

## **The Roles of English in the Development of Tourism and Economy in Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Tourism is very important to be developed to improve the economy in Indonesia. Therefore, various efforts should be carried out to support the development of tourism. English language competence is one of the essential factors in improving the tourism industry. This study was conducted to thoroughly study the roles of English in the development of tourism and the economy in Indonesia. Interviews and open questionnaires were conducted to owners of the selected tourism industry in Bali to collect the data. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that English plays a very important role in developing the tourism industry. Employees who can communicate well in English can support the development of the tourism businesses especially in broadening the sales programs and providing more efficient services. Therefore, this study implies that tourism stakeholders should continually enhance their employee's English language competence by conducting educational English programs.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The advancement of communication technology and opened international markets has increasingly made the development of markets and economy as without barriers. It has been agreed that the business language between countries is English. Even though Indonesia has gone a long way toward preparing resources by providing English from elementary school to university, it does not guarantee the competence of good communication skills to compete with the global market. A lot of extra efforts have been carried out to ensure young job seekers are capable communicate effectively in English. The English proficiency possessed by job seekers greatly affects the labour market because this factor determines competition with the workforce

(Ahmad, Hussan, & Malik, 2018). With the development of this global market, of course, good English competence of human resources and quality products are needed to compete successfully in the international market. English in the tourism sector is not only intended for workplace communication but also for international marketing.

With respect to international marketing, English language skill is very important to have in order to be able to communicate internationally. Without having good competence in English, it may harden to compete in the global market. Indonesia has human resources who have both the opportunity and the challenge to survive and compete in this fast-paced era. Human resources are an important key to winning the global competition. Domestic professionals compete with foreign workers and create fierce economic competition. This indicated that many aspects of tourism should be considered to gain the global market (Xudoyarov, 2019). This condition causes the urgency of the ability to communicate in English. Every individual professional is required to have good proficiency in English, in order to master communication in the free market. Increasing English competency needs to be done continuously through non-formal educational institutions while remaining side by side with the implementation of formal education and non-formal intuition and the teaching of English for specific purposes should be considered and well-integrated (Zahedpishah et al., 2017). Indonesian language, which is the first and unifying national language, needs to be balanced with English which is the unifying language in the international world. This is necessary to increase capacity in the economic and business sectors (Husain et al., 2021).

Although English has been introduced since early education until in university level, it is, however, English is still considered a difficult language to master by most Indonesian because English is still considered a foreign language. However, nowadays, there are many training institutions and English courses that can be attended to improve the ability to communicate in English. Especially, those who work in the tourism industry, mastering English is very important (Astawa et al., 2018). To prepare human resources who are reliable and fluent in English, actively and communicatively to all elements of society cannot be separated from the role of the government in issuing program and training policies to improve people's ability to speak English (Suprayogi & Budi Eko, 2020). The application of English for Specific Purpose in the foreign tourist promotion program can be formed to offer training or courses for workers. English is one of the keys in playing a role in success in improving the tourism sector and the national economy (Fatos Gjata, 2017). Indonesian society can no longer avoid it because English dominates all aspects of life in communication. English is recognized by foreign countries as the official language of international relations in the fields of technology, economy, education, politics, social, and culture.

In the field of the tourism industry, Indonesia has great potential and diverse tourism activities. It has many tourism destinations with various traditions and cultural festivals. Indonesia has vast territory makes this country rich with its natural potential. Tourist destinations are ranging from beaches, lakes, traditional ceremonies of the people, culinary delights, and so on make it a favourite place for both foreign and local tourists. All those natural resources could be developed sustainably for the growth of the tourism industry (Kodir, 2018). Additionally, adequate infrastructure in the tourism sector starting from transportation, lodging, public facilities at tourist attractions, culinary, general information, tour guides, and many others

should be well-built. To make visitors feel comfortable, the role of English is also vital especially when visitors wish to get information about the places, direction, and other services (Amerta, Sara, & Bagiada, 2018)

The tourism industry in Indonesia has proven capable of supporting the people's economy and now its existence is very much needed and is one of the important sectors for earning foreign exchange and increasing government revenue apart from oil and gas. For this reason, the government should continue to increase its resilience, policies, and increase the development of tourism to further develop the people's economy and achieve strategic things between income and equalization of job opportunities, encouraging regional development, exploiting natural resources, and developing cultural arts, through the tourism industry (Goryushkina et al., 2019). All these are needed to sustainably develop tourism business throughout the country.

