LOCALS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ENGLISH IN LANGGHER DHATANG AS A LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN PAMEKASAN, MADURA

Devy Sulistyawati, Mohammad Halili

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura

devysulistyawati9@gmail.com, Mohammad.halili@trunojoyo.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to study the locals' perceptions towards English in association with the local tourism destination development. Since language and tourism are interwoven, the use of language is linked to the likelihood of its popularity or infamy. It is undeniable that Indonesia requires English in all tourism sectors. The problem is that Indonesian's English proficiency in general is still in the lowest position among the members of the MEA. This has become one of the obstacles to make local tourism sites more competitive in the international sphere. Recognizing the communities' perceptions to English would be a meaningful step to advance the potentials of the local tourism destination. Therefore, two issues that this research is concerned about are: the locals' perceptions and the problems that might pose if English were introduced. The descriptive qualitative method employed. This research is located in Langgher Dhatang, Dusun Pogag, Desa Palalang, Kec. Pakong, Kab. Pamekasan, Madura. We interviewed thirteen local people living around the location. The participants' involvement decision was made based on the assumption that they will have a direct impact for its language planning. We designed a questionnaire in a Google Form to ask and marked the answers in accordance with the participants' responses. The research shows various attitudes towards English: most of them (76,9%) believe that English is important for Langgher Dhatang. 15,4% of the participants who have no idea either English will have a positive impact or not for local tourism development. The rest (7,7%) sees that English is inconsequential to its promotion. The problems that could arise include a low level of motivation in learning (15,4%), a low level of education (69,2%), and the youth ignorance in tourism site development (7,7%).

Keywords: English, Langgher Dhatang, Locals' Perceptions, Local Tourism Destination

I INTRODUCTION

Language and tourism cannot be separated. The use of language is associated with the likelihood either the popularity of tourism destination increases or decreases. To do a language planning in a certain area, initial information of the dwellers' insights is important to get since it clues what sort of the next actions that can be taken. It can help the researchers to work effectively mainly because the gathered evidences from locals can underlie either the project can(not) continue. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the locals' attitudes towards English for the development of the local tourism industry and problem identification if English were introduced.

Langgher Dhatang is a religious site that is strongly believed to exist without human intervention. The terms are Madurese: Langgher means *Mushalla* (a public place for performance of religious duties) and Dhatang means *Datang* (come). It means that this site presents by itself. This belief has already passed from generation to generation. Its naming consists of and refers to its historical values and meanings. Since then, planning to develop this site onto religious tourism purposes develops.

Tour is transitional activity from one activity to another with a lighter intensity. Tour is usually done by someone to take a break from the daily routine such as work. Tourism is the plural term of tour. Tour is a tourist trip that is carried out repeatedly or around, both planned and unplanned which can produce a total experience for the perpetrator (Wirawan & Semara, 2021). Tourism is everything related to tour activities and their impacts, due to the contact/interaction between travel agents and tourist attractions, tourism support facilities, and infrastructure/infrastructure provided by the community, private sector, and government, starting from the place of residence, while on the way, at the destination, until he returns to his place of residence (Wirawan & Semara, 2021). Thus, tourism is a symptom that happens due to the motion of human beings from where they stay to do some travelling activities, whether or not it was a holiday until they went back to their home.

Indonesia has tourism development potentials. The abundance of natural resources, cultural diversity, religions, ethnics and races can be a strong capital for tourism investment. With these various attractions, it is not surprising that Indonesian's tourism industries is considered highly promising. In fact, the tourism sector in Indonesia is one of the largest sectors supporting the state income. Indonesia as the largest archipelagic country in the world consisting of 17,508 islands or also known as the

maritime country, has realized the importance of the tourism sector to the Indonesian economy (Mudrikah, 2014). The reason for this is that Indonesia's tourism growth is always above Indonesia's economic growth. The tourism industry can contribute to the country's foreign exchange up to US$ 10 billion. This position is number four after oil, coal and palm oil (Sari & Suryawan, 2021). Recognizing that fact, developing the tourism sites means developing economic incomes of its people.

