

Challenges and Strategies of Hospitality EFL Lecturers in Implementing Industry-Based Learning within ESP Courses

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Abstract. The rapid transformation of the hospitality industry in response to globalization and sustainability demands has placed new expectations on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education. Within this evolving context, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers are required to bridge academic learning with professional practice through Industry-Based Learning (IBL). This study explored the challenges and strategies of hospitality EFL lecturers in implementing IBL within ESP courses in two Indonesian tourism polytechnics. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving six EFL lecturers with direct experience in hospitality-based teaching. Thematic analysis revealed four interrelated themes: limited student readiness and linguistic confidence, inconsistent industry collaboration on sustainable practices, time constraints restricting learning depth, and pedagogical adaptation through scaffolding and reflection. These findings indicate that lecturers' experiences are shaped by a continuous negotiation between institutional structures, industry realities, and the socio-emotional dimensions of teaching. The study highlights that successful IBL implementation depends not only on curriculum design but also on lecturers' reflective and adaptive agency in managing authentic learning environments. Theoretically, the research contributes to the understanding of experiential and constructivist learning in vocational English contexts, while practically, it provides insights for strengthening collaboration among lecturers, institutions, and industry partners toward sustainable and contextually grounded hospitality education.

Keywords: *Industry-Based Learning (IBL); English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Hospitality Education*

Introduction

In recent years, the hospitality industry has undergone a rapid and multifaceted transformation driven by globalization, digitalization, and the global shift toward sustainability. These developments have significantly reshaped the competencies required of graduates from hospitality and tourism institutions, particularly in the domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). English has become the lingua franca of international hospitality, functioning as a key medium for communication among professionals, guests, and stakeholders from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Zizka, 2022; Chen & Liu, 2021). Consequently, English language proficiency in this field extends beyond linguistic accuracy to include intercultural communicative competence, pragmatic awareness, and the development of professional identity (Basturkmen, 2021; Renandya & Widodo, 2020). Within this context, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers play a crucial role in designing learning experiences that connect classroom instruction with authentic workplace practices.

Despite this pedagogical shift, a persistent gap remains between ESP instruction and the realities of workplace communication, particularly in Indonesia's vocational and tourism

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higher education. Many ESP classrooms continue to rely on textbook-oriented and teacher-centered approaches, providing limited exposure to authentic discourse and intercultural interaction (Khalida & Refnaldi, 2020; Sari et al., 2023). As a result, students often demonstrate adequate theoretical knowledge but encounter difficulties when applying English in professional contexts. To address this issue, Industry-Based Learning (IBL) has been introduced as an experiential approach that integrates academic learning with real industry engagement. Through placements in authentic settings such as hotels, travel agencies, and restaurants, IBL enables students to develop communicative competence, critical thinking, and professional skills through direct interaction (Billett, 2011; Qureshi et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, IBL has been formally supported through the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 53 of 2023, which emphasizes stronger collaboration between vocational institutions and industry. Institutions such as Makassar and Lombok Tourism Polytechnics have begun integrating IBL into their ESP curricula. However, its implementation remains challenging and often inconsistent across contexts.

A preliminary study by the researcher, based on informal observations and exploratory interviews with EFL lecturers and students at these institutions, reveals several critical issues. First, the duration of industry exposure is often too limited to allow meaningful language practice. Second, coordination between academic institutions and industry partners is often fragmented, leading to misalignment between learning objectives and workplace tasks. Third, students frequently exhibit low confidence and high anxiety when required to use English in real professional interactions, particularly when dealing with international guests. Additionally, lecturers reported difficulties in integrating industry experiences into classroom reflection and assessment. These findings indicate that, although IBL has been adopted structurally, its pedagogical implementation remains suboptimal.

These preliminary findings also highlight a broader research gap. While previous studies have extensively examined ESP curriculum design, student performance, and the effectiveness of experiential learning models, limited attention has been given to lecturers' perspectives as key agents in implementing IBL. Existing research tends to focus on outcomes rather than processes, overlooking how lecturers interpret policies, negotiate institutional constraints, and adapt pedagogical strategies in real contexts. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical studies that explore how EFL lecturers integrate language instruction, industry demands, and emerging priorities such as digitalization and sustainability within a unified pedagogical framework, particularly in Indonesian vocational education settings.

