

Conference Paper

## Mapping Tour Guides' Speaking and Writing Skill Levels in Tourist Villages in Trenggalek

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### ABSTRACT

Trenggalek is one of the regencies in East Java that is intensively developing tourist villages. By 2022, 35 tourist villages have been successfully built. With the existence of tourist villages with various potentials, supporting factors are needed from not only the government but also the wider community, one of which is the participation of the community as tour guides. A tour guide must master various abilities; communication skills, language skills, and the ability to know a lot about tourist attractions. One of the vital things that must be mastered by a tour guide is the ability to speak and write English as an international language. A tour guide is expected to be able to use English well, fluently, and effectively in carrying out his duties to guide tourists who come. That is why it is necessary to map the level of English proficiency of the tour guides in tourist villages. Thus, this study focused on analyzing the English levels of tour guides in two skills; speaking and writing. The result revealed that tour guides in Trenggalek have a varied range of English speaking and writing levels, from basic to intermediate. It is hoped that later with the mapping of the English level of the tour guides, English teachers and researchers in similar fields will be able to better prepare teaching materials and training programs that are suitable to the needs of the tour guides

*Keywords: English skills, tour guides, tourist villages, Trenggalek*

### Introduction

As a country that is very rich in tourism potential, Indonesia has several excellent tourism potentials, such as the potential for natural, cultural, and artificial tourism. Tourist destinations in Indonesia are also well known throughout the world, with Bali as the most visited tourist destination. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of tourist visits before the COVID-19 pandemic, namely in 2019 was 16.11 million foreign tourists, but this figure is still below the target set by the government, namely 18 million foreign tourists. For domestic or domestic tourists alone, there were 722,158,733 tourist trips in 2019. With the covid-19 pandemic, the number of tourists both domestic and foreign decreased drastically. There were only around 4,052,923 tourist visits in 2020 and 1,557,530 visits in 2021, where these numbers fell very sharply compared to the years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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With the pandemic conditions in 2022 gradually improving, the government then tried to revive the wheel of tourism, one of which was by re-invigorating the development of tourist villages. Tourism villages have been developed by the Indonesian government in various provinces. Based on the Association of Indonesian Tourism Villages (Asidewi) in 2020, there were 1,302 tourist villages with details of 138 tourist villages located in West Java Province, 132 tourist villages in Central Java Province, 114 tourist villages in East Java, 92 tourist villages in NTT, and the rest are scattered in other provinces such as North Sumatra and Yogyakarta. And one of the provinces that are very aggressively building and maximizing the potential of tourist villages in East Java Province. The province with the second largest population on the island of Java has the potential for natural and cultural tourism that can be utilized as a tourist village. Several districts in East Java Province are intensifying the development of tourist villages, including districts that may not be too big, one of which is Trenggalek Regency. This regency, which is located in the south of Java Island, has a very beautiful natural charm in the form of mountains, beaches, and a rocky but beautiful landscape. In addition, there are various kinds of indigenous cultures such as the Turonggo Yakso dance, Tayub, Tiban, and other arts that support the development of tourist villages in the district.

Another attraction of Trenggalek is the very cheap price of the food. Some mountainous areas of Trenggalek are also producers of high-quality coffee, fruit, and milk commodities, namely the Bendungan District, which is located on the slopes of Mount Wilis, which produces premium quality coffee and milk, and Pule District, which also has a mountainous landscape which produces high-quality dragon fruit. These potentials are scattered in various villages in Trenggalek which then become the background for the emergence of tourist village tourism villages in Trenggalek. To increase tourist visits, including in tourist villages, several things are needed, one of which is the participation of tour guides. Trenggalek as a district in East Java that launched the 100 tourist village program sees the urgency and need for the role of tour guides in the success of this program. These tour guides will later be placed in tourist villages spread across various sub-districts in Trenggalek Regency. The tour guides are also expected to have several abilities, one of which is the ability to use English well and fluently. This is the background of the research "Analysis of English Language Ability Tour Guide Tourism Villages in Trenggalek Regency as Part of the Success of the "100 Tourism Villages of Trenggalek Regency" Program.

Referring to several studies in the field of English for Tourism or English for Guiding, several previous studies discuss similar topics. The first research discusses the speaking skills of tour guides whose job is to promote tourism objects at the Aceh Tsunami Museum (Gani & Damayanti, 2018). If you pay attention, the research focuses on one skill in English, namely speaking. So that used to measure is also different. While the research that will be proposed aims to analyze all English skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). Furthermore, if the previous research used the researcher's standards in determining the level of the tour guides, then this study uses the standard or level of English set by the CEFR. Previous research also used interviews as an instrument. Interviews are designed according to the actual setting and situation, namely when the tour guides are on duty (natural setting). Meanwhile, the research that will be submitted will use interviews, English tests (online and offline), and observation.

