

LINGUISTIC OBSTACLES: EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SEMBALUN GUIDES IN ENGLISH VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki tantangan yang dihadapi oleh pemandu wisata Sembalun saat menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam peran profesional mereka. Metode kualitatif, termasuk teknik reduksi data, digunakan untuk merangkum dan mengidentifikasi tema dan pola kunci. Peserta studi terdiri dari pemandu Sembalun, dan data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa pemandu wisata Sembalun perlu menguasai empat aspek: kosa kata, aksen, kelancaran, dan tata bahasa. Meskipun kosa kata dan kelancaran mungkin cukup untuk pengunjung asing, tata bahasa dan aksen menimbulkan kesulitan. Namun demikian, pemandu Sembalun menyadari pentingnya mengembangkan aspek-aspek ini. Secara khusus, tantangan utama yang dihadapi pemandu wisata Sembalun yang bekerja di sektor pariwisata Desa Sembalun adalah berkomunikasi dengan tamu-tamu dari Rusia dan Prancis, karena aksen mereka menyerupai bahasa daerah mereka. Untuk meningkatkan potensi Desa Sembalun dan menarik lebih banyak wisatawan internasional, penting bagi pemangku kepentingan pariwisata, terutama pemandu wisata, untuk memiliki keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris yang mahir. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kemampuan berbahasa Inggris bagi pemandu wisata Sembalun dan menyoroti perlunya perbaikan terus-menerus untuk mengatasi tantangan komunikasi dan meningkatkan pengalaman pariwisata bagi pengunjung internasional.

Kata kunci: *Tantangan Bahasa; Bahasa Inggris; Pemandu wisata; Sembalun*

Abstract

This study investigated the challenges Sembalun guides face when using English professionally. Qualitative methods, including data reduction techniques, were employed to summarize and identify key themes and patterns. The participants comprised Sembalun guides, and data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that Sembalun guides need to excel in four aspects: vocabulary, accent, fluency, and grammar. While vocabulary and fluency may suffice for foreign visitors, grammar and accent present difficulties.

However, Sembalun guides recognize the significance of developing these areas. Communication with visitors from Russia and France, whose accents resemble those of their native languages, presents the biggest challenge for Sembalun guides working in the tourism industry in Sembalun Village. To enhance the potential of Sembalun Village and attract more international tourists, it is essential for tourism stakeholders, especially tour guides, to possess proficient English-speaking skills. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of English language proficiency for Sembalun guides and highlight the need for continuous improvement to overcome communication challenges and enhance the tourism experience for international visitors.

Keywords: *Linguistic obstacle; English Speaking; Tourism Guide; Sembalun.*

INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as a globally significant language and is gradually becoming a prominent dialect in Indonesia. It is extensively used as a communication tool among individuals from non-English speaking countries, playing a crucial role in various aspects of life (Erazo et al., 2019). In the tourism industry, English is particularly essential for effective communication, coordination, and interaction between tourism professionals and travelers (Aisy, 2018)

West Nusa Tenggara Province, or Lombok, is a home of culture and heritage (Yaqin, 2020; Yaqin et al., 2022; Yaqin & Shanmuganathan, 2020). Lombok is also renowned for its tourism industry in Indonesia, and Sembalun Village in East Lombok stands out as a promising destination. Situated near Mount Rinjani, Sembalun Village offers breathtaking natural beauty, including lush rice fields, majestic mountains, picturesque waterfalls, traditional houses, and other captivating attractions (Sushanti et al., 2019; Vitriani et al., 2017). To enhance the tourism potential and attract both local and foreign visitors to West Nusa Tenggara Province, proficient English speaking skills are indispensable for individuals working in the tourism sector, especially tour guides.

This research aims to identify the difficulties encountered by tour guides in Sembalun Village in their work. A needs analysis approach will be employed to understand the linguistic competencies necessary for effective communication with tourists. The research aims to shed light on vocabulary, accent, fluency, and grammar as essential aspects of Sembalun Guides. While foreign guests may prioritize

vocabulary and fluency over grammar and accent, guides must comprehensively understand these four elements.

