterance, a wider context of

the sequence within an interaction was considered (Björkman, 2014; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Williams et al., 1997).

While the analysis was essentially qualitative, frequency counts of the strategies used and their functions (Björkman, 2014; Jamshidnejad, 2011) were undertaken to support the presentation of the findings and to give the reader an idea of the extent to which the different types of CS were used.

4.5 Research Methodology: Analysis of English for Hospitality Course Materials

4.5.1 Content analysis

To address Research Question 3, the course outlines, textbooks and audio materials commonly used in the English courses for Hospitality (ESP) were examined, based on content analysis (Berg, 2004). As a research technique, content analysis is replicable by other researchers or readers – they can look at the same materials and obtain similar or comparable results (Berg, 2004, p. 241). Using content analysis procedures, the researcher designated the units of analysis – which in this case, opted to set limits on the portion of written material that was examined. The course outlines of accessible ESP courses for hospitality, together with two textbooks commonly used in these courses: *English for International Tourism* (Dubicka & O’Keeffe, 2003) and *High Season: English for the Hotel and Tourist Industry* (Harding & Henderson, 1994) were examined. Although the textbooks used varied from one institution to another, the textbooks chosen for review were commonly prescribed for students in those course outlines that were accessed, either as the main course material in an integrated curriculum in a number of institutions (e.g. Van Hien, Saigon, Van Lang or Hung Vuong University and Dalat College), or as a supplementary resource in the others. As information related to the staff was not obtained, it was not possible to report exactly whether the staff involved in this study had prior training in English with the use of these textbooks or not.

The course content review was qualitative, although some frequency counts of the activities students complete to practise the listening and speaking skills were undertaken. The course objectives and the course activities derived from the textbooks were the units of analysis. Two key communicative skills were chosen as

the units of analysis - speaking and listening skills as these skills are used most frequently in the face-to-face communication between the hotel staff and guests.

4.5.2 Analysis of activities

The analysis of activities was guided by the framework developed by Littlejohn (2011, p. 198), with special emphasis given to the first and second level of the framework adopted for analysing the activities provided for students to practise listening and speaking skills. Littlejohn (2011, p. 191) identified three key features of task or activities analysis which were guided by three questions:

- (1) What is the student expected to do?
- (2) Who with?
- (3) With what content?

All the activities for listening and speaking skills in the textbooks were coded according to whether the students were expected to practise the skills/subskills that required “scripted responses” (based on the material provided in the book) or whether they had to produce their own linguistic expressions/ideas (which was referred to as “initiate”) (Littlejohn, 2011, p. 191). The tasks or activities that required a scripted response could be ‘*listen and answer questions about the listening text*’, ‘*listen and tick the items heard*’, or ‘*listen and complete the table with information heard*’; or ‘*practise the conversation with a partner.*’ Activities or tasks required students to adopt an ‘initiate’ position could be ‘*listen and make suggestions or give advice*’; or ‘*make a conversation with a partner on a certain topic.*’

The second question examined who the students participated with when they completed the task; whether the task was done as the whole class, individually or in pairs and groups.

The third question focused on the content of the activities, the communicative functions of the language manifested in the activities and the topic areas in which the activities occurred.

The audio materials which accompanied the textbooks were a special focus (along with the tapescripts). They were assessed in relation to the length of the recording for listening activities, the complexity of the language, and the accents of the speakers.

The course outlines were de-identified using alphabetical coding.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

In studies using CA, issues of reliability and validity are central (Arminen, 2005). Peräkylä (as cited in Seedhouse, 2005c, p. 254) identifies the major factors that relate to reliability in CA: the selection of recorded data, the technical quality of recordings and the adequacy of transcripts. In the current study, the naturally-occurring interactions were recorded in different venues, over a period of time, at different times of the day, on different days of the week, and with different participants. All of these reflect the external reliability of the study (Arminen, 2005). The data were transcribed in detail at an appropriate level for the study's purpose (Arminen, 2005; Peräkylä, 2005). The use of the transcripts accompanied by the original recordings (Arminen, 2005; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; ten Have, 2007) provided a solid empirical base from which the findings were derived and the availability of the transcripts enabled replication of the procedures for analysis to be tested (Seedhouse, 2005a, p. 254), as "one aspect of reliability is the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable or replicable" (Bryman, 2001, p. 29).

Content analysis allows the information to be re-analysed for reliability checks. Despite its advantages, the span of inferential reasoning entails a certain amount of interpretation by the individual researcher (Berg, 2004). This selection method may be subject to "biased selectivity" (Yin, 1994, p. 80). The researcher considered the possibility of bias in the selection of materials and, although there is no common English curriculum for Hospitality, the researcher was confident that the materials reviewed in this study were commonly used in the course outlines and textbooks in use (either as the main or supplementary material) and were not selected to match their own substantive and theoretical interests. Krippendorff (2004, p. 18) states clearly that content analysis is "divorceable from the personal authority of the researcher".

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Consent to undertake the research was approved by the Curtin University Ethics Committee. Signed agreement was obtained from the hotel managers. An

information session was provided to the staff of each hotel to ensure they had a full understanding of the purpose and procedures of the research. An opt-in model was employed to obtain consent from staff and guests. Staff and guests were provided with information sheets and invited to be involved in the research on a voluntary basis. Those staff members who were willing to participate in the research signed a consent form. The same procedure was employed for guests involved in the study. All participants were free to withdraw, without consequence, at any time.

The participants' anonymity was maintained at all times. Potentially identifiable details in the transcripts or from the course outlines were removed during the transcription process.

Digital recordings of the interactions and other electronic files are kept securely and stored in password-protected files. Raw paper data has been securely stored in the School of Education at Curtin University. After five years, all data will be destroyed.

4.8 Summary

This study is situated within an overarching qualitative research paradigm. The study design followed the principles of CA and analysis of 182 naturally occurring interactions recorded at real-life hotel settings in Vietnam was undertaken to identify the CS used by S, based on CA's "next-turn proof" procedure. The strategies and their functions in the local context of sequential organisation were observed, identified, coded and categorised.

Content analysis was employed to examine the curriculum of ESP courses for Hospitality, with a particular focus on the activities prescribed by the textbooks commonly used in the English courses, particularly the activities provided for students to practise English speaking and listening skills.

Ethical considerations, as well as reliability and validity issues, were discussed.

The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.0 Introduction

The findings are presented in two sections. The first section describes the analysis of the naturally-occurring interactions where communicative strategies (CS) were employed by staff when interacting with guests. The second section reports the analysis of the course materials used in ESP courses for Hospitality and the extent to which these activities reflect the way English is used as an ELF in the workplace.

5.1 Analysis of the Naturally-occurring Interactions

5.1.1 Overview

Comprehensible communication is an important aspect of staff performance at work, particularly in the current context of this study where English is used as a shared means of communication between Vietnamese staff and guests who come from different linguacultural backgrounds. To ensure that the information received from, and given to guests was correctly heard and understood, staff employed various CS. By closely examining sequences of talk in interactions between staff and guests based on the sequential organisation, particularly preceding and following utterances, the processes of clarifying, confirming, emphasising and highlighting the shared information were revealed. Five CS were identified and categorised and are presented in terms of their form and the functions in the local context of occurrence in the interaction. These CS were observed to be employed by both staff and guests. While acknowledging that interactions are a two-way process and jointly constructed, guests' utterances were not categorised. They are, however, important in establishing the context for staff's utterances and are, therefore, contained in the extracts presented in this chapter.

5.1.2 Front Office activities

The staff involved in this study were those who had the most frequent and direct contact with guests from their arrival at the hotel, during their stay, to their departure. Their interactions were varied in term of the topics of discussion (what the guests and the staff talked about) and could take from 30 seconds to a few minutes to

complete. In some interactions, from the initial topic (e.g. inquiring information about a restaurant) several subsequent, related sub/topics could be derived (e.g. arranging a booking and asking for directions to the restaurant). There were also interactions in which several unrelated sub/topics were referred to. For example, a guest asking for help with a restaurant booking which could consist of some substeps including clarification of type of restaurant/food the guest wanted, the number of guests and the time the guest preferred for the booking. When the booking procedure was finished, s/he might ask for information about something else, for instance directions to a place of interest or a request for currency exchange. These interactions could take three or five minutes to complete and some could be longer. In the total interactions examined in this study, the average time was one minute and fifty-eight seconds each. Besides dealing with routine and transactional activities with guests, staff also dealt with a wide range of other queries and requests from guests. Although these activities are common to hotels around the world, the way in which these activities were mediated through the use of ELF between staff and guests in a Vietnamese setting has not been the subject of previous research.

Table 2 presents the activities staff performed when interacting with guests. Interactions about restaurants/bars often included requests for assistance with the booking, thus they are categorised separately.

Table 2: Activities Performed by Staff at the Hotel FO

Activities	Number (interactions)	Percentage (%)
Check-ins	26	14
Check-outs	28	15
Information and booking services about restaurants/bars	41	23
Information about tours, events, and directions	41	23
Miscellaneous requests and queries	40	22
Complaints	6	3
Total	182	100

Staff dealt most often with guests' queries and requests for information about restaurants/bars, tours, places of interest and events, and directions. Fewer requests were received related to such things as booking a car or a taxi, checking or

confirming flight or tour details, changing or extending the room booking. The use of online advance booking and a computerised system of guest profiles has simplified checking in and checking out procedures and reduced the person-to-person interaction between staff and guests in relation to these two activities.

Apart from transactional activities, there was also some 'small talk' (talk for socialisation purposes which does not relate to the work-oriented transactions) inserted into the process of transaction. There were 20 interactions in which small talk occurred. It often related to the offer of a welcome drink, a social chat about guest's plans for the following days, or talk about family and personal issues.

5.1.3 Communicative strategies

Strategies were observed in the sequences of related talk on the turn-by-turn procedure. Extracts from interactions in which these strategies occurred are given to illustrate the way in which the CS were used. Abbreviations of S (referring to a staff member) and G (referring to a guest) were used in the transcripts and the extracts. When there was more than one staff member or guest involved in a conversation, a number is added to differentiate the participants. A bold font is used to identify the CS under discussion.

The CS identified from the data were: repetition, reformulation (paraphrasing), minimal queries, backchannels (BCL) and lexical suggestion, all of which were employed by staff as a tool to enhance comprehension and to facilitate the effectiveness of communication with guests. These strategies were observed to be used on their own or in combination with one another. Table 3 presents the number of instances of strategies employed by staff in the data, and the corresponding percentages, for easy comparison. Repetition occurs the most often (62%) followed by BCL (20%).

Table 3: Communicative Strategies Employed by the Staff

Strategies		Number (instances)	Percentage (%)
Repetition	Other-repetition	191	47
	Self-repetition	61	15
Reformulation	Other-reformulation	35	9
	Self-reformulation	10	2
Minimal queries		13	3
Backchannels		82	20
Lexical suggestion		18	4
Total		410	100

5.1.3.1 Repetition

Repetition in this study refers to the restatement of the lexical items (exact or with a slight change in the word form and order) which were used in the ongoing or preceding utterance.

Categorisation of repetition indicated that other-repetition (where a staff member repeated the lexical item(s) from a guest's preceding turn) and both self-repetition (where a staff member repeated the lexical item(s) said by himself/herself in an ongoing or in subsequent turn) occurred. The repeated part was usually the final or key lexical item(s). Thus, most of staff's utterances involving repetition were initiated from what guests had said.

These types of repetition manifested as either exact repetition or repetition in which the original utterance was slightly changed or modified.

5.1.3.1.1 Types of repetition

Repetition of exact lexical item(s) from guests' preceding utterances was used frequently by staff. Exact repetition involved a single word, a phrase or the whole utterance. Repeated elements were often names (restaurants, streets, shopping centres or places of interest), directions, instructions or numbers (room number, floor, price, currency, and time). Below is a typical example of exact repetition taken from the data: An arrow (→) is used before the utterance in which the strategy is in the focus for describing.

Extract 1 (IT-176)

- [1] S1: may I help you?
[2] G: is there = is there an Italian restaurant around here?
[3]→S1: **restaurant?**
[4] G: Italian / restaurant

In this extract, the word ‘*restaurant*’ was repeated with rising intonation. This topic word was recycled throughout the interaction.

Varied repetition involved a slight change in the word form or word order; for example, a change in deictic references (‘*the*’-‘*this*’; ‘*you*’-‘*we*’), word forms (‘*Italian*’-‘*Italy*’) expanded with additional information or reduced from the original utterance. Repetition of spelt lexical item(s) or repetition with spelling was also observed to occur.

In Extract 2, a staff member was giving a guest information about the room price. In response to the guest’s request for clarification (Line 50), the staff self-repeated part of the original utterance and modified it with additional information, giving an explanation (Lines 51-52).

Extract 2 (IT-59)

- [49] S: this lounge belong to signature floor / or the normal floor
[50] G1: normal floor? / what to normal floor
[51] →S: **normal floor** not belong to our executive floor / no breakfast /
[52] no happy hour
[53] G1: ah yes / both both / we want to know both

Staff also repeated the spelling of the word, which was classified as ‘spelt repetition’ in this study. In Extract 3, the name of the shopping centre ‘TAX’ (an acronym for the Saigon Trade Centre in Ho Chi Minh City) - was repeated several times, accompanied with its spelling by the staff.

Extract 3 (IT-108)

- [8]→ S: yes hotel A’s here. / so you can go to the **TAX** shopping centre /
[9] **T-A-X** / **T-A-X** contact service centre
[10] G: yes
[11]→S: **TAX** plaza
[12] G: right / ok

Both self-repetition and other-repetition were observed to occur at any point in the interaction and their functions were categorised according to the local context of the sequential organisation within which they occurred. The main purpose of repetition in all cases was to ensure that the information shared was accurately heard by the interlocutor. Self-repetition and other-repetition occurred in different sequential environments and their functions differed in response to the environments in which they occurred.

5.1.3.1.2 Other-repetition

Staff frequently repeated the final part or the key lexical item(s) from guests' preceding utterances for a number of purposes.

(1) Requests for information

Guests often initiated the interaction with a request for information or a service and staff rarely responded to it without checking whether the received information had been heard or understood accurately before appropriate information or service was provided to guests. This was achieved by repeating part (or all) of the guest's preceding utterance. Repetition was observed to occur mostly after guests' initial requests (32%) or when a new request was initiated or new information offered during the interaction (12%). In these situations, repetition was initially employed to seek confirmation about the guest's request, and it was often related to the topic under discussion. In the subsequent talk, related information about the topic was generated and negotiated by the use of repetition alone or in combination with other CS. The use of repetition, while occurring most often at the beginning of an interaction, was found to appear at any point in the interaction when another request or new information was initiated.

In Extract 4 below, a guest initiated the interaction with a request for directions to the bank. To check whether the guest's desired destination was correctly understood, the staff repeated the final part from the guest's preceding utterance with a change of the deictic references from '*the*' to '*this*' and spoke with a rising intonation. The repeated utterance was responded to by a confirmatory token '*yes*' (Line 3) followed by the staff's claim of acknowledgement in Line 4, when an offer for further information was made.

Extract 4 (IT-3)

- [1] G: I want to go **to the bank**
[2] →S: uh **to this bank?**
[3] G: yes
[4] S: ok / I give you a [*] nearest / **nearest** one
[5] G: uh huh?

In Extract 5, the staff repeated the exact, final key word (Line 4) from the guest's utterance and said it with rising intonation which required a confirmation from the guest. This pattern of repetition reoccurred (Line 8) and functioned also as a request for confirmation and an acknowledgement, as after the repetition, the staff continued her on-topic talk with a request seeking the guest's confirmation.

Extract 5 (IT-153)

- [1] G: you are ok?
[2] S: yes?
[3] G: have you got the **cost?**
[4]→S: **cost?**
[5] G: yes
[6] S: euro or dollar?
[7] G: one one **euro**
[8]→S: **euro?** / ok?
[9] G: ok. / thank you

Extract 6 below gives an example which illustrates how sequences of talk were generated and organised. In each of these sequences, repetition was employed by S for different purposes. The interaction started with guest 1's request for assistance. The kind of food and restaurant as the topic of the interaction was negotiated in the first part of the interaction and, when the information was clear, further steps were generated. Repetition occurred after most of the guest's statements (Lines 26, 31, 33, 37). The staff member repeated exact words from the guest's utterances and converted them into requests, checking for confirmation about the received information (Lines 26, 33), acknowledging and agreeing with the information provided by G (Lines 31, 37), and confirming the information in response to the guest's request for confirmation (Line 50). Boundaries between sequences were marked by minimal responses 'right' (Line 27), 'yeah' (Line 39) or 'yes' (Line 34), and 'yes / sure' (Line 52).

Extract 6 (IT-5)

- [24] S: yes / may I have your room number?
[25] G1: one five, one six
[26] → S: **one f**ive, **one s**ix.
[27] G1: right
|
[28] S: [*] mister / **mister** (name of the guest)?
[29] G1: (name of the guests) / [yes]
[30] G2: [yeah] (names of the guests)
[31] → S: (**name of the guest**) / for two persons?
[32] G1: **four persons**
[33] → S: **four persons**?
[34] G1: **four persons** / yes
|
[35] S: HA. / HA restaurant? what time for reservation?
[36] G1: at **seven thirty**?
[37] → S: **seven thirty**. // thank you / please wait for a minute / I'll call them.
[38] G1: thank you so much.
[39] S: yeah
|
[48] S: ok that's confirmed / you have a table booked at nine thirty?
[49] G1: seven / seven thirty?
[50] → S: oh / nineteen thirty
[51] G1: nineteen thirty / ok ((laughing)) / can you write it down for us?
[52] S: yes / sure
|
[53] G1: and maybe you can show me how to get there.
[54] S: HA restaurant / number [*] eleven / Le Thanh Ton / we are here?
[55] G1: yes

The repeated utterances were sometimes not followed by a confirmatory response but the on-topic talk was continued instead. In these circumstances, repetition had a dual function: as a confirmation check and an acknowledgement. As illustrated in Extract 7 below, the staff's repetition of the guest's preceding utterance (*change?* – Line 3) was not responded to spontaneously by the guest, but was followed by another confirmation request (*euro?* – Line 3) initiated by the staff member.

Extract 7 (IT-141)

- [1] S: may I help you sir?
[2] G: yes / I want to change money.
[3] → S: **change?** euro?
[4] G: yes / **euro** in dong.

