

ENGLISH LANGUAGE URGENCY FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES TO BOOST GLOBAL ECONOMY

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE URGENCY FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES TO BOOST GLOBAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Having good communication skills is important for all tourism and hotel employees to have. All tourism and hospitality employees are expected to be effective and efficient English speakers to provide quality services. The present study was conducted to explore the needs of English among hospitality employees to improve the global economy. The results showed that high language competence is needed by hospitality employees to be able to work professionally. It is, however, most hospitality employees still have problems in English. Consequently, they are unable to communicate effectively to satisfy tourists' expectations. The study implies that the increase of English language training needs to be carefully considered and the English learning syllabus offered by hospitality training institutions needs to be restructured to improve career choices in the tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has developed into a global phenomenon involving hundreds of millions of people, both from the community, government, and the tourism industry. In its development, tourism has undergone various changes, including changes in patterns, forms, and nature of activities as well as motivation to travel. In developing countries, tourism is oriented towards centric economic growth and business development. Tourism is one of the

main sectors to obtain foreign exchange from non-oil and gas income. In addition to foreign exchange earnings, tourism also plays a role in other strategic fields, for example creating and expanding employment opportunities, encouraging environmental preservation and developing the nation's culture, and fostering a sense of love for the motherland. Thus, tourism activities involve various companies engaged in transportation, accommodation, food companies, and service companies.

The increase in tourism in the world requires a higher level of communication skills to improve global interconnectivity. One language that is used internationally to communicate in English, therefore the mastery of English becomes compulsory for all hospitality and tourism employees. This is because the employees who communicate effectively in English provide efficient services. Meanwhile, those who speak poor English tend to provide inefficient services due to their communication breakdown. Consequently, the need for good English communication skills can be denied to work in all sectors within the tourism industry (Al-saadi, 2015). The skill is not merely for tourism companies doing business in the English-speaking country. Therefore, having a good knowledge of English specifically used in a tourism business context is very important. As a result, enhancing English language skills for the tourism industry may help people to be more employable in tourism businesses (Chaudhary & Kaur, 2016).

In addition, mastering English as an international language is a must for people living in the era of globalization as it is now to access information, technology, and communication between countries, of course, requires international language skills, namely English, which has been designated as the unifying language or Lingua Franca (Astawa et al., 2019). Especially in the tourism industry, English has been used as a means of communication since ancient times until now. People who live in international tourism areas need English language skills to engage and interact with all tourists intensively. Therefore, high practical knowledge of English is indisputably important for all tourism practitioners (Astawa et al., 2019).

The main destination of foreign tourists in Indonesia is Bali because Bali presents a beautiful panorama and a very unique culture. The Balinese have designed their area to become a tourist destination without losing local traditions and culture. The Balinese can improve their well-being by running a tourism business such as setting up restaurants, hotels, villas, or just being a tourist guide for tourists. Therefore, having a good mastery of English is very important for the Balinese who want to work in the tourism industry (Astawa et al., 2019). Nowadays, through the continuous development of tourism in Bali, the economic wheel is spinning rapidly towards the prosperity and reliability of the tourism industry. The increasing number of tourists causes economic transactions to increase, which certainly has an impact on economic progress for industrial entrepreneurs and the general public.

To continually increase the quality of services within the tourism industry as described above, it certainly requires reliable human resources, infrastructure, and good English language skills. By having good English communication

skills, tourism business workers can serve foreign tourists well to satisfy their needs. Due to these phenomena, English has been taught starting from elementary schools to universities and is considered to be one of the compulsory subjects. The Indonesian government certainly thinks that the future of the nation's children needs English language skills. Unfortunately, many Indonesians learn English only mainly at a conceptual level and cannot use or apply English effectively in their daily lives due to some social and linguistics factors hindrance their English communication skill. Fox, (2008) describes that sociolinguistics competence becomes important to be mastered in order to be successful communicators in the tourism industry.

There is no doubt that tourism has a valuable impact on world economic development. Consequently, many countries have taken tourism seriously in recent years and have made tourism a major sector in foreign exchange income, job creation, and poverty alleviation. Wilson, (2018) describes that English is really important for the development of the tourism industry. Nowadays tourism is no longer just an industry but also a field of study and developed as a science which is an activity that has a major role and influence on human life. Therefore, the demand for English ability is very high to be employable in the tourism sectors (Iglesias, 2016). Having good English communication skills enables tourism workers, to engage themselves with tourists in various business transactions and tourism activities. This is why all tourism practitioners are urged to continuously enhance their English skills.