The development of the tourism industry to support the people's economy is important to be intensively developed because the development of tourism activities enable people to travel in the context of their business to meet new needs, to achieve more prosperity than the original state, and their travels have an influence on economic life (Lopez & Bhaktikul, 2018). It is not merely for the economic growth of the country but also indirectly affects the life of the world economy. The development of tourism certainly cannot be separated from human life, especially regarding social and economic life (Gorbuntsova, Dobson, & Palmer, 2019). The progress of the tourism industry occurs in line with the openness that has occurred in various countries which encourages people to travel to other countries to carry out various activities including tourist trips and businesses.

Therefore, it is vividly clear that tourism development has an important role in encouraging economic activity, enhancing Indonesia's image, improving people's welfare, and providing expansion of employment opportunities. This role, among other things, is shown by the contribution of tourism to the country's foreign exchange earnings generated by foreign tourist visits, these bring excellent income for the people, and diverse employment opportunities (Nepal et al., 2019). In addition, tourism also plays a role in enhancing national identity and encouraging public awareness and pride of the nation's cultural richness by introducing tourism products such as the richness and uniqueness of nature and the sea, museums, art and folk traditions, and other cultural activities. Moreover, quality of services is required to gain customers' satisfaction (Masrurul, 2019).

Several studies have been conducted concerning the roles of tourism toward the growth of the economy and also the importance of English in communication (e.g.: Zahedpisheh et al., 2017); Vivek et al., 2020; Husain et al., 2021). However, those studies were mainly investigated tourism and English in the tourism industry. Therefore, based on the previous studies and the phenomena described above, this study aims to examine the role of English in the success of the tourism industry and the growth of the economy. This study is considered to vividly important to be conducted to reveal the existing roles of the English language in the tourism industry and the growth of the economy.

## **METHODS**

The present study made use of a qualitative research design with descriptive analysis. A qualitative approach processes search for data from the context of the event directly as an effort to describe the events according to their reality, which means making the various events as coherent as possible and involving participatory perspectives in their various events. The data collection in this study was carried out through interviews and an open questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with tourism industry owners in Bali. The interviews were conducted in semi-structured interviews and in a relaxed condition to reveal real existing phenomena related to the roles of English in the tourism industry. Moreover, the open questionnaire was constructed using open questions or open-ended questions that must be answered honestly so that this research can provide a real picture of the important role of English in the world of the tourism industry and the improvement of the community's economy. The data obtained from the interview were matched with the data from the open questionnaire. The open questionnaire was structured in such a way that the data collected provides more in-depth data on the important role of English in the tourism industry and in improving the economy. The data collected were categorized according to their respective categories, then analyzed through the data reduction stage. The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews were triangulated with data obtained questionnaires. This is done so that the data found in the research are able to provide a truly real picture according to the actual situation. The presentation of the data in this study was carried out descriptively and then verified to obtain valid and reliable findings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Tourism is one of the industries that really supports the economy of the people in Indonesia. Many other industrial sectors depend on the development of the world of tourism. The role of English is very important in the world of tourism because almost all tourism activities use English as a medium of communication. Therefore, tourism workers are required to be able to speak English effectively so that they can play an active role in developing tourism so that the people's economy can be maintained and developed. In this section, data related to the role of English for tourism and economic improvement are presented descriptively and argumentative with facts found in the field. This study used interviews and open questionnaires to collect the data to figure out the roles of English in the tourism industry. The summary of the data of the present study can be presented as the following.

“Well, I think English is very important for the development of tourism. My employees who speak good English, they can work more efficiently and provide better service to the guest if compared with those who cannot speak English” (stakeholder A)

“If possible, all tourism staff should speak fluently and good English. When they speak good English, the tourist will be much easier to communicate and they can get appropriate services, consequently, they would stay longer in my hotel” (stakeholder B)

“English is definitely important for the tourism industry. Most tourists who come to my shop speak English. So all my staff has to speak English. Without English, I probably cannot sell anything to tourists with a good price”. (Stakeholder C)

“Telephoning skill in English is very important for my staff as my businesses are mainly hotel and transportation booking. Without having good English, it will be hard for me to get a customer. Therefore, I only employ booking staff who speak good English” (stakeholder D)

“English skills like describing, explaining, suggesting, etc are very essential for my staff to have as our businesses are mainly in tour guiding. A tour guide should have a high level of English otherwise, they cannot do the job properly”

Those excerpts of the interviews from the tourism stakeholders indicated that English language skills are very needed by tourism workers. Tourism workers do not only need good skills to work within their department, but they should be able to communicate in English in various aspects of the tourism industry. The skill of telephoning, describing, explaining, suggesting as well as making inquiries are very important to have by all tourism personnel. These data are relevant to the result of the open questionnaire which indicated that the need for English communication skills is very high.

