



The Urgency of English Language in Tourist Destinations: Enhancing the Comfort and Safety of Foreign Tourists in the Tanjung Bira Beach Area, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi

Irfan Hakim Fathayadimyati¹, Reza Al-Farizi², Mulyaningsih³, Wasiyah⁴, Rohiyati⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Institut Agama Islam Al-Zaytun Indonesia

E-mail: siyatitea3@gmail.com, azerfariz19@gmail.com, mulyaningsih110974@gmail.com,
wasiyahyah2@gmail.com, rohiyatifirda@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2024-11-11 Revised: 2024-12-23 Published: 2025-01-10	English plays a crucial role in the tourism sector, especially in local tourist destinations such as Tanjung Bira Beach. The ability to communicate in English by tourism stakeholders is key to enhancing the comfort and safety of foreign tourists. This article discusses the urgency of English language proficiency in tourist areas, considering the important role of language in conveying information, explaining local culture, and responding to emergency situations. Additionally, English is a vital element in creating positive experiences for foreign tourists, increasing the competitiveness of destinations, and supporting sustainable tourism growth. Through structured English language training, the provision of multilingual informational materials, and the utilization of digital technology, it is hoped that tourism stakeholders in Tanjung Bira Beach can enhance their service quality. With this approach, tourist destinations will not only become more welcoming to foreign tourists but also provide positive contributions to the local economy. This article emphasizes the need for synergy between local governments, tourism stakeholders, and the community to ensure that English language proficiency becomes an integral part of sustainable tourism development.
Keywords: <i>Urgency;</i> <i>English Language;</i> <i>Local Tourist Destinations;</i> <i>Comfort and Safety;</i> <i>Foreign Tourists.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2024-11-11 Direvisi: 2024-12-23 Dipublikasi: 2025-01-10	Bahasa Inggris memegang peranan penting dalam sektor pariwisata, khususnya di destinasi wisata lokal seperti Pantai Tanjung Bira. Kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris oleh para pelaku pariwisata menjadi kunci untuk meningkatkan kenyamanan dan keamanan wisatawan mancanegara. Artikel ini membahas urgensi penguasaan bahasa Inggris di kawasan wisata mengingat pentingnya peran bahasa dalam menyampaikan informasi, menjelaskan budaya setempat, dan menanggapi situasi darurat. Selain itu, bahasa Inggris merupakan elemen penting dalam menciptakan pengalaman positif bagi wisatawan mancanegara, meningkatkan daya saing destinasi, dan mendukung pertumbuhan pariwisata berkelanjutan. Melalui pelatihan bahasa Inggris yang terstruktur, penyediaan materi informasi multibahasa, dan pemanfaatan teknologi digital, diharapkan para pelaku pariwisata di Pantai Tanjung Bira dapat meningkatkan kualitas layanan mereka. Dengan pendekatan ini, destinasi wisata tidak hanya akan semakin ramah terhadap wisatawan mancanegara tetapi juga memberikan kontribusi positif bagi ekonomi lokal. Artikel ini menekankan perlunya sinergi antara pemerintah daerah, para pelaku pariwisata, dan masyarakat untuk memastikan bahwa penguasaan bahasa Inggris menjadi bagian integral dari pembangunan pariwisata berkelanjutan.
Kata kunci: <i>Urgensi;</i> <i>Bahasa Inggris;</i> <i>Destinasi Wisata Lokal;</i> <i>Kenyamanan dan Keamanan;</i> <i>Wisatawan Asing.</i>	

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a country rich in natural beauty and culture, which can serve as a supporting factor to attract the interest of foreign tourists to visit the archipelago. In South Sulawesi Province, particularly in the tourist area of Tanjung Bira, there exists a place as beautiful as paradise, filled with stunning natural beauty, featuring towering cliffs and a sea that radiates three captivating colors. Unfortunately, access to

this hidden location is quite challenging for the community. Limited transportation and steep roads are some of the obstacles to visiting Tanjung Bira Beach.