One of the most important things that cause people to want to travel is the desire to know the culture of other people in the world and the desire to experience the culture. Cultural resources that become tourist attractions include historic buildings, art and sculpture, performances, religious relics, activities, and ways of life of local people, and culinary. Tourism with a special interest is the trend development of tourism in the coming years because potential tourists require a type of tourism that is focused and able to meet the specific needs of tourists. To satisfy tourists' needs, tourism employees need to communicate in English properly (Che Hassan & Ong Lok Tik, 2019). Being a good English communicator helps fulfill the needs of all visitors and provides satisfaction that may lead to an increase in incoming visitors. All tourism activities directly engage the community, thus bringing a variety of benefits to the communities both economically and socially. Therefore, tourism is considered to be one of the most important aspects to make people have the experience of many things in their life. To be able to provide comprehensive and holistic services, tourism employees need to have effective skills in communication (Che Hassan & Ong Lok Tik, 2019).

The need for English for the tourism industry has drawn attention for many researchers to investigate the potential of the language used in tourism (Irimiea, 2019). English has centrally essential to be mastered by all tourism workers to boost the economy. Tourism benefits can be clearly viewed from many aspects, namely the benefits of tourism in terms of economic, socio-cultural, environmental, value relations and science, and job opportunities and opportunities. The tourism sector is one of the strategic sectors in developing Indonesia's economy. This fast-growing sector has become part of the

development of the global economy (Astawa et al., 2019). Tourism has helped the growth of the Indonesian economy and the unemployment number slowly decreasing. The tourism sector is one sector that contributes to income and employment. This happens because the arrival of tourists to an area opens up opportunities for people to become entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

Economic growth is one of the macroeconomic indicators that are of concern to the country, even in the world. This is because the economic growth of a country can reflect the increase in a country's ability to provide more types of economic goods to its population and increase the income per capita of its population. Tourism has supported the growth of the economy enormously. The tourism sector is one of the strategic sectors that must be used for tourism development as part of national development. Tourism development has impacted many people's life because it improves people's income, which in turn it can improve the welfare of the people. The tourism sector is one sector that contributes to employment. Because it provides the opportunity for the local to work and starts businesses to get a better income. To be able to work professionally in the tourism industry, the mastery of tourism English becomes a compulsory skill to possess (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). Therefore, an English language curriculum and learning materials should be developed to meet the needs of tourism stakeholders (Puspitasari, 2018).

English considered to be one of the key elements of tourism growth which makes English is a subject that needs to mastered by all hospitality personnel. This is since hospitality has become the largest component of economic growth. (Wu & Huang, 2013). Tourism has even developed into one of the largest industries in the world. The number of tourist arrivals and the income derived from international tourists. Consequently, to provide a higher level of services for tourists, many facilities should be built. One of the economic potentials possessed by Bali Island is in the tourism sector. It is hoped that the government can develop and exploit the potential of this tourism sector because the existence of the tourism sector can develop the people's economy. English is an essential tool for people to work in the tourism industry. Therefore, hospitality practitioners need a high level of English competence, it however many of them still have limited skill in English and low English confidence. (Fujita et al., 2017).

In the case of tourism businesses in the world today, from professional globalization and with a practically unlimited economy, effective communication is essential for the good performance of any company. In this globalization, English has become the standard language for business communication. (Astawa et al., 2019). Company preferences vary: some requests, other written, oral English competencies, and, in many cases, require language proficiency in both directions. This sounds logical if we assume that English has become the language of global communication. Finally, everyone involved in the tourism sector must have good instructions, and the use of English and management communication skills are needed to meet all the requirements of the sector because this may result in service excellence, faster and better so that it will improve the economy in the long run. (Prachanant, 2012). The improvement of the English language for hospitality employees is

always needed to ensure that they all can communicate effectively. Therefore, their competence should be assessed continually. (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Consequently, genre-based learning material concerning English for hospitality personnel is essentially important to be implemented. (Terauchi et al., 2017).