The second research is about the English language proficiency of the tour guides on duty at historical attractions (Chanwanakul, 2021). The research is set in Thailand. In this study, apart from English proficiency, the researcher also found that presentation skills and communication skills also play an important role in the success of a tour guide's task other than English proficiency. Compared to the research that will be proposed, this research also has differences, namely the involvement of communication skills and presentation skills as things that are also discussed in the research, while this research focuses more on the English proficiency level of the tour guides.

In addition, from where the research was carried out, the two previous studies took place in popular tourist attractions, Bali (the first study) and Thailand (the second study). While in this

research, researchers will take place in a tourist attraction that is relatively not too well known and is still in the stage of developing into a mainstay of tourism in East Java and Indonesia, namely Trenggalek. Where foreign tourists are also not as busy as Bali or Thailand, so the researcher's initial prediction is that the English skills of the tour guides there are also not at the level of the English proficiency of the tour guides in the two previous studies. However, this research has an opportunity and provides a way for similar research to be conducted in developing tourism objects in Indonesia, the aim is to find out the appropriate methods and English language training materials for tour guides and also to prepare the English language skills of tour guides. So, it is hoped that the tour guides in Trenggalek, especially in tourist villages will be ready if there are foreign tourists who come to visit.

From the explanation above, this study then tried to answer this research question:

1. What are the levels of speaking and writing proficiency of tour guides in Trenggalek?

## **Material and Methods**

This research was carried out by a combination of lecturers, students, and tour guides, to parties directly related to the tourism sector in Trenggalek Regency, especially related parties from the Trenggalek Regency Tourism and Culture Office. Broadly speaking, this study seeks to describe and analyze the English language skills of tour guides. The stages of carrying out the research in detail are as follows.

### **Research stages**

1. Initial observations. At this stage, the researcher coordinates with the relevant agencies, especially regarding the number of tour guides and their distribution in the tourist village of Trenggalek Regency. At this stage, the researcher also discussed with the authorities the condition of mastery of the English language of the tour guides. By knowing the field description, the researchers prepared an initial strategy to map the English proficiency level of the tour guides. Here, the research team also involved two students from the Tourism Studies Program who will program MBKM the next semester. By participating in this activity the students concerned get recognition of as many as 3 credits. For the courses that receive 3 credits of recognition in the MBKM program in this activity, the Tour Guiding course weighs 3 credits. This course is an elective course and a characterizing course for the UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur Tourism Study Program, where in this course students will receive material on tour scouting in ecotourism. In addition, students will also learn the psychological factors of tourists in visiting tourist objects, mapping tourist characteristics, basic tour scouting, tour guiding techniques, code of ethics for tour guides, K3 in tourism, First Aid, licensing tour guides, storytelling techniques, and practice, making ecotourism trips and tour guiding. With the characteristics of the material given in the Tour Guiding course, it is targeted that this research activity can be recognized as 3 credits in the Tour Guiding course.
2. Interview and preliminary analysis. At this stage, the researchers conducted field observations by holding hearings and interviews with tour guides in the tourist village of Trenggalek Regency. The researchers will ask some questions to the tour guides; 1. About their estimates of their English level, 2. About their opinion on the importance of mapping the English, level for tour guides, 3. About the barriers and other inhibiting factors in improving their English level, and 4. Effective ways to improve their level of English proficiency. In addition, the researchers also made direct observations when the tour guides were on duty. Because the tour guides are not evenly distributed in the existing tourist villages, the hearing will be held centrally with tour guide representatives from each tourist village. Preparation of test materials and design of types of English tests. After knowing the description of the ability of the tour guides, the researchers then looked for English test materials that refer to the CEFR level (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2), some of which were taken from the British Council,

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/>, where on the website materials appropriate to the field of study have been mapped, including English language materials for tour guides.

3. Giving English tests for tour guides. The tour guides were then given an English proficiency test, in which the test questions had been prepared in advance by the researchers. The summarized test questions are then given to the tour guides to be done offline and online. Because there is a possibility that the tour guides are not familiar with the question model, the researchers will accompany the tour guides during the process of working on the questions.
4. Analysis of the results of the tour guides' English tests and the development of types of tests and materials. The researchers then analyzed the results of the English test of the tour guides and then grouped the tour guides according to their level of English proficiency, according to the classification of the CEFR. From here, English teaching strategies are designed for tour guides as well as materials to be compiled in textbooks. Researchers also develop teaching materials and tests that can be used by tour guides in the future.
5. Follow-up interviews. After the English test was successfully carried out, a follow-up interview was conducted which was about the opinion of the tour guides about the material being tested with the suitability of their description of the English test and the suitability of the English they did while guiding tourists.
6. Implementation of test results. At this stage, the researchers developed teaching materials and English teaching methods for tour guides based on the results of the tour guides' English tests. A need analysis was also carried out at this stage, because based on the test results; the researchers got clearer information about the English language needs of the tour guides.
7. Data analysis and evaluation. After all the research series above has been carried out, data analysis is carried out which is the last stage. All data obtained will be processed, discussed with researchers, and tour guides, and evaluated with other related parties. It to then be implemented in the form of an external.



