

FUNCTIONALIZATION OF THE USE OF ENGLISH FOR TOUR GUIDE IN OKDO TOUR & TRAVEL MEDAN

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ABSTRAK

English plays an important role in the tourism industry, especially in promoting overseas tours through tour guides. The communication that occurs between tour guides and tourists is related to the image of Indonesia by these tourists. By mastering foreign languages, as well as understanding the culture of various countries, it is expected to be able to provide the best service and be able to create a good impression or image which has the effect of increasing the Indonesian tourism industry. So in this study, functionalization of the use of English is needed so that the English language is easy to understand in order to the message conveyed by the speaker can be easily understood by the listener, especially for tour guides at Okdo Tour & Travel. The method used in this study is qualitative and data obtained through observation. Based on the research, it can be concluded that the tour guides lack of interest in honing English skills so that it affects the development of the potential that exists within the tour guides and it requires more professional English tutors so they can learn and use English in various activities.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest archipelago country in the world by number 17,540 islands and a long coastline of 95 thousand kilometers stretching from west end to east. The bounty of abundant natural resources and Great biodiversity makes Indonesia a nation that reckoned with in the world. Indonesia becomes a Center of Excellent diversity biological resources. This is supported by the potential of marine and fisheries, mining, sea transportation, maritime industry, ecotourism, marine services and abundant energy mineral resources.

The tourism sector is one of the development sectors capable of creating progressive growth in developing countries, especially Indonesia, as well as increasing the country's foreign exchange and can act as a catalyst for development (agent of development). In other words, all businesses related to tourism are commercial businesses with the main objective of bringing in foreign exchange. In addition, tourism

development also aims to introduce and take advantage of the natural beauty and culture of Indonesia which has characteristics based on local wisdom. The goals of tourism development in Indonesia are clearly seen in the Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 1969, especially Chapter II Article 3, which states "Efforts to develop tourism in Indonesia are the development of the "tourism industry" and are part of the development and development of business and welfare. society and country. According to Norval in Spillane (1987), a British economist explains that tourism besides being useful for education, culture and social also has a different meaning more important from an economic point of view.

According to BPS Head Suhariyanto (2022) there were 1,557,530 foreign tourists visiting Indonesia during 2021. In December, the number of foreign tourists visiting reached 163,619 tourists.

Seeing the potential for Indonesia's tourism development which is marked by the increasing number of foreign tourist visits each year, of course this is a great opportunity to improve the Indonesian economy in general and the people's economy in particular. However, even though there has been an increase in foreign tourist arrivals, it has not been matched by the number of tour guides who can speak English well or are communicative, according to Okdo's partner reports.

From the observation, it was obtained that most of the tour guides working at Okdo Tour & Travel in Medan City tend to have high school education and only a few have bachelor's degrees, many of them do not yet have good English skills, while English is the main guiding language. they use. This will have a negative impact on providing information to tourists.

The functionalization of the English program aims to assist tour guides in motivating themselves and optimizing their potential in communicating in English so that they can make a meaningful contribution to others, and especially to develop their own careers. In addition, this training also aims to provide knowledge and insight on tourism services to form professional human resources.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach used is qualitative. Qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of words aimed at understanding social phenomena including linguistic phenomena (Mahsun, 2005). This research is used to explain a problem and describe its solution in depth and systematically.

The main data sources in this study are words and actions, and further data are additional data such as interviews and other information. The data collection method in this study is questionnaire. This is a technique or way of collecting data indirectly. The instrument or data collection tool is also called a questionnaire containing a number of questions or statements that must be answered or responded to by the respondents.

In addition, the observation method was also used. According to Hasan (2002) Observation is selecting, changing, recording, and coding a series of behaviors and situations related to the organization, according to empirical goals.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of tourism brings changes to the region. These changes can have a positive value if tourism development is carried out in the right way, in accordance with careful planning adapted to local conditions. However, if the implementation is not planned properly, it can actually result in losses or have a negative impact on developing tourism areas. Someone takes a tourism trip because he is influenced by various reasons which are reflected in various types of tourism. This needs to be studied because it relates

to supporting facilities and programs that need to be prepared, especially for areas that are tourist destinations.

Medan is the gateway to various tourist destinations in North Sumatra which has many attractions such as the Maimun Palace with the Grand Mosque and the Deli Pool, the Tjong A Fie House with Kesawan Square, the London Sumatra Building (Lonsum) and a number of other typical old buildings of the Dutch colonial era around. Medan has long been known as a trading city and became the headquarters of many plantation companies such as Deli Tobacco.

a. Use of English for Tour Guides at OKDO Tour & Travel

Based on observations and interviews with local tour guides revealing some tourism-specific problems and English proficiency faced by people in the tourist area of Medan city, researchers found that awareness of the importance of education, especially English, is still low in tourist destinations. Having a desire to know, interest, and strong determination from the participants is the main key in helping them change their lives for the better through acquiring the desired knowledge and skills. Without high motivation from the participants, the learning process that is followed will not be meaningful. English proficiency is low in tourist destinations with great potential, and people are reluctant to do business in these tourist destinations due to inadequate English skills. It is known that foreign languages play an important role in the tourism industry.

b. Factors inhibiting the use of English in tour guides at OKDO Tour & Travel

Based on the observations of researchers in the field, it can be concluded that the low interest in learning English and Human Resources (HR) in tour & travel are one of the inhibiting factors for the functionalization of English. The participation of tour guides is required in planning, implementing and developing the functionalization of the English language. HR, in this case the tour guide, is the party that organizes tourism where this role is very important, the competence of HR in tourism service and development is very important in the implementation and as a driving force for tourism development. English is crucial in the development of the tourism sector because it is an international language used by foreign tourists to communicate. Direct communication between foreign tourists and local residents without translators can increase the potential of tourist destinations and provide added value. However, English is still an obstacle for the local community due to low levels of education, lack of interest in learning, and lack of training to improve the quality of human resources from the government in tourism areas. Because of the above, it is hoped that the government will try optimally and be active in efforts to improve the quality of human resources.

c. How Theory Works

The research findings indicate that the functionalization of the use of English in the Okdo Tour & Travel tour guide has not been fully implemented. Language is a means to build communication, if the language is used properly it will foster communication and produce good language. However, if it is used incorrectly it can cause a bad response. Therefore personnel in the tourism industry, especially front positions must continue to level language proficiency.

Talcott Parsons and H. Bonner (1986) stated that which affects the activeness of visitors in interacting with the community and will bring dynamic changes in the behavior of visitors to the places visited, and will also have a positive impact on changes in the pattern of life, so that the Symbolic Interactionism Theory of Herbert Blumer (1987) appears, the workings of this theory, when visitors interact with the culture at the place where visitors visit, from there is a symbolic interaction that triggers social interaction, so that visitors' perceptions of life or the form of the quality of their tourism will emerge new perceptions from visitors regarding the quality of the places visited.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on research findings on the functionalization of English in tour & travel in Medan, several conclusions can be drawn, namely:

- a. Lack of interest in honing English skills for tour guides in Medan so that it affects the development of the potential that exists within the tour guides;
- b. Human Resources (Tour Guides) are still limited and only a few are able to speak fluently in English so it is difficult for them to share English;
- c. Need to improve tour & travel facilities and infrastructure in the city of Medan so that it can support the need to serve travelers coming from abroad; and
- d. Tour & Travel in Medan City requires more professional English tutors so they can learn and use English in various activities.

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