



## Exploring The English Phrases Needed At The Tourist Sites In Palopo, South Sulawesi

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### **Abstract**

English language is essential in the development of tourism. The English language for many years is used as an instructional language in the tourism industry. This paper aims at finding phrases that are needed at the local tourist sites and also to find out local people perspective related to the role of the English language in the tourism industry. This research is qualitative one and in collecting data the researcher applied direct observations and interviews. The results show that many English for tourism phrases in research sites are needed to know by the traders, hotel staff, officers, drivers and all people who live around the tourist sites in Palopo. The result of the study is expected to encourage people around the tourist sites and practitioners to pay attention to the issue of the English language in tourism. Improving collaboration between educational institutions and tourism organizations is needed in the sustainable development of the local tourism industry in Palopo.

**Keywords:** *English for Tourism; local tourism; English language*

## **Introduction**

English language plays an essential role as the predominant tool to communicate globally. English has become an international language and it is used as a means to transfer thoughts and cultures and to build good relationships between people around the world. In tourism industry, English language is used as lingua franca; it is used as an instructional language for many years. Thus, it is an essential factor for tourism practitioners and people in this field to be able to communicate in English.

The tourism industry is a sector that can be the source of financing for government and society around the tourist attractions. The development of the tourism industry is influenced by many factors; one of them is a human resources factor. The adequate of human resources is an effective way to promote tourism in a region. The quality of human resources is supported by the ability to speak English as an international language that commonly used in the tourism industry (lingua-franca). Language is a cultural manifestation that is used by human beings in communication, in writing or even as a body language to convey our desire to others. Thus, the English language is essential in the development of tourism.

According to Mr. Firmansyah Rahim as Director General, Development of Tourism Destinations (2013), tourism development is fitting to involve citizens around the tourist attractions; one way to involve them is by providing English language training. He added that the government or tourism providers and the citizen around the tourism place can establish a good connection in order to develop local tourism in a region.

Palopo as a developing city in South Sulawesi Indonesia is trying to develop its tourism sector. There are many tourism destinations in Palopo, one of them is located in Latuppa district. Latuppa is located about seven kilometers from Palopo or about ten minutes away by car. It is an area where visitors can enjoy some tourism objects namely Kambo Hill, Agro swimming pool, Jodoh River, and Latuppa Waterfall. To reach Latuppa waterfall, visitors will pass a paved, winding, downhill and uphill road, with magnificent sightseeing of 2000 meters long river that will be suitable for rafting. After arriving to the gate, visitors have to walk through the slippery and steep path, among cocoa plantations that owned by local people, it is about 50 meters from the parking area. In this location, visitors can taste many seasonal fruit trees such as durian, rambutan and mangos teen.

Additionally, tourism sector in Palopo need to be developed in many parts, such as facilities and human resources especially the ability of people around the tourist destinations in communicate in the English language, take example in Bali, majority people in Bali who live around tourists sites are able to communicate in English, thus many foreign tourists feel comfortable to come

and interact with the local people. In this part, collaboration between educational institutions and tourism organizations is needed, particularly the department of English Language and tourism.

In linguistics, there are English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). One of the popular branches of English for Specific Purposes is English for Tourism. This subject has been taught in some tertiary education globally such as at the University of Cokroaminoto Palopo. ESP can be defined in two basic goals for the learners. The first is the acquisition of content knowledge of a specific field, and the second is the development of English skill required to perform in the discipline (Butler-Pascoe, 2009). She stated that, this combination requires expertise in English language teaching and content knowledge of a particular field such as tourism, business, technology, aviation etc.

Moreover, authentic material of the disciplines or occupations it supports and in the process providing appropriate language practice in terms of syntax, lexis, register, genre and discourse (John & Dudley-Evans, 1991). Additionally, Wello and Dollah (2008:55) wrote that “a foreign language should be studied in the context of improving learning gains”. It means that a foreign language or the English language should be studied based on the context in order to achieve successful learners. As a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Tourism required an analysis of the learners needs. In addition, Pinelopi (2015) in his article in the International Journal of English Literature and Culture entitled “English for Specific Purposes: How to Teach English for Tourism” states that in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) preparing materials that match with the learners’ needs is crucial, therefore preparing particular references for students in accordance with their field is very essential.