In addition to the challenges in transportation access, the quality of communication in English in this area has yet to be realized. Tour guides and local government still use Indonesian and Bugis languages in their interactions. This results in limited access for foreign tourists to obtain

important information regarding accommodations, travel, directions, and other facilities such as shopping centers in Tanjung Bira Beach and its surroundings. Tourists often feel confused and uncomfortable due to difficulties in communication. This situation contributes to the low interest of tourists in visiting and adversely affects the development of tourism in the region.

According to Taslim (2023), effective communication skills, especially in English, are essential in the management of tourist destinations. A person's English proficiency is divided into several levels. Each level reflects the quality of speaking and writing in English. The standards are divided into basic levels (Beginner and Elementary), followed by Intermediate and Advanced. At the basic level, an individual can only express or write in words or phrases and still struggles to perform these activities in a complex manner. At the subsequent level, an individual possesses good grammatical understanding and vocabulary mastery. At this level, one will find it easier to speak and write with greater breadth and detail. At the highest level, an individual is fluent and has a strong command of the context contained within a topic. They will communicate more comfortably and clearly in English without significant difficulties.

In general, to enhance English language skills among Indonesians in remote areas far from urban centers and grand infrastructure, the role of educational institutions is necessary to provide outreach and understanding of the importance of English. Particularly in the tourism sector, English is also a pressing need that can positively impact the economic, social, and cultural fields in Indonesia. According to Bensulong et al. (2023), the quality of human resources around ethnic tourist sites in various regions of Indonesia hinders the progress of Indonesian tourism. Language barriers in communication, especially with foreign tourists, do not support the biodiversity of Indonesia's natural environment. Therefore, English becomes an essential global language that must be mastered by tour guides or individuals involved in tourism to interact effectively and informatively with tourists.

Based on data from the South Sulawesi Central Statistics Agency (2021), the statistics of foreign tourist arrivals have fluctuated over the past three years, starting from 2019. In fact, in 2021, there were no recorded visits from foreign tourists. This data shows a drastic decline of up

to 79.75% in 2020 and 100% in 2021. Meanwhile, data on international passenger arrivals at Sultan Hasanuddin Airport indicate a decrease of up to 76.01% in 2020 and 99.97% in 2021. Based on this data, tourism activity in South Sulawesi in 2021 remained weak. This was caused by the impact of the COVID-19 virus spread, which was still rampant in various parts of the world.

The objective of this research is to understand the role of English in advancing the tourism sector in Indonesia, specifically in the Tanjung Bira Beach tourist area. From this, the author can analyze the impact of English proficiency on the local community and tourists in the area. Subsequently, the language gap between tourism managers and tourists will be minimized by determining effective strategies for enhancing English language competency for managers and local communities to improve service quality and tourist satisfaction. From this elaboration, the author will conduct research titled: The Urgency of English in Tourist Areas: Enhancing Comfort and Safety for Foreign Tourists in the Tanjung Bira Beach Region, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi.

II. METHOD

This research adopts a literature study approach to explore information and data related to the significance of the English language in the region, the quality of human resources, tourism development, as well as the services and performance of tourism managers. Through the literature study, researchers can access a variety of literature, articles, and relevant documents aligned with the discussed topic. This approach enables researchers to comprehend the broader context regarding the urgency of using the English language in remote tourist destinations such as Tanjung Bira Beach and similar locations. Additionally, the author has conducted observations over five months in Bulukumba Regency to complement the theory and observe the development of the English language and service quality of tourist destinations towards international tourists.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tanjung Bira Beach is a natural tourist destination located in the Bira Keke hamlet, Bonto Bahari sub-district, Bulukumba district, South Sulawesi province. This beach is renowned for its enchanting white sands, underwater beauty, breathtaking cliffs, and rich local cultural

attractions. By walking approximately two kilometers, visitors can reach the zero point of Bulukumba. In addition to its captivating natural beauty, this destination also offers admission tickets at affordable prices, namely Rp10,000 for children, Rp20,000 for adults, and Rp55,000 for international tourists. This situation makes Tanjung Bira Beach frequently visited by both local and international tourists. Therefore, careful attention to service in this location is essential to ensure safety and provide comfort to visitors. One important aspect in this context is the mastery of English as a means of communication with foreign travelers.