In some other cases, repetition was also followed by a tag ending (e.g. *right*, *correct*, *ok*), spoken with rising intonation and used as a question, seeking a confirmatory

response from the guest. In Extract 8, the staff member repeated the final part from the guest's preceding utterance accompanied by a tag ending and rising intonation which was followed by a 'yes' answer from the guest confirming that the information was correct.

Extract 8 (IT-88)

- [1] G: can you tell me **where AB Tower is**
[2] → S: **AB Tower right?**
[3] G: yeah / seventy six Le Lai right?
[4] S: I think so

Repetition of the final key word from the guest's utterance was sometimes pronounced with falling intonation; this triggered the guest's repetition of the same word. In Extract 9, the repeated item is the name of a shopping centre in Ho Chi Minh City.

Extract 9 (IT-16)

- [1] G1: yes / I want to go to the shopping centre / **Vincom?**
[2] → S: **Vincom.**
[3] G1: **Vin/com.**
[4] → S: **Vincom** yes / [*] I'll show you on the map?
[5] G1: yes

'*Vincom*' in the guest's utterance was pronounced with rising intonation, with the stress falling on the second syllable. This word was picked up and repeated by the staff member with falling intonation and the stress was shifted to the first syllable. The staff member's utterance was followed by guest 1's repetition of exactly the same word with the same stress pattern (also on the first syllable) and a slight pause between the syllables. The staff member then repeated this word, followed by an affirmative confirmation, displaying that the information was received and acknowledged (Line 4). Further appropriate information was offered after guest 1's request was clearly comprehended by the staff member.

There were a few cases in which the staff member seemed to repeat guests' preceding utterances but actually misinterpreted it. In Extract 10 below, the guest's request in Line 7 was misheard and misinterpreted by the staff member as '*laundry*' (Line 8). Receiving an 'incorrect' or inappropriate response for the request and interpreting the staff member's utterance as a request for repetition, the guest repeated his original utterance with a stress emphasis on the word '*wait*' (Line 9).

Extract 10 (IT-144)

- [6] S: please go back your room and someone will come
[7] G: **how long wait** / **how long wait**
[8] → S: **laundry?**
[9] G: **how long wait** / **how long wait**
[10] S: ah / five minutes / sorry? / please your room number?
[11] G: six / zero / two.

Repetition of guests' utterances was observed to occur not only in transactional activities, but it was in 'small talk' as well, as shown in Extract 11.

Extract 11 (IT-112)

- [1] S: orange juice / fresh one?
[2] G: okay / thank you.
[3] → S: two **orange juice?** / with ice?
[4] G: **no ice** for.
[5] → S: **no ice?** / sugar?
[6] G: no / no
[7] → S: no / **two orange juice** / **no ice** / **no sugar** / thank you / I need one
[8] more passport? // you stay with us until twenty second
[9] G: yeah

(2) Requests for clarification

Guests' queries and requests were varied. In order to provide the right service or advice to guests, asking for clarification or checking understanding of the received information by repeating guests' utterances was frequently employed by staff. This pattern often occurred at the beginning of the interaction.

In the following example, the key lexical item from the guest's preceding utterance was repeated with rising intonation requesting clarification (Line 3). The guest responded with a confirmatory token and provided an explanation to make the utterance more explicit. The staff member displayed his/her understanding by saying 'oh ok' (Line 6).

Extract 12 (IT-108)

- [1] G: i:s is there a place that we can buy [*] actually buy [*] **lacquer** like
[2] [*] statues or something
[3] → S: **lacquer?**
[4] G: yeah **lacquer** pots? / anything like this // is there [*] a shop where
[5] where we can buy such of things?
[6] S: oh ok / I'll show you a place / we are here sir?

In some cases, repetition was used as a clarification when it was used with an 'or' question.

Extract 13 (IT-182)

- [12] G1: so: for me room [*] three nights / this is one one two
[13] S1: **it is one one two**? or two oh five
[14] G1: for me two oh five

(3) Acknowledgement or agreement

Repetition of part or all of what was said in the previous utterance was often the way in which staff displayed their acknowledgement or agreement with the information provided by guests.

Extract 14 (IT-52)

- [5] S: yes / how many people?
[6] G: three
[7] → S: **three** / what time ma'am?
[8] G: seven?
[9] → S: **seven pm** / may I have your room number?
[10] G: [*] one nine one six?
[11] → S: **one nine one six** / one minute?

In this extract, after repeating the primary information, the staff member continued by asking questions to elicit more information from the guest (Lines 7, 9).

(4) Response to a question

Repeating part of the guest's preceding utterance was frequently used by staff to initiate the response to the guest's question.

Extract 15 (IT-93)

- [21] G: and where's **the post office / the central post office**?
[22] → S: **the post office / the central post office** / it is here.
[23] G: okay / so easy

In summary, repetition of lexical item(s) – the key information or the final part of guests' preceding utterances – occurred frequently in staff speech and it was used as a request for confirmation or clarification of the received information, as acknowledgement of or agreement with the information received, as a response or to start a new utterance. It occurred predominantly in contexts when guests initiated

requests for information or for provision of a service, which was mostly at the beginning of the interaction, although it could occur at any point in the interaction when a request for new information was initiated. The frequency of occurrence of other-repetition is summarised according to functions in Table 4.

Table 4: Functions of Other-repetition

Other-repetition	Number of instances	Percentage (%)
Requests for confirmation	102	53
Requests for clarification	9	5
Acknowledgement or agreement	50	26
Responses to G's questions	30	16
Total	191	100

5.1.3.1.3 Self-repetition

Self-repetition was observed to occur in exact or modified forms within an ongoing or in subsequent turns and, depending on the local sequential context, it was employed as a confirmation, a clarification, and to emphasise the key information or as a strategy for maintaining the talk.

(1) Confirmation

When there was a request from a guest for a repetition of what was said, the staff member often repeated exactly what had been said or slightly modified the original utterance to confirm the information given. This pattern was observed to occur at any point in the interaction. In Extract 16 below, the staff member repeated the whole utterance (Line 107) to confirm what was said in response to the guest's request for repetition.

Extract 16 (IT-14)

- [105] S: **and the payment of the tour will charge to your room**
 [106] G: I'm sorry?
 [107] → S: **the payment for the tour will charge to your room**
 [108] G: yes

(2) Clarification

The staff member repeated the lexical item(s) from his/her own utterance and elaborated or expanded it to clarify what was said or to enhance guests' comprehension. In Extract 17 below, after the guest's short response 'uh huh?' encouraging more information, the staff member repeated the key elements from his own utterance and expanded the information to make it more explicit to facilitate the guest's comprehension.

Extract 17 (IT-9)

- [50] S: but you- you can go to the **Saigon square**
[51] G1: uh huh?
[52] → S: **Saigon square** over here / about [*] seven minutes to walk / go
[53] straight down that way, / this block / and two more block
[54] G1: okay

In Extract 18, a guest initiated a request for clarification of 'normal floor' – a type of standard room in the hotel which is distinct from 'executive floor'. To clarify the guest's request, the staff member repeated the lexical items from the previous utterance and modified it by adding extra information to explain what 'normal floor' meant.

Extract 18 (IT-59)

- [49] S: this lounge belong to signature floor / or the normal floor
[50] G1: normal floor? / what to normal floor
[51] → S: **normal floor not belong to our executive floor** / no
[52] breakfast / no happy hour
[53] G1: ah yes / both both / we want to know both

Self-repetition sometimes involved changes to the word order.

Extract 19 (IT-3)

- [20] S: yeah / but [*] I think tax- / taxi's better for you.
[21] G: pardon?
[22] → S: **I think you take a taxi better**
[23] G: I know / but I- I like to walk ((laughing))

In this interaction, in response to the guest, the staff member restructured the original utterance with a change of pronoun 'you' from the object in the repeated utterance to the subject of the repeating utterance, and 'taxi' was changed from the subject of the

original utterance to the object of action in the repeating utterance. The transfer of word order led to the change in the function of the word in the utterance, therefore its focus and emphasis were also shifted.

(3) An emphasis on key information

Repetition to emphasise or highlight key information occurred frequently in staff speech. In the following extract, elements of the direction-giving exchange were repeated across the turns, followed by the guest's acknowledgement (Line 55), request for confirmation (Line 57) and clarification (Line 59).

Extract 20 (IT-5)

- [53] G1: and maybe you can show me how to get there.
[54] S: **HA restaurant / number [*] eleven / Le Thanh Ton** / we are here?
[55] G1: yes
[56]→ S: the **restaurant's** just / here / **number eleven**.
[57] G1: number eleven
[58]→ S: yeah / **Le Thanh Ton** / you can keep the card.
[59] G1: so that's there is.
[60]→ S: **eleven HA restaurant / number eleven Le Thanh Ton street**.
[61] G1: okay

The staff member clarified the location of the restaurant both from the deictic reference '*just here*'. All elements (name, number of the restaurant and the street name) were repeated until a confirmatory response '*okay*' from the guest was obtained.

(4) Maintaining the interaction or gaining time

Self-repetition was used as a strategy for maintaining the talk (e.g. gaining time to search for an appropriate word(s) or thinking about what to say next). In these cases, it was observed that staff often controlled the conversation. Guests often displayed their participation and listenership by giving short feedback to what was being said, or requested confirmation or clarification.

In Extract 21 below, the staff self-repeated several times the lexical items within an ongoing turn and in the subsequent turns. The guest displayed his participation in the conversation by giving short responses to what was said by the staff.

Extract 21 (IT-4)

- [21] S: yeah / another one here called the place called **Parkson** / **Parkson**
[22] G: oh we've been there.
...
[27] → S: so opposite right there? / they have the the new **Vincom** / new [*]
[28] **shopping centre called Vincom centre.**
[29] G: yeah
[30] → S: yeah / **bigger** / **a bigger one** / inside here opposite **Parkson** here?
[31] G: oh we went there as well.
[32] → S: **Vincom** here

In summary, by examining sequences of interaction, both other- and self- repetition were found to occur frequently throughout an interaction, either on their own or in combination with other strategies. These CS were used to confirm, clarify or emphasise the information provided or as a strategy to maintain the interaction between staff and guests. The frequency of occurrence of self-repetition is summarised according to function in Table 5.

Table 5: Functions of Self-repetition

Self-repetition	Number of instances	Percentage (%)
Confirmation of the information provided	22	36
Clarification of the information provided	6	10
Emphasis and highlight of key information	17	28
Maintaining the interaction (gaining time)	16	26
Total	61	100

5.1.3.2 Reformulation

Reformulation was employed by staff as a CS to enhance and facilitate guests' comprehension by restating or re-presenting the original utterance in an alternative way. It could be paraphrasing, explaining, summarising, restructuring, using alternative expressions, or restating the original using different words. Reformulation had various forms – an utterance could be modified, reduced or changed – and its function depended on the local sequential context. Two types of reformulation were identified: one, self-reformulation, in which the staff member reworded what s/he

had said earlier; and two, other-reformulation, in which the staff member re-worded what was said by the guest in the preceding utterance.

Reformulation was observed to occur at any point in the interaction, alone or in combination with other CS. Like repetition, reformulation was frequently employed at the beginning of the interaction or when a request or new information was initiated. It often occurred when the previous utterance was long and/or complicated, or when the request was not direct or insufficiently explicit.

5.1.3.2.1 Other-reformulation

Staff frequently reformulated by paraphrasing, summarising, explaining, elaborating or restructuring what was said by guests for the following purposes: In the first example, as shown in Extract 22, other-formulation occurred when the staff restated what was said from the guest's preceding utterance by paraphrasing the utterance using 'you mean ...' (Line 8) in a declarative structure and spoke with rising intonation. This was in response to the guest's preceding utterance which was uttered with several filled pauses and was not clear to the staff member.

Extract 22 (IT-59)

- [5] S: you can keep the same / may I borrow your key? / I make the new one
[6] for you to extend
[7] G: yes but [*] I try [*] we can stay [*] until ten-twelve o'clock?
[8] →S: **you mean you enjoy the drink here until twelve?**
[9] G: yeah / if it's ok

In the next extract, the staff member responded to the guest's question by reformulating his/her preceding utterance using alternative vocabulary 'à la carte' and restructuring the utterance.

Extract 23 (IT-32)

- [96] G: can we choose from the menu? or is it the set menu
[97] → S: in this [*] yeah **you try the many à la carte**
[98] G: okay
[99] S: yeah

Staff reformulation could also involve word or phrase substitution. In the guest's utterance in the extract below, the key lexical item '*the shopping malls*' was substituted by '*a place for shopping*'.

Extract 24 (IT-4)

- [1] S: good morning sir? / how may I help you?
[2] G: good morning / **can you show me where / the shopping malls are.**
[3] apart from the one over there.
[4]→ S: **you you're looking for a place for shopping?**
[5] G: yeah / we were at that mall / over there?
[6] S: yeah

Staff frequently reformulated what was said by guests to request clarification or confirmation, to respond to guests' request, or to confirm and clarify what was said.

- (1) As a request for confirmation of understanding

Guest requests were various and they were not often direct or straightforward. In these cases, additional sequences were triggered, requesting clarification or confirmation of the received information before the appropriate information or service was provided.

Extract 25 (IT-46)

- [1] S: how may I help you sir?
[2] G: how are you? / I just want to see what you're doing in the restaurants
[3] for the New Year tonight?/ and if your booking is available?
[4] →S: [*] **so you want the the restaurant in in the hotel?**
[5] G: yeah

In this extract, the guest's utterance was long and the request was relatively complex. The guest used indirect questions which were unclear to the staff member; therefore he reformulated the guest's utterance by using an interpretive summary to check whether the received information had been correctly understood. The staff member's request was responded to by a confirmatory response '*yeah*' from the guest and further action was suggested.

In Extract 26, the staff member misheard or misinterpreted the guest's preceding utterance. Interpreting the staff member's utterance as a request for clarification, the guest then reformulated his utterance with an explanation and repeated the key word.

The staff member's reformulation was formed as a declarative structure followed by a tag ending. It was pronounced with rising intonation which triggered the guest's confirmatory 'yes'.

Extract 26 (IT-46)

- [1] G: is there a bank?
[2] S: the voucher for / for the-
[3] G: the bank to change money to change money / the bank / the bank /
[4] bank
[5] →S: **you like to change the money right?**
[6] G: yes
[7] S: can you come in here please

(2) As a request for clarification

To ensure the information received from guests' requests was clearly understood, staff also requested clarification by reformulating guests' preceding utterances. In the following extract, the guest's utterance was long and the request was unclear to the staff member, as it was followed by the guest's explanation. The staff member used 'you mean ...' (Line 18) to reformulate what was said to check whether the received utterance had been accurately understood.

Extract 27 (IT-59)

- [15] G: ok / what's the price of / of one night here with signature / what's
[16] the price? / because we take it by in connection and we like if we take? /
[17] take? directly by our own yeah
[18] →S: **you mean / you would like to know how much if you enjoy**
[19] **signature lounge benefit from today?**
[20] G: yeah no / if if [*] next month I want to come back

(3) As a response to confirm or clarify what was said

In Extract 28, the staff member, interpreting guest 2's utterance as a request for clarification (Line 60), responded with a reformulation. The reformulated utterance triggered the guest to utter 'ooh oh' displaying his surprise. In Lines 63-64, the staff member gave some extra information about the price which was responded to by the guest's acknowledgement in Line 65.

Extract 28 (IT-11)

- [58] S: [*] from here to there around [*] twenty twenty five minutes
[59] G1: okay
[60] G2: **for driving?**
[61]→S: **for for taxi**
[62] G1: oo:h oh
[63] S: and the cost around [*] seven or eighty thousand dong about four
[64] dollars
[65] G1: okay

The staff member also reformulated using an alternative expression – ‘*there*’ in Extract 29 below was reformulated into ‘*in the room*’ (Line 7).

Extract 29 (IT-82)

- [5] S: where’s your luggage
[6] G: I left it **there** ((laughing))
[7]→ S: ***in the room*** / no problem

The frequency of occurrence of other-reformulation summarised according to function in Table 6:

Table 6: Functions of Other-reformulation

Other-reformulation	Number of instances	Percentage (%)
Requests for confirmation	16	46
Requests for clarification	10	29
Confirmation and clarification	9	26
Total	35	100

5.1.3.2.2 Self-reformulation

Staff produced a self-reformulation either to clarify or confirm what was said to enhance and facilitate guests’ comprehension.

(1) As a clarification

Self-reformulation was employed as either a clarification or a confirmation. Staff frequently reformulated what s/he had said previously when the utterance was not clear and seemed too complicated for guests to understand, or when a request for clarification was initiated by guests. Extract 30 below provides an illustration of the

way in which a staff member reformulated his/her utterances to enhance the guest's understanding.

Extract 30 (IT-81)

- [13]→ S: **don't go out with your passport. / keep your passport in the**
[14] **safety box** / no / we have a safety box / lobby.
[15] G: ah / sorry?
[16] →S: **please keep the passport in the safety box / then you can go out**
[17] G: huh?
[18]→ S: **don't bring outside** / very dangerous.
[19] G: uh huh.
[20] S: thank you

In this extract, the first two utterances (Lines 13-14) were imperatives but they were long and the guest had difficulty in understanding what was being said. In response to these requests, the staff member self-reformulated by restating - paraphrasing (Line 16), restructuring (Line 18) the original utterances. In Line 18, the staff member restructured the previous utterances in a simplified form with a single imperative structure and uttered it with a slight pause that seemed to make it more explicit and received a short response in falling intonation from the guest.

(2) As a confirmation

Extract 31 gives an example of reformulation using an alternative expression to confirm what was said.

Extract 31 (IT-79)

- [35] S: with **complimentary**
[36] G: what's that? / ah **complimentary**
[37] →S: **it's free.**
[38] G: okay

The staff member's utterance of the adjective '*complimentary*' was reformulated by using an alternative lexical item ('*free*') to reinforce or confirm the guest's comprehension (Line 37) and was responded to by the guest's acknowledgement token '*okay*' in Line 38.

In summary, two types of reformulation were observed to occur and they performed different functions, depending on the circumstances of their use in the interaction. Along with other CS, reformulation was employed by staff as a tool to enhance and

facilitate both staff members' and guests' comprehension. The frequency of occurrence of self-reformulation are summarised according to function in Table 7.

Table 7: Functions of Self-reformulation

Self-reformulation	Number of instances	Percentage
Confirmation of information provided	3	30
Clarification of information provided	7	70
Total	10	100

5.1.3.3 Minimal Queries (MQs)

MQs are the 'specific questions' frequently employed as a medium to facilitate comprehension in communication between staff and guests. They occur at any point in the interaction and are used in a particular context in combination with other CS.