In addition, as an effort to analyze the English language achievement, conducting appropriate language assessment to the language learners is indisputably important (Gan, He, & Liu, 2019). Assessment is not only carried out to know learners' language achievement and learning progress, but it is also to continually improve their language competence. By administering the assessment, it enables teachers to know the strength and weaknesses of their teaching strategies (Ahmad, 2018; Ma, 2019). This is because assessment results could be used as a reference to see which part of the lesson should be improved. Therefore, assessment is also utilized to know language learners' needs for a specific competence (Morgan, & Alfehaid, 2019). Consequently, to analyze the language learners' language needs, teachers should always conduct an assessment in every learning session.

Considering the phenomenon of tourism that boosts the development of the economy, all hospitality employees need to have a high level of English to be able to communicate effectively in the global economy. Many studies have been conducted concerning the importance of tourism; however, there are only a few studies related to the need for English to boost tourism and the global economy. Therefore, the present study urgently needs to be conducted to reveal the existing conditions of the English language skills of hospitality employees and how these skills influence the development of tourism and the global economy.

METHOD

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative is carried out to analyze the data by using explanations or discussion questions. This method is commonly used to reveal the real existing phenomena. A qualitative research design was thoroughly employed in this study to explore all investigated phenomena related to the needs of English for the development of global tourism. All cases were studied to collect the required data to establish valid and reliable research findings. The qualitative research design was used to ensure that all detailed data were gathered and compared as well as triangulated. All conditions were considered to obtain the right prospects for the collected data. The data obtained from open interviews collected through Google forms were triangulated with WhatsApp video calls. The audio data were transcribed and categorized accordingly. By using qualitative design, all data could be collected to answer the research questions concerning the urgent need of having good quality English to be successful in the tourism industry.

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Participants

The participants of the study were selected based on the criteria that were predetermined criterion. There were Two hundred and fifty tourism employees

who participated in this study. They were selected based on the length of working experiences, job position, and their roles in the tourism industry. Because of the large number of participants who were eligible to participate in the study, the numbers were then narrowed down using random selection techniques. Consequently, twenty employees were nominated to participate intensively in the study.

Data Collection

The present study used a qualitative research design to gather data concerning the needs of English for the development of the tourism industry and the global economy. The data collection techniques that were utilized in this study were open questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were constructed in essay questions to enable participants to answer descriptively freely. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted through WhatsApp video calls. All calls were recorded to ensure that the data were well-stored. The interviews were used to triangulate the data that were collected through the questionnaires. This process was done to ensure that all the collected data were relevant to the existing phenomena.

Data Analysis

All data obtained from the interviews were recorded using computer systems to ensure that all data were well recorded. The recorded data were transcribed and matched with the data that were collected through the questionnaires. The data were then put into the right category and then analyzed descriptively. The process of the analysis was done strictly based on the analysis guidelines. To establish valid and reliable findings, the analysis was presented with theoretical and empirical argumentation. The results of the analysis were then described and presented descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The increase in public and government income comes from the expenses and costs that can be incurred by tourism to encourage improvement and growth in the development of other sectors. One of the characteristics of tourism is that tourism depends and is related to other sectors in this sector. Thus, the development of tourism will increase and grow in other fields of development. Tourism development has a positive effect on expanding business and employment opportunities. Opportunities and jobs are born out of demand for tourists. Thus, the arrival of tourists in an area will open up opportunities for the community. To become a hotel, guest house, restaurant, food stall, transportation, and others. These opportunities provide opportunities for local people to work. Therefore, at the same time, they increase their income to support their household lives.

Needs Analysis

The development of the tourism industry has been proven to create sufficiently large business opportunities so that the wheels of the economy can rotate more rapidly towards the welfare and stability of the tourism industry. In line with the increasing number of tourists, the transactions and activities that are directly or indirectly related will increasingly take part in both the service and non-service industries. It can be said that the opportunities that arise are

entertainment, health, offices, tourism education, trade, and others. In creating these opportunities, qualified human resources who have good language skills are needed. These opportunities provide job opportunities that are wide open in various fields. This is a chain that is interconnected and rotates automatically for the welfare of tourism actors and the wider community. Sustainable efforts are needed in order to advance and support the tourism industry mentioned above, tight competition with the quality of human resources is needed.

