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Exploring Tourist Experiences: The Role of English in Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran Bahasa Inggris dalam komunikasi lintas budaya antara wisatawan dan pelaku pariwisata lokal, serta mengidentifikasi strategi adaptasi yang digunakan untuk mengatasi hambatan komunikasi di destinasi wisata. Metode penelitian tinjauan pustaka melibatkan pengumpulan, analisis, dan sintesis informasi dari berbagai literatur ilmiah yang sudah ada, seperti buku, jurnal, dan makalah konferensi. Sumber data dipilih secara selektif berdasarkan relevansi, kredibilitas, dan kemutakhiran informasi. Analisis data mencakup pengorganisasian, evaluasi kritis, dan sintesis temuan untuk membangun narasi yang koheren. Pendekatan ini efektif untuk mengeksplorasi pengetahuan yang ada dan mengidentifikasi area yang memerlukan penelitian lebih lanjut, menghasilkan karya ilmiah yang berbasis teori kuat dan bukti kredibel. Hasil penelitian ini menyoroti peran bahasa Inggris dalam menciptakan pengalaman wisatawan yang positif melalui komunikasi lintas budaya. Wisatawan menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan komunikasi non-verbal untuk berinteraksi dengan penduduk lokal, yang didukung oleh motivasi ekonomi dan budaya keterbukaan. Namun, hambatan seperti keterbatasan penguasaan bahasa Inggris dan perbedaan norma budaya sering menyebabkan miskomunikasi dan kesalahpahaman. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya peningkatan kemampuan bahasa Inggris dan pemahaman budaya untuk memperbaiki komunikasi lintas budaya di destinasi wisata.

Kata Kunci: *Bahasa Inggris, Lintas Budaya, Komunikasi, Wisatawan*

Abstract

This research aims to explore the role of English in cross-cultural communication between tourists and local tourism actors, as well as identifying adaptation strategies used to overcome communication barriers in tourist destinations. The literature review research method involves collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing information from various existing scientific literature, such as books, journals, and conference papers. Data sources are selected selectively based on relevance, credibility and up-to-date information. Data analysis includes organization, critical evaluation, and synthesis of findings to build a coherent narrative. This approach is effective for exploring existing knowledge and identifying areas requiring further research, producing scientific work that is based on strong theory and credible evidence. The results of this study highlight the role of English in creating positive tourist experiences through cross-cultural communication. Tourists use English and non-verbal communication to interact with local residents, which is supported by economic motivation and a culture of openness. However, obstacles such as limited command of English and differences in cultural norms often cause miscommunication and misunderstandings. These findings underscore the importance of improving English language skills and cultural understanding to improve cross-cultural communication in tourist destinations.

Keywords: *Communication, Cross Culture, English, Travelers*

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global lingua franca, playing an important role in cross-cultural communication in this era of globalization. In an increasingly connected world, the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds has become crucial, whether in professional, academic or social contexts (Iriance, 2018). English is often the bridge that overcomes language barriers and allows for a more efficient exchange of ideas, knowledge and information (Desi Jelanti et al., 2023; Muhammadiyah, 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2023). The development of information and communication technology has accelerated interaction between nations, making English the main tool in various international communication platforms. In the business environment, English is not only used for international negotiations and cooperation, but also in global marketing and customer service. In the academic world, scientific publications and international conferences often rely on English to reach a wider audience. In addition, English also plays an important role in diplomacy and international relations, helping to create understanding and cooperation between countries with different cultures. Understanding and being able to use English well allows individuals to overcome cultural differences, reduce misunderstandings, and build more harmonious relationships at a global level. Thus,

mastering English is not just about learning a language, but also about opening the door to effective and inclusive communication in this diverse world.

Research by Astina & Muliadisa (2018) revealed interactions between local traders and foreign tourists on Sanur Beach. Local traders use non-verbal (wave, smile) and simple verbal ("Hello, buy one sir, cheap price") communication to adapt to tourists. A culture of openness and economic necessity drive these communication efforts. However, limited command of English and lack of understanding of excellent service are obstacles, often causing miscommunication (Astina & Muliadisa, 2018). Khotimah's research (2019) adds that differences in language and culture often cause misunderstandings and conflicts, hindering cooperation and effective communication (Khotimah, 2019).