An MQ was manifested as a sound, a word, a phrase or a sentence. Common MQs observed from the data are: '*pardon?*', '*pardon me?*', '*sorry?*', '*excuse me?*', '*I'm sorry?*', '*what?*', '*huh?/hm?*', '*what's that?*', or 'wh-interrogatives' used in combination with a partial repetition of the previous utterance.

The MQs occurring in the data were either focussed – where a specific word(s) or part of the preceding utterance had not been understood (partial repetition of the preceding utterance used in combination with '*wh-interrogative*' belongs to this group) – or unfocussed (those MQs which do not indicate what specific word(s) or part of the preceding utterance needed to be addressed, for example, '*sorry*', '*what?*', and '*huh?*').

Typically, MQs were used when the preceding utterance was not fully comprehended and the speakers displayed a need to have the information repeated or clarified. These questions were mostly delivered with interrogative intonation. Following a MQ, there was often a repetition in full or with variation or a reformulation of what was said in the previous utterance.

(1) As a request for repetition

In Extract 32 below, a full repetition was given after the unfocused MQs to confirm the given information. For the first three attempts, the question did not receive an

appropriate reply but triggered the staff member's requests for repetition (Line 28), for checking understanding (Line 30), and for clarification (Line 32). Finally, it was repeated with a modification (Line 33), and the utterance was made more explicit, resulting in the staff member's claim of understanding (Line 34).

Extract 32 (IT-125)

- [27] G: NG / NG / **how does this mean?**
[28] → S: **sorry?**
[29] G: **how does it mean** [*] / in Vietnamese
[30] S: Vietnamese restaurant? / Vietnamese food
[31] G: **what does it mean?**
[32] → S: **sorry?**
[33] G: **what does it mean / the name of the restaurant**
[34] S: a:h / in English? / in English
[35] G: in English yes
[36] S: yes / in English it's delicious

(2) As a request for clarification

In Extract 33, the staff member reformulated part of the guest's utterance combined with '*wh-interrogative*' to request for clarification of what was said in the guest's preceding utterance.

Extract 33 (IT-169)

- [6] G: I left my two brushes there.
[7] → S2: **you** [*] **forget what?**
[8] G: two [*] my two brushes.
[9] S2: two brush / two brushes / I call room service to check for you
[10] G: **thank** you

In summary, MQs were used in contexts where the preceding utterance was not clear and needed to be clarified or repeated. A full repetition or repetition with variation, or a reformulation was often used after the MQs. The occurrences of MQs are summarised according to function in Table 8.

Table 8: Functions of MQs

Minimal queries	
Functions	Forms
Request for repetition	<i>pardon?, pardon me?, sorry?, excuse me?, I'm sorry? what?, huh?/ hm?, what's that?, or 'wh-interrogatives'</i>
Request for clarification	

5.1.3.4 Backchannels (BCL)

5.1.3.4.1 Forms of BCL

Staff often gave short responses to display attention or involvement in what was being said by guests. The common short responses observed in the study were lexical items including 'yeah', 'yes', 'okay', 'alright' and 'I see' and non-lexical items such as 'uh huh', 'uhm'. These short utterances were categorised as BCL: they occurred as a single word or a sound (e.g. 'okay', 'uhm'), in combination with one another (e.g. 'yes, uh huh', or 'yes, yes'). The only syntactic structure observed in the data was 'I see'.

5.1.3.4.2 Contexts of occurrence and the functions of BCL

Staff often produced BCL at the end of guests' utterances, at the transition relevance place (TRP) and there were a few cases where BCL overlapped with guests' utterances. The employment of BCL with rising intonation normally encouraged more information from guests and/or displayed staff's engagement or attention to what was being said: 'yeah', 'huh', 'uh huh' frequently occurred in staff's responses to guests. There were very few cases of 'okay' when responding to guests and 'yes' was used for acknowledgement. In some cases, BCL had more than one overlapping function (e.g. an attentive listening BCL could also be an acknowledging BCL).

(1) Attention or engagement

In Extract 34, the guest talked around the topic of having a city tour arranged by the hotel in the afternoon. In response to what was said by the guest, the staff member displayed his attentive listening and understanding by giving a BCL which the guest followed up on (Lines 4-5) and overlapped with the guest's utterance (Lines 6, 8 and 10).

Extract 34 (IT-12)

- [1] S: good afternoon how may I help you?
[2] G: ah yes / I have the afternoon. / I don't have to be back to the hotel
[3] until six
[4] → S: **uh huh?** =
[5] G: = or to the hotel by [five thir]ty
[6] → S: **[uh huh?]**
[7] G: but I [have] an appointment.
[8] S: **[uh huh?]**
[9] G: I think six will [be] fine
[10] → S: **[yes]**

(2) Encouragement

Staff produced a BCL to display their attentive listenership and encourage guests to continue their speech. In Extract 35, the guest required a recommendation for a local bar other than hotel ones. In response to the guest, the staff member produced the BCL ('*uh huh?*' – Line 21) to encourage more information from the guest, and at the same time to show his/her engagement with what was being said by the guest. Similarly, in Line 23, '*uh huh?*' encouraged the guest to say more and display the staff's agreement with the guest's opinion.

Extract 35 (IT-43)

- [20] G: yeah / I think? we don't want the hotel bars so much
[21] →S: **uh huh?**
[22] G: because they try the same music,
[23] →S: **uh huh?**
[24] G: you know? we want to in a local bar.
[25] S: local bar?
[26] G: yes
[27] S: yeah [*] / this [*] // they have the [*] some small bars
[28] G: yeah yeah

(3) Acknowledgement or agreement

The BCL used in Extract 36 displays the staff member's acknowledgement and agreement (Lines 9, 12, 16, and 18) with the information provided by the guest.

Extract 36 (IT-51)

- [6] S: do you want make a reservation?
[7] G: no we- actu- actually I've made a reservation / can you just call
[8] them and check [*] if they still have my reservation?
[9]→ S: **yeah**
[10] G: if possible? for eight o'clock / yeah that's one / that's one /
[11] number ten Dang Tat
[12]→ S: **yeah**
[13] G: do you have their number?
[14] S: yes we have the number
[15] G: it's under my name K
[16]→ S: **yeah**
[17] G: this is my name?
[18]→ S: **yeah**

In Extract 37, while the guest was checking in, small talk took place and the staff produced BCL, which were realised as the syntactic structure '*I see*' (Lines 25 and 30) displaying her attention, involvement and understanding about what was being talked.

Extract 37 (IT-82)

- [21] S: ((laughing)) how's your new year
[22] G: AH / it's okay
[23] S: in Vung Tau? you work in the Vung Tau?
[24] G: no in [*] Houston / Texas
[25] →S: **I see.**
[26] G: I see my son / because he called and said he has a
[27] girlfriend and I stayed home alone ((laughing))
[28] S: with girlfriend?
[29] G: no our SON / I would like to see my son
[30] →S: **I see.**
[31] G: but he was out with his girlfriend on New Year's Eve /
[32] okay / I was home by myself.

In summary, BCL were employed to display staff engagement and cooperation in interaction with guests. One form of BCL could be used for different functions and conversely, one function of BCL can be manifested by different forms. The occurrences of BCL are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Functions of BCL

Backchannels			
Functions	Number of instances	Percentage	Examples of forms
Attention or engagement	50	61	<i>Uh huh, yes, uhm, yeah, alright</i>
Encouragement of more information	10	12	<i>Yes, oh yeah, uh huh</i>
Acknowledgement / understanding or agreement	22	27	<i>Yeah, okay, uh huh, uhm, I see, okay</i>
Total	82	100	

5.1.3.5 Lexical suggestions

One of the CS that staff employed to display co-operation and to facilitate communication with guests was suggesting a word(s) to complete their utterance. Staff also searched for a word(s) or requested help from guests to identify the appropriate lexical item(s) to complete his/her own utterance. The suggested word was often the name of a restaurant/bar, place of interest, event or related to directions or issues pertinent to guests' stay in the hotel.

Staff often anticipated what guests were going to say and suggested a word to help them say it. In most cases, the suggestion was agreed to.

Extract 38 below is an example in which the name of the restaurant was offered by the staff and agreed with by the guest.

Extract 38 (IT-50)

- [1] G: you know the restaurant?
- [2] S: yes / I know viet- Vietnamese restaurant
- [3] G: it's [*] C-U-C [*]
- [4] → S: [*] (CUC GACH QUAN)
- [5] G: yeah

This strategy was employed in circumstances where a guest had started, but not finished his/her utterance and needed assistance to complete.

Extract 39 (IT-105)

- [19] G1: **so come out of here? we go:**
[20] → S: **straight up**
[21] G1: straight up?
[22] S: pass to the Notre Dame cathedral and
[23] G1: yeah?
[24] S: and then you turn right
[25] G1: uh huh?
[26] S: go straight to the end of the street
[27] G1: ok / thank you

Occasionally, there were cases in which the word(s) suggested by the staff member was not exactly the one that the guest was seeking. In such cases, a refusal response was given in the following turn, and the guest finally searched for the appropriate word(s) to complete his/her utterance. In the following extract, the staff displayed his agreement by repeating the guest's words with a slight change in word form in the next turn.

Extract 40 (IT-12)

- [25] G: and we're doing the- [*] the war [*]
[26] → S: **war / criminal**
[27] G: **no not to remnants** / see the other one / yes the histo- the
[28] Vietnamese history museum?
[29] S: uh **historical museum**

Staff also sought assistance from guests to complete his/her own utterance as shown in Extracts 41 and 42 below.

Extract 41 (IT-1)

- [16] → S2: yes? [*] **miste:r**
[17] G: **(name of guest)**
[18] S2: your room number twelve oh seven?
[19] G: yes

Extract 42 (IT-23)

- [1] S: good evening / can I help you sir?
[2] G: I want to know place (name)
[3] → S: **(repetition of the name)? / is it the the name of the the:**
[4] G: **the restaurant** / you know where it is
[5] S: you can write on the paper? we check / V?

In short, giving or asking for assistance with a suitable word or suggesting lexical items to complete the turn was employed as a CS to display staff attention to what was being talked about and indicate co-operation with guests in the interaction.

5.1.3.6 A combination of strategies

The findings above individually describe the most frequently-employed CS used by staff and present a picture of how and when these CS occurred in interactions between staff and guests. These strategies were also observed to be used in combination with one another in interactions to enhance comprehension between staff and guests.

Extract 43 (taken from IT-71)

- [1] G: [*] a taxi to go to the airport by a tour company? in the name of
[2] (name of company) / has anybody come?
[3] →S: **so- sorry?**
[4] G: ah my tour company was going to get me a car.
[5] →S: **yeah**
[6] G: has anybody come? / by the name of G?
[7] →S: **so pick you up to the airport ma'am?**
[8] G: uh sorry?
[9] →S: [*] **you're expecting someone from your travel agent pick**
[10] **you up to the airport?**
[11] G: yeah / at six o'clock
[12]→S: **six o'clock?**
[13] G: yeah / has anyone informed?
[14] S: [*] so normally when they come they will contact with us at the
[15] reception desk / I will call you when they come in
[16] G: okay
[17] S: yeah

In Line 3, a request for clarification was employed, a BCL was used in Line 5; interpretive summaries were utilised in Lines 7, 9-10; and repetition was used in Line 12. A combination of strategies was generally employed when both staff and guests were unclear about the received information and a single strategy did not help to make the information explicit enough. One (or more) CS was employed until common understanding was achieved.

In summary, repetition, reformulation, BCL, MQs and lexical suggestions were the CS employed most often by staff when they were interacting in English with guests.

These strategies were observed to be used on their own or in combination with one another and they were realised in different forms. They fulfilled different functions, depending on the context of their occurrence in the interaction.

Repetition, reformulation and MQs were employed most often to seek clarification of guests' preceding utterances; repetition and reformulation were used as requests for confirmation of accuracy or checking understanding; BCL and lexical suggestions were most often used to display staff's attentive listenership, cooperation and engagement with guests. By using various strategies, shared understanding was negotiated and accomplished by staff and guests. In most cases, their interactions were successful and communicative outcomes were achieved. There were very few cases, in which misunderstanding occurred and if this happened, it was sorted out by the staff member's or guest's use of an appropriate CS.

5.2 Analysis of the English Language Training for Hospitality Students

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the English language courses in Hospitality, based on a number of accessible course outlines and textbooks which are commonly used in the ESP component of Hospitality courses.

The main focus of analysis in this section was the extent to which the two communicative skills of listening and speaking, which were those most frequently used by hotel FO staff, and were addressed in the course content and activities. The other two skills – reading and writing, which were less frequently used by the FO staff – were also identified but only to present a more complete idea of the skills that are developed in a typical ESP course, and they were not analysed in detail.

The course outlines were reviewed to identify the objectives of the course. The textbook activities that students were provided with to practise listening and speaking in English were the primary focus of the analysis of teaching materials. The two textbooks analysed were commonly used in ESP courses in the integrated curriculum of educational institutions in Vietnam. These were *English for International Tourism* (Dubicka & O'Keeffe, 2003), normally used for the Basic ESP course (coded as B1), and *High Season: English for the Hotel and Tourist*

Industry (Harding & Henderson, 1994), often used for the Advanced ESP course (coded as B2).

5.2.1 Course objectives

The ESP courses are designed to provide students with a basic knowledge of English, with special emphasis on its application to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. Their aim is to develop communication skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The courses also provide students with grammar and vocabulary exercises, with an emphasis on terms relevant to these vocational sectors. By the end of the course, students are required to take and obtain an average score (5 out of 10 is the average and the pass score according to the Vietnamese grade system) on both oral and written test for integrated skills of listening, reading, writing and vocabulary and language use.

Although the ESP courses are separated into Basic and Advanced levels – acknowledging that the level of difficulty and the content were different – the focus of skill development was almost the same in each level, i.e. developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

(1) Listening

The course requires that students listen to dialogues and monologues delivered in clear standard speech on common topics regularly encountered, either in daily life or in the tourism or hotel environments. The aim is to facilitate their understanding of the content of the listening texts, as well as help them to follow simple instructions, guidelines or explanations in English.

At the Advanced level, students are provided with opportunities to listen to more complex and diverse listening texts, such as dialogues, monologues, discussions and negotiations. They are expected to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the content of the listening texts; in particular, to listen for specific information.

(2) Speaking

The aim is to develop speaking skills (via dialogues and monologues) and students are expected to be able to: initiate, sustain and close a conversation on familiar topics of personal interest; respond to requests; participate in discussions; express personal

opinions and reactions to events; indicate agreement and disagreement politely; describe or compare objects; give instructions; and talk about common or work-related topics.

At the Advanced level, students have greater exposure to work-related topics, including providing information about the hotel, hotel services, hotel facilities, dealing with guests' requests or complaints.

(3) Reading

Students must be able to understand the main content of the reading texts on common or job-related topics, the description of events, places, objects, plans or projects, and recognise the main points in formal-informal letters, brochures, documents, and newspaper articles on familiar or job-related subjects.

(4) Writing

Students have to be able to write a brief description on familiar or job-related topics, confirm a booking, reply to a complaint letter, and prepare notes, memos or messages to colleagues.

At the Advanced level, students spend more time writing about hotel and tourism-related topics; for example, composing faxes, emails or transactional letters concerning hotel matters.

These four macro skills are realised through various activities, however, the main focus of analysis in this study was on activities for listening and speaking skills as most interactions occurring in the hotel FO were face-to-face interactions between the staff and guests. Thus, these skills were important and they were the most frequently used by the staff in communication with guests. Common activities for listening and speaking presented in each textbook were identified and categorised based on the nature of activities that students were expected to do, the skills and subskills that they developed, the language functions manifested in the activities, the topic areas that the activities covered, and the settings for the practice activities. The time provision for skill development in both language and professional skills was very limited at both the Basic and Advanced levels of the ESP course.

5.2.2 Textbook analysis

5.2.2.1 Activities providing for listening and speaking

Table 10 shows that there are more listening and speaking exercises in B1 (Basic ESP) than in B2, while B2 (Advanced ESP) has more reading and writing exercises. The reading exercises in both textbooks also provide input for practising speaking.

Table 10: Exercises for Practising Communication Skills

Skills	Listening		Speaking		Reading		Writing	
Textbook 1 (B1)	56	(36%)	64	(41%)	28	(18%)	9	(6%)
Textbook 2 (B2)	34	(29%)	25	(21%)	45	(38%)	15	(13%)

In B1, the exercises included topics regularly encountered every day, e.g. likes and dislikes, shopping, eating in a restaurant, going on holiday, or industry-related matters, such as hotel services and facilities and booking functions. The content of B2 was more focussed on hotel issues, including types of accommodation, facilities, internal organisation, staffing and services.

Settings for the practice activities in both textbooks were ‘exotic’ – in B1, they were mostly hotels or places in European countries. In B2, the settings were in America, England or Australia.

5.2.2.1.1 Listening

The textbooks included both dyadic conversations and monologues on daily common and job- or industry-related issues. The listening texts in B1 were mainly short conversations between a staff member and a guest or between two staff members. The listening texts in B2 were longer conversations between a hotel representative and a guest, an interviewer and interviewee or two staff members. The monologues in B1 were mini-talks giving personal opinions or experiences of the job, flight or train announcements, or a brief introduction of a tour or a tourist attraction. Those in B2 were longer and the speaker(s) talk about topics such as job experiences, or a tour program. The activities were organised for pair-work, group-work or individual practice. The types of listening texts are summarised in Table 11.

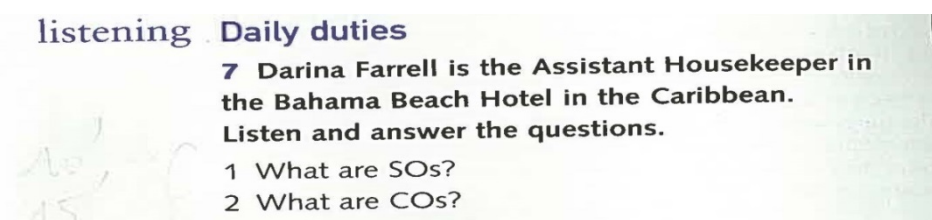
Table 11: Types of Listening Texts

Types of listening texts	B1	B2
Dyadic conversations	30	30
Monologues	15	4

The listening texts in B2 were longer than those in B1 (ranging from half a minute to six minutes, compared to half a minute to three and a half minutes). Listening texts in both textbooks included reference to geographical place names. In B2, for example, *Unit 8, 9, 10, and 11* made reference to places in the USA and Europe. In B1, *Unit 11* the reference is to locations in New Zealand.