Figure 1. Research Team with Resource Person after Data Collection



Figure 2 Research Team Conducting Data Collection

## Results and Discussion

Through this research, it can be seen that the English language skills of the tour guides in Trenggalek Regency vary. As for the number of respondents who participated in this study, there were 5 people who five were chosen because they had already guided foreign tourists, or tourists who used English as their language of instruction. The five people came from Duren Sari Tourism Village, Sawahan Village, Watulimo District. This study was used to test and interview instruments. Respondents consisting of 5 tour guides were given an English proficiency test which includes speaking and writing because the tour guide's ability focuses on these abilities. After that, the tour guides were given several interview questions to determine their ability in English. The direct data collection process was carried out in Sawahan Village which became a tourist village in Watulimo Trenggalek District.

After going through various considerations, including field surveys and an initial overview of the tour guide's English proficiency as well as limited access to digital-based test instruments (TOEFL, IELTS) in tourist villages in Trenggalek, then the assessment instrument was changed, into a written and spoken test where the researcher designed the test instrument. The English language skills tested are specified as speaking (speaking) and writing (writing), because these two skills are active and productive which is highly emphasized to be mastered by a tour guide. Before assessing the participants' speaking skills, the researcher first determined the criteria and standards of assessment for each skill as follows. There are five tour guides involved in this research, participant S, O, U, R, and F. From these results it can be revealed that participant F received the highest score with a score of 80 out of 100. A score of 80 means that F is a good English speaker. Based on the assessment criteria, the pronunciation of F can be understood clearly even though it is still influenced by his mother tongue. For the grammatical aspect, F made some small mistakes even though it didn't affect the meaning. The next aspect is vocabulary where speakers sometimes use inappropriate vocabulary. Inaccurate in this context means that the speaker's diction or choice of words must be revised. Therefore, sometimes speakers have to explain the sentences again. The next and final assessment criterion is fluency. Although his fluency is slightly impaired by language problems, his fluency is still good and doesn't affect his meaning too much. Participant O, U, and R have nearly the same speaking scores where their scores are only 3-6 points apart. O became the tour guide who got the second highest score with a total of 77 points, followed by R who got 72 and U with 66 points. The level of fluency in speaking among the three tour guides was almost the same. They are quite fluent in speaking, but sometimes they still make grammar mistakes. They also still have some problems in vocabulary when they often use inaccurate vocabulary which is sometimes out of context. Their fluency is also quite good although sometimes it still exists some pauses. The lowest score was 41 which was achieved by S. There was a difference of 40 points between F, the tour guide who received the highest score, and S, the tour guide with the lowest score. Most of them could understand what people were talking about, except for the speaker who scored the lowest, because he could barely understand what other people were talking about. All speakers/respondents made some grammatical and pronunciation errors. Meanwhile, the results of the writing test show that there are three tour guides with the same score. They are O, R, and F. They score 4 for all aspects; originality of writing, content according to title, text harmony, choice of vocabulary, choice of grammar, writing of vocabulary, and writing, with a total score of 28. While the tour guide with a score of 21 there is one, U, and the lowest is S with a score of 8. O, R, and F are quite fluent in English. They can write English well, and their writing is easy to understand. They can also convey the meaning of their writing. Still, there are some minor grammatical errors, for example the use of simple and past tense, but overall the meaning can be well received by readers. On the other hand, U gets a score of 3 in all criteria. He is quite good at writing. Sometimes, however, he misunderstood the instructions and asked the researcher for help during the test. He also made some grammatical errors which made his meaning somewhat different from what was asked in the question. The ideas also don't flow well. The lowest score is 8, which is obtained by participant S. The results obtained from this study, the

ability to speak English both speaking and writing skills of the tour guides is very diverse. Some of them can speak and write English well, but there are also those whose English skills are lacking. It is hoped that further research can design books and applications that support the use of English for tour guides.

### **Conclusion**

From the study conducted, it could be concluded that the levels of writing and speaking skill of tour guides in Trenggalek is very diverse. Some of them were already good in English while others are still lacking. Some efforts should be done in improving the English skills of tour guides in Trenggalek one of which is implementing English for Tour Guide training. The diverse levels of English speaking and writing skills may also affect teaching English to tour guides, not only in Trenggalek but also in other areas.

In addition, the researcher concludes that based on the results of the English test and interviews, the tour guides have varying English skills and the textbooks or materials that will be given to them must also be by the English levels of the tour guides. In addition, applications and guidebooks in two languages are needed, Indonesian and English, which if possible, can be used to equip the tour guides with sufficient English, as well as tour guide applications that use two languages. Research requires further research for the development of guidebooks and tour guide applications in the future.

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