

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ENHANCING TOURISM COMMUNICATION

Rahma Aulia Safira¹,Lula Aula Dzukhriyah²,Nur Azka
Inarah³,Shafira Adelfita Anhar⁴,Suciana Wijirahayu⁵

¹²³⁴⁵Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA

¹rahmaksh31@gmail.com; ²lulaauladz@gmail.com; ³aintazka@gmail.com; ⁴shafira.anhar1@gmail.com;
⁵sucianawijirahayu@uhamka.ac.id

Abstract: The research emphasizes the importance of language education in improving communication within the tourism sector. It highlights how language education provides the necessary linguistic skills for everyone to enable smooth communication, encourage cultural exchange, and demonstrate the attractiveness of tourist destinations. With globalization encouraging increased interaction among various cultures, effective communication skills, especially in foreign languages, have become a must in the tourism industry. This study uses Mix-method research to explore the important role of language education in improving communication within the tourism sector. The questionnaire will consist of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions that allow participants to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the importance of language education in the tourism sector. Through thematic analysis, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between communications, tourism, language education, and speaking proficiency, offering practical implications for stakeholders in this domain. By underscoring the importance of effective communication in tourism and the contribution of language education to achieving this goal, this research advances our understanding of how language proficiency can enrich the overall tourism experience and foster sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: *Enhancing Communication, Tourism, Language Education*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a notable uptick in the growth of international travel (Wang et al., 2015). Language plays a vital role in facilitating smooth interactions between travelers and locals, enriching cultural exchanges, and creating memorable experiences. In this context, the role of language teaching in improving traveler communication cannot be underestimated. This research aims to explore the importance of language teaching in enhancing communication in the tourism sector, focusing on how language skills can contribute to meaningful and more authentic interactions between tourists and destinations. Moreover, the increasingly global nature of tourism requires industry professionals to be equipped with multilingual skills to cater to diverse travelers. Language instruction not only helps tourism staff communicates effectively with international travelers but also enhances cultural understanding and appreciation. By investing in language education programs and encouraging language diversity in the tourism sector, destinations can differentiate themselves in a competitive market and attract more tourists. In this study, we will review current practices and strategies related to language teaching in the tourism industry, analyze the effectiveness of existing language training programs, and explore innovative approaches to language learning. By

reviewing case studies and best practices from various destinations, we aim to identify key factors that contribute to successful communication in tourism and provide recommendations for improving language-teaching initiatives in the industry. Generally, this research seeks to highlight the central role of language teaching in improving tourism communication and driving sustainable tourism development. By emphasizing the importance of language skills in creating authentic and memorable travel experiences, we hope to inspire those in the tourism industry to prioritize language teaching as a key part of their marketing and operational strategies

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Impact of Communication on Language

Employees in the dynamic fields of tourism and hospitality necessitate meticulous recruitment processes and ongoing training initiatives, given the pivotal role their communication skills play in fostering positive interactions with customers (Cuic Tankovic et al., 2023). While external communication garners significant attention in the tourism sector, internal communication serves as a linchpin for bolstering employee satisfaction, thereby directly influencing guest contentment (Ryan et al., n.d.). Internal communication transcends mere information dissemination; it serves as a conduit for exchanging ideas, shaping thoughts, and conveying messages crucial for issuing directives, inspiring teamwork, refining products and services, and assessing and rewarding employee performance (Guffey & Loewy, 2010).

Moreover, as posited by (Kang & Hyun, 2012), communication styles and skills are multifaceted, encompassing a diverse array of dimensions and attributes, alongside a plethora of nonverbal cues that intricately modify or complement the verbal message, underscoring the nuanced nature of effective communication in these industries. Language is a system of spoken or written symbols communicating ideas, emotions, and experiences (Daft & Wiginton, 1979). By understanding the role of language, organizations can improve coordination skills (Chen et al., 2006) operate better new technology (Thitthongkam & Walsh, 2010), develop customer satisfaction and have effective management (Dickson & Huyton, 2008) in the tourism industry.