The textbooks provided students with opportunities to do different exercises to practise their listening skills. The majority of activities were scripted responses – based on the information provided in the listening texts – to questions done individually or in pairs. Listening for details or specific information was the focus in both textbooks. The types of exercises included answering questions about the listening texts or completing the table, a form or a card based on the information obtained from the listening texts. Examples of listening exercises in the two textbooks are provided as illustrative below.

Example 1:



Source: Dubicka, I. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, Unit 1, p.8

In this exercise, students were asked to listen to the recording for specific information – SOs (stay-overs) and COs (check-outs) – the terms used in the hotel environment to refer to the room status managed by the hotel housekeeping division. Through the information obtained from the listening, students could understand the hotel job (housekeeper). Follow-up exercises also checked students' comprehension skills focusing on specific, detailed information about what was listened, for example, listen and tick the phrases heard or re-order the conversation as

Example 2:

8 What do the housekeepers usually do if they have an SO? Listen again and tick (✓) the phrases you hear.

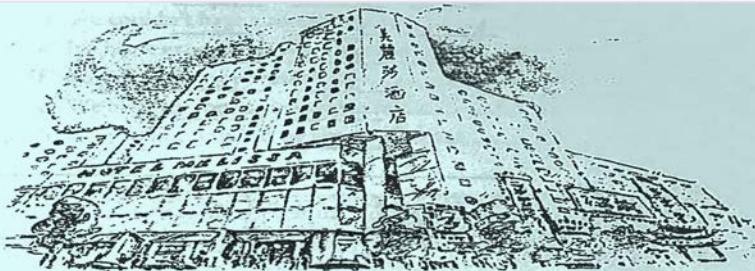
a) change the sheets ✓	e) clean the bathroom
b) use the computer	f) make the bed
c) check the soap	g) tidy the bedroom
d) change the towels	h) use air freshener

Source: Dubicka, I. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, Unit 1, p.8

Students were also required to listen and answer the questions about the listening text or complete the table/chart with specific information as illustrated in Examples 3 and 4 below:

Example 3:

2 Listening



Listen to these two callers phoning the Hotel Melissa to make reservations. Complete the information in the chart below:

	Caller 1	Caller 2
Name of guest(s)	_____	_____
Arrival date	_____	_____
No of nights	_____	_____
Room type	_____	_____
Company/Individual	_____	_____
Stayed before	_____	_____
Method of payment	_____	_____
Credit card No	_____	_____
Address	_____	_____
Reservation No	_____	_____
Special requests	_____	_____

Source: Harding, K., & Henderson, P. (1994) – B2, Unit 4, p.43

Example 4:

listening **8** Mr and Mrs O'Donnell talk to the receptionist at the Cape Grace Hotel. Listen to their conversation and answer these questions.

- 1 What are Mr and Mrs O'Donnell going to do?
- 2 What does Beverley tell them not to take?
- 3 Where is Mr O'Donnell going to leave his camera?
- 4 What advice does Beverley give them about their car?
- 5 Where does Beverley tell them not to go?
- 6 What does Mrs O'Donnell want to visit?

Source: Dubicka, I. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, Unit 7, p.48

Most listening exercises checked students' comprehension skills. They were required to listen for specific or detailed information all of which was scripted responses, based on what students had listened from the recordings.

There were also exercises which required students to listen and take notes for further practice in B2 which were not included in B1.

Listening for inferences which required students to *initiate* their ideas or produce their own expressions was not practised at all in B2. There were few exercises to practise listening for the main idea of the text in either textbook. After each listening text, a variety of questions types were asked; for example, *wh-*, *yes/no*, or *True or False*. The listening activities for both levels are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12: Activities for Listening Practice in B1 and B2

	Listening focus							
	Detailed, specific information		Main idea(s)		Making inferences		Note-taking	
Activities	B1	B2	B1	B2	B1	B2	B1	B2
Answer questions	25	5		2	4	2		6
Tick the items heard	5	6						
Match items heard	5	2	4					
Complete a table with specific information	6	9						
Number/order	5	2						
Make suggestions/give advice	2							
Total	48	24	4	2	4	2		6

From an examination of the audio-recordings, it was evident that the dialogue in the audio material in B1 was spoken by at least one NS from a European background and by a person speaking BrE or AmE in B2. No Asian accents were identified, even where the second speaker was a NNS of English. There was only one case in which a person of Asian background was the focus of an activity, i.e. between a Thai tour guide and a group of European guests (*Unit 13*, B1).

The speech in the audio materials was delivered without overlaps, hesitations or pauses. The turn length was unbalanced and, in many cases, while the primary speaker was speaking, the other interlocutor gave no signals indicating that s/he was listening or engaged in the primary speaker's talk.

The speakers spoke relatively quickly and the speech sometimes included a long series of numbers and foreign names, e.g. *Unit 11* (B1); *Unit 4* (B2). During these listening activities, there was not much evidence of the listener confirming or checking (e.g. by using strategies such as repetition or paraphrasing) whether the information had been heard or understood correctly and the speaker continued the ongoing topic without interruption (e.g. *Unit 4*, B2) (Examples of the Tapescripts are provided in Appendix 4).

5.2.2.1.2 *Speaking*

Speaking practice was largely provided through pairwork or groupwork based on the tasks generated around the particular topics in the textbooks. Fourteen of the fifteen units in B1 started with a speaking task initiated by pictures or photos to trigger a brainstorming activity related to the topic. This speaking task usually involved an open-ended discussion question or questions requiring students to work with a partner or individually to elicit information related to the topic. Thus, the tasks required both scripted responses – based on the information given in the book – and initiated by students. The example below provides an illustration of this activity.

Example 5:

5

Pensione Do Pozzi

Water cities

▲ Londra Palace

▲ Hotel Marconi

speaking 1 Look at the pictures of hotels in Venice. What do you think their star ratings are? What kind of rooms, facilities and services would you expect to find in these hotels?

Source: Dubicka, I. & O’Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, Unit 5, p.30

This activity required the students to work either individually or in pairs/groups to activate their prior knowledge related to the topic of the unit ‘*Hotel and hotel facilities*’ using the pictures and the guiding questions as the clues to initiate the ideas. Once this brainstorming activity was done, follow-up activities (e.g. listening or reading) and language practice (e.g. vocabulary or grammar practised through listening, speaking, reading or writing) were provided. For example, after the students completed the above exercise, they were asked to do the follow-up activities including listening, vocabulary and reading practice

In B2, speaking was often generated from listening or reading texts and there was one to two separate speaking activities in each unit. Students were asked to act out a conversation in pairs with their peers. The topics in B2 were mainly about the hotel, its services, promotion or development strategies. Speaking practice was also integrated into the reading, listening and vocabulary or grammar practice. An example of speaking activities is provided below:

Example 6:

9 Activity

1 Work in pairs. Complete columns 1 and 2 of this chart by looking at today's newspaper. Together, complete columns 3 and 4. You will need to set buying and selling rates for each currency, and decide whether you are going to charge commission.

COUNTRY	CURRENCY	TODAY'S EXCHANGE RATE (to your currency)		
		Rate from paper	Cash	
			Your buying rate	Your selling rate
UK				
USA				
Japan				
Germany				
Greece				

2 Take turns to be A and B.

A
You work in the exchange office of a large hotel. Using the rates you have just set, answer the questions of the tourists who come to your office to change money.

B
You are a tourist. Choose one of the currencies and decide how much you have. Go round the class, visiting other students' exchange offices and trying to get the best rate. Act out the conversation.

Useful language:

Can you tell me the exchange rate for ...?
I'd like to change these ...
How many ... will I get for ...?
Does that include commission?

Source: Harding, K., & Henderson, P. (1994) – B2, Unit 6, p.73

In this example, students were required to work in pairs to do the speaking activity building up the content frame for their conversation and acting out the conversation with their partners.

In B1, besides the brainstorming activity, follow-up speaking activities were also generated from the grammar practice. Other speaking activities included acting out dialogues based on the information given in the textbook, responding to guests' requests and queries, eliciting information from the reading texts or a table of information. This usually involved engaging in a dialogue in the form of question-answer, initiating conversation and exchanging information with a partner, speaking generated from the listening or reading activities by talking about them in relation to

their own situation. For example, after reading the hotel descriptions and doing the reading comprehension exercise, students were asked to practise speaking by relating the topic to their own local setting or situation as in Example 7 below:

Example 7:



Source: Dubicka, I. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, Unit 5, p. 31

Students were also provided with opportunities to participate in pair and group work discussion on daily common or job-/industry-related topics.

Table 13 provides a summary of activities students were provided with to practise speaking skill.

Table 13: Activities for Speaking Practice

Skills	Activities (pair work, group-work or individual)	Number of activities	
		B1	B2
Sustain a conversation / exchange information	<i>Role play / act out a conversation</i> <i>Asking-answering questions</i> <i>Responding to G's questions</i> <i>Providing information</i> <i>Dealing with G's problems</i>	35	15
Participate in pair-work or group-work discussion	<i>Discussion on common work-related topics (e.g. differences between business travellers and holidaymakers)</i>	10	5
Make suggestions or give advice	<i>Respond to G's questions and requests for advice (e.g. about shopping, safety, cultural customs)</i>	8	1
Describe objects on common or work-related topics	<i>Give descriptions of objects (e.g. hotels, places, traditional dish, gift)</i>	7	3
Give a presentation on common and work-related topics	<i>Give a personal presentation on common and job-related topics (personal/job experiences, events, plans)</i>	4	1
Total		64	25

5.2.2.2. Reading and writing activities

Reading and writing are the two components of the English course. However, these skills were not frequently used by the FO staff in the face-to-face interaction with guests, thus they were not focused to the same degree as the other two skills of listening and speaking in this study. Reading (18%) and writing (6%) activities in B1 concentrate on the job-related tasks including confirming changes to reservations, describing and comparing hotels and hotel facilities, a tourist attraction or a special traditional dish, describing a job and job duties, or writing an email, a formal letter (e.g. confirmation of a booking or a letter of apology), a fax, a leaflet, a CV or an application for a job. In B2, more emphasis was placed on reading (38%) and language practice, i.e. industry-related vocabulary and language use. There was at least one extra activity (some included two or three) in B2 which also provided students with opportunities to practise reading and speaking skills. Reading texts often referred to the industry-related topics concerning the hotels and hotel industry, for example, brochure descriptions, car hire information, reservations and Front Office computer systems, hotel business facilities, or hotel notices and information sheets. They were also the source from which speaking or writing practice was generated. Writing activities (13%) required students to use the target language in the written form, for instance, for describing local attractions, for a fax confirming a reservation, a formal letter offering a special rate for hotel accommodation, a reply to a letter of complaint, a covering letter or a letter of application, or a response to survey results. Generally, reading and listening texts played a significant supporting role and provided information for writing and speaking practice in both of the textbooks. Below is an example in which the information from the reading activity was used as a framework for students' writing practice.

Example 8:

6 Reading

For most hotels, fax reservations are the most common. Read this example of a fax reservation and complete the chart below:

COMFORT TOURS LONDON

F A X M E S S A G E

Date:	13th March 199__
From:	Kate James
To:	Melissa Hotel
Attention: Reservations	No. of pages: 1

Could you please reserve a double room with private bath for Mr and Mrs Charles Davies? They will be arriving on 18th April and staying for 3 nights (departing on the morning of 21st April).

It is their 25th wedding anniversary, so could you arrange for champagne and flowers to be placed in the room?

Look forward to receiving your confirmation, with exact cost, by return.

Regards

Name of guest(s)
Number of guests
Room(s) required
Dates
Special requirements

Writing

Reply to the reservation by fax, asking for any additional information you require.

Melissa Hotel

F A X M E S S A G E

From:	Date:
To:	No. of pages:
Attention:	

Source: Harding, K., & Henderson, P. (1994) – B2, Unit 4, p.49

In both textbooks, the settings for practising the language and skills were exotic and located in L1 English-speaking or European countries.

5.2.2.3. Language functions

There was a wide range of functional language presented in the two textbooks. Requests and offers consistently used complex, formal language, e.g., “*Could you spell your surname for me, sir/madam (Mr/s Wright?)*”; “*Would you mind showing me your passports, please?*”; “*Would you like me to call your room?*”; “*Sorry, I didn’t catch that. Could you repeat your visa card number?*”

Repetition functioned as a request for checking and confirming information in only one unit of each textbook, for example, G: “*It’s PTC 0189-02*” – S: “*so that’s PTC*”

0189-02” - Unit 11, B1), or a long series of numbers was checked, e.g., “So that’s 4335 171 36094” (Unit 4, B2); or in combination, e.g., “Is that P for Poland or D for Denmark?”; “Did you say fifty? Five-0?” (Unit 11, B1).

The language activities related to professional practice were presented in each unit of both textbooks, some of them were grammar or vocabulary related, and some of them were integrated in listening and speaking activities (as well as in reading and writing). The language functions presented in both B1 and B2 are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Examples of the Language Functions Presented in B1 and B2

Function	Manifestation
Asking for/ eliciting information	<i>Can I have the names of the people travelling, please? Could/can you give me your surname / address/room number please? How will you be settling your account sir?</i>
Checking the information	<i>Just let me confirm the details /Is that correct? Can you just check through the details, please? So that’s 433517136094. I’ll just read that back to you. That’s 3095 5541 8409.</i>
Checking spelling and numbers	<i>Is that P for Poland or D foe Denmark? Sorry. Did you say fifty? Five – O?</i>
Requests for repetition	<i>Sorry, could you repeat that please? Could you spell your surname, please? Sorry. I didn’t catch that. Could you repeat your Visa card number?</i>
Requesting something or offering advice	<i>Would you mind showing me your passports, please? Would you like me to send you some information?/ a map / information ... May/can I take an imprint of your visa card?</i>
Giving suggestions/advice	<i>It’s a good idea to take a pill if you get seasick You should try not to attract attention</i>
Responding to an enquiry / dealing with guests’ enquiries	<i>What kind of information do you need exactly? What would you like to know? When exactly are you coming?</i>
Checking a guest in/out	<i>I’ll get your bill. What room are you in? Would you just like to check it through?</i>
Giving directions and instructions	<i>On your left you can see the sculpture. Put your pass into the machine Be careful not to ...</i>

5.2.3 The alignment between the ESP course materials and the English language used in the hotel setting

Language and professional practice activities were presented in each unit of B1, most of which were grammar or vocabulary related. Some of the examples used such as requests for repetition: *“Sorry, I didn’t catch that. Could you repeat your visa card number?”* (Unit 11, B1) were in a relatively complex form not replicated in the natural interactions. In the hotel setting, for example, there was much more reliance on MQs such as *“sorry?”* or *“pardon?”*.

Other examples in the textbooks were also at odds with the lived experience, for instance, requests for the spelling of the guest’s name – *“Could you spell your surname for me Mrs Wright?”* or *“Would you mind showing me your passport please?”* (Unit 2, B1) manifested in the natural interactions as *“Your surname, sir?”* or *“Your surname is ...?”* or *“Your passport please?”* or *“Passport, please?”*. However, in a small number of cases, formal requests and offers were also used by staff, for instance: *“If you don’t mind I would like your signature here please”*; *“Sign here please madam”*; *“Would you like the bellboy to help you with the luggage?”* or *“Would you like to drink something before you leave?”*.

In the natural interactions, staff rarely responded immediately to guests’ initial requests. It was normal practice for staff to check for accuracy and understanding of the received information before providing guests with relevant or appropriate information. There were usually additional sequences inserted in the interactions within which clarification or confirmation processes took place to enhance and facilitate staff’s and guests’ comprehension. There were very few cases in the textbooks in which meaning or understanding was negotiated through the use of CS like those employed by the staff in the real-life setting. Instead, the speech was often much more formal: *“What exactly is the problem?”* (Unit 7, B2).

Partial repetition from preceding utterances (Units 1, 2, 7, 9, B1) was occasionally presented to check for confirmation of the received information, but it was mainly associated with utterances produced by guests.

At the hotel FO, key information was frequently emphasised and highlighted by staff through the use of repetition and spelling, and thereby guests were oriented to the

main point or the main content of the talk. This practice was not emphasised in the course content.

In the hotel FO, flexibility was required to deal with contingencies and unexpected events. For example, while doing the checking in/out for guests, social talk or ‘small talk’ was interwoven into the process. There were no examples of conversation of this nature in either textbook.

Speaking practice related to ‘giving directions’ (e.g. *Unit 12*, B1) is set in a ski resort and much of the material therefore has little relevance to those who will work in the hotel FO environment in the Vietnamese context. Expressions used for giving directions in this textbook are simple, including “*go left/right, go straight on, or go upstairs/downstairs*”. In the natural interactions, the directions demanded were more complicated and there was much flexibility for contingencies; for example, “*we are here sir?/ about ten minutes / ten minutes to walk from here / keep go straight down that way, ... go to the big roundabout here, / and you’ll see on the right / you’ll see the building like this ... it’s called Ben Thanh / Ben Thanh market*”(IT-9). There is no practice for giving directions in B2, as the activities mainly focus on accommodation and services in the hotel.

Textbook interactions were organised in a sequential order of question-answer or request-response and exercises for speaking practice given in the textbook also followed these patterns (e.g. act out a conversation based on the suggested procedure or complete the other half of the dialogue using the prompts given in the brackets as described in the previous part of this chapter). There are few cases in the textbooks in which BCL or other strategies are used by the guest yet this phenomenon was observed in both staff and guests’ speech in the real-life setting.