The post-pandemic context further complicates this landscape. The increased adoption of digital and hybrid learning models has transformed how lecturers deliver instruction and facilitate engagement (Apriani et al., 2022; Prayogi et al., 2022; Alawamleh et al., 2023). Blended IBL models—combining virtual simulations, online mentoring, and limited in-person practice—have expanded learning opportunities but also required higher levels of digital competence. For EFL lecturers, this shift entails balancing technological adaptation with communicative and intercultural pedagogy, adding complexity to their professional roles (Mulyani et al., 2022).

At the same time, the growing emphasis on sustainability in the hospitality industry has influenced educational priorities. Professionals are increasingly expected to communicate sustainability practices effectively in English and apply them in workplace contexts (Legrand et al., 2011; Ruhanen et al., 2020). Integrating sustainability into ESP not only aligns with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 and SDG 8, but also positions language as a tool for social and environmental responsibility (Zizka, 2022; Chen et al., 2023). However, how lecturers incorporate these emerging themes into IBL-based ESP instruction remains underexplored.

Drawing on Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) and Constructivist perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978), lecturers are positioned as facilitators who support both cognitive and affective learning through reflective and scaffolded experiences. In this regard, their role extends beyond content delivery to include mediating students' professional identity formation, emotional readiness, and intercultural competence.

In light of these gaps, this study investigates the challenges and strategies of hospitality EFL lecturers in implementing Industry-Based Learning within ESP courses at tourism polytechnics in Indonesia. By foregrounding lecturers' lived experiences, this research addresses the underrepresentation of teacher perspectives in the literature and highlights the complexity of translating policy into practice. The study contributes theoretically to discussions on experiential and work-integrated language learning by emphasizing teacher agency and contextual adaptation, and practically by providing insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and industry stakeholders to design more coherent, responsive, and sustainable IBL frameworks in hospitality education.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically anchored in frameworks that explain how hospitality EFL lecturers experience, interpret, and respond to the complexities of implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Drawing upon Experiential Learning Theory, Constructivist Learning Theory, and the ESP Approach, this section establishes an analytical lens that specifically captures lecturers' challenges and strategies in bridging language pedagogy with real industry practices.

Experiential Learning Theory and Lecturers' Challenges and Strategies

Experiential Learning Theory conceptualizes learning as a continuous process in which knowledge is constructed through experience and reflection. The cyclical process—comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—explains how individuals transform real-world engagement into meaningful understanding (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2019).

In relation to this study, hospitality EFL lecturers encounter significant challenges when facilitating Industry-Based Learning, particularly in aligning classroom instruction with unpredictable and dynamic workplace situations. For instance, lecturers must deal with limited control over industry environments, varying student readiness, and inconsistencies between pedagogical goals and workplace demands. These challenges often require immediate pedagogical decision-making without structured guidance.

At the same time, the theory explains the strategies lecturers employ. Through continuous reflection on teaching experiences, lecturers adapt their instructional approaches, such as modifying tasks based on real guest interactions, integrating reflective journals, and redesigning learning activities to better simulate workplace communication. In this sense, lecturers are not only facilitators of students' experiential learning but also experiential learners themselves, constantly refining their practices based on field-based insights. Thus, this theory provides a foundation for understanding how lecturers transform challenges into adaptive teaching strategies through reflective cycles.

Constructivist Learning Theory and Socially Mediated Challenges and Strategies

Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that knowledge is socially constructed through interaction, collaboration, and contextual engagement (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2020). Within the IBL context, lecturers operate in a socially complex environment involving students, institutional systems, and industry partners.

From this perspective, lecturers face challenges that are inherently social in nature. These include negotiating expectations between academic institutions and industry stakeholders, managing diverse student abilities and confidence levels, and facilitating communication in multilingual and multicultural environments. Additionally, lecturers often

struggle to maintain meaningful interaction when students are placed in external industry settings with limited supervision.

To respond to these challenges, lecturers implement strategies grounded in social mediation. These include scaffolding students' communication through guided role-plays, facilitating peer collaboration, maintaining communication with industry mentors, and creating reflective discussion spaces where students can share experiences. Lecturers also act as mediators who bridge institutional expectations with workplace realities, ensuring that learning remains meaningful despite contextual constraints. Therefore, constructivist theory highlights that lecturers' strategies are relational and interaction-driven, rather than purely instructional.