Due to language differences and regional accents, communication challenges arise when Sembalun Guides interact with foreign guests, particularly those from Russia and France. To fully leverage the potential of Sembalun Village and increase foreign tourist visits, it is imperative for tourism professionals, particularly tour guides, to possess proficient English-speaking skills. This research focuses on Sembalun Guides, with three participants selected for data collection and analysis.

The research aims to uncover the English language needs of Sembalun Guides and explore how they overcome communication difficulties in their work. By understanding these challenges, valuable insights can be gained to improve English language proficiency among tour guides in Sembalun and contribute to enhancing the tourism experience.

Furthermore, needs analysis has long been recognized as a crucial component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practices, guiding researchers, course designers, materials developers, examiners, evaluators, and classroom teachers (Rahman, 2015; Yaqin, Lalu Nurul, & Zainuddin, 2017). Piyanapa (2004) asserts that needs analysis helps identify students' language requirements and determine the appropriate ESP courses they need. Mackey & Philp (1998) categorizes needs into two types, with academic needs emphasizing English proficiency for further academic studies. In the tourism industry context, English proficiency is vital for serving foreign tourists and improving the overall service quality (Juwita et al., 2019; Widiyati, 2017).

Preliminary observations and interviews conducted by the researcher revealed several

challenges faced by Sembalun Guides in their role. These challenges include difficulties understanding tourists due to rapid fluency, language mixing, repetitive sentence patterns leading to misunderstandings, inadequate knowledge of local folklore relevant to tourists, limited vocabulary retention, and a lack of familiarity with formal and non-formal language usage. This research aims to address these issues by investigating the specific needs of Sembalun Guides to improve their English language skills and enhance their professionalism within the tourism industry.

METHODS

The research utilized qualitative methods to investigate the problems and needs of Sembalun guides in their communication with foreign tourists. Sembalun Lawang Village, located in Lombok, Indonesia, was chosen as the research site due to its popularity among tourists and its role as a starting point for Mount Rinjani hiking trails.

The data collected for the research consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with tour guides, focusing on their workplace issues and language needs. Secondary data, including photos and recordings, supported the research information regarding English language usage. The data sources were the tour guides working in the tourism sector in Sembalun Village.

Data collection techniques employed in the research included observation, interviews, and documentation. Passive participation observation was used to observe the behavior and activities of the tour guides in their workplace. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the guides' opinions and ideas related to their English language challenges and needs. Documentation, in the form of interview recordings, notes from group discussions, and photographs, was utilized to support the collected data.

Data analysis involved data reduction, data presentation, and drawing temporary conclusions (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., &

Saldaña, 2018). Data reduction focused on summarizing and selecting the main themes and patterns, while data presentation involved concisely describing the findings. Temporary conclusions were drawn based on the analysis and verification of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observations and interviews that the researcher has carried out, the researcher found several problems experienced by the Sembalun Guide in carrying out his work as a Guide Sembalun, some of the same obstacles. The problem experienced by the Guide Sembalun is that, on average, not all guests who visit use English because English is not a common language or is often used in their country, for example, Japan, Korea, and some countries that still prioritize their language. Based on the results of observations, the researchers also found the obstacles faced by the Sembalun guide, namely (1). Guide Sembalun often has difficulty understanding what tourists say because the fluency is too fast, and tourists sometimes mix their language with English. (2) Guide Sembalun often experiences errors when mentioning almost the same sentences, so there is a misunderstanding with the other person. (3). Lack of understanding of ancient stories essential to tell tourists. (4). Too little vocabulary was memorized by the guide. (5). Some of the guides rarely understand formal and non-formal language because the language that is often used by the Sembalun guide is a market language, so the researcher wants to know what the Sembalun guide needs in improving English skills and what is needed by the Sembalun guide to improving professionalism as a guide in Sembalun.