Meanwhile, Rao (2007) in his article “The role of the English Language in the Tourism Industry” wrote that the main component in the tourism industry is human resources; human resource plays an important role in the promotion of tourist attractions in a country. According to Wello and Dollah (2008:13), ESP programs focus on developing communicative competence in a specific field, such as tourism, business and engineering. Moreover, Barsturkmen (2006) states that English for Specific Purposes has functioned to help language learners cope with the features of language or to develop competencies needed to function in a disciplines, profession or workplace.

In tourism industry, English is used to communicate, promote, negotiate, and execute transactions with tourists by tourism employees. In Indonesia, tourism sector is the fastest-growing industry and it plays an important role in the economics of some regions in Indonesia, such as Bali, Lombok, and Tana Toraja.

Due to the importance of the English language in tourism industry, many education institutions both government and private, offer undergraduate level English courses related to tourism English for students who intend to work in

tourism or hospitality industry after graduation. It is including Cokroaminoto University of Palopo who offer English for Tourism as one of optional subject for students in English Language Department.

In relation to the issue, the main reason for conducting this study is to find tourism vocabulary that meet with the learners' needs. This study explores the phrases and expressions used by visitors in the local tourist sites. Therefore, those phrases can be used as one of teaching materials that locally charged or as an authentic material in teaching English for Tourism particularly for the students in Indonesia.

The major objective of this study was to investigate the English phrases needed at the local tourist sites. Additionally, the aim of this study also tried to find out the perception of people related to the role of the English language in tourism as support to sustainable development of the local tourism.

The findings should make an important contribution to the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly English for Tourism. Therefore, this study makes a contribution on the development of local tourism by providing English phrases to learn for people who interested to work in the field of tourism industry.

## **Method**

The method of this study is qualitative. Qualitative methods offer an effective way of describing phrases or expressions used by the visitors in the research sites. Data were gathered from multiple sources at various time points during direct observation and interviews. A random sample of visitors, traders and local people in various sites in Latuppa areas were recruited as the participants. Semi-structures interviews were conducted to gain information about the perspective of people related to the role of English language in sustainable development of local tourism.

## **Results**

The results of this study are reported and discussed based on the data collected through direct observations and interviews.

From the observations, the researcher found some phrases and expressions used by the visitors, traders and people who live around tourism sites in Latuppa, Palopo. These spots namely Jodoh River, Kambo Hill, Agro Swimming Pool, and Hotel and Latuppa Waterfall. Most of the phrases are spoken in Bahasa Indonesia due to the majority of tourists are them who live around Palopo city and Luwu regency. Therefore, the topics of conversations occurred such as buying and selling, renting something, in the parking lot, asking something, show directions, telling the time, ordering food and drinks,

check in at the hotel, explained the hotel facilities/sites, describing traditional food and beverage, and welcomed guests (greeting). These phrases can be developed as a dialogue or conversation in accordance with the needs of people who live nearby the tourist attractions. The visitors spoke in Bahasa Indonesia, thus the phrases are translated into the English language.

The following are some phrases used by the traders and visitors in the tourist attractions.

*Visitor : Ma'am...how much is it? (while holding a bottle of soft drink from refrigerator)*

*Seller : Eight thousand rupiah.*

The extract above shows that the phrase "How much is it" is one of the common expression used by the buyer in buying something. In tourism spots, we can find a lot of traders, thus bargaining phrases are needed for tourist. Additionally, pricing phrases such as 'eight thousand rupiah" is equally important.

Another phrase occurred in the research sites such as "excuse me" but in Bahasa Indonesia, local people pronounce it as "tabe". Besides that, there are some phrases spoke by the tourists in bargaining such as "I would like to...", "How much does the...", "Do you have...", "Could I have the.." etc.

In Latuppa, particularly in Jodoh River, some gazebos are rented for the visitors. In renting a gazebo, the dialogue below shows some phrases used by the visitor and the owner.

*Tourist : Excuse me ma'am...we need to rent a gazebo, is it yours?*

*Owner : Yes, I am...you can rent this one?*

*Tourist : How much does it cost for a day ma'am?*

*Owner : Fifty thousand rupiah*

*Tourist : Oh, okay. Can I rent this one for a day?*

*Owner : Sure. I'll clean it first.*

*Tourist : Thank you.*

From the dialogue above, we found some useful phrases related to tourism, such as "we need to rent a gazebo", "How much does the gazebo cost?", "Can I rent this one for a day?". Besides that, common expressions such as thank you, sure and excuse me, often spoken by the local tourists.