ESP Approach and Pedagogical Challenges and Strategies

The ESP approach provides a discipline-specific framework that emphasizes the importance of aligning language instruction with learners' professional needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Basturkmen, 2021). In hospitality education, this requires lecturers to design materials and activities that reflect authentic workplace communication, such as handling guest complaints, managing reservations, or explaining services.

However, lecturers encounter several challenges in implementing ESP within IBL contexts. These include limited access to authentic industry materials, inconsistent collaboration with industry partners, time constraints in aligning curriculum with field experience, and students' varying levels of English proficiency. Such constraints often hinder the effective integration of language learning with industry practice.

In response, lecturers develop strategic pedagogical adaptations. These strategies include designing task-based and problem-based activities that simulate real hospitality scenarios, incorporating authentic communication samples from industry settings, and using bilingual or scaffolded instruction to support learners with lower proficiency. Additionally, lecturers may customize assessment methods to reflect both language competence and workplace performance. Through the ESP lens, these strategies are viewed as efforts to ensure that language instruction remains relevant, practical, and aligned with industry expectations.

Integrating Challenges and Strategies Across Theories

By integrating these three theoretical perspectives, this study adopts a constructivist-experiential framework that captures the dynamic relationship between lecturers' challenges and strategies. Experiential Learning Theory explains how lecturers respond to challenges through reflection and adaptation; Constructivist Learning Theory highlights the social and contextual dimensions of these challenges and strategies; and the ESP approach provides the pedagogical foundation that guides lecturers in aligning language instruction with workplace needs.

This integrated framework positions lecturers as active agents who continuously negotiate, adapt, and innovate within complex educational and professional environments. It also defines the scope of this study, which focuses on lecturers' lived experiences, reflective practices, and strategic responses in implementing Industry-Based Learning within ESP courses. By applying this lens, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how theoretical principles are enacted in practice and how lecturers navigate the intersection of language education and industry demands in hospitality contexts.

Material and Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the challenges and strategies of hospitality EFL lecturers in implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. The qualitative descriptive design was chosen because it allows for a rich, detailed, and contextualized understanding of participants' real-life experiences without imposing rigid theoretical assumptions. This

approach is particularly suitable for educational settings where researchers aim to describe and interpret the lived realities of teachers and the dynamic nature of teaching practices. In the context of this research, it enabled an in-depth exploration of how lecturers perceive, experience, and respond to the complexities of aligning language pedagogy with the demands of the hospitality industry. The methodology was structured to ensure transparency, coherence, and replicability, allowing other researchers to understand and potentially reproduce the study procedures while recognizing the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry.

The participants in this study were selected through a purposive sampling technique, as they possessed direct and relevant experience with the research phenomenon. A total of six English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers participated, representing two vocational higher education institutions in Indonesia: Makassar Tourism Polytechnic and Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. These two institutions were selected because they actively integrate Industry-Based Learning programs in collaboration with hotels and other hospitality establishments, offering authentic environments where language education and industry experience intersect. The inclusion criteria were: (1) lecturers who teach ESP courses in hospitality programs, (2) have at least two years of professional teaching experience, and (3) have been directly involved in planning, supervising, or evaluating IBL activities. This participant selection ensured that the data reflected genuine pedagogical and contextual insights from lecturers experienced in industry-linked teaching. Makassar Tourism Polytechnic represents a long-established institution with extensive hotel partnerships, while Lombok Tourism Polytechnic, as a newer institution, reflects the emerging dynamics of sustainable and collaborative hospitality education.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis, ensuring triangulation and depth. Semi-structured interviews served as the main data collection technique, enabling participants to express their professional views and reflections in their own words. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on the participant's location and preference. The interviews explored lecturers' perceptions of IBL relevance, challenges encountered in integrating it into ESP instruction, strategies employed to overcome those challenges, and reflections on student engagement and outcomes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted in classroom settings and during IBL activities—such as student preparation sessions, hotel placements, and post-IBL feedback meetings—to document teaching practices, lecturer–student interactions, and collaboration with industry mentors. Document analysis involved reviewing lesson plans, curriculum outlines, partnership agreements, and institutional policies to understand how IBL was formally embedded within ESP teaching frameworks.