Obstacles Faced by the Guides in Sembalun

The first interview that the researcher did with WS as the Sembalun guide was to know the conditions in the language of the Sembalun guide in communicating English with foreign tourists who came to Sembalun. WS said, "A person who works as a tourism guide must have a strong mentality and the ability to speak English and

understand the arts and history of Sembalun Village in particular". WS answered the question:

"Dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris, terutama di lingkungan pariwisata, rata-rata pemandu sembalun bisa menggunakan bahasa inggris meskipun bahasa inggris pasaran. Untuk penggunaan bahasa inggris sendiri permasalahan yang di hadapin yaitu penggunaan bahasa inggris yang kurang ibarat pisau yang tidak pernah di asah".

"In speaking English, especially in the tourism environment, on average, Sembalun guides can use English, albeit colloquial English. As for the use of English itself, the problem faced is the lack of English, like a dull knife that has never been sharpened." (Own Translation)

As a Guide Sembalun, WS added that "during the pandemic, most of the Guide Sembalun had problems using English, which was a bit stiff, because the mentality that had been built up so far in communicating with visitors began to decrease due to lack of communication due to the lack of visitors during the pandemic".

Understanding English, art, and history significantly influences the Sembalun guide's communication and services to guests visiting the Sembalun tourist area. The Sembalun guide always tries to give the best possible service by understanding and communicating in English.

The biggest obstacle for the Sembalun Guides who work in the Sembalun tourism sector is the speaking speed of the tourists and their unique accents. The Sembalun guides learn a lot from experience to learning English-speaking accents beforehand. According to them, it is not too difficult to understand what tourists mean, even though the language is English as a foreign language material in formal schools cannot adequately prepare stakeholders to understand accents, and it is also very complicated to teach various speaking accents. MA then added, "I have learned to speak English seriously since I was in high school. Not only have I studied at school, but I have also studied self-taught with friends who can speak English and foreigners while training mentally."

MA said, "Russians speak English like they speak their language; it's hard for me to understand, the problem is with them, and thank goodness Google translate exists in this world." To learn and understand, it is necessary to socialize the importance of using English in daily communication. He told them:

"Masalah paling serius adalah menyesuaikan komunikasi dengan beberapa Negara yang memiliki kosakata yang sedikit berbeda seperti Rusia. Mereka berbicara bahasa Inggris seperti mereka berbicara bahasa Rusia mereka sendiri, tidak jelas, dan kami yang mendengarnya tidak mengerti. Kadang masalahnya tidak datang dari kita, bisa dari mereka langsung, biasanya mereka google translate apa yang ingin mereka katakan, jika kita benar-benar buntu kita tidak mengerti apa yang dimaksud"

"The most serious problem is adapting communication with some countries that have a slightly different vocabulary, like Russia. They speak English as if they are unclearly speaking their own Russian language, and we, the listeners, don't understand. Sometimes the problem doesn't come from us, it can come directly from them. Usually, they use Google Translate to say what they want to say. If we are stuck, we don't understand what they mean." (Own Translation)

Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it may also be a foreign language for tourists. Obstacles don't always come from the guide, sometimes they come from tourists, and from everything that happens, the Sembalun guide uses body language and even lets google translate to solve the problem.

The need for language in the management of tourism organizations has not been thoroughly investigated, but it can be concluded that the need for English used is very important for the creation of networks and management of tourism organizations. Language is a special expression of power relations between the individuals and groups involved. Related studies have been carried out, and this paper

encourages practitioners to focus their language role initiatives on specific intermediate performance outcomes and pay attention to language issues in tourism organization management (Bilodid & Vorobel, 2022). Almost all participants felt that this study found that the need for English is important in their daily work. However, the participant's perceived level of English proficiency was medium to medium, and most still found some difficulties speaking English. This finding is similar to the results previously conducted by Prachanant (2012) that tourism employees have difficulty speaking and using vocabulary.

The findings have shown that the participants of this study agree that the internet helps them to improve their speaking skills. They use gadgets to open youtube and google translate and even games to learn English. This is in line with the research by Bobanovic & Grzinic (2011), which suggests that the participants used a similar method. The participants of this study were students and hotel employees. Both groups use the internet and social media to communicate in English.