Religious tourism sites could be an option to tourism purposes. These sites offer spiritual experiences and attract visitors. In Mecca for instance, the number of pilgrims   during the 5 days of the Hajj reached up to 3.16 million in 2012 (Oumoudden & Al-Zahrani, 2021) and 4.2 million people annually for Vatican City, Italy (Moore, 2018). In Islamic context, religious tourism is used to spread da'wah and learning about Islam to the wider community in general in the form of tourism activities. In other words, visitors can take learned-lessons of Islamic values and meanings from their visits. For example, they can recall the history of religious tourist attractions visited (Vinandari, Hafizd, & Noor, 2019). The high spiritual needs of the Indonesian people have caused many religious sites to appear with various backgrounds. Spirituality is a dominant force in the needs of human life today because spirituality can provide peace and tranquillity in the human soul and even unity with the creator so that it has meaning in life (Narulita, 2018).

The local people's proficiency in English plays a significant role in tourism. This competence can facilitate the communication between visitors and dwellers. In a transaction for instance, a best deal can be made if the seller and the buyer understand each other. The oral promotion of its site from visitors to their families, friends, and colleague will be likely to increase the rate of its popularity as to it becomes magnet to other potential visitors. Sharing the understanding of a language can help every social group to feel as a single unit even though they come from different group (Dwivitasari, 2019). English has made the business more vibrant (Savarese, 2007).

As an international language, English is a means of connecting nations. It is undeniable that Indonesia requires English in all tourism sectors. The function is to facilitate communication between foreign tourists and tourism actors. In a study conducted by Luh Sri Damayanti in the journal In Journey: Journal of Tourismpreneurship, Culinary, Hospitality, Convention and Event Management (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 71-82) entitled *Peranan Keterampilan Berbahasa Inggris Dalam Industri Pariwisata*, mentioned that English has an important role in the tourism and hospitality industry. These roles are communicative role, integrative role, lingua-franca role, relationship-fostering role, business/economic role, and functional role (Damayanti, 2019). This reinforces the statement that English is needed in various layers of the tourism sector. Mastering English is thus important to attract a wider market especially in Indonesian's tourism sectors.

English which achieves a global status is necessary to be developed in the tourism sector in Indonesia. If the local people understand English, the communication with foreign tourists can take place effectively. This also can be a strong point that attract the people around the world to see local site destination in Indonesia. However, the ability or English language skills of Indonesians are still in the lowest position among the countries that are members of the MEA (ASEAN Economic Community) (Damayanti, 2019). Equal to Thailand and Vietnam, Indonesia is the country with the lowest English proficiency compared to other MEA member countries such as Singapore, the Philippines and even Malaysia. Indonesian people's English proficiency is in the range of 38.45 –54.06 (Iriance, 2018). This is one of the obstacles to the progress of local tourism in Indonesia to be able to compete in the international scope. Language development is one of the efforts to improve the quality of human resources so that the language planning is also fundamental.

The research on the language planning was also conducted in Bali (Sutarma, Putu., Sadia, & Ketut, 2013). They were mainly focused on the use of Bahasa Indonesia in practical terms in tourism industries in Bali. The source of data taken by researchers was the use of Indonesian in Nusa Dua, Kuta and Sanur, Bali. The result of this study demonstrates that the Indonesian language planning process is not optimal due to the fact that the use of foreign languages is still dominant and also that implementation and evaluation steps have not run well.

Other research examines how local communities in Japan perceive the sustainable cultural tourism. The results of the study indicate that Japanese residents have both positive and negative traits depending on how close they are to the interaction with the industry and tourism activities. However, most of them are unhappy with the sustainable cultural tourism due to the severe impacts that might be caused. For that reason, the researcher suggests that tourism managers and/or local governments need to develop a better market planning and management to develop sustainable cultural tourism (Kurniasari, 2021). From these two studies, it can be seen that public perceptions are highly fundamental for the

development of the local tourism industry. In other words, it is pivotal to engage communities to do language planning in a targeted local tourism development. The community engagement can indeed minimize the potential conflicts among governments and the dwellers as we already did initial identification to the likelihood either the project can(not) continue.