The data analysis followed the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which provides a systematic process for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The analysis proceeded through six stages: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes, (2) generating initial codes to capture significant statements and recurring ideas, (3) searching for broader themes that connected the codes conceptually, (4) reviewing and refining themes for internal consistency and clarity, (5) defining and naming each theme to capture its essence, and (6) producing a narrative report that linked themes to the theoretical framework and research questions. The analysis was conducted manually to maintain close engagement with the data, and validation was ensured through peer debriefing and member checking with selected participants to confirm the accuracy and credibility of interpretations.

Institutional permissions were obtained from both participating polytechnics, and ethical clearance was formally granted by Makassar Tourism Polytechnic before data collection began.

In summary, the methodological design of this study was intended to produce a clear, transparent, and credible account of how hospitality EFL lecturers navigate the integration of IBL within ESP teaching. By combining multiple data sources and applying a rigorous analytical process, this study provides a solid and trustworthy examination of lecturers' professional challenges, adaptive strategies, and reflective practices. The qualitative descriptive approach not only captures the richness of their lived experiences but also strengthens the interpretive depth and reliability of the findings, ensuring that the analysis presented is both methodologically sound and academically robust.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on thematic analysis of interviews, observations, and supporting documents, four interrelated themes emerged that reveal how hospitality EFL lecturers experience and respond to the challenges of implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. These themes capture the professional realities, emotional struggles, and adaptive strategies lecturers employ while aligning academic language instruction with dynamic hospitality practices. The themes are: (1) Student Readiness and Linguistic Confidence, (2) Limited Sustainable Industry Collaboration, (3) Time Constraints and Learning Depth, and (4) Pedagogical Adaptation through Scaffolding and Reflection. Each theme reflects a lived experience of negotiation between institutional expectations, industry realities, and the lecturers' professional agency.

Student Readiness and Linguistic Confidence

One of the most recurrent challenges described by lecturers was the lack of student readiness and confidence in using English, particularly when interacting with international guests or discussing sustainability-related topics. Many students, though familiar with sustainability concepts in Indonesian, struggled to articulate these ideas fluently in English. One lecturer (L2) stated:

"The challenge that I most often encounter is the limited readiness of students. Not all students have enough confidence to communicate with foreign guests in English, especially when the topic is related to sustainability issues."

This statement reveals a deeper tension between academic knowledge and communicative competence. Students may understand theoretical aspects of eco-friendly practices, yet the linguistic and emotional demands of real industry communication often leave them hesitant. Another lecturer reflected on the emotional side of this issue:

"They are afraid of being wrong, afraid of being ridiculed, so they prefer to be silent rather than try to speak in English."

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings resonate with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, where learning involves a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of IBL, students are immersed in authentic professional experiences (the "concrete" phase) but often lack structured reflection and feedback to transform those experiences into linguistic competence. The lecturers' roles thus extend beyond teaching grammar or vocabulary—they become facilitators of emotional resilience, guiding students through reflective cycles that foster both linguistic confidence and intercultural adaptability. This also aligns with Beard and Wilson's (2019) notion that experiential learning is inherently emotional, requiring educators to create psychologically safe spaces for risk-taking and self-expression.

Such remarks indicate that foreign language anxiety remains a significant barrier, particularly in authentic, high-stakes environments like hotel internships. Lecturers thus find themselves not only teaching English but also building students' emotional resilience and self-efficacy to engage in cross-cultural communication.

Limited Sustainable Industry Collaboration

A second major challenge concerns the inconsistency of industry partners in applying sustainability principles. Several lecturers observed that only a small proportion of hotels or restaurants genuinely practice eco-friendly operations. One participant (L4) noted:

"In my experience, the biggest obstacle lies precisely in the availability of industry partners who really apply sustainability principles. Not all hotels or restaurants have a green practice policy that can be used as a real example."

