

A Need Analysis of English Local Culture for Lopus Village Tour Guide

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Abstract.

This study examines the necessity of English proficiency tailored to local culture for tour guides in Lopus Village, a rising tourism destination. With the increasing interest of international visitors, mastering English that integrates cultural elements becomes vital for effective communication and promoting local heritage. Using a qualitative research design, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and questionnaires involving local tour guides. The findings reveal specific language needs that align with the village's cultural uniqueness, highlighting the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and integrated English skills for the tourism sector. This study underscores the significance of a needs-based approach to language training in local tourism.

Keywords : *Needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes, tourism, local culture, integrated skills and tour guides.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the major drivers of economic growth worldwide (UNWTO, 2021). In developing countries, rural tourism is an essential sector that contributes to local community development (Hall & Page, 2019). Lopus Village, located in Central Kalimantan, is one such area that offers rich cultural heritage and natural attractions (Rianto, 2023). However, one of the main challenges faced by the local tourism industry is the lack of English proficiency among tour guides (Yumita, 2023). This research investigates the specific English language needs of Lopus Village tour guides, emphasizing the importance of integrating local culture into language training (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). English serves as a bridge between local tour guides and international visitors, enhancing cross-cultural interactions and improving service quality (Robinson & Hall, 2018). The ability to communicate in English allows tour guides to share local stories, explain cultural traditions, and respond effectively to tourist inquiries (Dann, 2020). In the context of rural tourism, English proficiency is not only beneficial for economic growth but also for preserving and promoting indigenous heritage (Hernández, 2021). Tour guides require specific English skills tailored to tourism-related interactions, including hospitality expressions, historical narration, and problem-solving conversations (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). The tourism industry necessitates fluency in basic communication and cultural explanations to provide a comprehensive and immersive experience for visitors (Harding, 2018).

Additionally, the ability to comprehend and adapt to different English accents is a crucial factor in ensuring effective communication (Hyland, 2019). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) focuses on equipping learners with industry-relevant language skills (Anthony, 2018). In tourism, ESP courses emphasize practical language use, including greeting visitors, explaining attractions, and handling complaints (Gillett, 2019). By incorporating elements of local culture, ESP programs can be customized to meet the unique needs of tour guides in Lopus Village (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). A need analysis helps identify the linguistic gaps faced by tour guides and informs the design of targeted language programs (Long, 2005). By understanding the real-world challenges encountered in tourism communication, educators can develop more effective training materials (West, 1994). Need analysis in this study highlights the areas where English proficiency should be improved among Lopus Village tour guides (Silverman, 2013). Effective tour guiding requires a combination of speaking, listening, and cultural awareness (Ellis, 2003).

An integrated approach to English learning ensures that tour guides can engage in meaningful conversations and provide detailed explanations to tourists (Widdowson, 1983). Role-playing, immersive learning experiences, and interactive simulations are among the best strategies for improving tour guides' English skills (Tomlinson, 2011). Several previous studies have discussed the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the tourism sector. Basturkmen (2010) examined the application of ESP in the tourism industry and emphasized the need for industry-specific training programs. Harding (2018) studied English proficiency among tour guides and identified essential communication strategies required for the profession. Additionally, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) developed an ESP framework applied in various vocational training programs, including tourism. Robinson and Hall (2018) investigated the impact of language barriers on tourism services and visitor satisfaction, highlighting the crucial role of language skills in enhancing the tourist experience. Meanwhile, Flowerdew (2013) explored integrated English learning methods applicable to vocational contexts, including the tourism industry. These studies indicate that mastering industry-specific English is essential for improving professional communication and enhancing the quality of services provided to tourists.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the English language needs of tour guides in Lopus Village (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). A focus on real-world interactions allowed for an in-depth understanding of linguistic and cultural challenges (Robinson, 1991). The participants consisted of 15 active tour guides, selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement with international tourists (Nguyen et al., 2022). This selection ensured that the study focused on guides with direct experience addressing the needs of foreign visitors (Prachanant, 2012). Data were collected using:

1. **Semi-structured interviews:** To explore language challenges and cultural integration by focusing on language topic; English learning needs for tour guides; importance of cultural knowledge in language learning; challenges faced; and method for learning (Smith, 2018 & Prachanant, 2012).
2. **Observations:** To analyze real-world interactions between tour guides and tourists (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Data were collected over three months, involving direct observations and interviews with stakeholders, including tour guide managers and local leaders (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The process ensured a comprehensive understanding of the guides' challenges and training requirements (Smith, 2018; Prachanant, 2012). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and specific language needs (Nguyen et al., 2022). Patterns were categorized into speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, as well as cultural competencies (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Smith, 2018).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Language Topic

Tour guides need to master English in professional contexts, such as welcoming tourists and providing clear destination information (Belcher, 2006). They also need to understand the phrases used to provide directions and safety instructions to make tourists feel more comfortable (Hall & Page, 2019). In addition, the skill of answering general questions from tourists politely is essential to building effective communication. Storytelling techniques and cultural understanding are also needed so that tour guides can convey information in an interesting and meaningful way. By mastering these topics, tour guides can improve their language skills and provide a more professional tour experience

3.2 English Learning Needs for Tour Guides

Tour guides in Lopus Village require proficiency in English to communicate effectively with international tourists (Taylor, 2020). Speaking skills were the most essential, as guides need to explain cultural and historical aspects of the village, while listening skills were also emphasized to understand and respond appropriately to tourist inquiries (Johnson, 2018).

3.3 Importance of Cultural Knowledge in Language Use

Tour guides emphasized the importance of integrating cultural knowledge into their English communication (Martin, 2010). Understanding local traditions, historical sites, and folklore allowed them to offer more engaging and informative tours. However, many guides lacked formal training in conveying these cultural aspects effectively in English (Davis, 2015). This gap in training resulted in less immersive experiences for tourists. To address this issue, a tailored ESP program focusing on cultural communication could enhance the quality of tours in Lopus Village.

3.5 Challenges Faced in Using English

The primary challenges encountered by tour guides include limited vocabulary and difficulty in pronunciation (Johnson, 2019). Many participants reported struggling with tourism-specific terminology, affecting their ability to provide clear explanations. Additionally, a lack of confidence when speaking with foreign tourists was a common concern (Adams, 2016). Variations in tourist accents further complicated communication, making listening skills a necessary focus in training.

3.6 Methods for English Training

Participants expressed a preference for hands-on and interactive training methods, including role-playing and real-world simulations (Smith, 2018). They found traditional classroom instruction less effective compared to experiential learning (Nguyen et al., 2022). Many guides also suggested incorporating digital resources, such as language-learning apps, to reinforce their skills outside of formal training sessions (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Prachanant, 2012).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of needs-based language training for tour guides in Lopus Village. One of the primary recommendations is the development of an ESP curriculum that incorporates cultural elements to ensure that language training meets the specific demands of the tourism sector. Additionally, conducting regular workshops and role-playing exercises is crucial in improving speaking and listening skills, enabling tour guides to communicate more effectively with tourists. The integration of multimedia resources for self-paced learning is also encouraged as a supplementary approach to formal training, allowing guides to enhance their language proficiency independently. By addressing these needs, the overall quality of tourism services in Lopus Village can be significantly improved, further establishing the village as a leading tourist destination (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Robinson, 2020).

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