The process of language planning always intersects with political, social, cultural, and religious interests. Language planners cannot ignore the obstacles that might occur when language planning is carried out. The human resources or the targeted learners could be another problematic source. It means that introducing English in this context does not mean that the project goes as planned as we struggle with the background knowledge of the participants. Designing relevant materials and setting the class condition are parts of the internal challenges. It is also important to take account that the challenge is even more difficult because language planning will be held is local tourism in which its people are less exposed or even has never been in direct contact with English.

Establishing the importance of locals' perceptions towards English, the purpose of this study is to look at the insights of the community in Langgher Dhatang, Dusun Pogag, Desa Palalang, Kec. Pakong, Kab. Pamekasan, Madura. This research questions two issues: 1) what are the locals' responses if English is introduced in that area; and 2) what are the possible challenges that can contribute to its plan (un)successful.

II   METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The notion refers to a certain tradition in social sciences that fundamentally depend on observations of humans both in its area and the forms of (spoken and writen) language (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). The purpose is to elaborate the locals' perceptions towards English. This is to look at the view of local people if English were introduced in Langger Dhatang, located in Dusun Pogag, Palalang Village, Pakong District, Pamekasan Regency. The rational of choosing this site to undertake the research is based on the people's (irrational) belief that this is a stand-alone building without anyone's intervention. People believe that this building was built by spiritual forces. Moreover, the research on it as a religious tourism site destination remains unidentified. On the one hand, this location has an interesting history but due to the lack of promotion, this place has a very small numbers of both local or international tourists. Therefore, researchers assert that developing English for the people around it will have added values to why tourists should explore this place.

The following chart illustrates steps in the data collection we did:
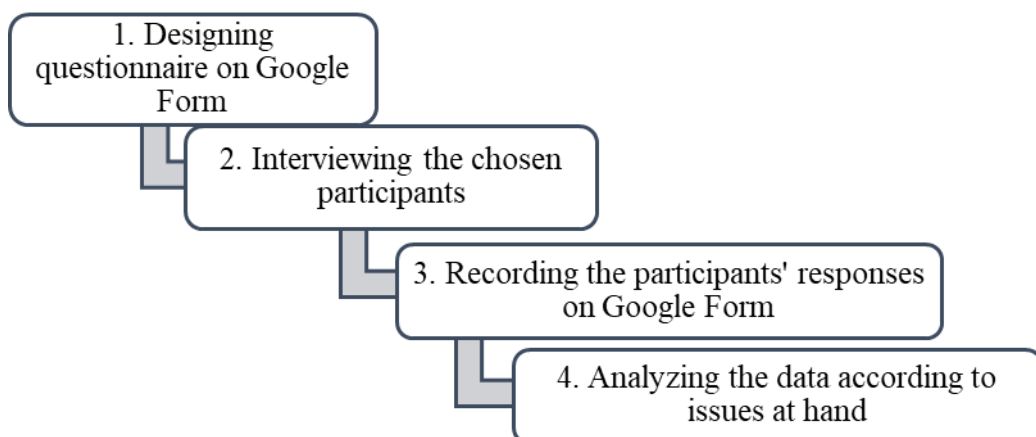
Picture 1. Data collection steps

The first step is to design questionnaire that was made to structure the relevant questions to obtain required information. Using Google Form is indeed handy enough to guide where the questions are going to go. This is generally accepted that gathering information from society is dynamic, not static. Therefore, as distracted topic might present, it is important to keep focusing on what specific information we are looking for. This is also helpful to specify, rather than generalize, responses as we expected. Moreover, we interviewed thirteen participants as they all meet the criteria of being participants: indigenous, neighbouring to the location of the research (Langgher Dhatang), and directly impacted with the language planning. The questions are in Bahasa Indonesia, but we used the local

language, Maduranese, to ask or to talk. This is to ensure that messages get across well or the questions were well understood.