Unfortunately, the status of the English language in remote areas of Indonesia is quite concerning. According to Andika and Mardiana (2023), English in Indonesia, particularly in remote areas, is classified as a foreign language. This means that English is neither the first language nor the mother tongue used in daily life. In fact, even the utterance of a single word is rarely encountered in these regions. The difficulty in mastering English is attributed to the lack of practice in their environment.

Besides the language factor itself, the quality of human resources also contributes to the challenges in mastering English. Particularly around Tanjung Bira Beach, both tourism managers and local communities are not proficient in communicating in English. This impacts the comfort of foreign tourists in interacting with local residents. However, the accommodation and shopping facilities at Tanjung Bira Beach are on par with those found elsewhere. Therefore, communication and socialization skills need to be enhanced to support the facilities and exotic phenomena offered at Tanjung Bira Beach. Here are several reasons why the mastery of English is urgently needed at Tanjung Bira Beach:

1. Enhancing the Comfort of Foreign Tourists

One of the keys to joy in tourism lies in effective communication between tour guides or staff at the location and the local community with tourists, both domestic and international. According to Putri and Wicaksono (2015), to maintain and enhance service quality, it is essential to conduct educational outreach and training for workers or tour guides. It is only fitting that a tourist destination provides the best service for its guests. Always appearing elegant and adhering to standard operating procedures are concrete examples of delivering optimal

service. A friendly and responsive demeanor is also a crucial aspect in improving service to tourists.

To cultivate a friendly and responsive persona, one must enhance communication skills. According to Razali et al. (2023), individuals should possess effective and competent communication abilities, whether in the workplace, organizations, or society at large. This skill serves as a primary foundation for building healthy and productive relationships in human life. An effective communication process is also supported by an organized presentation structure; meaning, the way messages are conveyed must be clear and persuasive, based on relevant data and evidence.

The presentation process in communication also needs to be translated into English, considering that English speakers generally come from ethnic groups in the western hemisphere, such as Europe and America. The ethnic diversity within society necessitates that the communication process understands various phenomena of plurality. At times, an individual explaining a tourist destination must consider the causes and effects of interactions with tourists. Tour guides must provide education and information about the tourist site to visitors who may be vulnerable and easily offended. Therefore, interactions with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds must be carefully managed to foster healthy relationships and achieve the goals of the discussion.

According to Muslim (2013), social interaction is the connection between individuals, whether personally or in groups, creating reciprocal relationships. In this era, the term transparency or globalization is recognized, characterized by changes in societal behavior as a direct result of advancing science and technology. Cultural acculturation is a tangible example that has emerged in this era. Furthermore, attitudes of ethnocentrism, misunderstandings of cultural values, stereotypes, and prejudices against unfamiliar individuals have also surfaced. One contributing factor to the development of these attitudes is the aspect of language. In certain societal contexts, excessive language use can serve as an indicator of communication barriers, as it generates

various perceptions regarding the symbols of the language employed.

Yusril et al. (2021) state that the quality of service at Tanjung Bira Beach impacts tourist satisfaction. The empathy of tourism managers and local residents towards tourists is a crucial aspect that needs attention to ensure that the desires and needs of visitors are met. Additionally, prompt and agile responses must be provided to travelers to assist them in various aspects. The ability of tourism managers to communicate and understand various sectors at the tourist site, alongside other skills, is essential for delivering optimal service. Every segment of the community surrounding Tanjung Bira Beach must ensure the comfort of both local and international tourists with offerings that can compete with other tourist attractions.