<b>English language competence needed by tourism personnel</b>						
Tourism Stakeholders	Telephoning	Informing	Suggesting	Directing	Describing	Inquiring
Stakeholder A	High	High	Medium	High	High	High
Stakeholder B	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium
Stakeholder C	High	High	High	High	High	Medium
Stakeholder D	High	High	Medium	High	High	High
Stakeholder E	High	High	Medium	High	High	High

Table1. The needed English communication skill based on the result of the open questionnaire

English language competence required by tourism personnel to be mastered is mainly dealing with communication skills. The skills of English communication such as telephoning, informing, suggesting, directing, describing, and inquiring are considered to be highly needed as shown by the results of the open questionnaires administered to the tourism stakeholders. There only a few stakeholders considered that the skills of suggesting, and inquiring are in medium necessity. Although it is considered a medium necessity, it is still important to be able to work properly in the tourism industry.

Understanding the essence of the excerpts of the interviews and the results of the open questionnaires conducted to tourism stakeholders, it is clear that both data showed the need for English for tourism development is highly important. This also indicated that English has considerably high roles in tourism development. The tourism stakeholders also confirmed that employees who speak good English provide more effective and efficient services to the tourist and the services are given may improve the quality of services and as a result, tourists may spend more time staying at their accommodation. Having tourists who are willing to spend more time staying and of course, also they may spend more money and buying things as well as using the facilities at their own cost. These activities certainly improve the quality of the tourism industry and increase the growth of the local economy. The efforts of supporting the local economy definitely also support the national economy.

### **The Role of English Language in the Tourism Sector**

The tourism industry is one of the means in increasing the economic progress of the community both locally and globally. It cannot be denied that the tourism industry is the economic sector that has a very fast growth compared to the other economic sectors. Many jobs from the tourism industry have emerged starting from the activities of providing accommodation services, restaurants, tourist services until the souvenir business have succeeded in helping the government to reduce high unemployment.

The rapid development of the industry tourism brings understanding between cultures through the interaction of tourists with local communities in tourist areas. This interaction is where tourists can get to know and respect the culture of the local community and also understand the background local culture embraced by the community. Tourism activities can potentially have future effects and be backward (Nikazachenko et al., 2018). Based on the data collected using questionnaires and interviews with the participants of this study, it was found that there are at least three benefits that can be obtained with the development of tourism in an area. First, it provides a significant contribution to the income of the local community. Second, it is able to reduce the number of unemployed because of the absorption of workers. Third, it encourages the emergence of entrepreneurs engaged in the tourism industry. These all enable the improvement of the local economy and eventually improve the global economy. The economic growth through tourism business brings wealth and a better living standard for all workers within the tourism industry and other communities.

Nowadays, the developments international markets have reached Indonesia in various industries and businesses including the tourism industry. The country of Indonesia is rich in tourist attractions that are so enchanting that it has become one of the destinations for both domestic and international tourists. The government has also begun to aggressively develop tourism by building tourist spots in their respective regions. The development of adequate and standard facilities and infrastructure is a comfortable place to be visited by visitors (Robinson et al., 2018). Moreover, with the richness of local culture, Indonesia becomes one of a popular tourist destination. The development of tourism in terms of various businesses and facilities certainly supports the local economy. The data of the study showed that most people are eager to work in the tourism industry because they can earn a better income and sufficiently support the living needs of their families. The participants of the study strongly recommended that all people who wish to work effectively in various tourism businesses should be able to communicate in English fluently.

The data collected from the participates of this study further confirmed that the development of tourism facilities could be useless if the workers are able to communicate well in foreign languages, especially the English language which becomes the main driving factor in the use of built facilities. This means, without a good command of English communicatively, the facilities built will not be able to be operated as a tourism activity. Sometimes tourism workers are not ready to master English when foreign tourists come and communicate in foreign languages. This is of course very uncomfortable for foreign tourists because they cannot provide good service. Tourism workers will be able to provide good service if they are able to communicate well in English.