The participants' responses were recorded. While we asked, we marked the options of the answers on the Google Form based on the participants' responses. This method is undoubtedly useful as this guards the data from lost. We can later check their responses on the Google Form. Finally, we analysed the chosen data based on the issues under discussion. In this stage, we see how the perceptions of the interviewees link to the notion of English to be introduced in that area. This point is crucial to understand because this gives a clear picture to us either the project to introduce English can go hand in hand with locals or vice versa.

III   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the interviews with participants in the given area covering the following issues:

3.1   THE POSSIBILITIES OF ENGLISH DEVELOPMENT IN *LANGGER DHATANG* AREA

We found various responses or beliefs of the participants to the likelihood of English to be introduced in that place. The first question is that "Based on your opinion, is it possible to develop English langguage in Langger Dhatang area?". The following chart illustrates their responses:

Picture 2. The locals' perceptions towards the development of English

The chart clearly shows us that most of the participants, which reach up to 76.9%, agree that it is possible to develop English in the Langgher Dhatang area. There are only small number of the participants (7.7%) of the respondents who disagree with English introduced in that site. Some (15.4%) have no idea about the issue under discussion. It means that the last party cannot justify their position to the idea of English development.

Any efforts are undoubtedly required to support the development of tourism site and developing English is considered to be a realistic action to improve the tourism industry (Widiastuti, Astawa, Mantra, & Susanti, 2021). For example, we can identify who will engage in the project. Youth around the location can be the party that will firstly receive this project. In addition, we also trained basic expressions for the people running a business around the location to understand basic command in English.

Since not all of the participants share the same views, the ones who see that English is not possible to develop in that area need further study. The problem with this view is that they actually have no idea about English, but because they see that developing tourism site will have more negative impact instead of the advantages, they put any efforts to popularize the site will remain harmful. For that reason, disagreement shown mirrors the pseudo rejection to English, but they see the disadvantages are more dominant than positive ones.

Pertaining to the previous insights, we asked a further question that can indicate what the next step that can be taken is. The following chart shows their responses:

Picture 3. The necessity of English

The data show that most them, that reach up to 61.5% of the participants "agree" with English requirement in the tourism area. This means that the participants consider the necessity of English for tourism sectors. To get more visitors especially from foreign countries, English is irrefutable. English plays a major role in the delivery of quality service (Zahedpishes, Bakar, & Saffari, 2017) and get more competitive global market (Al-Saadi, 2015). Having a good command in English supports the local tourism to have more visitors and intercultural communication can take place (Wilson, 2018). Reciprocal engagement or two-ways communication between visitors and hosts facilitate what they need.

Meanwhile, there are also the respondents who have no idea to its significance and it reaches up to 30.8%. participants with this position definitely do not know what English is actually for. For that reason, they cannot justify their position. The rest of the participants, which are up to 7.7% "disagree" with that idea. It should be noted, however, that this is very common to see this point of view. Even though logical reasonings to their attitude require more investigation, it is presumably believed that Langgher Dhatang is downward impossible to have foreign visitors. Therefore, they do not think that English brings more advantages to the development of Langgher Dhatang as a local tourism destination.

3.2 THE PROBLEMS THAT ARISE AS A RESULT OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

The second research question to the problems that arise when English language planning is carried out is fundamental to this study, since it can anticipate further actions for its plan. By recognizing and classifying the potential problems that might arise, we can work later effectively. As it is known that developing a language that has never been used before raises problems both internally and externally. The following are the result of research on the perception of the people around local tourism Langger Dhatang regarding this matter:

Picture 4. Potential problems towards English Development

What we found from the challenges or possible problem identification include: 1. Lack of HR interest in learning; 2. Low level of education; 3. Pessimistic perception of tourism site development activities; 4. Average age of HR dominated by parents; 5. Lack of youth concern for the environment around tourist sites; 6. Lack of sensitivity of the community to jointly develop tourist sites; 7. There is no support from educators to learn English for residents; 8. Lack of financial support from the local government; 9. Other (is an answer for people who do not understand or do not know the answer). The data stated 69.2% or 9 respondents answered "other", 15.4% or 2 respondents answered "Lack of HR interest in learning", "7.7% or 1 respondent answered" Lack of community sensitivity to jointly develop tourist sites" and 7.7% or 1 respondent answered "Lack of youth concern for the environment around tourist sites".