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In the tourism sector, mastery of English plays an important role, especially in scouting activities. This is because the core guideline is the delivery of information supported by mutual communication between guides and tourists. Therefore, the role of language in the guidance process is very large, especially in English and supported by other languages. Knowledge of tourism, especially about the objects and attractions of Indonesia, is an important insight for a tour guide in supporting the professionalism of his work.

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The role of English in the tourism industry is very important. This is one of the factors that support the success of the tourism industry. Language as a communication tool plays an important role because it is an international language. The role of language is very necessary to build social relationships and as a communication tool. The role of English in the tourism sector is to facilitate communication, avoid misunderstandings, strengthen relationships, and create a family atmosphere between tourists and people related to tourists. According to the results of the study regarding the role of English in the tourism industry, the following data were obtained:

The data showed that a travel agent, a tour guide in carrying out their duties, should use appropriate English and their comments should be logically acceptable with common sense. This means that the comments and explanations giving by the tourism employees should be relevant to the real phenomena. They could not make up a story or telling something that was not happening. Hotel staff should use a high level of English to efficient in doing their duties. Therefore, people with excellent English skills are mostly employable in the tourism industry and work more efficiently.

Additionally, based on the assessment of English communication skills conducted on the participants showed that the English competence level of all participants was mainly in the lower intermediate. The tourism personnel were good enough for certain topics, but still a little difficult to develop a conversation. They encountered some problems with vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation. The findings indicated that all tourism establishments should provide further training and practices to ensure that their staff become fluent in English and communicate in good English.

Furthermore, tourism employees should continually improve their English to increase their service to guests. They should consider taking English communication courses to enable them to communicate effectively. Therefore, they need to keep up learning to attain the required level of English to work in

the tourism industry. Ideally, their English should be at least an intermediate level. However, they were required to enhance their English proficiency level up to the upper-intermediate or advanced level. In the upper-intermediate, the tourism staff can converse on familiar topics, although there are still some problems with vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation. Meanwhile, at an advanced level, tourism employees can carry out conversations smoothly and naturally. There are no problems with grammar, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation.

During the interviews, it was also found that tourism employees were specifically poor in English skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the questionnaire analysis, reading instruction should be focused on developing to understand the main ideas of reading text and understand specific information related to tourism information, such as brochures, maps, articles, and authentic reading sources in the field of tourism. Moreover, writing skills need to be developed to express ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings appropriately. Listening skills that are necessary to develop are listening from audio from sources (native English voice) and speaking skills development should include dialogue, monologues, public speaking, and interviews.

Specifically, tourism employees should continually improve their ability to communicate using correct grammar, which includes the use of basic forms, pronouns, numbers, comparatives, and gerunds. They are required to have the ability to use expressions that include describing things, describing places and locations, describing feelings, describing time, giving direction, giving advice. Moreover, they should be able to communicate using appropriate vocabulary related to the tourism industry. Furthermore, they need to use good pronunciation, intonation, emphasis, and spelling. The data also showed that tourism employees need to have various communication strategies to able to communicate in various situations. Furthermore, the needs of English for hospitality personnel are briefly discussed below especially for receptionists and cashiers, tour guides, food and beverage services, and other hospitality employees.

The receptionist and cashier at the front office at the hotel is doing administrative work at the front office in charge of welcoming guests or clients who deal with hotels both domestic and foreign guests. The task of a receptionist is to explain the needs of guests, such as what products and services will be provided, answer incoming calls, arrange meetings, and so on. A receptionist at the front office must be capable, intelligent, and energetic, supported by the ability to speak English to complete all of his tasks. It should be noted that the English proficiency according to the TOEIC required by a receptionist must have a minimum score of 550, that is, independent language users. The receptionists are expected to be able to deal with most situations likely to occur during the check-in and check-out processes. This means that users of these languages can use language that can be understood in general. Having the ability to communicate with matters related to their field of work, daily conversation, identify messages, and presentations.