During the interviews, participants of the study provided practical examples of the importance of English, for examples English skills in telephoning, informing, suggesting, directing, describing, and inquiring are very essential communication skills to be mastered to be able to provide better services in the tourism industry. This indicated that many tourism activities require good English skills, workers are constantly trying to improve their abilities. Many tourism workers are aware of the importance of English, but there are still many who are unable to communicate well. For this reason, several efforts must be made by the workers themselves as well as the owners of the tourism industry and the government.

Some of the efforts that have been made are the provision of English courses that are conducted in the workplace as well as outside the workplace. However, the results are not optimal due to the limited learning time for workers. Workers mostly have to study in their spare time or between working hours. Besides that, their mastery of English when they start work is not sufficient. This is due to the lack of good and intensive English learning when they attend training to work in the tourism industry. This phenomenon needs to be a note for the tourism training institutions to improve English language training so that workers will be more professional in carrying out their work (Astawa et al, 2017). Efficient workers within the tourism industry are really needed to ensure all visitors are highly satisfied with the services and they are willing to spend more time to enjoy the tourism activities. These all certainly bring more income to all those who work in the tourism industry and indirectly to all communities.

### **The Role of English in Improving the Economy**

All industry owners in Indonesia have recently realized the importance of English for improving the community's economy in line with the development of the world of information technology where the market is more open with a more effective communication system with other countries where English is used as the communication medium. With the ability to communicate in English, people become more creative in marketing their products including products. The creative economy, which conceptually generates economic growth, especially increased income and job creation, encourages the involvement of various parties to take part in increasing tourism and the community's economy (Safaeva et al., 2019). Therefore, English is a prime necessity to be able to develop their businesses in a highly competitive market.

Based on the data collected through interviews and open questionnaires, it was found that English is one of the most important parts in the success of various businesses where English is one of the pillars in building communication networks with various people in the world. In communication, a tool is needed that can facilitate the course of communication. One of them is a language that becomes a bridge to connect various interests of one individual with another. Moreover, the participants of the study confirmed that English has become the international business communication among all people to improve and increase their market for their businesses. The participants of the study believed that by having good English mastery the economy will continue to develop and all resources can be used to increase the prosperity of the nation. Therefore, some things that must be prepared carefully and must be dealt with in everyday life are language to communication. All relevant economic efforts should be practiced to sustainably develop and achieve economic goals (Schroeder et al., 2019).

It is well known, most of our society members are passive English users. It is said to be passive because the ability to communicate is still classified as lacking, meaning that it is not yet skilled at using English in communicating properly and correctly. This happens because the average speaking skill in English is rarely used on a daily basis. The participants further expected the involvement of all stakeholders to seriously focus on the improvement of English communication skills for all job seekers in order to be able to compete with international workers who wish to work in Indonesia. The percipients of the study described that English learning programs should be continually conducted at vocational schools and also in the industry where they work to ensure their ability to communicate in English is updated to current business conditions.

Therefore, it can be summed up that the tourism sector plays an important role in increasing income community, as well as local government revenue, this is due tourist visits from within and from abroad, for that the government should always continue to provide services and improvements facilities and infrastructure so that the tourism sector can still exist in the future. This is due to the fact that tourism businesses become an important industry in strengthening economic growth both locally and globally. The authorities should continually support the development of the tourism industry to improve the economic growth by providing supportive policies towards the tourism development, improving structure and infrastructure, services, and easing the administration for tourism development activities. Additionally, sufficient training programs including English language training should be provided to all tourism workers and future tourism workers.

## CONCLUSION

Today's technological developments, it has led to changes in several sectors. One of them is the tourism sector which of course must always be ready for the times that demand to provide new breakthroughs so that they are attractive to be enjoyed and used as the main choice as a supporting aspect for the running of the economy, social, education, politics, business, and others. The tourism industry certainly needs several main and supporting elements so that the products presented are in accordance with the wishes that have been planned. In this case, tourism actors must have a strategy in developing and making tourism products feasible to sell to all visitors. To be successful in all tourism businesses, English communication skill is highly important to be mastered by all workers and business owners. This study implies that continual English language training is very necessary to ensure that all job seekers and workers are able to communicate effectively in English.

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