The interesting point to note is that the low level of education achieves the highest rank in number. That big number basically strongly indicates how important the education is, according to the locals' perception, to support the local tourism industry. This can lead people around Langgher Dhatang to share a uniformed goal: the development of local tourism industry. Education plays an important role to build people's tourism awareness because it increases the people's sense of belonging to the tourism site around them. Additionally, skills that they gain while in education or tourism training can provide better services. For that reason, positive cooperation among people is expected to grow healthy.

Some, however, do not know what sorts of problems will arise if language planning is carried out. This shows that language planning is something that has never happened before resulting in a lack of information regarding this matter. However, other answers such as lack of community sensitivity, lack of concern for youth and lack of interest in human resources in learning are indications that the problems that arise originate from within the community itself. In relation to the Moeliono theory, which says that in the language planning process there are problems that need to be considered by language planners, such as problems related to position or status, problems with language systems or codes, and problems related to the use of language by local residents (Riani, 2017), the community problems in the Langger Dhatang area are in point number three of Moeliono's opinion, which is related to the local residents.

3.3   ENGLISH AS A *LANGGER DHATANG* TOOL OF PROMOTION

Concerning the people's belief to the positive impact that can bring by mastering English is another initial identification prior to the English development. What we asked is that "Whether English be a means of promotion and attraction for the local tourism industry which in this case is less well known by tourists? ". Langger Dhatang as local tourism which has an interesting history but is not well known by the wider community is one aspect of the interest of researchers to find out the perceptions of the people in the tourist area when using English as one of the attractions and a means of promotion for Langger Dhatang tourism itself. The following is the data that has been taken by researchers on this matter.

Picture 5: English as a tool of tourism promotion

The data shows that most of respondents (53.8%) agree with, some (38.5%) "Don't know" and some disagree with (7.7%) that English can promote the local tourism destination. Seeing the results which show that almost half of the respondents chose "yes", the researchers concluded that the public thinks that English can indeed be a means of promotion for Langger Dhatang. The following data reveals the locals' perceptions whether English can be a magnet for visitors or not.

Picture 6: English as a means of tourism attraction

The above data shows that the results of English can be an attraction for Langger Dhatang tourism. The data stated that participants (46.2%) agree with, some (30.8%) "Don't know", and some (23.1%) disagree with that English can be an attractive tool to local tourism. With the big number of respondents who said "yes" to this question, the researchers concluded that indeed English could be an attraction for local tourism in Langger Dhatang. From the two data above, the language of tourism provides a description of the potential of tourist destinations that seek to persuade, attract, encourage and seduce potential tourists to become real tourists (Arfin, Aireen, & Hassan, 2012). This is in line with the opinion of the people in the Langger Dhatang area that indeed English can be a promotional tool that can attract tourists and can also be a tourist attraction.

The data shows various attitudes shown by the participants in regards with the development of English in Langgher Dhatang area. Those various responses can be understood as a challenges and opportunities for language planning especially in the local tourism destination which is low in popularity.

IV CONCLUSION

Gathering initial insights of the local people towards English can be a meaningful step to develop English in a religious tourism site. Introducing and mastering English to and by local people in a growing religious tourism visit enable the local tourism destination more vibrant. The current research shows various attitudes towards English in the given area: most of participants believe that English is important and if it is introduced to them, English can be a means of effective communication for foreigners' as to promote this site to wider visitors. In contrast, some did not see any significance to Langgher Dhatang promotion even though they learn English. But some cannot justify their position to the role of English in the religious tourism site.