2. Importance of Language Education in Tourism

Language education plays a crucial role in enhancing communication within the tourism sector. As globalization increases cross-cultural interactions, proficiency in foreign languages becomes indispensable for tourism professionals. Media in encouraging communicators in any sectors influenced the process of acquiring global Language (Wijirahayu et al., 2024) Effective communication is essential for cultural exchange, attracting tourists, and promoting tourist destinations. Language education can help to overcome communication problems by improving English communication skills in the tourism sector. This can include learning the local language of the tourist destination, as well as other relevant languages used by tourists and other professionals in the industry.

By improving language skills, tourism professionals can communicate more effectively with tourists, clients, and colleagues, leading to better customer service, increased satisfaction, and improved team performance. In the tourism industry, language education can also help to promote cultural exchange and understanding. By learning the local language and culture of a tourist destination, tourism professionals can better understand and appreciate the local customs and traditions. To carry out these errands,

tourism organizations ought to communicate over dialects (Dowling et al., 2013). Subsequently, in tourism organization administration of tourism organizations, dialect can be depicted as a fundamental means of communication. This influences the organization's capacity to control worldwide exercises (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999) As Lauring, 2007 states that effective tourism organization administration is concerned with the capacity to oversee communication over dialects.

METHOD

This study will employ a mix-method research design to explore the importance of language education in enhancing communication within the tourism sector. The research will focus on the perspectives of tourism students. The participants for this study include tourism students. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with participants. The interviews will be conducted in-person or via WhatsApp chat, depending on the participants' availability and preferences. The interviews were guided by open-ended questions, allowing participants to share their experiences, opinions, and insights on the importance of language education in the tourism sector. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. To gather information on user preferences and experiences, the study used a questionnaire consisting of 10 participants aged 20 to 25. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that allow participants to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the importance of language education in the tourism sector. Participants' consent obtained before the interviews and questionnaire, and their identities will be kept confidential. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for conducting qualitative research, ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Questions

No .	Question	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1.	Is it crucial for the tourism industry's employees to have strong foreign language skills?	20%	10%	70%
2.	Is it crucial to communicate effectively with tourists in a foreign language?	20%	10%	70%
3.	Is it necessary to overcome language barriers when communicating with tourists?	20%	30%	40%
4.	Is it crucial to currently have available foreign language education programs for the tourism industry?	20%	10%	70%

5.	The effectiveness of language education programs is crucial in improving communication skills for tourism industry employees?	10%	20%	70%
6.	Is it necessary for today's tourism industry employees to be equipped to handle cultural misunderstandings or miscommunication with tourists?	20%	-	80%
7.	Is it essential for tourism industry employees to use foreign languages to promote tourism services?	10%	10%	80%
8.	Is it crucial for tourism industry employees to communicate effectively with each other in a foreign language?	20%	20%	60%
9.	Is it essential for the tourism industry's employees to attend language education programs to improve their foreign language skills?	20%	10%	70%
10.	Is it essential for tourism industry employees to handle the high expectations of tourists?	20%	20%	60%

3. Employees Tourism

Table 2. About Employees Tourism

No.	Tourism Employees	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1.	Is it crucial for the tourism industry's employees to have strong foreign language skills?	20%	10%	70%
3.	Is it necessary to overcome language barriers when communicating with tourists?	20%	30%	40%
6.	Is it necessary for today's tourism industry employees to be equipped to handle cultural misunderstandings or miscommunication with tourists?	20%	-	80%
7.	Is it essential for tourism industry employees	10%	10%	80%

	to use foreign languages to promote tourism services?			
8.	Is it crucial for tourism industry employees to communicate effectively with each other in a foreign language?	20%	20%	60%
10.	Is it essential for tourism industry employees to handle the high expectations of tourists?	20%	20%	60%

According to the table, the data provides valuable insights into the perceived importance of language skills and cultural understanding in the tourism industry. A significant majority (70%) agreed that it is crucial for employees in the tourism industry to have strong foreign language skills, suggesting a recognition of the importance of effective communication in enhancing the tourist experience and facilitating smooth operations within the industry. However, when asked if it is necessary to overcome language barriers when communicating with tourists, the responses were more evenly distributed. While 40% agreed, a notable proportion either disagreed (20%) or remained neutral (30%). This could indicate a belief that while language skills are important, they are not the only factor in successful communication with tourists.