Regular education is not the best way to improve speaking skills; we know we only learn theory in school. Individual efforts are considered an effective way to improve speaking skills in improving and practising English knowledge. English is the most important language for guest communication, being able to speak English is not just about being able to communicate with native English speakers; it is the most commonly spoken language in the world. If you are a person working in the tourism sector, you will both speak English (Asrifan et al., 2020; Cahyadi, n.d.; Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016).

There is very little data on how the various Sembalun Guides perform in communicating with tourists in the field of tourism learning English. them through vocational training. This study concludes that proficiency is the main relevant factor in guest satisfaction.

Talking is the most problematic for stakeholders, Guey (2015). As described above, the findings indicate that guides must speak

English to communicate with foreign clients in their routine work. Sembalun guides spend most of their time talking to tourists and dealing with them. This is in line with de Grey's (2015), where research participants are hotel and travel agency employees, stating that they must pay attention to what foreign clients say, taking the time to understand the points conveyed. Against the previous research that has been done, the findings of this study inform that stakeholders should listen to the different accents of different nationalities of tourists. Therefore, the ability to understand information from tourists is sometimes unattainable.

As we know, English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia. Some people who understand English better than others in all aspects feel their abilities mean nothing because they have no partner to share with. So, in this case, English plays a vital role in tourism; people with these abilities can communicate it with foreigners who come to these tourist attractions. On the other hand, people who are not fluent in speaking English face several problems, namely, they have no idea of speaking in public or are unable to convey messages to listeners effectively. There are also alternative ways to remove the language barrier.

This review includes the results of research and discussion. This is intended to answer research problems. In the findings, the researcher describes the data collection and retrieval process. Then, in the discussion, the author concludes the findings. This finding focuses on the results of the interviews.

The researcher has conducted research and obtained complete data from interview techniques and other documentation. To achieve the research objectives, the authors have analyzed the data systematically. To get results from knowing the need for a Sembalun guide, To find out the Need for Sembalun Guide to improve speaking skills in English. To get results and find out the need for a Sembalun guide to conducting interviews, the interviewed participants were WS, SJA, and MA, as Sembalun Guides.

From September 1 to 30, 2021, researchers went to Sembalun Village to make

observations. There, the researcher immediately met with the Sembalun Guide, who worked at the climbing administration counter to the Bukit Pergasingan route, namely the WS brother, after the researcher was invited to sit down and start the interview with WS as the Sembalun guide. The researcher asked how the tourism conditions in Sembalun village were, then WS said "The tourism situation in Sembalun village is currently experiencing a very drastic decline due to the Lack of income for Sembalun guides because currently more local tourists are visiting Sembalun, especially for good climbing, climb to Rinjani or the hills in Sembalun that have received permission from the government, especially from TNGR". WS works as a Sembalun Guide and a counter guard on the Pergasingan hill-climbing route.

Conditions in the village of Sembalun, especially the Pergasingan hill-climbing route, have undergone many changes, many existing villas and currently being built; the route to the Pergasingan counter is also undergoing several changes and additional facilities such as the installation of street lights and additional facilities for guard booths at several guard counters. Hill in Sembalun village, although visitors are only local tourists, does not reduce the existence of the services provided by Sembalun guides.

The next day, the researcher interviewed another Guide, Sembalun, SJA. SJA said that he only graduated from high school, and after completing his education in high school, he did not immediately work as a guide. He attended English training for several months at a particular English course, but after completing the course, he did not immediately become a guide but was trained to become a guide. A porter while training his mental and English skills, which he had obtained from English training for several months at that time. And after being trusted by several trekking organizers, he was then trusted to guide guests to climb to Rinjani or other tourist destinations in Sembalun Village until now.