In summary, the differences between the language functions and the CS found in the textbooks and those in the natural interactions are clearly evident. They are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15: Examples of Strategies Used in the Textbooks and the Hotel Context

Language practice and strategies	In the textbook	In the real hotel context
Request for repetition or spelling out sur/name	<i>Sorry, I didn't catch that. Could you repeat your visa card number?</i> <i>Sorry, could you repeat that, please?</i> <i>Could you spell your sur/name, please?</i>	<i>Sorry? / what? / pardon? / I'm sorry / huh?</i> <i>Is that O-N-G?</i>
Checking for accuracy	<i>I'll just read that back to you.</i> <i>That's 3095...</i>	<i>3095 ...?</i>
Checking and confirming information	<i>Did you say fifty? Five – O?</i> <i>Is your name Mr Ong?</i>	<i>Five oh?</i> <i>Mr Ong, right?</i>
Request for G's performance of an activity	<i>Could I have your passport?</i> <i>Would you mind showing your passport, please?</i> <i>Could I have the name, please?</i>	<i>Your passport please?</i> <i>Can I have your passport please?</i> <i>Your name please?</i> <i>It's Mr ...? or Mr ...?</i>
Asking for information	<i>When are you thinking of going, madam?</i>	<i>You want today?</i>

Completion of a professional internship (experiential learning) was specified in the course objectives for Hospitality and Tourism courses. However, there was no specific reference to the internship in the ESP units. It was not possible to establish the link between the learning objectives of the ESP course and the internship. The absence of any specific reference suggests that there were no specific aims for the internship with respect to the application of English language skills to the workplace. Taken towards the end of the course, there was also no occasion subsequent to its completion whereby students were able to discuss their language learning needs in relation to the workplace experience.

In summary, while activities that enabled students to practise listening and speaking skills during the ESP component of their Hospitality course were the main focus of analysis, it is clear that skill development related to “*Listening for detailed, specific information*” far outweighed all others, while the skill of being able to “*Sustain a conversation/exchange information*” figured most prominently in speaking activities. The listening tapes featured NS almost exclusively and most activities were situated in environments which were unfamiliar to students. The internship, which was mandatory for all students, had no specified learning objectives in relation to the ESP component of the course.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.0 Introduction

Hospitality service is much concerned with communication and the quality of that service depends on the capacity of staff to perform a range of communicative functions. Information received and provided must be the “right message for the right audience” (Wolvin, 1994, p. 195).

In this study, set in the Front Office (FO) of four Vietnamese hotels, natural conversations between the Vietnamese staff and guests were recorded in order to assess the communicative strategies (CS) that staff employed. The FO staff primarily came to this work environment from the training programs where English (including ESP) was studied as a foreign language subject. Many staff members did not appear to have well-developed English language skills, despite the requirement for them to possess a TOEIC score above 475 on graduation. To accommodate their English proficiency to that of guests and facilitate the success of the communication, staff used a wide range of CS to make themselves understood and to understand their interlocutors, guests. The guests with whom staff interacted came from different countries and, for most of them, English was not their L1. Therefore, the English language used in interactions between the Vietnamese hotel FO staff and guests in this study was a *lingua franca* (ELF) and, as such, shares characteristics with its use in the other environments.

Besides routine and transactional activities, staff had to deal with a wide range of queries from guests, mostly for information, directions to places, or requests for service. This study, like others before it (e.g. Blue & Harun, 2003), has revealed how the various activities performed by the staff through their communication in English are oriented towards satisfying the guests’ diverse needs. Their jobs demand a range of multifunctional language skills (Blue & Harun, 2003; Chan, 2002; Lo & Sheu, 2008; Prachanant, 2012). In hotel service settings, these skills need to ensure that not only is communication efficient and adequate (Gunnarsson, 2009) but also “clear, straightforward and candid” (Sparks, 1994, p. 22).

Effective communication is the goal that ELF speakers aim to achieve. The diversity of linguacultural backgrounds that guests bring to the interactions with staff has a number of consequences when they attempt to negotiate meaning with staff (Canagarajah, 2007; House, 1999; Meierkord, 1998). Several factors impact on the intelligibility of their conversation, including the accents of both speakers – staff and guests, their use of vocabulary and syntactical structures, their pronunciation and interpretation of word meanings or the rate of their speech (Canagarajah, 2007; Jenkins, 1998; Meierkord, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2004). All these factors have a potential impact on comprehension: they influence staff's interpretation of what is being said and guests' understanding of staff's questions and responses. As a result, staff's capacity to negotiate a successful communication with guests can therefore be compromised. They must also decode information given by guests, which may be lengthy and complex and contain indirect questions or questions which are not explicit. The problem may be further compounded by misunderstanding due to noise from competing activities nearby or through mishearing the request. This study found that, together, these factors caused staff to struggle to interpret accurately what they heard. In response to this, they elicited a number of CS directed at ensuring better understanding and the successful outcome of the interaction with guests. In most cases, their communication was successfully performed and completed.

The various strategies identified in this study – repetition, reformulation, minimal queries (MQs), backchannels (BCL) and lexical suggestion – performed different functions in the interaction. Most of them were used for confirming, clarifying, highlighting or emphasising important information – a finding similar to those of a number of other studies: Lichtkoppler (2007) emphasised the functions of repetition in ensuring accuracy of understanding; Svennevig (2003, 2004, 2008) stressed the role of repetition and reformulation in checking understanding; Björkman (2014) interpreted repetition and paraphrasing as clarification and confirmation requests; and Kaur (2009, 2010, 2011b, 2012), Mauranen (2006), Pitzl (2005) and Watterson (2008) all highlighted the importance of repetition, reformulation and clarification practices in the negotiation of understanding between ELF speakers.

Björkman (2014) identified CS which are different from those found in this study, such as “signalling importance” or “simplification” (p.130). In this study, signalling importance was not found to be linguistically manifested by emphasised lexical

items (e.g., *very important*) or modal verbs (e.g., *must*). The use of modal verbs with strong prohibition did not appear in the data, which reflects the nature of hospitality language which “meets needs, provides high level of service, understands people or delights people” as commented by Dann (1996, p. 3) and displays the warm welcome inherent in hospitality service.

While there is a growing body of research into ELF, there has been very little research into ELF in hospitality settings apart from Blue and Harun’s (2003) study into the patterns of hospitality language associated with host-guest interaction in which English is used as a LF. However, the focus of their study is on the use of hospitality language – the functional and communicative activities that the front-line staff (as hosts) involved in in their hotel routines within the context of an L1 English-speaking country, viz. four hotels in Southampton, the United Kingdom. The only other related studies have involved a needs analysis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in the hotel industry, for example, Chan (2002) and Su (2009), the investigation into the English language skills used by Thai students in their internship (Dechabun, 2008), or corpus-based studies into English as professional discourse (Cheng, 2004; Warren, 2004). To date, there has been no substantial research in Vietnam using naturally-occurring interactions in ELF to examine how people involved in hotel service work communicate with guests. For this reason, this study makes an original and significant contribution to the field of ELF and has the potential to inform the content and methods of ESP courses for hospitality. Most especially, it provides an additional resource in the under-researched field of ESP in Vietnam and adds a reference for the use of English in a workplace setting – tourism and hospitality in general and in the Vietnamese context in particular.

The findings from the study contribute to characterising and documenting the English language used in a hotel workplace. The English hospitality language in this study provides persuasive evidence to re-emphasise that negotiation of meaning (through the use of various strategies and skills) is the ultimate goal that ELF speakers aspire to and, in this study, is what the Vietnamese hotel staff and foreign guests orient to in their interactions.

Research Questions

6.1 Research Question One

What communicative strategies are frequently employed by the Vietnamese hotel front office staff when they are interacting with foreign guests using English as a lingua franca?

The five communication strategies (CS) most commonly used were repetition, reformulation, minimal queries (MQs), backchannels (BCL) and lexical suggestions. There were relatively few instances of other strategies (e.g. code-switching and overlapping talk) which have also been reported by other ELF researchers, for example, Cogo (2009) and Cogo and Dewey (2006). The use of these strategies displays a high level of cooperation and involvement between staff and guests in the joint-construction of an interaction and, more importantly, they clearly facilitate the building of a shared understanding between staff and guests. This characteristic of ELF communication has been observed by a number of researchers, for example, Cogo and Dewey (2012), Kirkpatrick (2010b), Kaur (2010), and Pitzl (2005).

Researchers look at CS from different perspectives and have categorised them in ways that differ from the approach adopted in this study. Mauraanen (2006), for example, interpreted strategies such as requests for clarification, confirmation or rephrasing as signals designed to prevent misunderstanding. “Rephrasing” (Mauraanen, 2006, p. 135) – restating an utterance to make it more explicit – is the same concept embodied in this study by the term of ‘reformulation’. “Paraphrase” in Kaur’s (2010, p. 198) or “paraphrasing” in Björkman’s work (2014, p. 132) is considered as a strategy in its own right, whereas in this study “paraphrase” is used as a type of ‘reformulation’. ‘Paraphrase’ or ‘reformulation’ are categorised as a type of repetition in a number of studies (Johnstone, 1994; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987), while this study has viewed them as two separate categories, in line with researchers such as Kaur (2010) or Svennevig (2004); and, “spelling out the word” (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, p. 128) is considered a subtype of repetition, as it is often accompanied by repetition.

The most frequently used CS was repetition – both self- and other-repetition. The use of this strategy is typical in ELF conversations (Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2010;

Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006). There is little evidence in the literature about the extent to which repetition is used, as most of the research comprises qualitative descriptive studies. However, in this study, which reflects the approach taken by Björkman (2014) and some others, for example, Jamshidnejad (2011), 62% of all instances of identified CS were repetition, suggesting that there is a high reliance on repetition to establish the exact nature of the communication.

Other-repetition and exact-repetition were the most common forms of repetition found to occur in this study, also reported in other studies (Johnstone, 1994; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Tannen, 1987). Other-repetition reflects staff's need for clarity of understanding, as staff reflect back to guests what they thought they heard, seeking assurance before providing an appropriate information or service to guests. The use of confirmation repetition does not necessarily mean that staff did not understand what guests said. In most cases, it appeared that staff had understood the information, but wanted to ensure the accuracy of what had been received. It reflects the nature and requirement of the hospitality industry that the information provided to and received from guests must be accurately processed (Wolvin, 1994). In addition, this behaviour is likely to be influenced by the culture and the way staff use their L1. In the Vietnamese context, cultural factors, such as the need for certainty before committing to an action (N. T. Tran, 1996) dictate that staff has a full understanding of what is required from them before giving an answer. This results in frequent repetition, especially at the commencement of an interaction.

Mostly the repetition was exact-repetition. Repetition of an exact lexical item is especially important when the speakers do not share a linguistic variety, as it is an effective way to narrow down the range of items used (Kaur, 2012, p. 604).

Variations to the wording only occurred when staff attempted to make the information more explicit and intelligible to enhance guests' understanding. This form of repetition was sometimes accompanied by the spelling out of the words, which themselves may have been repeated for emphasis. Kirkpatrick (2007a) reported that ELF speakers of ASEAN countries employ spelling out of the word as a strategy to clarify the meaning of the word and enhance understanding. The combination of repetition and spelling out of the repeated item in the present study reinforced the information that staff were delivering and this combination appears to be specific in this workplace setting.

Repetition along with reformulation occurred mostly after guests' initial requests or during the interaction when there was a new request initiated or new information was offered. At these times, staff appeared to be most unsure about the topic under discussion and used repetition to confirm the nature of the request and enhance their level of confidence in their own response to it. This repetition was most frequently used in response to simple sentences, where guests' requests were direct and easily repeated. Repetition/reformulation or MQs were sometimes a response to difficulties in hearing (Drew, 1997; Kaur, 2010; Svennevig, 2004) which compromised either staff or guests' interpretation of what they had heard.

Repetition was frequently associated with particular circumstances, such as providing names, times, currency, numbers, addresses or directions to guests. Even though these details were important information, the excessive use of repetition when figures were involved suggests that this information is crucial to staff's work performance, as the hotel industry is committed to ensuring that details given to guests are accurate (Wolvin, 1994). This type of information needed to be processed and recorded accurately by staff and it is likely the most suitable explanation for the frequent use of repetition in these circumstances, since key tourist requirements, such as wake-up calls, pick-up times, exchange rates and charges rely heavily on the accuracy of figures and numbers. The preoccupation with times, currency, numbers, addresses, in particular, may be specific in the hotel settings.

Repetition was often accompanied by a tag-ending, such as *'yeah'/'right?'* (Johnstone, 1994). These endings affirm staff's interpretation of what they have heard, seek guests' confirmation, and enable the interaction to proceed. In a similar way, intonation was used to reinforce the CS. Rising intonation was often used with repetition, reformulation and MQs to signal to the guest that the staff did not fully understand the guest's utterance and was seeking clarification or confirmation about what had been said. This finding is in line with other researchers. Norrick (2012, p. 571), for instance, observed that "rising intonation expresses doubt of understanding and it attracts the primary speaker's attention and draws a specific response", while falling intonation indicates a need for confirmation or clarification (Svennevig, 2003, 2004).

The other key strategies were used less often, with BCL (20%) the next most frequently used. When a BCL was employed, it was normally indicative of the need for a staff member to engage with a guest, in order to fulfil his/her FO role. A BCL sometimes overlapped with the guest's talk, displaying staff's attention, engagement and cooperation (Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012; Drummond & Hopper, 1993; Gardner, 2001; Meierkord, 2000). MQs and lexical suggestions were the strategies used least often. The talk between staff and guests was 'rehearsed' to some extent, as staff had dealt with identical matters dealing with other guests, based on routine information that might be provided to all guests as a matter of course, or perhaps in response to frequently asked questions. As a result, staff did not have much difficulty in understanding the topic of conversation and made limited use of the MQs or lexical suggestion.

It is well established that Vietnamese people rarely interrupt the other speaker while he/she is speaking, which is consistent with a shared characteristic of ELF speakers in ASEAN countries observed by Kirkpatrick (2007a). It is also likely that the staff considered that their responsibility was to listen and respond appropriately (Wolvin, 1994). Instead of interrupting guests, staff initiated their turn at the transition relevant place (TRP) – they waited until the guests finished, then began their own turn (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2010a). Direct questioning is not typical of Vietnamese interpersonal exchanges (N. T. Tran, 1996) and because of this, the use of lexical suggestion was limited to instances in which Vietnamese names, for example, local restaurants or places of interest, were introduced.

There were instances where two or more CS were used in the same interaction. Where a particular strategy was not producing the outcome desired, it was combined with other strategies, the use of which appeared to maximise clarity and attract a full attention from guests (Kaur, 2012; Merritt, 1994). For example, where a minimal enquiry did not result in an appropriate answer, staff reverted to combining it with BCL, reformulation or/and repetition.

6.2 Research Question Two

What functions do these communicative strategies serve in facilitating communication between the staff and guests?

The CS employed were influenced by the circumstances in which they were used. CS serve a multitude of functions, prime amongst them being confirmation of understanding of the information staff received from guests (53%). Guests' requests and queries were varied and the diversity of topics made it essential that staff were clear about the nature of the task before proceeding. Confirmation requests, therefore, occurred most at the beginning of the interaction but reappeared as needed.

In cases of uncertainty about a guest's preceding utterance, the staff member requested additional clarification from the guest in order to respond appropriately. When the response by staff failed to confirm the matter for a guest, a negative response from the guest would lead to further explanation in order to complete the query. Sequences in which confirmation or clarification was being sought and given constitute a second exchange or a subordinate exchange where understanding is explicitly negotiated so that the ongoing talk can be resumed. Thus, understanding was collaboratively constructed by staff and guests through the employment of different strategies. This finding is supported by other ELF researchers, for example, Firth (1996) and Kaur (2009, 2010).

Clarification often included an elaboration, sometimes a modification of the original utterance by staff (or guests) which made the answer more explicit. The use of alternative vocabulary or expressions, change of word form or word order occurred often in the data and their use was designed to make the utterance clearer to guests, or to reinforce or confirm guests' interpretation. This reflects the nature of ELF communication in which speakers often adopt a variety of adaptive strategies, adjusting their language to make it more explicit and intelligible (Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012). Staff mostly chose words or expressions that were commonly used and easily understood; for example, instead of adopting the guest's word "bucks", which is a more familiar form of American English, in the response, the staff used the word "dollars" – a common word which is likely to be more universally understood. The use of familiar and easily understandable vocabulary is the trend employed by ELF speakers and this finding has been reported in other research as one of the

characteristics of ELF communication (Cogo, 2010, 2012; Meierkord, 2002). Mishearing or misinterpretation of guests' utterances was not often evident in the data. When it did occur, repetition alone (or in combination with other CS) was employed. Other ELF researchers have also noted that there is not much misunderstanding in ELF communication, as the use of various strategies pre-empted problems (Kaur, 2009; Pitzl, 2005).

Displaying agreement or acknowledging guests' requests or queries was frequently evident in staff's speech, occurring most often with a partial exact repetition of guests' preceding utterances or with a BCL. The frequent use of acknowledgement or agreement repetition or BCL indicates that most interactions between staff and guests were a two-way exchange where a staff member/s and a guest/s took turns as a speaker and a listener. Thus, when information was elicited from a guest, the staff responded by displaying acknowledgement or agreement with the information provided. In this way, staff displayed their co-operation and attention to what was being said by guests.

Encouraging more information from guests was also a function that BCL performed in the interaction. When a BCL was used with rising intonation, more information from guest was invited, encouraged or requested (Gardner, 2001; Schegloff, 1982; Svennevig, 2004; White, 1989).

Maintaining the talk, keeping it moving and paying little or no attention to the 'non-standard' form of English used by guests was another feature of the interactions examined in this study. In some cases, when responding to guests' requests, staff did not adopt the 'incorrect' or less commonly used lexical item(s) from the guest's utterance but naturally corrected it or changed it and used the alternative item(s) in his/her speech. Staff demonstrated Firth's (1996, p. 245) "make it normal" strategy to maintain the flow of the interaction and did not pay much attention to 'non-standard' words or syntax. Guests often adopted the lexical item(s) corrected or changed by staff. This finding reflects the characteristic of ELF that the form of the language used is negotiated and agreed upon by the participants and the interaction is jointly constructed by the participants in the specific context of communication (Canagarajah, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2009).

Emphasising or highlighting the important information often occurred within an ongoing turn or in the subsequent turn – staff repeated information or accompanied it with spelling out the word. As previously noted, the information emphasised often included names, numbers, currency, directions. Clearly, this kind of information was important to guests. Self-repetition emphasising key information was an effective way to transmit the information accurately or draw guests' attention to it. Repetition sometimes combined with spelling out of the key word, facilitating guests' comprehension as well as emphasising the key point that needed to be communicated to guests. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers who also emphasised the role of repetition in directing and drawing the interlocutors to the key points of the interaction, for example, Johnstone (1994) and Kaur (2011b).