The necessity for tourism industry employees to be equipped to handle cultural misunderstandings or miscommunication with tourists was strongly agreed upon by 80% of respondents, underscoring the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding in the global tourism industry. Similarly, 80% of respondents agreed that it is essential for tourism industry employees to use foreign languages to promote tourism services, highlighting the role of language skills not just in service delivery, but also in marketing and promotion within the industry. The importance of effective communication between tourism industry employees in a foreign language was agreed upon by 60% of respondents, indicating the value placed on internal communication in a multilingual environment. Finally, the necessity for tourism industry employees to handle the high expectations of tourists was agreed upon by 60% of respondents, suggesting an understanding of the increasingly demanding nature of tourism consumers and the need for industry employees to meet these expectations.

4. Importance of Language Education

Table 3. Second Variable about Importance of Language Education

No .	Importance of Language Education	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
2.	Is it crucial to communicate effectively with tourists in a foreign language?	20%	10%	70%
4.	Is it crucial to currently have available foreign language education programs for the tourism	20%	10%	70%

	industry?			
5.	The effectiveness of language education programs is crucial in improving communication skills for tourism industry employees?	10%	20%	70%
9.	Is it essential for the tourism industry's employees to attend language education programs to improve their foreign language skills?	20%	10%	70%

According to the table, the data sheds light on the perceived importance of effective communication with tourists in a foreign language and the role of language education programs in the tourism industry. A substantial majority (70%) agreed that it is crucial to communicate effectively with tourists in a foreign language. This suggests an understanding of the importance of language proficiency in enhancing the tourist experience and facilitating successful interactions within the industry.

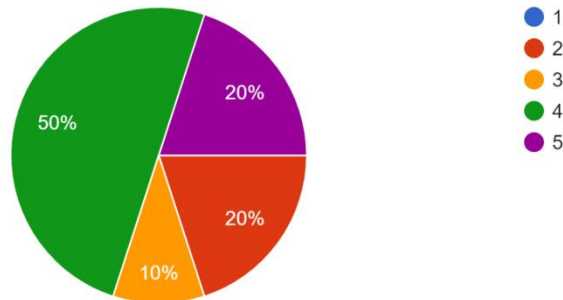
The necessity of having available foreign language education programs for the tourism industry was also agreed upon by 70% of respondents. This indicates a recognition of the role of structured language education in equipping industry employees with the necessary language skills. When asked about the effectiveness of language education programs in improving communication skills for tourism industry employees, 70% of respondents agreed. This underscores the perceived value of these programs in enhancing employees' language proficiency and their ability to communicate effectively with tourists. Finally, the necessity for tourism industry employees to attend language education programs to improve their foreign language skills was strongly agreed upon by 70% of respondents. This suggests a belief in the importance of continuous learning and skill development in the tourism industry.

After conducting the questionnaire and then getting conclusions. The researcher then conducted deeper interviews with several respondents. From interviews conducted via WhatsApp, researchers can conclude that:

I. The Importance of Tourism Employees Having Language Skills

2. It is crucial to communicate effectively with tourists in a foreign language.

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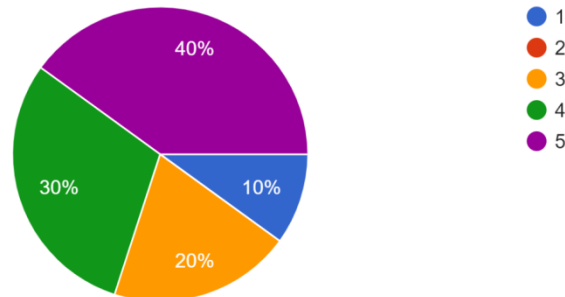
Per the theory presented by (Miller et al., 2017) Proficiency in tourist-specific vocabulary, manners, and service-oriented language is essential for effective communication with visitors. Based on the explanations and perspectives of the respondents, researchers can conclude that in this 21st century era. Tourism must have the ability to speak foreign languages. This is useful in order to communicate effectively with tourists from various countries and fellow employees. It also allows employees to understand the needs of tourists, provide better services, and increase positive impressions on tourists. Speaking a foreign language is very important for tourism industry employees because there are many foreign tourists coming. If tourism employees have the ability, it can improve International's competitiveness, ensure service quality, and maintain a healthy relationship between tourists and those who serve them.