Moreover, the participants anticipate the potential problems that hinder the learning, for example, the low level of education of its people, lack of tourism awareness development of the youth, the low level of motivation in learning English. These alert us that it is not only a matter of transferring or introducing English, but also a matter of understanding the learners. What we can recommend for the next research is to scrutinize on how actually mastering English can be associated with economic incomes of its people. We can subsequently see the consistency of their opinions if different contexts of research proposed.

REFERENCES

Al-Saadi, N. (2015). Importance of English Language in the Development of Tourism Management. *Academic Journal of Accounting and Economics Researches*, 33-45.

Anggito, A., & Setiawan, J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher).

Arfin, M., Aireen, N., & Hassan, H. (2012). Language for Tourism: A review of Literature. *Procedia Sosial and Behavioral Sciences 66*, 136-143.

Damayanti, L. S. (2019). Peranan Keterampilan Berbahasa Inggris dalam Industri Pariwisata. *Journey: Journal of Tourismpreneurship, Culinary, Hospitality, Convention and Management, 2*(1), pp 71-82.

Dwi Vitasari, D. (2019). Analisis Gaya Bahasa pada Lagu Peterpan. *Journal Peqguruang, 1*(2), pp. 109-114, doi:10.35329/jp.v1i2.561.

Iriance, I. (2018). Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Lingua Fraca dan Posisi Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris Masyarakat Indonesia Diantara Anggota MEA. *Prosiding Industrial Research Workshop and National Seminar 9*(0), 776-783.

Isdianto, E. (2014). Bahasa dan Teknologi. *Jurnal Bahas, 40*(91), 90-98.

Kurniasari, K. K. (2021). Pariwisata Budaya Berkelanjutan: Persepsi Masyarakat Lokal. *Journal of Research on Business and Tourism, 1*(1), p 62-74.

Mudrikah, A. (2014). Kontribusi sektor pariwisata terhadap GDP Indonesia tahun 2004-2009. *Economics Development Analysis Journal*, ISSN 2252-6765, 362-371.

Narulita, S. (2018). Spiritualitas Modern Melalui Wisata Reigi Studi Fenomenologi Peziarah Makam Habib Husein Alydrus. *Strengthening the Moderate Vision of Indonesian Islam*, (hal. 904-912). Surabaya.

Oumoudden, S., & Al-Zahrani, K. (2021). "Tourisification" of the Spritual and/or Spritualization of the Cultural: Between Pilgrimage and Consumerism: The Emergence of religious Tourism in Saudi Arabia. *Open Edition Journal*.

Riani. (2017). Permasalahan dalam Perencanaan Bahasa pada Masyarakat Multikultural. *Madah, 3*(2), 164-172.

Sari, N. I., & Suryawan, W. A. (2021). Pengembangan Area Hiburan dan Edukasi di Area Paralayang Batu. *Jurnal Sains dan Seni ITS, 9*(2), G137-G142.

Savarese, C. (2007). *English Language Right in the Global Market: An American Perspective*. Springer Science Business Media, LCC.

Sutarma, Putu., I. G., Sadia, & Ketut, I. (2013). Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia di Industri Pariwisata Bali: Studi Kasus Perencanaan bahasaPada Industri Pariwisata Bali. *Soshum Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora, 3*(2), 118-135.

Vinandari, N., Hafizd, K. A., & Noor, M. (2019). Sistem Informasi Geografis Wisata Religi Berbasis Web Mobile. *Jurnal Sains dan Informatika, 5*(1), 42.

Wilson, A. (2018). Adapting English for the Specific Purpose of Tourism: A Study of Communication Strategies in Face-to-Face Encounters in a French Tourism Office. *ASP (La revue du GERAS)*, 1-20.

Wirawan, P. E., & Semara, I. M. (2021). *Pengantar Pariwisata*. Bandung: IPB INTERNASIONAL PRESS.

Zahedpishes, N., Bakar, Z. B., & Saffari, N. (2017). English for Tourism and Hospitality Purposes (ETP). *English Language Teaching*, 86-94.