Porter and Samovar (2010) theory. The use of simple sentences in English reflects cultural adaptation (Pratiwi, 2016; Sari, 2020), in line with DeVito's (2001) theory about the importance of cultural differences in communication (Handayani, 2016). Lustig and Koester (2003) put forward the concept of "mindset" which is relevant to the openness and friendliness of local traders (Gardiana et al., 2023). Liliweri (2009) emphasized the importance of mastering English, which was supported by the finding that language limitations were the main obstacle. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that language influences perception, consistent with local traders' difficulty using English (Wedasuwari, 2020). Dell Hymes (1964) with the concept of "Communicative Competence" supports the importance of social and cultural context in communication. Tubbs & Moss (2005) emphasize the delivery of intercultural messages, relevant to the interactions of local traders and tourists (Hariyati, 2020). Sihabudin (2011) highlights the importance of managing communication barriers. Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles shows the adaptation of local traders in speaking. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions concept supports the importance of an open and friendly culture in positive interactions (Safitri & Firdaus, 2023).

Several previous studies, namely the research results of Maricar et al., (2024), show that mastery of English and good communication skills are very important for tourism actors to interact effectively with foreign tourists and support sustainable tourism (Maricar et al., 2024). Khotimah's research results (2019) show that the differentiating factors in communication between foreign tourists and local communities in Kandri Tourism Village include verbal and non-verbal language systems, economic systems, education systems, culture (values and norms), and religious systems (Khotimah, 2019). The results of Julita's research (2022) show that cross-cultural communication between local surfers and foreign tourists at the Bono wave tourism location occurs intensely, motivating local surfers to learn

foreign languages, and even though there are communication barriers, cultural differences do not hinder interaction because the two cultures interact with each other. respect (Julita, 2022).

This novelty of research offers a new perspective on how English not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a cultural adaptation mechanism that allows deeper and more meaningful interactions between tourists and local communities. By highlighting case studies in various tourist destinations, this research reveals the unique dynamics of cross-cultural communication that occur in the field, as well as identifying the strategies and approaches used by local tourism actors to overcome language barriers. In addition, this research expands understanding of the role of English in creating inclusive and sustainable tourism experiences, which has not been widely explored in previous studies.

This Research Gap, although many studies have discussed the importance of English in cross-cultural communication, there is still a lack of understanding in depth how daily interactions between tourists and local tourism actors occur, especially in tourist destinations that are less exposed to globalization. Most previous studies have focused more on business or academic contexts, while the practical and contextual aspects of cross-cultural communication in everyday tourism remain underexplored. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring real interactions in local tourist destinations and identifying effective practices that can be implemented in improving cross-cultural communication. This research aims to explore the role of English in cross-cultural communication between tourists and local tourism actors, as well as identifying adaptation strategies used to overcome communication barriers in tourist destinations.

RESEARCH METHOD

The literature review research method, or what is often called library research, is an approach carried out through collecting, analyzing and synthesizing information that is available in various scientific literature (Browne et al., 2019; Snyder, 2019; Walliman, 2021). This method aims to explore and understand certain concepts, theories or phenomena through in-depth study of existing works. In this context, researchers do not collect primary data, but instead utilize secondary data sources that have been published (Coe et al., 2021; Fellows & Liu, 2021).

Data sources in literature review research are very diverse. Generally, data sources used include books, scientific journals, conference papers, theses and dissertations, research reports, articles in the mass media, and electronic documents that can be accessed through academic databases or digital libraries. The selection of data sources is carried out selectively

based on the relevance, credibility and up-to-dateness of the information contained therein. This process begins with identifying the topic and research objectives, which is then followed by searching for relevant literature using various techniques such as keyword searches, browsing journal indexes, and using academic search engines such as Google Scholar, PubMed, or JSTOR.