According to MDW, one of the interviewees, it is very important to pay attention to. "Because as I said a while ago and for the tourism industry like this maybe working in a neighboring division where it is interconnected, I think it is very important to have a remote dialect in the tourism industry". This is in accordance with what is explained by Munusamy & Kaliappen (2024) , which explains that English has a very important role in the industry. Whether it is in the tourism industry or the hospitality industry. Workers in these sectors need to have good English communication skills. This is one of the ways that can improve the quality of tourism and hospitality services in Indonesia.

2. The Role of Language Education

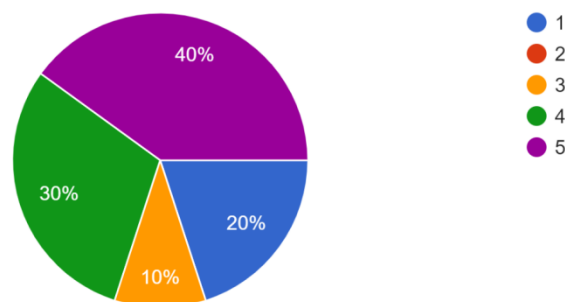
5. The effectiveness of language education programs is crucial in improving communication skills for tourism industry employees.

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9. It is essential for the tourism industry's employees to attend language education programs to improve their foreign language skills?

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In line with (Feruza & Phd, 2023) view, Effective language training requires ongoing review and constructive critique. Formative evaluations, language competency exams, and real-time feedback sessions help students identify areas for improvement. Based on the respondents, researchers can conclude that foreign language education plays an important role in the tourism industry. This is because with language education employees can communicate effectively with tourists. By communicating effectively, it can improve the quality of service and if the quality of service provided to tourists. Then, tourists will be interested in using these tourism services and this also provides benefits for service providers and natives around the tourism site.

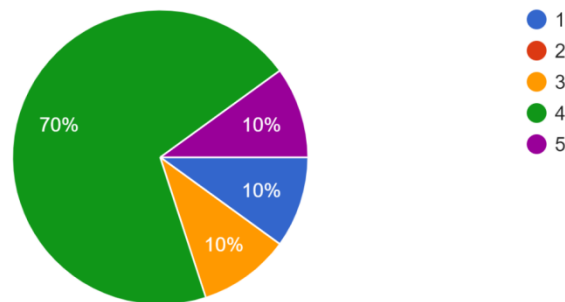
Industrial and hospitality workers can learn English in many ways. One of the most important is the role of language education itself. Language education can also learn from any media, one of which is from YouTube. It can improve English speaking skills in a fun and interesting way (Lorenzo & Wijirahayu, 2022). However, every medium, material, teaching method and test or evaluation used must have its own challenges (Wijirahayu et al., n.d.). Workers who work in the tourism department must familiarize themselves

with speaking English. Therefore, a good strategy is needed, especially when practicing classes, the closest example is choosing activities as expected by students or prospective tourism workers themselves (Wijirahayu, 2017).

3. The Importance of Language Education Programs for the Tourism Industry

7. It is essential for tourism industry employees to use foreign languages to promote tourism services?

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Per the theory proposed by (Feruza & Phd, 2023) Experiential and context-specific learning are essential for language acquisition in the tourism industry. Based on the explanations and perspectives of the respondents, researchers can draw the conclusion that language education programs are very important to be included in the current Tourism Industry. The language education program includes speaking, writing, and listening in a foreign language. With the help of language education programs for employees in the tourism industry, it will have a big impact on the quality and services in the tourism industry because it can increase international competitiveness.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The conclusion of this study is that the researcher wants to emphasize the important role of language education in the tourism industry. This is supported by the data collected by the researcher, namely using questionnaires and also in-depth interviews with respondents. From the results of the data collection, the researcher can conclude that the majority of respondents agree that having the ability to be able to communicate with foreign languages is very important for tourism industry employees. The respondents argued that foreign language skills such as speaking, listening, and writing enable effective communication between tourism employees and tourists or with fellow employees.

In this context, foreign language education programs, especially English, play an important role in equipping tourism industry employees with the necessary language skills. Thus, the researcher argues that foreign language education should be an important part of the tourism industry's employee development program. This not only affects the improvement of the employees' abilities but also improves the quality of services and increases international competitiveness. Therefore, foreign language education should be an important part of the tourism industry's employee education and training program.

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