This inconsistency affects the authenticity of students' learning experiences. When industry partners lack visible sustainability initiatives, lecturers struggle to contextualize ESP instruction around real examples. Consequently, the alignment between curriculum goals and workplace exposure becomes uneven. The situation also places lecturers in a mediating role, as they must reinterpret the concept of sustainability in classroom discussions to fill experiential gaps. One lecturer (L1) expressed this dilemma:

"We often have to redefine the meaning of green practices in the classroom because not all internships show real examples."

These insights suggest that IBL's effectiveness is structurally dependent on external collaboration, echoing Billett's (2011) argument that the quality of workplace learning relies on the affordances of the environment. Within Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural framework, this issue also underscores that knowledge construction is socially mediated students' understanding of sustainability is shaped by interactions between lecturers, industry mentors, and authentic contexts. However, when these mediating contexts are inconsistent, lecturers assume the role of cultural and conceptual mediators, bridging gaps through contextual reinterpretation.

This adaptive mediation reveals a critical layer of teacher agency (Gao, 2021): lecturers are not passive implementers of policy but active negotiators of meaning who reconstruct sustainability education based on local industry realities. Rather than perceiving the lack of industry consistency as failure, lecturers transformed it into a reflective dialogue—helping students examine how sustainable practices could be imagined or improved within Indonesian hospitality. This adaptive approach reinforces Ratnah and Saputri's (2023) and Zizka's (2022) claims that sustainability communication in ESP must remain context-responsive, blending local relevance with global awareness.

Time Constraints and Learning Depth

Time emerged as another critical constraint. The standard IBL duration—often two weeks—was perceived as insufficient for students to adapt, observe, and internalize both linguistic and professional competencies. A lecturer (L5) commented:

"The duration of IBL which is only two weeks feels too short. Students take longer to be able to adapt and show progress in language skills and understanding of sustainability."

This limited timeframe creates a surface-level engagement with the workplace environment, where students merely adjust to routines rather than deeply reflect on the communicative and sustainability aspects of their tasks. The lecturers expressed frustration

that the institutional structure prioritizes completion over transformation. The short duration also restricts the lecturers' ability to monitor progress or conduct meaningful post-placement evaluations. One participant (L3) reflected:

"Just as they started to confidently talk to guests, the program was over."

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight a tension between policy-driven implementation and pedagogical depth. Experiential learning, as Kolb (1984) posits, requires time for iterative cycles of experience and reflection. Short-term placements interrupt this process, leading to what Marlina (2017) calls "fragmented learning experiences." Yet, lecturers demonstrated creative responses—extending learning through reflective journals, online debriefings, and post-IBL discussions. These adaptive measures signify not only pedagogical innovation but also professional resilience, affirming the lecturers' agency to sustain reflective learning despite structural limitations.

Pedagogical Adaptation through Scaffolding and Reflection

In response to these challenges, lecturers employed multiple adaptive strategies centered on scaffolding, authentic learning, and reflective practice. Pre-IBL preparation was the most frequently mentioned intervention. Lecturers used classroom simulations, role-plays, and scenario-based activities to help students anticipate real-world interactions. One lecturer (L6) explained:

"I usually give simulations in class before students take IBL. This way, they are better prepared to face real situations in the industry."

This proactive scaffolding was seen as vital to reducing anxiety and improving communicative readiness. Lecturers also provided targeted vocabulary lists and situational dialogues relevant to hospitality, ensuring that students entered their placements with practical linguistic tools. Another strategy involved reflective journaling, where students documented their experiences and challenges in English during and after IBL. According to one lecturer:

"Through reflection journals, students learn to relate experiences to theory and recognize the development of their own abilities."

Reflection thus became a bridge between experience and understanding, enabling both linguistic and personal growth. Furthermore, maintaining close communication with industry partners was seen as essential. As one participant summarized:

"I maintain communication with industry partners so that students get support that is in accordance with ESP's learning objectives."

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Table 1.