Short utterances, acting as BCL, were used to give feedback to guests, signalling understanding and agreement with what was being said. This also confirmed that the conversation was being listened to and was ongoing (Drummond & Hopper, 1993; White, 1989). The lexical and non-lexical BCL identified in this study have been reported in a number of other studies (Bjørge, 2010; Gardner, 2001; Heinz, 2003; S. Maynard, 1986; McCarthy, 2003; Stenström, 1994; White, 1989). An explanation for the finding that BCL were often produced at the end of guests' utterances, at the transition relevance place (TRP), and that staff's talk rarely overlapped with guests', is a reflection of the characteristics of hospitality language (Blue & Harun, 2003). It also highlights the influence of Asian culture on staff's behaviour – ASEAN speakers rarely interrupt the other interlocutor while he or she is speaking (Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2010a). This was clearly in evidence in the current study – when information was being given by a guest, staff displayed participation in what was being said through verbal and non-verbal means and without overlapping talk, then took over the turn when the guest had finished his or her utterance. By offering BCL to what was being said by guests, staff displayed their attention, involvement or engagement in guests' talk. The use of BCL in staff's speech reflects the characteristics of communication in the hospitality service industry in which listener behaviour is an important aspect of communication (Wolvin, 1994, p. 197).

Interaction is a highly organised two-way exchange in which a staff member/s and a guest/s take turns to contribute to the turn-taking and sequential organisation. Maintaining the flow of talk was necessary for the interaction to be sustained. Staff

used self-repetition to gain time to search for an appropriate word or a better expression to make the information more explicit and intelligible. In most cases, the gaining-time repetition involved repeating, rephrasing or reformulating guests' utterances (Lichtkoppler, 2007; Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987).

In some cases, staff seemed to give more information than was needed. Arguably, when the topic of discussion was familiar to staff, providing more information was likely to allow staff to control the situation better. Many topics were repeated throughout the day with different guests and the key vocabulary and expressions were often repeated. This gave the staff a 'sense of security' in a first-off meeting with a guest or when a new request was initiated. Another explanation is the preference of Vietnamese people to have everything explained in detail (N. T. Tran, 1996). This preference may manifest itself in staff's providing the most comprehensive information possible.

There were a number of interactions in which staff engaged in 'small talk' with guests, for example, when a welcome drink was offered or a check-in/out procedure was carried out with guests. 'How are you' sequences were commonplace in everyday interactions (Wong, 2002; Wong & Waring, 2010). Building up and maintaining interpersonal relations (Brown & Yule, 1983) – the “special kind of relationship” (King, 1995, p. 229) between staff and guests – is an essential dimension of the hotel industry. The interactional functions of language (Brown & Yule, 1983) were intertwined with hotel transactional functions. Thus, involvement in 'small talk' with guests was part of the routine communication of the FO staff, helping to maintain and reinforce the relationship with guests and, thereby, facilitating the hotels' business. Blue and Harun (2003) also identified substantial amounts of general chat interspersed with transactions which they claimed to be typical of hotels (p. 83).

6.3 Research Question Three

What kinds of language activities are included in the ESP teaching materials and how approximate are these activities to the communicative needs of the hotel industry?

This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in Hospitality. The ESP courses are designed to provide students with relevant English, grammar and communication skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) so that they will be able to communicate effectively with guests in English once they are employed in a hotel setting.

The extent to which the ESP course enables them to do this is considered in this section. Course objectives – the guide to the course content – are discussed, as are the textbook activities and the accompanying audio materials. The opportunities provided to students to gain relevant workplace experience concludes the discussion.

6.3.1 Course objectives

Within the hospitality sector, most activities take place in face-to-face or dyadic communication (dialogues) between a hotel staff member and a guest, and an English vocational course is, by necessity, “skills-centred” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 69). The objectives of an ESP course in Hospitality must focus on developing students’ communicative skills, particularly those related to listening and speaking (Chan, 2002; Su, 2009). Listening and speaking are intertwined with one another (Richards, 2008); when speaking is practised, opportunities for listening are generated. This observation has been made by other researchers (e.g., Chan, 2002; Shieh, 2012; Su, 2009) all of whom emphasised the importance of listening and speaking skills as a prerequisite for working in the hospitality sector, particularly for the Front Office staff who have the most frequently direct contact with guests. This has also been confirmed by more than 90% of the staff investigated in Shieh’s (2012, p. 1731) study that face-to-face is the most common means of interaction with guests, and listening and speaking are very important skills for the hotel FO staff’s work performance.

The hotel industry in Vietnam specifies a minimum of 475 to a maximum of 650 points in TOEIC to be able to work in the FO of a three-star hotel (VNAT & EU, 2009, p. 7). Yet the ESP course only demands a score of 50% average from different components of the final test for completion of the unit and 400 or 450 in TOEIC in order for students to graduate. Perhaps this lower standard is a product of the limited time given to students to achieve the requisite TOEIC level – between 6 and 9 credits for ESP course (approximately 67-112 hours). This proficiency level is unlikely to

be achieved unless students take extra courses in English in a foreign language centre (T. N. Pham, 2010). The time allocation falls considerably short of what is required to bring the proficiency level to that needed in the workplace (H. Nguyen & Chaisawat, 2011; H. H. Pham, 2005). On two counts, the structure of the ESP course did not appear to meet the requirements of the industry.

Having made these points, the course objectives examined in this study were quite appropriate to the broad aims of a Hospitality ESP course. Students were given multiple opportunities to listen, speak, write and read texts in English. All of the objectives were able to be achieved through a number of activities. While all objectives could be met in this way, the allocation of activities to objectives was not uniform. In the Basic ESP, students were provided with more practice on listening and speaking skills than in the Advanced Level. There was a trend for the majority of activities in the Advanced Level to focus on the broad objectives related to reading and writing. The reading texts provided extensive vocabulary related to the hotel industry. Writing skills – usually in the form of a letter of complaint or confirmation; faxes, or messages referring to hotel and hotel activities – were given prominence. Besides, students were also prepared for getting ready for a job, thus writing a covering letter, resume or application form was introduced and practised. Most of the writing practice followed a set format.

6.3.2 Textbook activities

If course content is guided by the stated course objectives, it is directly realised by the language practice activities presented in the textbook (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

It is obvious from the findings that the textbooks cover a wide range of activities for practising communicative skills. Both textbooks had a similar focus on skill development, albeit at different levels of difficulty. One distinguishing feature was that listening and speaking activities were more prominent in Textbook 1 (B1) and reading and writing in Textbook 2 (B2). B1 was used for the Basic ESP – when students were transferring from the General English (GE) to the ESP stage – and the aim was to develop spoken language proficiency. For the Advanced ESP, there were more reading activities and written practice in B2, and listening and speaking demands were more complex. One conclusion to be drawn is that it is assumed that

students will have achieved a sound level of spoken and written competency by the end of the second unit, and that the more complex reading and writing skills can, therefore, be emphasised more in the third and final (Advanced) unit.

The speaking activities appear to address the needs of a typical hotel FO staff member, although, in the natural interactions, more information and clarification were needed than was presented in the textbook activities. Blue and Harun (2003), Chan (2002) and (Su, 2009) have identified that giving information, providing a service and dealing with guests' various requests and queries are those functions and activities which are most frequently performed by hospitality employees. There were few opportunities for students to role-play these functions, particularly in B1. Listening activities, to a large extent, focussed on identifying specific or important information, a function consistent with the nature of the job that staff routinely performs. Obtaining specific, exact information is necessary to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of hotel transactions (Nation & Newton, 2009; Rahim & Tzijan, 2011). While the two key skills of speaking and listening were, overall, given emphasis in the textbook activities, they were not the focus of assessment, but just a minor portion was included in the overall assessment of ESP courses. One explanation might be that a written test is easier and less expensive to organise than an oral test. There were many students in one class and it would take a lot of time to conduct an oral test with all students. In some circumstances, implementing a listening test was too difficult due to lack of facilities and some teachers lacked the skills to design such a test. The traditional focus of instruction in Vietnamese classes is grammar-oriented, with an emphasis on reading and translating for comprehension (Duong, 2007; H. H. Pham, 2005). This focus does not give due recognition to the skills of speaking and listening and, consequently, they are generally overlooked in assessment.

One of the key issues to emerge from the review of the textbooks prescribed for the ESP courses is that almost all the settings for practising the language in the textbooks are 'foreign' to the lived experiences of the participants in this study – they are usually situated somewhere in Europe, the UK, America or Australia. A number of researchers have argued that the course content must address the needs of the users in a real-life setting that is meaningful to them (Chan, 2002; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Prachanant, 2012). It is potentially problematic when the language is

embedded in a particular culture, particularly one that is beyond the experience of students who will take up positions in the hotel industry in a different cultural setting.

When learning a language, it is inevitable that the student learns about the underlying culture of the target language (Kramersch, 1998), as language and culture are interrelated (Alptekin, 2002). When using textbooks which have been published abroad for the ESP courses for Hospitality, cultural factors must be appraised to determine whether the socio-cultural information in the books is appropriate for learners' needs (Kilickaya, 2004). Arguably, students will benefit from learning about other people, their culture and the geography of other countries. Knowledge about such things may be a means by which staff in the FO are able to establish rapport with guests or become more appreciative of their needs. However, this study reveals that interaction with guests is mostly focussed on local hotel issues, providing advice on where to eat or where to go, or giving information about Vietnamese culture and customs. It is clear that the content of the course, referenced almost exclusively to settings beyond Vietnam, limits students' ability to meet guests' needs.

6.3.3 Audio materials

Standard English (SE) (Quirk, 1990) or NS varieties of English, e.g., British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) are the most desired and dominant varieties used in English instruction in Vietnamese educational institutions (Kirkpatrick, 2007b; H. H. Pham, 2005), which, Young and Walsh (2010) reported that the students and the teachers in their studies also displayed a preference for SE – it was the “default” variety adopted in their teaching (p. 130). Other scholars (e.g., Chevillet, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007b; Matsuda, 2003; McKenzie, 2008) have also observed that the use of SE in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary as a reference for linguistic medium is favoured by the majority of teachers/learners of EFL/ESL. Arguably, in real life, NNSs of English – particularly those in an Expanding Circle (EC) country like Vietnam – rarely communicate with NSs. This claim is supported by Jenkins' (2009a) observation that English speakers in the EC show attachment to BrE and AmE, often using it as a lingua franca to communicate with other NNSs. In this study, staff used English as a lingua franca to communicate with guests from many linguacultural backgrounds, either NSs or NNSs. However, most of them were

NNSs, and many from another Asian country (VNAT, 2014). In this setting, effectiveness or success in communication is of greater concern than formal correctness, and staff's proficiency is measured by the effectiveness of their communication skills, particularly the use of strategies to enhance and facilitate mutual understanding, rather than correctness against the NS norm (House, 1999; Hülmbauer, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2008). Therefore, the use of SE or NS varieties of English to communicate with foreign guests, as Denham (1992, p. 61) observed, may not be appropriate for Vietnamese conditions.

So, while it is a common practice to adopt SE in teaching, the complexity and the diversity of sociolinguistic characteristics of English means that there are varieties of English influenced by the L1 of its users (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006; Kachru, 2005; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008; Yano, 2009b). Non-standard forms of vocabulary and grammar were evident in the speech of both staff and guests in this study, e.g., “*I think you take a taxi better*” or “*brochpack*” instead of “*brochure*”, “*make a reservation to see a doctor*” instead of “*make an appointment to see a doctor*”, “*what's the code*” (for using a computer) instead of “*what's the password?*”, or using inappropriate prepositions or verb forms, e.g., “*you can go at the Ng restaurant about right here*”, “*you straight that way, ma'am*”, or “*you should booking in advance*” and the like. The occurrence of ‘non-standard’ forms of grammar and vocabulary in the speech of staff and guests is similar to what has been reported in a number of ELF studies. Researchers, for example, Cogo and Dewey (2012); Deterding (2010); Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006); Kirkpatrick (2003, 2010b); and Meierkord (2004) observed that there are variations in the use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation among English users, and that non-standard forms are common and unavoidable in ELF communication.

The exclusive use of NS accents in the sample conversations from the course materials means that students were not exposed to different accents or varieties of non-native English. Given that, in the workplace, staff will often communicate in English with NNSs rather than NSs, this limits the development of students' aural sensitivity and must, in consequence, impede their understanding of the conversation of the range of guests who present at the hotel FO as indicated from the findings of this study.

The relative paucity of conversation experience that the textbook generated and the formulaic way in which the speaking activities were presented also placed significant limitations on students' spoken language development. The functional language presented in the textbooks was as the 'standard', whereas the language used in the real-life conversation is diverse and "never achieves a stable or even standardised form" (Meierkord, 2004, p. 129).

The scripted conversations examined in the textbooks and the CDs seemed simple and the speakers in these conversations generally had no trouble when interacting with one another. Importantly, there were very few cases in which the speakers used strategies to negotiate meaning in the ways similar to those used by the staff when interacting with guests. During the natural interactions that were observed, some flexibility was required to deal with contingencies and unexpected happenings. Communicative strategies (CS) were employed in these circumstances, often allowing the staff to deal with the unknown or to 'buy time', to get more time to formulate their response (Johnstone, 1994; Merritt, 1994). There were no comparable examples of conversation in the textbooks which made explicit use of the range of CS identified in this study. Conversations were delivered in a sequential order of questions-answers and there was little repetition, lexical suggestion or BCL provided as strategies for negotiating meaning between speakers. The language used in the textbooks was simple ("*go straight on*") and was clearly inadequate to meet the face-to-face communication demands that staff faced when responding to guests' various requests and queries which are, by comparison more complex and extended ("*keep go straight down that way, ... go to the big roundabout here, / and you'll see on the right ...*").

Thus, although the ESP courses for hospitality aim to make students understand English spoken in clear standard speech, it is clearly not designed to expose students to the English varieties to which they will be typically exposed in a hotel work environment.

6.3.4 Internships

The capacity to transfer what has been learned into practice is central to a course's effectiveness. In contemporary vocational training, exposure to the relevant industry through an internship (Busby, 2003) or workplace learning (Weber, 2013) is an

essential, integral component of the training curriculum (Collins, 2002; Powers, 1980; Tse, 2010; Tynjälä, 2008; Wan, Yang, Cheng, & Su, 2013), and is seen as an inseparable part of the educational experience of hospitality students (Collins, 2002; Yiu & Law, 2012). The internship component of this hospitality course assigns students to a hotel to expose them to industry-related issues. It appears that the ‘issues’ are entirely professional in nature; the absence of any reference to language suggests that there were no specific aims for the internship with respect to the application of English language skills to the workplace. Consequently, when they enter the workforce, new graduates are likely to experience difficulties in communication with foreign guests. Lin et al. (2014) believe that, to maximise the effectiveness of a hospitality English language program, students must be able to realise what they have learned in the workplace, i.e. there must be a connection between theory and practice and the interlink between educational institutions and the relevant industries must be established and enhanced so that the effectiveness in training can be achieved.

6.4 Research Question Four

How might ESP courses for hospitality students be improved in relation to the development of English communication skills relevant to the hotel industry?

The contrasts between the functions and forms of English used in the real hotel workplace and the classroom have the potential to inform the ESP courses for Hospitality. The objectives of the course are realised primarily through the activities in the textbook. The textbooks reviewed in this study reveal a mismatch in the way in which English is practised by students during their training and the way it is used by staff in the FO. This suggests that the current training approach needs modification.

Although the textbooks provide a range of activities for practising the communicative skills of speaking and listening, they do not provide opportunities for students to gain experience of working with English as a LF or to identify and practise the CS that can ensure effective communication with guests.

Linguistic realisation of the language functions in the textbooks is different from the way the language function was realised in the natural interaction. In the textbooks,

the section on language functions was separate part from those containing the other activities, and contained examples to illustrate how the functions were used; for example, how to make a polite request (e.g., “*could you + infinitive ...please?*” - “*Could you show me your passport please?*” or “*would you mind + V-ing ... please?*” – “*Would you mind showing me your passport, please?*”).

Speaking practice was often generated by the language focus points to practise and reinforce students’ use of the language. In the real life setting, language functions were negotiated and jointly constructed (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Seedhouse, 2004). Thus, meaning and function of the language used was negotiated by staff and guests in a specific communicative event (Canagarajah, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2009). The materials presented in the textbooks included some activities (e.g., listen and complete the booking with information about the guest) in which clarification or checking information was used, but it seems that these skills were not the focus and it is notable that items that S frequently checked for accuracy or full understanding (e.g., numbers, names, directions, or instructions) were unlikely to be practised sufficiently in the textbooks as there were very few exercises that included these items.

In the real life setting, staff must be able to decode the received information accurately and provide an appropriate response to guests. Chan’s (2002) statement – that developing an understanding of how the ideas and the content of the message is communicated – is the skill that needs re-emphasis. Communicative competence including linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and strategic elements (the way of using strategies to negotiate meaning, deal with problem of hearing or understanding) is essential for all hospitality students (Chan, 2002). It is the contention of this study that such communicative competence cannot be achieved through the current approach to English language learning in the ESP component of Hospitality courses in Vietnam.

The practice settings for speaking and listening practice were not relevant, nor was the material culturally appropriate. The practice settings were not suitable for effective practice as they were not familiar with students. In addition, the exclusive use of NS accents in conversations means that different accents or varieties of non-native English were excluded. In the workplace, staff often communicate in English

with NNSs rather than NSs. It is therefore necessary for the hospitality students to be exposed to different varieties of English during their coursework.

Students were not exposed to any other English speaking environment besides those presented by the teacher (who is normally Vietnamese and, therefore a NNS of English) or through the audio material. Access to a range of situations for conversation would give students more opportunities to practise English. In the real context in question, guests' requests were mainly concerned with hospitality activities, such as eating out, asking for directions to places, or booking a tour. Students would benefit from more practice situations which are contextualised to cover more authentic situations. This exposure can be achieved through experiential learning in the hospitality/hotel industry (Shieh, 2012; Tse, 2010; Yiu & Law, 2012). Although professional practice is included in every training program (MOET, 2007), English is not required or emphasised on practicums/internships for hospitality students. Blue and Harun (2003) have stressed that English hospitality language is a professional skill. It is not only a means of communication but through communication in English, S can perform hotel activities. It is an essential factor to facilitate the success of hotel business. For this reason, it is important to have English as part of all hospitality students' practicum programs.

The model for oral interaction in class cannot be based on the intuitions of textbook writers, but should be informed by the findings of conversation analysis of naturally occurring interactions (Richards, 2008, p. 2) which, to some extent, was the focus of this study. By extension, natural conversation in the real workplace would increase the authenticity of the teaching-learning materials and would enable students to recognise the features of speech delivery in a real ELF interaction.