During the observations in the research site in Latuppa, the researcher also found several phrases such as; *Where is the restroom?, Where is the changing room?, Where can I find..., How far is it from...,How long will it take to get to...,I'd like to go to..., I need to go to...,Could you please take me to..., Shall we order now?, What is good here, I can't decide what to order. What do you suggest?, Could I have the....please?, I would like to drink / eat, I would like to order...,and May I have the bill?, What time is it now?.*

These phrases are spoken in Bahasa Indonesia by the tourists, traders, officers and local people who live around the tourist sites, the researcher then translated into the English language. To sum up, the phrases found in Latuppa have similarities with phrases used in other tourist sites. Unfortunately, majority visitors, traders and local people are not able to speak English.

To answer the second research questions about the perception of people related to the role of the English language in tourism as support to sustainable development of the local tourism, the researcher conducted semi-structure interviews. It is important to know how the people who live nearby the local attractions in Latuppa realized the importance of the English language as a part of citizen support in the local tourism development. The researcher through interviews concluded that majority of people do not realize the importance of English in sustainable development of potential tourism in the region. They argued that the tourism attractions in Latuppa lack of foreign travelers or international tourist not like in Toraja. Therefore, mastering the English language is not a crucial thing for now. Additionally, people said that mastering the English language would be needed for them in the future, when some international tourists interested to visit Latuppa, Palopo. The researcher shows that tourists who came to the Latuppa attractions are still local people from Palopo and Tana Luwu. Thus, it is reasonable for local people to argue that mastering the English language is not very important for them now.

This argument is in contrast to the opinion of young people. From the interviews most of the students as young people said that the English language is very important in daily communication and it would be great if local people who live nearby tourist sites are able to speak the English language, particularly tourism English. Moreover, some students argued that with the English language local people can promote local tourism worldwide, for instance via social media like facebook, vlog, twitter or blog.

Discussing about participation of the residents in the development of local tourism in Palopo, the researcher assumed that the citizens for many years is actively participated to increase tourism in their area, especially in the economic sector, such as selling a variety of fruits, gasoline, provide rent tires to swim, provided parking space and mini restaurant nearby the tourist attractions. However, the citizens are lacking in terms of creativity, such as making various souvenirs typical of Latuppa or Palopo that can be sold as a local souvenir (*ole-ole khas*) typical of Latuppa attractions.

Prof. Dr. I Gde Pitana (2012) states that developing a tourism destination is not possible without the creative economy. Instead, the creative economy cannot develop without the market. The market for creative economy is tourism. This indicates tourism has a very close relationship with the creative economy. Rao, Ravantharanathe and Syaharom (2007) found that the role of the English language proficiency in the tourism industry is prominent.

Tourism is an activity which directly involves community around the

tourist sites. Tourism activities will bring many impacts on the local community. Further, the tourism industry can change the lives of local people in various aspects of life, such as in the economics, social, cultural, ideological defense, and security. This is what makes the world of tourism is becoming a subject of study and tourism often shine under the spotlight of public due to the nature of tourism is dynamic and involves many stakeholders.

To sum up, this study has found some English phrases that meet with the local tourist needs. The finding is expected to encourage people around the tourist sites and practitioners to pay attention to the issue of the English language in tourism.

## **Conclusion**

As a potential sector to improve, tourism industry have played important role to support the sustainable development of a region. English as a Lingua-franca is also an important element in developing a tourism sector. This study shows that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge of the citizens related to the importance of the English language and tourism. Some phrases and vocabulary appropriate for the citizens nearby Latuppa attractions are found, there are various context of the phrases such as; buying or selling, leasing, show directions, telling time and so on. These phrases generally can be found in the English for tourism books. Therefore, it is expected to the government of Tourism Sector of Palopo city to give more attention to the development of local tourism by increasing interest and participation of citizen in the development of local tourism. Improving collaboration between educational institutions and tourism organizations is needed in sustainable development of the local tourism industry in Palopo..

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