Summary of EFL lecturers' challenges and strategies of implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses

Theme	Description	Illustrative Strategies
Student Readiness and Linguistic Confidence	Students lacked confidence and fluency in using English for sustainability discussions, leading to hesitation in real interactions.	Pre-IBL simulations, vocabulary support, and emotional encouragement
Limited Sustainable Industry Collaboration	Inconsistent green practices among partner hotels restricted authentic learning experiences.	Reinforcing sustainability concepts in class; ongoing dialogue with industry partners
Time Constraints and Learning Depth	Short IBL durations prevented deeper adaptation and reflection.	Extended reflection tasks; post-IBL debriefing sessions
Pedagogical Adaptation through Scaffolding and Reflection	Lecturers developed context-specific strategies to prepare and support students.	Scaffolding, authentic task design, reflective journals, and continuous collaboration

Overall, the findings reveal that the challenges faced by hospitality EFL lecturers are not merely technical but deeply contextual and emotional. The tension between institutional structures, industry realities, and pedagogical ideals forces lecturers to act as mediators—balancing theory with practice, language with culture, and sustainability ideals with real-world constraints. Their strategies—scaffolding, reflective learning, and collaboration—illustrate a form of professional resilience rooted in adaptability and empathy. Rather than viewing these challenges as obstacles, the lecturers reinterpret them as opportunities for ongoing learning and pedagogical innovation, turning Industry-Based Learning into a dynamic, reflective, and context-sensitive process that continually evolves with the hospitality industry's changing landscape.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a dynamic and multifaceted intersection between pedagogical ideals, institutional expectations, and the real-world demands of the hospitality industry faced by EFL lecturers in implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. The four major themes—student readiness and linguistic confidence, limited sustainable industry collaboration, time constraints and learning depth, and pedagogical adaptation through scaffolding and reflection—collectively portray the complexity of vocational language education in Indonesia's tourism context. These findings highlight that the implementation of IBL is not simply an administrative process or a curriculum requirement but rather a *socially and emotionally situated practice* that requires lecturers to balance competing forces: theory and practice, institutional policies and industry realities, and global English standards and local cultural dynamics.

The first theme, *student readiness and linguistic confidence*, underscores a recurring pedagogical challenge in hospitality ESP classrooms: the gap between students' linguistic proficiency and the communicative demands of professional hospitality environments. Many lecturers described how students, despite understanding the technical aspects of hospitality in Indonesia, often lacked the confidence to express themselves in English when interacting with guests or discussing sustainability initiatives. This finding resonates with prior studies by Gumartifa and Syahri (2021) and Daud et al. (2022), which emphasize that language anxiety and low self-efficacy significantly hinder students' communicative competence in ESP contexts. When viewed through Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), such hesitation reflects an incomplete learning cycle. Students may experience real-life industry

engagement (*concrete experience*), but without structured opportunities for *reflective observation* and *abstract conceptualization*, their learning remains surface-level. The lecturers' pre-IBL strategies—simulations, role plays, and guided reflections—represent deliberate attempts to complete Kolb's experiential cycle by providing reflective scaffolds that help students translate workplace encounters into linguistic growth and self-awareness. This aligns with Beard and Wilson's (2019) assertion that experiential learning becomes transformative only when it is mediated through reflection and mentorship. The emotional dimension revealed here also supports Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2019) "emotion turn" in language education, which argues that language learning involves affective as much as cognitive engagement. Thus, lecturers' sensitivity to students' emotions becomes an integral component of successful IBL pedagogy.

The second theme, *limited sustainable industry collaboration*, points to systemic barriers that extend beyond the classroom. The success of IBL depends heavily on the quality and authenticity of partnerships with industry actors (Billett, 2011). However, lecturers in this study reported inconsistencies in how hotels and hospitality establishments implement sustainability practices or use English in daily operations. This lack of uniformity reduces the authenticity of students' learning experiences and challenges lecturers to recontextualize professional discourse in their teaching. From a Constructivist Learning standpoint (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2020), these inconsistencies illustrate that learning in IBL is co-constructed through social interaction and negotiation. Lecturers become mediators between institutional ideals and industrial realities, adapting pedagogical content to reflect local possibilities while maintaining alignment with global professional standards. Rather than perceiving these gaps as shortcomings, lecturers leveraged them as opportunities for contextual adaptation—integrating local hospitality practices into discussions of global sustainability. This finding echoes Ratnah and Saputri (2023) and Zizka (2022), who observed that ESP teaching in hospitality must remain responsive to context-specific variations in sustainability engagement. It also mirrors Widodo's (2021) argument that teacher agency in work-integrated language learning involves navigating power relations between academia and industry to sustain pedagogical coherence.