Thus, the communication skills of tourism managers and local residents with foreign tourists at Tanjung Bira Beach are aspects that must be enhanced. The development of communication should also align with comprehensive service delivery. In providing service, it is important to use clear and informative language structures so that presentations can be well-coordinated. Furthermore, in interactions with foreign tourists, the communication process must be effectively managed by tourism managers and local residents using a language that serves as a bridge among nations.

2. Enhancing and organizing the security of tourists at tourist sites.

In a tourist destination, the aspects of security for both the location and the tourists cannot be overlooked. This security encompasses not only physical protection but also communication processes that determine tourists' feelings of safety and protection. Moreover, for tourists from abroad, the use of English becomes crucial to provide security assurances. Proficiency in English will facilitate foreign tourists in understanding the information conveyed by the tourism operators.

In certain situations such as accidents, loss of belongings, or other emergencies, foreign tourists will undoubtedly require assistance from tourism operators to address these issues. Staff proficient in English will be able to respond quickly and effectively, minimizing the negative impacts of such situations.

Besides direct communication, directional signs or signboards at tourist sites also require attention. Directional indicators in English will instill confidence in tourists to explore the area without the anxiety of getting lost. The installation of directional signs will minimize dangerous situations and confusion.

These two aspects are interconnected in the effort to enhance security at Tanjung Bira Beach. Unfortunately, there are currently no directional signs displayed around the beach, making it difficult for both local and foreign tourists to navigate the area. Facilities using English are only found in accommodations, and even then, it is limited to the hotel names. Tourism operators must pay attention to this aspect to facilitate tourists in obtaining information.

Security considerations must also be viewed from the perspective of ecosystems and the environment. To protect the ecosystem and preserve local culture, interaction between tourism operators, local government, and tourists is necessary. Tourists must be educated about ecosystem protection and cultural preservation. In addition to Indonesian, English is also required as a communication tool with foreign tourists to ensure that important messages are conveyed clearly.

According to Saptadi et al. (2022), tourism activities also carry safety and health risks, including at beach tourist destinations. Besides causing accidents, hazards and risks at tourist sites also lead to losses for the location. Security risks increase with the rising number of tourists, although it can have positive economic impacts. The safety and security of tourists are crucial aspects in the management of a tourist destination.

3. Strengthening the competitiveness of regional tourism.

Proficiency in English is a crucial factor in enhancing the value of a tourist destination. In addition to serving as an effective communication tool, this skill also acts as a primary attraction for international tourists to visit Tanjung Bira Beach. When a place becomes a favorite, a deep emotional bond is formed, fostering a desire to return. To achieve this goal, it is imperative for tourism managers and local governments to develop the potential of Tanjung Bira Beach as a superior, safe, and comfortable tourist

destination that can compete with others. Various positive impacts will arise if the government and tourism managers successfully realize this objective. To encourage this achievement, effective promotional strategies, enjoyable experiences, and collaborations with other parties must be implemented. Here are several ways to enhance the competitiveness of Tanjung Bira Beach by emphasizing English communication aspects:

a) International Promotion

English is the international language used by nearly all of the world's population. To provide information and offers with a broad reach, the use of this language is a crucial aspect that must be considered. By providing promotional materials related to tourist destinations in English, Tanjung Bira Beach can certainly reach a vast network from various circles around the globe. Publication media can include online platforms such as websites, meta ads, or social media posts. Additionally, offline instruments can also be utilized as promotional media, such as brochures, booklets, billboards, and even business cards.