Data analysis in literature review research involves several important stages. The first stage is organizing data, where the information that has been collected is grouped based on certain themes or categories that are relevant to the research questions. Next, the researcher carried out a critical evaluation of each data source to assess the validity, reliability and contribution of each to the topic under study. This process includes an assessment of the methodology used in previous studies, analysis of research results, and interpretation of reported findings.

The next stage is data synthesis, where the researcher integrates various findings from the analyzed literature to build a coherent and comprehensive narrative. At this stage, the researcher identifies patterns, trends and gaps in the existing literature, and connects them to the theoretical framework or conceptual model underlying the research. The results of this synthesis are then presented in the form of a systematic literature review, which not only summarizes existing knowledge, but also provides new perspectives or recommendations for further research. Overall, the literature review research method is an effective approach for exploring and understanding existing knowledge, as well as identifying areas that require further research. By using systematic data collection and analysis techniques, researchers can compile scientific work that is based on a strong theoretical foundation and credible evidence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

English has become the main communication tool in cross-cultural interactions, especially in the tourism context. As a global lingua franca, English allows tourists from various countries to communicate with local people, overcome language barriers and enrich their experiences. This article will explore how English plays a role in creating a positive tourist experience, by highlighting the verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that occur between tourists and local residents, supporting factors, and the obstacles faced. By understanding these dynamics, we can better prepare strategies to increase cross-cultural interactions and support inclusive and sustainable tourism.

Research by Astina & Muliadisa (2018) revealed an interesting phenomenon related to interactions between local traders and foreign tourists on Sanur Beach. This research

focuses on cross-cultural communication patterns used by local traders as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in this communication. Local traders, most of whom have basic education and Balinese cultural backgrounds, use various forms of communication to interact with foreign tourists. They rely on non-verbal communication such as waves, smiles, eye contact and handshakes to overcome language barriers and create a friendly atmosphere that makes tourists feel welcome (Astina & Muliadisa, 2018).

Verbal communication is also used even with limited English. Local traders often use short and simple sentences such as "Hello, buy one sir, cheap price" to attract tourists' attention. This effort shows the willingness of local traders to adapt and communicate with foreign tourists, even though the language used is not perfect. The cultural factor of local traders who are open and friendly towards foreigners is the main support in this cross-cultural communication. Economic needs also encourage traders to try hard to communicate with tourists in order to increase sales. However, this research also found several obstacles in cross-cultural communication. One of the main inhibiting factors is the lack of good and correct command of English among local traders. The inability to use English correctly often leads to miscommunication and misunderstandings. Apart from that, a lack of understanding of the importance of excellent service is also an obstacle, because inadequate service can reduce tourist satisfaction. Khotimah's (2019) research states that a lack of understanding of cross-cultural communication often gives rise to misunderstandings which can lead to conflict. Differences in language, norms and cultural values mean that messages conveyed are not always received according to the sender's intentions. These misinterpretations can fuel tension and conflict between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds, hindering effective cooperation and communication. Therefore, a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication is necessary to reduce the potential for misunderstandings and conflicts (Khotimah, 2019).

Porter and Samovar (2010) emphasize the importance of observation and meaning in communication. They state that human behavior in communication must be observed and has deep meaning (Kristiani & Utami, 2019; Sjojfan & Azeharie, 2018). Astina & Muliadisa's findings showing the use of non-verbal communication such as waving hands, smiling and eye contact by local traders on Sanur Beach are very relevant to this theory. Local traders use these gestures to create a friendly atmosphere and overcome language barriers, indicating that their communication behavior has deep meaning and can be observed. This non-verbal communication serves as an effective tool in creating positive and friendly interactions, despite limitations in verbal language. DeVito (2001) highlights the importance of cultural differences, beliefs, values, and ways of acting in intercultural communication.

The use of short and simple sentences in English by local traders on Sanur Beach reflects their efforts to adapt communication to the culture of foreign tourists. This shows that cross-cultural communication does involve adapting to cultural differences. For example, local traders who say "Hello, buy one sir, cheap price" show their adaptation to the communication needs of foreign tourists despite language limitations (Asriadi, 2019; Panggabean et al., 2023). This is in accordance with DeVito's theory which emphasizes that cultural differences must be taken into account in intercultural communication.