The third theme, *time constraints and learning depth*, reflects structural challenges that constrain the full potential of experiential learning. The standard two-week IBL duration at the studied polytechnics was widely regarded as insufficient for students to internalize both linguistic and professional competencies. As Qureshi et al. (2023) emphasize, meaningful work-integrated learning requires extended exposure to workplace communication cycles to allow reflection, adaptation, and skill mastery. From the lens of Experiential Learning Theory, this time limitation disrupts the recursive learning process, preventing learners from progressing beyond basic adaptation toward transformative understanding. Lecturers' frustration with this "unfinished learning" process parallels Marlina's (2017) critique of short-term vocational programs, which often prioritize procedural training over critical reflection. Nonetheless, lecturers' use of reflective journals and post-IBL discussions demonstrates creative attempts to extend learning temporally and cognitively beyond the formal program boundaries. Such reflective extensions signify a form of *teacher agency* (Gao, 2021), where lecturers exercise professional judgment to sustain learning depth despite institutional constraints.

The fourth theme, *pedagogical adaptation through scaffolding and reflection*, reveals how lecturers respond innovatively to the multidimensional challenges of IBL implementation. Their strategies—ranging from structured pre-placement orientations to ongoing mentoring and post-placement reflection—reflect Vygotsky's (1978) principle of *scaffolding* within the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*, where learning occurs most effectively through guided support. In this framework, lecturers act as cultural and linguistic mediators who help students navigate between academic and professional discourses. These findings align with Lantolf and Thorne's (2020) sociocultural theory, which views language learning as a mediated process shaped by interaction, tools, and context.

Reflective practices, such as journaling and peer sharing, also resonate with Kolb's (1984) notion of *reflective observation* and with Yahya Akil et al. (2018), who demonstrated that structured reflection enhances students' capacity to link theory with professional identity formation. The lecturers' dual role as facilitators and co-learners in these processes underscores the importance of reflexivity in sustaining pedagogical authenticity.

Synthesizing these insights, the discussion suggests that integrating IBL into ESP courses constitutes a context-dependent, socially mediated process that demands pedagogical innovation, emotional resilience, and reflective adaptation. The challenges identified in this study—ranging from linguistic readiness to institutional constraints—are manifestations of broader systemic tensions between education and the labor market. Yet, lecturers' adaptive strategies reveal their capacity for professional agency and *transformative mediation*. This agency is visible not only in how they modify curriculum delivery but also in how they construct their professional identities amid changing educational paradigms. As Priestley et al. (2015) and Gao (2021) argue, teacher agency emerges from the interplay between personal beliefs, professional contexts, and structural opportunities—a dynamic clearly observed in how lecturers in this study exercised creative control within institutional limitations.

From a broader lens, the findings contribute to the growing theoretical conversation about how Experiential and Constructivist Learning Theories intersect in vocational language education. While experiential learning provides the foundation for linking theory with practice, constructivism explains how such learning is socially mediated and contextually interpreted. The lecturers' actions exemplify this intersection: they guide students through real experiences (experiential), facilitate reflection and meaning-making (constructivist), and continuously adapt to evolving institutional and industrial expectations (agentic). This integrative framework demonstrates that effective IBL is not merely about exposure to the workplace but about fostering continuous dialogue between experience, reflection, and contextual meaning.

On a conceptual level, this study enriches the discourse on IBL by humanizing the often-overlooked experiences of EFL lecturers as the connective tissue between academic ideals and industrial realities. Their narratives reflect resilience, empathy, and innovation in sustaining meaningful learning amid limited time, inconsistent industry collaboration, and evolving sustainability demands. On a practical level, the findings underline that successful IBL requires stronger institutional partnerships, extended internship durations, and ongoing professional development for lecturers in reflective and experiential pedagogy. Furthermore, digital tools such as virtual simulations and reflective e-portfolios could enhance continuity and accessibility in post-pandemic hospitality learning environments (Alawamleh et al., 2023; Prayogi et al., 2022).