A tour guide should have higher mastery of the English language because a tour guide work as an informer or giving information that is many and broad in scope. In principle, a tour guide is a person who works as a tour leader who travels around a place such as a village, city, museum, or other tourist spots. In addition, a tour guide is also a leader in tourism that is programmed with a set length of time both locally and internationally. In addition, the tour guide also moves a lot in the vacation packages section. A tour guide must be able to know and explain the culture, folk stories, and history of the local area. A tour guide must be patient and have good English skills. Of course, a tour guide must consistently improve his knowledge and ability to speak English continuously. It is recommended that a tour guide should have a minimum English language proficiency according to the TOEIC is 750, that is, independent language user. Tour guides are required to have the ability to communicate in various complex situations dealing with tourist activities including cultural activities. Moreover, tour guides must have the ability to communicate a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Food and beverage service personnel require highly efficient and effective English language communication skills. A waiter/waitress works in a restaurant, which is tasked with preparing the dining table with all its needs, providing guests with food and beverages. Activities carried out by the waiter/waitress are direct interaction activities and this clearly requires good communication skills as well. If a guest wants to know a lot about the menu he is going to eat, the waiter/waitress must be able to explain well to the guest. This means that waiters/waitresses need to have an excellent level of English communication skills. The minimum recommended English language proficiency according to TOEIC is 550, which is independent language users. This means that users of these languages can use language that can be understood in general. Having the ability to communicate about things related to their field of work, daily conversations, identify messages, and presentations. Chefs and cooks are not much different from waiters/waitresses with foreign language skills that they must master according to the minimum TOEIC score of 470 - 220, language users are at the lowest level in daily communication and can only communicate limited to their work. As a chef, they must be able to explain the process of cooking food properly.

Ticket sellers, merchandisers, and drivers also really need English language skills in serving their customers and when making transactions. They should be able to describe matters or things related to the products and services that they sell. The minimum required TOEIC score for them is 470 - 220, that is basic language users are at the lowest level in daily communication and can only communicate which is limited to their work. Meanwhile, employees who work in the Tourist Information service office also need good English language skills. The minimum recommended English language proficiency according to the TOEIC is 750 as an independent language user. These employees must be patient and able to explain many things related to tourist attractions, transportation, accommodation, and other important information.

Problems Encountered by Tourism Employees in the Works

The study revealed that there are several problems encountered by the tourism industry in communicating in English which is most of them affected their speaking skill. To be specific, the problems are categorized the following topics, such as (1) to greet appropriately; (2) explaining the accommodations comprehensively; (3) describing hotel facilities; (4) showing around the areas; (5) receiving reservations; (6) explaining hotel services and restaurants; (7) receiving and making phone calls; (8) dealing with complaints and giving solutions; (9) describing attractions; (10) guiding tours; (11) explaining the transportation. These problems were occurred due to a lack of English skills; therefore, all tourism personnel is required to have a high level of English communication skill to be efficient in doing their duties.

The ability to speak English for tourism actors is not evenly distributed and is still limited to certain groups or individuals due to differences in educational backgrounds. Therefore, it takes an effort to master foreign languages either self-taught or in groups courses. English, which has the status of a foreign language in Indonesia, has basically been taught since basic education. Even though English has been introduced or taught since someone took basic education, the results obtained have not been maximized so that their ability in speaking English in applying English in a conversation is still far from expectations. This is due to many factors. Factors that often hinder mastery of English are that many learners are still trapped in the mastery of grammatical language, techniques or teaching methods that still use old patterns that still emphasize the grammatical aspects of English. In teaching English, innovation and improvisation from the teacher are needed so as to increase interest in learning English. In addition, the use of English has not been applied in everyday conversations because practice makes perfect. This means that language skills are skills that must be used and if they are not used, these skills will gradually decline. Better if someone has foreign language skills, these skills should continue to be used in every conversation so that these skills are well-honed. Based on the description above, it takes an effort to make the lowest level of daily communication and can only communicate which is limited to work.

CONCLUSION

The function of the language and tourism sector is to facilitate communication, avoid misunderstandings, strengthen relationships, and create a family atmosphere between foreign tourists and people related to tourists themselves. The role of English in the tourism industry is very important because of the development of the current era of globalization that requires tourism employees to be able to compete in various fields of the tourism industry. The study concluded that tourism employees need their skills in communicating in English fluently and appropriately using appropriate expressions, vocabulary, and grammar. Moreover, tourism employees also need to develop their communication strategies to enable them to communicate in various situations. The conclusion that can be generated from this research is that the results of this needs analysis can be used as a basis for preparing learning plans and teaching materials for further training in tourism classes. The findings of the study are expected to provide benefits for universities in the development of

teaching materials and strategies to facilitate the process of teaching and learning activities.

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