The Sembalun Guide, which the researcher interviewed with MA, who has been a tour guide the longest. He said they had not mastered all aspects when speaking in English

with foreign guests because, indeed, they have never commented on any problems when talking to foreign guests in English, MA added that foreign guests do not care about the grammar or accent used, people foreign guests only need to understand what the guide means when explaining or answering questions from foreign guests. However, he also said that until now, he is constantly trying to improve his English speaking skills so that foreign guests who come can also feel more comfortable when talking to him.

After finishing interviews with several Sembalun guides, the researcher found that the expectations were desired by several Sembalun guides who worked there because of some of the same obstacles. Or the problem experienced by the Sembalun guides is that, on average, they say that not all guests who visit use English because English is not a common language or is often used in their country, for example, Japan, Korea, and some countries that still prioritize their language. Never learned how and what it takes to speak English, but once they work in the tourism sphere, they know and have just learned all the aspects that a tour guide must have when speaking English; they also say that their biggest obstacle is when a guest has a very incomprehensible accent because some countries don't prioritize English, such as foreigners from France, Japan, Korea, Arabic and so on.

Sembalun guide needs to improve English speaking skills

To support the potential of Sambalun village and increase the number of foreign guest visits, Sembalun village tourism actors, especially tour guides, must also have good English skills and skills to carry out their duties well. Bori-Sanz & Niskanen (2002) state that to develop good and potential natural tourism and attract tourists to visit, it takes beautiful natural beauty and the skills and expertise of actors. Qualified travel. Not all tour guides in this area have good English skills. Based on the results of interviews with several Sembalun guides in Sambangan village, tourism actors' knowledge and English skills in this area are still relatively low. On average,

Semalun guides are locals who do not receive formal tourism education.

They then learn English independently by participating in trainings or learning self-taught when meeting with foreign tourists. The results of interviews with tour guides also show that, on average, tour guides still have difficulty communicating with foreign guests. These difficulties are in pronunciation, proper sentence structure, and proper use of vocabulary according to their work context. The results of the initial observations that the researchers did also indicated that the average tour guide did not have good skills. They are not used to serving guests who come to their tourist area in a friendly and polite manner. They can still not use good body language when welcoming guests visiting Semalun Village tourist sites. One of the efforts that can be made to improve the quality of human resources, in this case, the tour guides in Semalun village, is to provide training.

The Semalun village tourism awareness group has attended several types of training. From the trainings that have been carried out in Semalun village, training related to English language training for tourism actors has not been widely carried out. These skills are also very important to be given to tourism actors considering that most of the tourism actors in the tourist village area of Semalun Village do not receive formal tourism education.

They are mostly self-taught English. Concerning identifying the problem, the researcher wishes to hold an English training which aims to help the Semalun Guide further improve the quality of their service to guests.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted on the Semalun Guides has identified several problems and obstacles they face in carrying out their work. These include difficulties in understanding the fast-paced and accented speech of tourists, errors in conveying information, Lack of understanding of critical ancient stories, limited vocabulary, and inadequate proficiency in the formal and non-formal language. It was found that not all tourists

visiting Semalun use English as their common language, which further adds to the challenges faced by the guides.

The research highlights the importance of English proficiency and knowledge of the arts and history of Semalun Village for effective communication and service provision to tourists. The ability to understand and communicate in English is crucial for providing the best possible experience to guests. However, the guides mentioned that the speaking speed and accents of tourists from different countries could pose difficulties in understanding them, and formal education alone may not adequately prepare guides for such challenges.

The study emphasizes the need to improve the Semalun Guides' English skills, as it plays a vital role in networking and managing tourism organizations. Communicating effectively in English is essential for guest satisfaction and the tourism experience. The research participants acknowledged the internet as a valuable tool for improving their speaking skills, utilizing platforms such as YouTube, Google Translate, and even games to learn English.

The findings suggest that individual efforts and self-study are effective ways to enhance speaking skills, as regular education may not provide sufficient practical training. Language barriers can be overcome through alternative means, such as body language and translation tools like Google Translate. However, the research indicates that guides would benefit from specific training programs focused on improving their English proficiency and understanding various accents.

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