6.5 Summary

This chapter discusses the findings related to naturally occurring interactions between staff and guests in the Vietnamese hotel setting and the ESP courses for Hospitality. The CS the FO staff employed when interacting with guests were found to be commonly used by ELF speakers in their communication (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Mauranen, 2006), so it is not surprising these strategies emerged in the data of this study. However, they were also identified to have some characteristics which may be unique and specific in this workplace setting

that have not been reported in any other studies so far (e.g., repetition of key elements including numbers and spelt lexical item(s)).

The hospitality language used by the FO staff revealed that the same strategies were repeatedly used in interactions with guests in different communicative events. Meaning and shared understanding was negotiated and jointly constructed by staff and guests, who displayed their active listenership and involvement in the interaction.

Students in the ESP course for Hospitality were provided with a wide range of activities to practise listening and speaking skills, along with the skills of reading and writing. However, the findings revealed a mismatch between the language presented in the textbooks and the language used in the real-life hotel setting. The hospitality course had a number of limitations including the time allocated for ESP, the TOEIC score required for graduation, the lack of English demands in the internship – an essential component of the professional training for hospitality (Blue & Harun, 2003; Yiu & Law, 2012). These limitations need to be addressed to better serve the needs of the hotel industry in Vietnam.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Implications

This study examined the English language used by the hotel FO staff when interacting with foreign guests in a Vietnamese hotel setting. This study confirms the earlier findings that ELF speakers are cooperative and collaborative with one another in their communication. They employ a wide range of strategies to prevent and resolve the problem of understanding, to enhance comprehension and facilitate the effectiveness of communication. The findings of the study are in line with those reported in other research which has been acknowledged and referred to throughout this study.

The findings from the study make an additional contribution to ELF research, further refining existing knowledge about the characteristics of ELF used in a workplace setting. More specifically, the focus on hospitality language in Vietnam has not been reported in the literature and this study makes a unique contribution to this field. Hospitality language, as viewed by Blue and Harun (2003), is a professional skill, and to some degree, this position has been supported and re-emphasised by this study. The staff performed their hotel routines and transactional activities through communication in English which was negotiated by using a wide range of strategies.

Particular features that have been identified in this 'Hotel English' are the emphasis on the accurate transmission of key information concerning hospitality services. While all of the CS used by staff have been reported in a number of studies, their manifestation in this study is not an exact replica of those found elsewhere. The way the staff and the guests structured their interactions was that once a subtask/subgoal had been achieved, the conversation was continued and similar strategies were employed until another outcome was obtained. This procedure was followed by the staff to display his/her understanding and respond to guests' utterances by employing a wide range of strategies and it seemed unique in this workplace setting in the Vietnamese context.

Other studies in the field of ELF and applied linguistics have not focused on examination of the teaching materials included in the ESP courses to determine the extent to which they are appropriate to the needs of the hotel industry. By examining

the English used by the FO staff in communication with guests, the appropriateness to the hotel industry of the activities and opportunities hospitality students were provided with in the ESP courses (particularly to practise the two skills of listening and speaking) has identified disjuncture between the forms and the functions of English used in the hotel workplace and those taught in the classroom setting. The textbooks reviewed for this study reveal the extent to which the teaching resources fail to reflect the daily language demands on hotel staff. Although the textbooks provide a wide range of activities for practising the communicative skills of speaking and listening, the input – the listening and reading texts, the practice settings, the grammar practice and vocabulary – provide limited opportunities for students to gain experience in working with English as a LF or to identify and practise the CS that can ensure effective communication with guests. Chan's (2002) assertion that developing an understanding of how the ideas and the content of the message is communicated is the skill that students require most needs re-emphasis.

Recognising these differences between the workplace and classroom environments is the first step towards a 'renovation' of the course content of ESP courses for Hospitality, a step that will help realise the Government's policy agenda with respect to the language education proposed in the *National Foreign Languages 2020 Project* (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008).

Teaching English for communication in a multilingual environment rather than following the traditional model of second language acquisition (SLA) (Firth & Wagner, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007b) which views the goal of language learning as the acquisition of native-like proficiency, would recognise the new social reality. Rather than focusing on acquiring solely the standard forms, the focus should be on the ability to use language successfully in LF contexts (Jenkins, 2004; Kirkpatrick, 2007b; McKay, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2004). Strategic competence enables speakers to engage in and maintain an interaction, negotiate meaning and prevent problems of understanding. It is important that students in ESP courses for Hospitality develop this competence if they are to be in the position to respond to the diversity in guests' linguacultural backgrounds and to the varieties of English they use. In the current teaching-learning context, students are rarely exposed to any other English speaking environment besides that created in the classroom. Access to a range of situations for conversation would give them more opportunities to practise English as a *lingua*

franca. Students would benefit from more practice situations which are contextualised and include authentic scenarios. This exposure can be achieved through experiential learning in the hotel industry (Shieh, 2012; Tse, 2010; Yiu & Law, 2012). English is currently not given any emphasis in internships for hospitality students and this, the necessity of having English practised in internships, should be taken for consideration when designing ESP courses for Hospitality.

The culturally-bound practice settings of activities in the textbooks need modification. Instead of sole focus on the cultures of NSs, the ESP curriculum should include information about the cultures and people in the regional (ASEAN and Asian) (Kirkpatrick, 2007b). This re-orientation would prepare students to introduce information about their own cultures – local people and lifestyles, traditional dishes, customs and habits – information that is important for their future jobs in the hotel industry.

7.2 Recommendations

Since this study was conducted in 2012, there have been substantial changes in the teaching and learning of English, driven by the NFLP 2020 (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2008). However, although the importance of English in the country's economic development is acknowledged, it is doubtful whether language proficiency to the level required by the hospitality sector can be achieved in the time provided for the English in vocationally-oriented courses. Serious consideration needs to be given to increasing time allocations for both GE and ESP. In addition, the reliance on textbooks to define course content is problematic, as is the poor alignment between content and culture. Development of materials oriented to the Vietnamese situation would be an important step in making teaching materials 'fit-for-purpose' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This includes the inclusion of different varieties of English, spoken by NNSs including those from Asia, in audio materials. Textbooks from foreign publishers need to be adapted to suit with the local context. The activities and exercises for practising and improving communicative skills would benefit from being referenced to local situations, ones which students will be involved in on taking up employment in the industry.

The ESP curriculum would benefit from having English learning outcomes integrated into the internship, as it is important that students have the opportunity to practise relevant communication skills in a real-life context. An internship that is timely, supervised, structured and which delivers formative feedback would be an important means of assisting students to be work-ready (S. R. Billett, 1994; Tse, 2010; Tynjälä, 2008). A reconceptualisation of the role of the internship in courses for Hospitality is warranted. Involvement of the tourism and hospitality sectors is essential if the real needs of industry are to be ascertained and used to inform the training curriculum. Increasing the regular contact and cooperation between vocational education institutions and industry in reviewing, designing and implementing the training curriculum would result in better-prepared graduates.

Opportunities for practising listening and speaking – the two most frequently used skills in the face-to-face interactions – should be increased. These skills need to be focused and strategies for negotiation of meaning including checking understanding, requests for clarification and confirmation need to be emphasised in English courses as these skills are important for successful communication in ELF.

Teaching methods and assessment warrant review. Until recently the majority of the English tests were designed to assess students' ability to use correct grammar and language structures and communicative skills were not much in focus (V. V. Hoang, 2010). The teaching focus on practising communicative and interactional skills is clearly called for.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

This study had some limitations. First, in ELF settings such as the hotel FO, a more diverse set of CS than those identified in this study likely exists. This study had as its focus only prominent CS in the FO staff's speech, suggesting that other, albeit less obvious, CS were employed. A more detailed examination of the transcripts may bring these to light.

Second, the data used for the study were audio-recordings; the examination was only of verbal language. Had video-recordings been used, a more complete understanding of how the FO staff communicated with guests including their non-verbal behaviour would have been emerged.

Third, the examination of the ESP courses was limited to an examination of the opportunities students were provided with to practise the two communicative skills of listening and speaking. The other two skills of reading and writing were included in the curriculum and are frequently used in some job positions in the hotel industry – notably FO staff. However, these two skills were not focused to the same level as listening and speaking skills in this study. Extension of the study to include an evaluation of the level of competence of the FO staff in these two macro skills would also have been a valuable addition to the knowledge of how communication skills are more broadly used in the hotel industry.

Finally, the textbooks used for analysis were those used in the courses for which course outlines could be obtained. While the researcher is confident that these textbooks were commonly used as the main material (or supplementary) in a large number of courses, it is acknowledged that detailed analysis of all textbooks has not been undertaken.

7.4 Further Research

This study is a starting point for exploring the spoken English used by the FO staff with foreign guests in the hotel setting and it is hoped that it will encourage more research into ELF in Vietnamese workplace settings.

The study was conducted on a small scale (4 hotels) and the area of examination was limited to the FO. Further study on the other divisions of the hotel would extend the generalisability of findings to a broader hotel setting. In addition, an expanded design of the study could canvas, amongst other things, the opinions of the hotel management about recruitment, in-house language training, and the requirements of the industry for experiential learning. With a broader study design, a full picture of how English is used in the Vietnamese hotel setting could emerge and the findings could have the potential to further inform vocational training priorities.

This study focused on the speech of the staff for the key strategies that emerge as the means of facilitating communication. Other language features of staff talk have emerged from the data but have not been analysed, as they are beyond the scope of the current study. Further analysis of the data has the potential to broaden the

findings of this study. Guests' talk was not analysed in this study, but it is also of interest to ELF research.

ESP classes for hotel and tourism in Vietnam was not a focus of this study. How the teaching activities affected students' preparation for work-related communication provides a potentially rich topic for further research. There are several components of the ESP course that impact the efficacy of its outcomes; this study has examined only the activities that students are provided with to practise listening and speaking skills. Further study on other aspects of the course and its content has the potential to further inform the updating of the curriculum and its alignment with industry needs.

7.5 Conclusion

The CS identified in the English spoken by the hotel FO staff when interacting with guests characterise the hospitality English used by Vietnamese hotel staff. They occur throughout an interaction to ensure and facilitate guest' comprehension and to display cooperation to ensure the shared construction of meaning in the interaction.

Since the data was collected, there have been substantial changes in the teaching-learning English in Vietnam, largely driven by the NFLP 2020 which is in its third stage of implementation. A 6-level framework for assessment of students' foreign language proficiency based on CEFR has been established and adopted in the national educational system from the primary school to higher education. An intensive English program will be introduced to all training centres, vocational schools and HE on a nationwide scale from 2016. Following this route, by 2020 Vietnamese students will be able to use English independently in study, at work and they will be able to communicate effectively in the multilingual and multicultural environment.

Examination of the ESP course materials for hospitality students reveals a lack of alignment between the English language presented in the classroom and that used in a real life setting. This lack of alignment poses a challenge to ESP curriculum designers, who are now called upon more than ever before to meet with the requirements of industry. The findings of this study enable HE institutions to respond to the call for innovation and change in the teaching of English to vocational education students, particularly those intending to work in the hospitality sector.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: 6 Levels of Foreign Language Proficiency Used in Vietnam Mô tả tổng quát khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam

	Các bậc	Mô tả tổng quát
Sơ cấp	Bậc 1 (A1)	Có thể hiểu, sử dụng các cấu trúc quen thuộc thường nhật; các từ ngữ cơ bản đáp ứng nhu cầu giao tiếp cụ thể. Có thể tự giới thiệu bản thân và người khác; có thể trả lời những thông tin về bản thân như nơi sinh sống, người thân/bạn bè v.v... Có thể giao tiếp đơn giản nếu người đối thoại nói chậm, rõ ràng và sẵn sàng hợp tác giúp đỡ.
	Bậc 2 (A2)	Có thể hiểu được các câu và cấu trúc được sử dụng thường xuyên liên quan đến nhu cầu giao tiếp cơ bản (như các thông tin về gia đình, bản thân, đi mua hàng, hỏi đường, việc làm). Có thể trao đổi thông tin về những chủ đề đơn giản, quen thuộc hằng ngày. Có thể mô tả đơn giản về bản thân, môi trường xung quanh và những vấn đề thuộc nhu cầu thiết yếu.
Trung cấp	Bậc 3 (B1)	Có thể hiểu được các ý chính của một đoạn văn hay bài phát biểu chuẩn mực, rõ ràng về các chủ đề quen thuộc trong công việc, trường học, giải trí, v.v... Có thể xử lý hầu hết các tình huống xảy ra khi đến khu vực có sử dụng ngôn ngữ đó. Có thể viết đoạn văn đơn giản liên quan đến các chủ đề quen thuộc hoặc cá nhân quan tâm. Có thể mô tả được những kinh nghiệm, sự kiện, giấc mơ, hy vọng, hoài bão và có thể trình bày ngắn gọn các lý do, giải thích ý kiến và kế hoạch của mình.
	Bậc 4 (B2)	Có thể hiểu ý chính của một văn bản phức tạp về các chủ đề cụ thể và trừu tượng, kể cả những trao đổi kỹ thuật thuộc lĩnh vực chuyên môn của bản thân. Có thể giao tiếp ở mức độ trôi chảy, tự nhiên với người bản ngữ. Có thể viết được các văn bản rõ ràng, chi tiết với nhiều chủ đề khác nhau và có thể giải thích quan điểm của mình về một vấn đề, nêu ra được những ưu điểm, nhược điểm của các phương án lựa chọn khác nhau.
Cao cấp	Bậc 5 (C1)	Có thể hiểu và nhận biết được hàm ý của các văn bản dài với phạm vi rộng. Có thể diễn đạt trôi chảy, tức thì, không gặp khó khăn trong việc tìm từ ngữ diễn đạt. Có thể sử dụng ngôn ngữ linh hoạt và hiệu quả phục vụ các mục đích xã hội, học thuật và chuyên môn. Có thể viết rõ ràng, chặt chẽ, chi tiết về các chủ đề phức tạp, thể hiện được khả năng tổ chức văn bản, sử dụng tốt từ ngữ nối câu và các công cụ liên kết.
	Bậc 6 (C2)	Có thể hiểu một cách dễ dàng hầu hết văn nói và viết. Có thể tóm tắt các nguồn thông tin nói hoặc viết, sắp xếp lại thông tin và trình bày lại một cách logic. Có thể diễn đạt tức thì, rất trôi chảy và chính xác, phân biệt được các ý nghĩa tinh tế khác nhau trong các tình huống phức tạp.

Trích: Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam- Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo (2014, p.2)

***Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:
Learning, Teaching, Assessment***

Common Reference Levels: global scale (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Appendix 2: Test Score Conversion Table

TOEIC	TOEFL Paper	TOEFL CBT	TOEFL IBT	IELTS	Cambridge Exam	CEFR	Hours
0 - 250	0 - 310	0 - 30	0 - 8	0 - 1.0			80-120
	310 - 343	33 - 60	9 - 18	1.0 - 1.5		A1	
255 - 400	347 - 393	63 - 90	19 - 29	2.0 - 2.5		A1	180-200
	397 - 433	93 - 120	30 - 40	3.0 - 3.5	KET (IELTS 3.0)	A2	
					PET (IELTS 3.5)	B1 (IELTS 3.5)	
405 - 600	437 - 473	123 - 150	41 - 52	4.0	PE1	B1	350 - 400
	477 - 510	153 - 180	53 - 64	4.5 - 5.0	PET (IELTS 4.5)	B1 (IELTS 4.5)	
					FCE (IELTS 5.0)	B2 (IELTS 5.0)	
605 - 780	513 - 547	183 - 210	65 - 78	5.5 - 6.0	FCE	B2	500 - 600
	550 - 587	213 - 240	79 - 95	6.5 - 7.0	CAE	C1	700 - 800
785 - 990	590 - 677	243 - 300	96 - 120	7.5 - 9.0	CPE	C2	1000 - 1200
Top Score	Top Score	Top Score	Top Score	Top Score	Top Score	Top Level	
990	677	300	120	9	100	C2	

Source: At the “Vietnam Engineering Education Conference” (N. H. Nguyen, 2013, p. 28).

Appendix 3: The English Proficiency Benchmarks in Tourism

TOEIC oriented Curriculum Guidelines for Tourism Vocational Training in Vietnam

Developed by IIG Vietnam – ETS Country Representative Page 7

The English Proficiency Benchmarks for Six Occupations in the Tourism Sector

Food & Beverage Server Low Standard	3 Star 300	4 Star 425	5 Star 525
High Standard	550	600	675
Front Desk Agent Low Standard	3 Star 475	4 Star 550	5 Star 625
High Standard	650	675	700
Room Attendant Low Standard	3 Star 275	4 Star 300	5 Star 375
High Standard	425	450	550
Security Officer Low Standard	3Star 275	4 Star 300	5 Star 375
High Standard	425	450	525
Tour Guide			
Low Standard	625		
High Standard	700		
Tour Desk Agent			
Low Standard	500		
High Standard	675		

Appendix 4: Examples of the Tapescripts

Tapescripts

Unit 1, Exercise 7 (CD Track 2)

- I So, what do you do at the beginning of the day, Darina?
- D I usually go to reception and meet the head housekeeper. There's usually a printout from the computer telling us which rooms are 'stay-overs' and which ones are 'check-outs'. We call the rooms 'SOs' and 'COs'.
- I SOs and COs?
- D That's right. An SO, or stay-over, is a general routine clean. We change the sheets every two days, towels every day if necessary, and clean the bathrooms.
- I And what about the bedrooms?
- D In the bedroom we make the bed, clean and tidy up. If people are staying over, we just give it a quick tidy and don't disturb their things.

Unit 1, Exercise 9 (CD Track 3)

- I So, how many days a week do you work?
- D Six days a week.
- I And do you have to work on Saturdays and Sundays?
- D I always work on Saturdays and Sundays.
- I So do you have any free days?
- D I always take Tuesdays or Wednesdays.
- I And what time do you finish work at the hotel?
- D I often work from nine to one, or nine to two, but on a very busy day, especially if it's a Monday with a lot of check-outs, sometimes I don't finish until three in the afternoon.

Unit 1, Exercise 11 (CD Track 4)

- I What are you responsible for as Assistant Housekeeper?
- D Well, I help the head housekeeper. We're responsible for about six people, six chambermaids, but sometimes eight in the summer with full occupancy. One of my main duties is to train new staff. Usually, on their first day, they stay with me all day. Then on the second day, they work with one of the chambermaids. I also have a bleeper so that people can contact me in case they have problems or any questions. When people have cleaned their rooms, I check everything's OK before the new guests check in.