Finally, reflecting on my position as both a researcher and a vocational EFL lecturer, I acknowledge that my interpretive lens is shaped by shared professional experiences and the broader sociocultural context of Indonesian hospitality education. This positionality enabled empathetic engagement with participants but also required reflexive awareness to maintain analytic rigor. Through ongoing peer debriefing and reflective journaling, I sought to ensure that the analysis remained grounded in participants' authentic voices rather than institutional expectations. In conclusion, the study redefines Industry-Based Learning not merely as a pedagogical technique but as a transformative social practice—one that positions EFL lecturers as *reflective mediators* who bridge languages, cultures, and sustainability goals in the ever-evolving field of hospitality education.

Conclusion

This study explored the challenges and strategies of hospitality EFL lecturers in implementing Industry-Based Learning (IBL) within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses at Indonesian tourism polytechnics. The findings reveal four key themes: student readiness and linguistic confidence, limited sustainable industry collaboration, time

constraints and learning depth, and pedagogical adaptation through scaffolding and reflection. Collectively, these themes illustrate that IBL implementation is not a simple pedagogical procedure but a deeply contextual and socially mediated process shaped by the intersection of institutional structures, industry engagement, and lecturers' professional agency. The lecturers' experiences show that while IBL offers immense potential for bridging academic and professional learning, its success relies heavily on the preparedness of students, the commitment of industry partners, and the creative pedagogical responses of lecturers who act as mediators between the classroom and the workplace. The study provides a fresh perspective on the human dimension of IBL by emphasizing lecturers' reflective and adaptive roles in navigating the complex realities of hospitality education. Through the lens of Experiential Learning Theory, the findings highlight how lecturers and students co-construct knowledge through cycles of experience and reflection, transforming challenges such as language anxiety and limited exposure into opportunities for professional growth. From a Constructivist Learning standpoint, the results reveal that learning in IBL contexts is inherently social, emerging from interactions among lecturers, students, and industry mentors. Furthermore, by applying the ESP approach, the study contributes to understanding how language instruction can be effectively aligned with authentic workplace communication demands. Together, these perspectives enrich the theoretical discourse on work-integrated language learning by situating lecturers not merely as instructors but as *reflective practitioners* who engage in continuous meaning-making within dynamic and often imperfect industry ecosystems.

Conceptually, the study advances the understanding of IBL as a *transformative pedagogical practice* that bridges experiential learning and sociocultural engagement. It demonstrates that the implementation of IBL within ESP courses requires balancing multiple forms of expertise—linguistic, pedagogical, and interpersonal—while negotiating institutional constraints. Practically, the findings carry several implications. For curriculum developers and policymakers, the study underscores the need to extend IBL durations and strengthen industry partnerships to ensure authentic, sustainable, and linguistically meaningful learning experiences. For institutions, it suggests that supporting lecturer professional development in reflective and experiential pedagogy is vital for enhancing the quality of industry-linked English teaching. For industry partners, the study calls for greater alignment between hospitality practices and educational goals, particularly in promoting English use and sustainability awareness in workplace settings. Beyond practical implications, this study contributes to the broader conversation about equity and agency in vocational education. It highlights how lecturers in non-metropolitan, resource-limited contexts exercise creativity and resilience to uphold the integrity of learning despite systemic barriers. Their efforts exemplify a form of *contextual professionalism* that values empathy, reflection, and adaptability—traits that are crucial for preparing students to thrive in a global yet locally rooted hospitality industry. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. The research focused on two tourism polytechnics, which may not fully represent the diversity of vocational institutions across Indonesia. The relatively small number of participants and the descriptive scope of the study also limit the generalizability of findings. Moreover, the study's temporal frame—based on short-term observation—may not capture the longitudinal evolution of lecturers' practices or student learning outcomes. Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal qualitative or mixed-method designs, exploring the perspectives of students and industry mentors alongside lecturers, or expanding the geographical and institutional scope to capture regional variations in IBL implementation. In conclusion, this study reaffirms that the integration of Industry-Based Learning within ESP teaching is not only an educational necessity but also a reflective journey of adaptation and transformation. By documenting the voices of hospitality EFL lecturers, it contributes to a richer, more humanized understanding of how language education interacts with professional identity, institutional culture, and global sustainability goals. The study ultimately calls for a continued collaborative effort among educators, institutions, and industries to

sustain meaningful, context-sensitive, and reflective practices in the evolving landscape of hospitality English education.

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