Lustig and Koester (2003) put forward the concept of "mindset" which influences perceptions in intercultural communication. The open and friendly character of local traders on Sanur Beach makes tourists feel welcome, in accordance with this concept. An open mindset allows local traders to more easily interact with tourists, which shows the importance of attitude in cross-cultural communication (Arfa, n.d.). When local merchants demonstrate openness and friendliness, they help create an environment conducive to effective and positive communication. This supports Lustig and Koester's theory which shows that an open mindset is key in cross-cultural communication. Liliweri (2009) emphasized the importance of mastering English in cross-cultural communication, especially in the tourism context. Astina & Muliadisa's findings which show that limited mastery of English is the main obstacle in interaction between local traders and foreign tourists supports Liliweri's theory. Language limitations lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings, which shows the importance of language mastery in cross-cultural communication. In the tourism context, mastery of English by local residents can improve the quality of interactions with tourists, reduce misunderstandings, and increase tourist satisfaction (Uzer & Uzer, 2023).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1929, 1956) states that language influences a person's way of thinking and perception of reality. The difficulty of local traders in using English correctly and effectively shows that different language structures influence the way they communicate with and understand tourists. This supports the hypothesis that language influences an individual's perception and reality. Limited command of English affects how local traders understand and interact with tourists, demonstrating the importance of language in shaping one's way of thinking and perception (Angelianawati, 2018; Huszka et al., 2024; Wedasuwari, 2020). Dell Hymes (1964) with the concept of "Communicative Competence" shows that language mastery not only involves grammar but also social and cultural context. Local traders' efforts to adapt and communicate with foreign tourists, even with limited language, shows that they understand the importance of social and cultural context in communication. This shows that effective

communication involves more than just mastery of grammar; an understanding of the social and cultural context in which the language is used is also very important. This is in accordance with Hymes' theory which shows that communicative competence involves understanding the social and cultural context (Katsara, 2023; Kroskrity, 2023).

Tubbs & Moss (2005) state that cross-cultural communication is the process of conveying intercultural messages. The interaction between local traders and foreign tourists on Sanur Beach, where messages are conveyed through various forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, shows that cross-cultural communication does involve the process of conveying messages between members of different cultures. For example, the use of simple English sentences and non-verbal gestures by local traders shows how messages are conveyed and understood in cross-cultural contexts (Sudarmika, 2020). This supports Tubbs & Moss' theory which emphasizes that cross-cultural communication involves conveying messages between different cultures. Sihabudin (2011) emphasizes the importance of managing barriers in cross-cultural communication. Astina & Muliadisa's findings which show obstacles such as limited English and lack of understanding of the importance of excellent service support this theory. Managing these barriers is important to achieving effective communication. For example, improving English language skills and providing training on the importance of excellent service can help reduce barriers and improve the quality of interactions between local traders and tourists. This supports Sihabudin's theory which emphasizes the importance of overcoming barriers in cross-cultural communication to achieve effective communication.

Howard Giles with Communication Accommodation Theory explains how individuals adjust their way of speaking to communicate more effectively with people from different cultures. Local traders on Sanur Beach who use short and simple sentences in English to attract tourists' attention show their adaptation in communication, in accordance with Giles' theory. For example, local traders who adapt to tourists' communication needs by using simple English show how they adapt their way of speaking to achieve more effective communication. This supports Giles' theory which emphasizes the importance of adaptation in cross-cultural communication.

Geert Hofstede with the Concept of Cultural Dimensions Hofstede shows how cultural differences influence interactions between individuals. The open and friendly culture of local merchants that helps create positive interactions with tourists shows that cultural differences do influence the way individuals interact, in accordance with Hofstede's theory. For example, the culture of openness and friendliness of local traders on Sanur Beach helps create an environment conducive to effective communication with tourists. This supports Hofstede's

theory which shows that cultural differences influence the way individuals interact and communicate.

This research explores how English is used by tourists and local residents in tourist destinations to bridge cultural differences and facilitate effective communication. Using various cross-cultural communication theories, this research provides an in-depth picture of the role of English in creating positive tourist experiences.