Unit 2, Exercise 2 (CD Track 5)

- TA Good afternoon, World Breaks, Janet Cookson speaking. How can I help you?
- C Hello, I saw your advert in the newspaper for fly-drive holidays in Florida. Does that mean you get flights, *

accommodation and car hire all included in the price?

- TA That's right, madam.
- C And what kind of accommodation is it?
- TA Well, there are two options. You can have a self-catering apartment or stay in a hotel.
- C We'd prefer an apartment, I think. How much will it cost for two weeks?
- TA That all depends on when you travel. When are you thinking of going, madam?
- C Well, some time when it's quieter, the second half of May. Is it off-season then?
- TA Yes, it is. That's a very good time to go. We have a great offer at the moment: fourteen nights fly-drive with self-catering apartments for £543 per person.
- C That sounds good. Could I book it now?
- TA Certainly. Let me see, the flights are from London Heathrow on Thursdays, so that's Thursday 17th May, returning from Orlando, Florida on the morning of Thursday 31st May. How does that sound?
- C That's fine.
- TA Could I have the names of the people travelling, please?
- C There's me, Jane Wright, my husband Simon and our son Andrew.
- TA Could you spell your surname for me Mrs Wright?
- C Yes, that's W-R-I-G-H-T.
- TA OK, thank you. Just let me confirm the details. That's three people, two adults and one child, leaving London Heathrow on Thursday 17th May, returning on Thursday 31st May.
- C Yes, that's right.
- TA Thank you, Mrs Wright. Now how do you wish to pay for your holiday? By credit card?

Unit 2, Exercise 8 (CD Track 6)

- J Hello.
- O Jackie. It's Oscar. How are you?
- J Oh, hi, Oscar.
- O Did I wake you up?
- J No, but I'm going to bed soon. It's late here.
- O Yeah, sorry. Listen, do you want to meet then, when I'm in Florida?
- J Yeah, sure. When did you say you're arriving? The 15th?
- O Yeah, that's right. Orlando airport.
- J And how are you getting around Florida?
- O I'm hiring a car at the airport.
- J And I suppose you're driving straight to Disney World.

- B I understand, sir. Here's your key. You're in room two sixteen. Take the lift to the second floor and turn right. Would you like the porter to help you with your luggage?
- L Yes, please. Now Bob, don't lift anything with your bad back.
- B I'll call the porter for you. Breakfast is served from 8 am until 9.30 am. Check-out time is at twelve noon on the day of departure. Enjoy your stay and let us know if you need anything.
- L Thank you, miss.
- R But Leeta, I don't see why I can't carry the bags ...

Unit 7, Exercise 8 (CD Track 19)

- R Hi Bev, got my passport?
- B Yes, Mr O'Donnell. Here you are, sir.
- R We were thinking of going shopping in the city centre for the afternoon. Is it safe?
- B Yes, sir. You'll find that the centre of Cape Town is no different from other major cities. You must take a few precautions, though. If you're going shopping, I recommend that you use traveller's cheques or credit cards. You shouldn't take large amounts of cash. The markets are very crowded and lively but beware of pickpockets.
- R Is that so? What about the camera?
- B You should try not to attract attention to yourself by carrying cameras and wearing expensive jewellery.
- L Sounds like we'd better leave our things in the safe deposit box in our room, honey.
- R You're right, Leeta. We'll do that. Hey, now where did I put those car keys?
- B If you are driving, sir, you must keep your car doors locked at all times.
- R This is like being back home in Chicago!
- B One last thing, avoid walking around the poorer areas of the city.
- L How about going to see Robben Island?
- B There are several ferries but it's best to book with an organised tour of the island. I can reserve your places for you here at the hotel. Oh, and another thing, it's a good idea to take a pill if you get seasick easily.
- R Thanks Bev, you've been very helpful.

Unit 7, Exercise 14 (CD Track 20)

One

There were a lot of guests who wanted me to take their luggage. I told him I was busy and would come back in half an hour.

Two

I'm a receptionist, not a safari guide. Our usual guide was off sick, and the Hotel Manager said I needed experience in the bush. The animals frighten me.

Three

I gave him a photocopy with all the times and prices for our excursions. The thing is, the leaflet is from last year because we haven't had time to print the new one.

Four

He ordered one thing and then he changed his mind. The thing is, I'm the only waitress on night duty and we were fully booked that week.

Unit 8, Exercise 2 (CD Track 21)

- M Good morning and welcome to *Holiday Options*. I'm Matt Scott and later today in the studio we have Lisa Barton – our very own tour operator. Lisa's going to tell us which resorts are going to be hot spots this summer. But first of all, we asked some of our listeners about their favourite holiday destinations.
- LB So, what's your favourite holiday destination?
- L1 My favourite place for a holiday? Corfu, Greece. We went there last year. It was great. Something for all the family.
- L2 Oh, it's got to be Majorca. I love it – there's sun, sea and sangria. I've been to Majorca twice now and I'll definitely go again.
- L3 I don't really have a favourite resort, but I'll probably go to the Mediterranean again, especially Turkey. The sightseeing's great. There's a fantastic place called, Pamukka ... Pamukkale. Yeah, and there are these incredible pools. It looks like snow, but it isn't.

Unit 8, Exercise 3 (CD Track 22)

- M So, that's where some of our listeners are going, but what do you think, Lisa? Which holiday resorts are going to be the hot spots this summer?
- L Well, a lot of people are going to Spain, Tenerife and, as we've just heard, the Balearic Islands. Also the Greek islands, like Corfu, are going to be popular.
- M One of our listeners mentioned Turkey. Do you think Turkey'll be popular this year?
- L I think it probably will, yes. You know, it's a great country. A real mix of East and West with some beautiful architecture and, of course, great beaches. And you don't get the crowds of tourists on the beaches as you do in, say, Spain.

Source: Dubicka, I. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003) – B1, p.136

- 2 I'm the Front Office Manager. I report to the Resident Manager on a regular basis but I can make a lot of daily operational decisions myself. I like the responsibility the hotel allows me to have. I have to supervise Front-of-House Operations and to do that efficiently, I need to have the assistance of the Head Receptionist, who looks after the reception area in general and has a good deal of contact with both staff and guests. We're concerned with day-to-day issues such as guests' comfort and security, but we also get involved in training and staff development, so there's plenty to do on that side, too.
- 3 I'm hoping to become Head Housekeeper in the near future. I've been Housekeeper for the Executive suites for a year now and there's a good chance I'll take over when Mrs Jones leaves at the end of the year. At the moment, I give orders to the chambermaids and cleaners personally, but I'm looking forward to getting more involved in planning and training. I know I shouldn't say this, but I think I'll be pretty good at it.

6 Listening

In this organization, the Concierge's primary function is to provide for guests' needs and special requests. This often involves contacting companies for information or services which are external to the hotel. Typical requests are for him or her to make bookings for tours, theatres, and special attractions. The Concierge will also help guests to organize and book their onward travel arrangements, including dispatch of luggage. Consequently, there is a need to know what services local businesses have to offer. That means businesses such as restaurants, travel agencies, and car-hire agencies.

To do the job effectively, the Concierge must be particularly aware of the arrival and departure of groups and any special events

taking place within the hotel. Internally, the Concierge Department is responsible for the safe delivery of mail and packages and they will maintain a supply of stamps for domestic and foreign postage. In some hotels, it is still a Concierge's duty to fulfil requests for secretarial work but here that comes under the remit of the business centre.

A log-book is kept in which all guests' queries and requests are recorded. This is another of a Concierge's many duties. A basic requirement that we have of our concierge staff is that they display a courteous and professional manner in all their dealings with guests and fellow employees. Above all, he or she must have a friendly personality. We lay particular emphasis on maximizing guest satisfaction. Therefore, a Concierge will endeavour to fulfil a guest's requests, if at all possible, and hopefully do it with a smile.

Unit 4

2 Listening

Dialogue 1

HOTEL: Hotel Melissa. Can I help you?

CALLER: Yes, I'd like to make a reservation, please.

HOTEL: I'll put you through to Reservations. Hold the line, please.

RESERVATIONS: Reservations, Peter speaking. Can I help you?

CALLER: Yes, I'd like to make a reservation.

RESERVATIONS: Certainly. What name, please?

CALLER: Lewis, David Lewis.

RESERVATIONS: Right, Mr Lewis, when would you like to stay?

CALLER: I'd like to reserve a double room for three nights from the 21st April.

RESERVATIONS: OK. 21st April, three nights, double. I'll just check availability ... Yes, we can do that for you. Is this a company booking or an individual?

CALLER: Oh, it's individual.

RESERVATIONS: Have you stayed with us before?

CALLER: No, I haven't.

RESERVATIONS: Would you like one of our Executive rooms, Mr Lewis, on the top floors with some wonderful views?

CALLER: Well, actually, no, I wouldn't. My wife doesn't really like using the lift and also she's got a bad leg, so I was hoping we could have a room near the ground floor.

RESERVATIONS: OK. I'll make a note of that and when you check in the receptionist will allocate a room on the first floor for you.

CALLER: Thank you.

RESERVATIONS: Will you be paying by credit card?

CALLER: Yes, I will. It's Visa.

RESERVATIONS: And what is the number?

CALLER: Hold on ... It's 4335 171 36094.

RESERVATIONS: So that's 4335 171 36094. And your address?

CALLER: 14 St John's Road, London NW6.

RESERVATIONS: OK, Mr Lewis, that's reserved for you. Your reservation number is PS1462. We look forward to seeing you on the 21st.

CALLER: Thank you.

RESERVATIONS: You're welcome.

Dialogue 2

HOTEL: Hotel Melissa. Can I help you?

CALLER: Good morning. I'd like to reserve a couple of rooms.

HOTEL: Certainly. I'll put you through to Reservations. Hold the line, please.

RESERVATIONS: Reservations, this is Peter speaking. How can I help you?

CALLER: Good morning. This is Rita King from Imperial Plastics. I'd like to reserve a couple of doubles for April 13th.

RESERVATIONS: Two doubles for April 13th ... Right. Availability is fine for that night. Is that a company booking?

CALLER: Yes, Imperial Plastics. The rooms are for a Mr Suarez, spelt s-U-A-R-E-Z, and Mr Johansson, spelt j-O-H-A-N-S-S-O-N. They'd like the Executive rooms.

RESERVATIONS: OK. You have an account with us, don't you?

CALLER: Yes, we do.

RESERVATIONS: But the guests haven't stayed with us before, have they?

CALLER: No, I don't think so.

RESERVATIONS: And how is the account to be settled?

CALLER: Full bill on the company account.

RESERVATIONS: Can I just check your contact details? It's Miss R. King, Imperial Plastics, Old Dock Road, London E5.

CALLER: That's correct.

RESERVATIONS: Right, Miss King, the reservation number is PS43307. I would be grateful if you could just confirm in writing, by fax if you like.

CALLER: Certainly. Thank you for your help.

RESERVATIONS: You're very welcome. Goodbye.

8 Listening

RECEPTIONIST: Can I help you, sir?

GUEST: Hello, I'd like a room for the night.

RECEPTIONIST: Do you have a reservation?

GUEST: No, I don't.

RECEPTIONIST: OK. Just the one night?

GUEST: Yes.

RECEPTIONIST: And one person?

GUEST: One person, yes.

RECEPTIONIST: Would you like an Executive at £125 or a Standard at £95?

GUEST: Just a Standard.

RECEPTIONIST: OK ... Do you have a preference for a twin or a double-bedded room?

GUEST: Twin, please.

Unit 6

2 Listening

Dialogue 1

RECEPTIONIST: That'll be £37.20, please, sir.

How would you like to pay?

GUEST: Oh, I don't know. Do you accept credit cards ... or a cheque?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes, or it can be added to your bill.

GUEST: Oh, yes. Can I charge it to my bill?

RECEPTIONIST: Certainly, sir. What room are you in?

GUEST: Room 408. Here ... here's my key card.

RECEPTIONIST: Right, thank you. That's fine. Could you just sign here, please?

GUEST: OK ... Could you wrap them for me?

RECEPTIONIST: Of course. I can arrange for them to be sent as well, if you like.

GUEST: That's an idea – it'll save carrying them. How much do you charge?

RECEPTIONIST: Well, it's ...

Dialogue 2

RECEPTIONIST: Good morning, madam.

How can I help you?

GUEST: I'd like to check out, please.

RECEPTIONIST: Certainly, madam. I'll get your bill. What room are you in?

GUEST: 702.

RECEPTIONIST: Here you are, madam. Would you just like to check it through?

GUEST: Yes ... Can you tell me what this item is for?

RECEPTIONIST: That was the morning papers you had.

GUEST: But I don't think I ordered any papers.

RECEPTIONIST: Didn't you? I'd better check the voucher ... You're quite right. Those papers were sent to 703. I'm very sorry about that, madam.

GUEST: That's quite all right. Actually there's another thing: I didn't order anything from room service either. Do you think there's some mistake? Oh, look! I've been given the wrong bill – this is 703 not 702!

RECEPTIONIST: I'm awfully sorry.

GUEST: That's all right. I thought it was a bit odd.

RECEPTIONIST: Here you are. Miss Smith, isn't it?

GUEST: Yes. Ah, that looks better. Everything seems to be fine. Oh, there's just one last thing. I wasn't sure about service charges in the restaurant. Are they included?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes, madam.

GUEST: Good. I thought so.

RECEPTIONIST: How would you like to pay?

GUEST: Do you accept Visa?

RECEPTIONIST: Of course. If I could just have your card.

GUEST: Here you are.

RECEPTIONIST: Thank you ... That's fine. I hope you have a pleasant journey.

GUEST: Thank you. Goodbye.

Dialogue 3

RECEPTIONIST: Hello, can I help you?

GUEST: Yes, I'd like to change some dollars.

Can you tell me what the exchange rate is?

RECEPTIONIST: Cash or traveller's cheques?

GUEST: Cash.

RECEPTIONIST: Right, the rate is one dollar forty to the pound.

GUEST: OK. Is commission charged on that?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes, we charge a flat rate of £2 per transaction.

GUEST: OK. I think I'll change two hundred dollars. How much will I get exactly?

RECEPTIONIST: Right, sir, let me just calculate it ... 200 divided by one point four equals ... 142 pounds eighty-six less two pounds commission ... That comes to 140 pounds and eighty-six pence.

GUEST: Good. That should be enough. Here you are ...

Unit 9

1 Listening

INTERVIEWER: Donald, you said that it is important to treat all your guests well, but differently. Could you explain what you mean by that?

DONALD: Yes, of course. Like any other company, we, as a hotel, need to be able to identify those customers who are important to us. Just as an airline will try to offer a better-quality service to first-class passengers, we'll try to provide a higher standard for our important guests. Business travellers, for example, generally expect a higher class of service. Also, because they are frequent travellers, business people are potential regular customers and it is very, very important for the hotel to attract regular guests. Some of our business clients have been coming here for years because, we like to think, we look after them well.

INTERVIEWER: So, are all business people treated the same?

DONALD: No, using the same logic, we like to distinguish between different types of business guests, too. Some have Very Important Person status, or VIP for short. A typical VIP guest might be a customer, like a company salesperson, who makes regular visits. The VIP business guest soon becomes well-known by all the front-of-house staff – indeed we have one Italian salesman who we see on almost a weekly basis! Then there is the CIP, who is a Company Important Person, which means he is an important person in a company which the hotel does a lot of business with. That might be a company that makes regular use of our conference facilities or business apartments, for example. Finally, top of the range is the VVP, or very, very important person, such as the managing director of an important company. Of course, not all managing

directors are VVPs, and businessmen are not the only important people.

INTERVIEWER: So, how are they treated differently?

DONALD: Well, unlike the normal business guest, the VIP has his or her room allocated in advance. We make sure we have all the necessary information about the guest and his company on the computer. We'll know what kind of room he likes, what side of the hotel, and so on. So there's just a simple check-in procedure. The duty manager is made aware of the VIP's presence in the hotel, but he doesn't usually come out to meet him. For the CIP, the room is also allocated in advance. However, all CIP rooms are double-checked, to make sure that everything is OK, and some additional extras are usually included. For example, if a CIP has asked for something in the past, we try to make sure it's there again on his or her return. Again, check-in is very simple and the duty manager does try to meet the CIPs if at all possible.

INTERVIEWER: OK, so there's extra attention to detail.

DONALD: Right. Then, there's the VVP.

Whereas CIP rooms are double-checked, all VVPs have their rooms treble-checked, the last check by the senior housekeeper or duty manager. What's more, a full range of extras is provided, including flowers, wine, chocolates, etc. For a VVP, there's no need to check in at Reception. The duty manager always meets and accompanies the guest to his or her room, where check-in procedures can be completed. In other words: for us, all our guests are important, but some guests are definitely more important than others.

Source: Harding, K., & Henderson, P. (1994) – B2, p.164

Appendix 5: Keys to Symbols in Transcription

- / one stroke sloping upward to the right (/) is used to indicate a slight pause.
- ((gap)) is used when a pause cannot be timed between different speaker's turn
- [*] is used to mark a filled pause (i.e. "er", "em", and "eh", etc. used within a speaker's turn)
- ((laughing)) laughing
- ((coughing)) coughing
- (xin chao) words in local language
- [...] single square brackets are used to mark the beginning and ending of overlap when someone is already speaking and the other starts, for example:
G: and we're leaving [tomorrow]
S: [let me] try for you and I think it's available.
- = Equal signs are used to indicate the latching utterances. It refers to the utterance when a guest or a staff member has just finished his/her prior utterance and the other interlocutor starts immediately. The signs are put at the end of the prior utterance and the beginning of the next utterance. For example:
S: I recommend you to go with the group tour =
G: = just go like the group tour yeah.
- These signs are also used to indicate the latching which occurs within an ongoing turn of a single speaker, e.g. I spoke to = I talked to somebody yesterday...
- _ a hyphen indicates a sharp cut-off of the prior sound (for truncation)
- : A colon is used to refer to a stretched or lengthened sound

- ? A question mark is used to mark a rising intonation
- . A full stop is used to mark a falling intonation
- , A comma is used to mark a continuing intonation
- word An emphasised or stressed word is underlined
- WORD** A capitalised word is used to indicate that the word is uttered louder than the other words
- is used to indicate the utterance within which there is a phenomenon examined