Generally, foreign tourists looking to vacation will conduct preliminary searches to determine their destination. The use of English and appealing visual templates will influence prospective tourists' decisions to visit a place. Therefore, the tourism managers of Tanjung Bira Beach, particularly the promotion division, need to consider this to attract foreign tourists. An effective promotional example is utilizing the Facebook application. Facebook is a social networking service under a large company named Meta. According to Andhika et al. (2022), Facebook has become a favorite among people worldwide. This has led many marketers and businesses to use the Facebook application as a promotional medium. Furthermore, numerous affiliates or third parties are also promoting products and services. More than 95% of Facebook users worldwide utilize various features within this application for promotional purposes.

b) Premium Travel Experience

In addition to eye-catching promotions, the choice of tourist destinations is also influenced by personal experiences.

Sometimes, prospective tourists will ask those who have previously visited their chosen destination for insights about the place or simply for recommendations on which sites to visit. According to Ayumi et al. (2022), the development of a tourist destination's image can be deemed successful if tourists feel satisfied with their visit. The destination image can serve as a reference for tourists to visit a site and a motivation to return in the future. The destination image is a tourist's perception of a tourist object based on their visit experiences stored in memory and heart.

The travel experience or destination image needs to be cultivated from within an individual through their personal experiences. A delightful experience at a tourist site is influenced by communication factors, information provision, friendly service, and guaranteed safety. In this regard, Tanjung Bira Beach must enhance its service and safety by training personnel such as tour guides, hotel staff, and even local residents to be proficient in communication, especially in English. Harmonious communication between tourism managers and international tourists will foster a sense of comfort and appreciation, creating a positive impression that enriches their experiences.

c) International Collaboration

Proficiency in English also opens up opportunities for collaboration with various parties on the international stage. Local governments can partner with international travel agencies to promote travel packages to Tanjung Bira Beach. Additionally, international-scale collaboration also impacts the enhancement of tourism managers' capabilities. This collaborative program can assist the region in gaining access to training activities, funding, or technical guidance for tourism development.

One international agency with an extensive network is Traveloka. Traveloka is an online-based travel agency that provides various transportation and quality accommodation services. According to Hamzah (2018), online business management saves time and costs while facilitating consumers in enjoying the products offered by the company. In developing its business, Traveloka utilizes

web series media to offer various tourism packages and transportation ticket sales. Traveloka partners with trusted affiliates to ensure transaction security and ease of ticket reservations.

Through this collaboration, Tanjung Bira Beach can become part of the global tourism network and attract a significant number of international tourists. This also allows for joint promotions at international tourism exhibitions that can expand market reach. Therefore, the use of English in a tourist area is key to international market interactions.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The mastery of English in tourist areas, such as Tanjung Bira Beach, plays a crucial role in supporting local tourism development and creating enjoyable experiences for foreign tourists. Proficiency in English needs to be honed by tourism stakeholders, ranging from tour guides, vendors, to facility managers, in order to enhance the comfort of foreign tourists, particularly by providing clear information regarding locations, culture, as well as attractions and scenic views that delight the eye. Furthermore, this skill also plays a part in ensuring the safety of tourists, especially in providing directions or responses to emergency situations, such as weather changes or natural conditions that may pose a threat. Beyond natural factors, safety also influences the mood of visitors. Tourists will have greater confidence in the management and staff of tourist sites that can guarantee security and provide complaint and alert services through information boards installed in tourist areas.

Enhancing English language capacity can also strengthen the positive image of tourist destinations, making them more welcoming to visitors, both local and international, and increasing competitiveness with other destinations on a global scale. Therefore, English language training programs for tourism stakeholders and local residents should be implemented in Tanjung Bira Beach to enhance its appeal as a professional and high-quality tourist destination. This initiative is not only beneficial in attracting numerous tourists but also provides long-term effects in supporting sustainability in the tourism sector, fostering regional economic growth,

and strengthening cultural relations between local communities and foreign tourists.

B. Suggestion

1. It is necessary to establish cooperation with local government institutions and educational entities by providing multilingual information and implementing digital technology systems.
2. Organizing educational tourism programs for local communities. Through this initiative, the community not only gains knowledge of the English language but also enhances local awareness of the importance of hospitality and quality service for foreign tourists.

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