This research found that cross-cultural communication patterns between tourists and local residents involve a combination of verbal and non-verbal communication. Tourists who visit tourist destinations often use English as a lingua franca to communicate with local residents. English is used in a variety of contexts, from everyday transactions to more in-depth conversations about local culture and traditions. Non-verbal communication also plays an important role in bridging the language gap. Tourists and locals use gestures, facial expressions and body language to convey messages and create a welcoming atmosphere. For example, waving, smiling, and eye contact are often used to convey friendliness and openness.

Several factors support cross-cultural communication between tourists and local residents. First, economic motivation is the main driving factor for local residents to learn and use English. English language skills are considered an important asset that can increase interactions with tourists and, in turn, increase economic income. Second, the strong culture of openness and friendliness in many tourist destinations also supports cross-cultural communication. Local residents who are used to receiving guests from various cultural backgrounds are more likely to have a positive attitude towards tourists and are willing to adapt to their communication needs.

However, this research also found several obstacles in cross-cultural communication. The main obstacle is the limited mastery of good and correct English among the local population. Many locals only have basic English skills, which are often insufficient for more complex conversations. This often leads to miscommunication and misunderstandings. Additionally, differences in cultural norms and communication styles are also a source of confusion. For example, the way people convey messages through body language or voice intonation can differ greatly from one culture to another, which can result in misunderstandings. Different cultural norms and values can also cause difficulties in interpreting messages.

The cross-cultural communication theories mentioned previously are very relevant to the findings of this research. For example, Porter and Samovar's theory about the importance of observation and meaning in communication supports the finding that

gestures and body language play an important role in cross-cultural communication. DeVito's theory of cultural differences, beliefs, values, and ways of acting also supports the finding that cross-cultural communication involves adapting to cultural differences. Lustig and Koester's concept of "mindset" which influences perceptions in intercultural communication supports the finding that the open and flexible mindset of local residents helps create effective communication. Liliweri, who emphasized the importance of mastering English in cross-cultural communication, supports the finding that limited English is the main obstacle in interactions between tourists and local residents.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf which states that language influences a person's way of thinking and perception of reality supports the finding that limited English affects the way local residents communicate and understand tourists. Dell Hymes with the concept of "Communicative Competence" shows that language mastery not only involves grammar but also social and cultural context, supporting the finding that local residents understand the importance of social and cultural context in communication. Tubbs & Moss's theory of cross-cultural communication as a process of conveying messages between cultures supports the finding that cross-cultural communication involves the process of conveying messages between members of different cultures. Sihabudin, who emphasized the importance of managing barriers in cross-cultural communication, supports the finding that managing barriers such as limited English and differences in cultural norms is important for achieving effective communication. Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles supports the finding that local residents adapt their way of speaking by using simple English to attract tourists. Hofstede's Concept of Cultural Dimensions by Geert Hofstede supports the finding that the culture of openness and friendliness of local residents helps create positive interactions with tourists. Adaptive Communication Theory by John O. Greene supports the finding that tourists adapt their language and behavior according to local culture.

This research has several important implications for the tourism industry and public policy. First, the research results show the importance of improving English language skills among local residents through training and education. English language training programs can help reduce miscommunication and increase traveler satisfaction. Second, this research shows the importance of understanding and implementing excellent service in interactions with tourists. Training on the importance of excellent service and how to implement it can help local residents provide better service, thereby increasing tourist satisfaction and loyalty. This, in turn, can increase economic income and the sustainability of tourist destinations.

CONCLUSION

The research highlights the crucial role of English in creating positive tourist experiences through cross-cultural communication. Tourists use English and non-verbal cues to interact with locals, fostering friendliness and openness. Economic motivation drives locals to learn English, enhancing their interaction with tourists. However, limited English proficiency among locals and cultural differences often lead to miscommunication. The study underscores the need for English language training and excellent service for locals to improve communication, reduce misunderstandings, and boost tourist satisfaction, thereby supporting sustainable tourism and economic growth in tourist destinations.

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