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# CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM: A SCOPING STUDY OF LOCAL TOUR GUIDES IN SADE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE

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**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi tantangan komunikasi kontemporer dan memetakan kebutuhan bahasa Inggris pemandu wisata lokal di Desa Adat Sade, Lombok Tengah. Kemampuan bahasa Inggris sangat penting bagi pemandu wisata untuk menyampaikan kearifan lokal Sasak secara akurat kepada wisatawan internasional. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan kerangka kerja *scoping study*, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pengurus Pokdarwis, pemandu senior, dan pemandu junior yang dipilih melalui *purposive sampling*. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana serta dicocokkan dengan parameter *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) dan CEFR. Temuan mengungkapkan dua wawasan utama. Pertama, pemandu wisata menghadapi tantangan utama berupa hambatan sosiolinguistik karena keragaman aksen global (*World Englishes*), kecemasan komunikasi di kalangan pemandu junior (*affective filter*), dan kesulitan pemilihan leksikal saat menjelaskan praktik budaya yang unik (seperti *merarik* dan perawatan lantai kotoran sapi) tanpa menimbulkan miskonsepsi. Kedua, pemandu wisata membutuhkan bahasa Inggris fungsional berbasis pekerjaan yang berfokus pada kemampuan berbicara dan mendengarkan komunikatif yang dikombinasikan dengan strategi kesantunan nonverbal (*politeness strategies*) untuk meningkatkan kepuasan wisatawan dan memicu *word of mouth marketing*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pelatihan bahasa untuk pemandu budaya harus menekankan pada komunikasi kontekstual berbasis kebutuhan dan taktik kompensasi interaktif daripada tata bahasa yang kompleks.

***Keywords:*** *English for Tourism (EFT), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Analisis Kebutuhan, Pemandu Wisata Lokal, Desa Adat Sade, Scoping Study.*

**Abstract**

*This study investigates the contemporary communication challenges and maps the English language needs of local tour guides in Sade Traditional Village, Central Lombok. English proficiency is essential for guides to convey Sasak local wisdom accurately to international tourists. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with a scoping study framework, data were collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews with Pokdarwis management, senior guides, and junior guides selected via purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model and benchmarked against English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and CEFR parameters. Findings reveal*

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*two primary insights. First, guides face key challenges: sociolinguistic barriers due to diverse global accents (World Englishes), communication anxiety among junior guides (affective filter), and lexical selection difficulties when explaining unique cultural practices (e.g., merariq and cow dung floor maintenance) without causing misconceptions. Second, guides require functional, occupation based English focused on communicative speaking and listening combined with nonverbal politeness strategies to enhance tourist satisfaction and trigger word of mouth marketing. The study concludes that language training for cultural guides should emphasize contextual, needs based communication and interactive compensation tactics over complex grammar.*

**Keywords:** *English for Tourism (EFT), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis, Local Tour Guides, Sade Traditional Village, Scoping Study.*

## INTRODUCTION

English serves as a vital functional tool for cross cultural communication in the global tourism sector. In destinations receiving international visitors, English proficiency is a primary requirement for local tourism actors, particularly tour guides, who act as a bridge between local culture and visitors from diverse backgrounds (Meylina & Mulyaningsih, 2024). Beyond conveying basic information, tour guides function as crucial *cultural brokers* and communicative mediators who interpret, translate, and reshape information to create authentic experiences for tourists (Cohen, 1979; Diprose et al., 2021; WFTGA, 2022). This linguistic competence is closely tied to English for Tourism (EFT), a prominent branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) under the umbrella of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EFT mandates that language instruction and content must be systematically built upon a comprehensive needs analysis of its users rather than being determined randomly (Dudley Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). While EFT ideally encompasses four core macro skills, communicative speaking and listening interactions take absolute priority in the field due to their highly dynamic nature (Chan, 2009; Chen et al., 2022).

To ensure that language training is targeted and efficient, a systematic needs analysis evaluation of target situation neds is essential. Following the foundational framework of Hutchinson & Waters (1987), these needs must be categorized into *necessities* (operational demands), *lacks* (the current gaps in proficiency), and *wants* (learners' subjective desires). This approach aligns with recent localized ESP mapping by Setiawan et al. (2025) for tour guides in Tetebatu, Lombok, which demonstrates the efficacy of using target needs components to capture objective field data. Furthermore, benchmarking these competencies requires an international standard, namely the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which serves as a benchmark to map learners' initial proficiency and align target capabilities with workplace demands across six standardized levels (A1–C2), where level B1 represents the ideal baseline for an independent cultural communicator (Council of Europe, 2001; Sudaryanto & Widodo, 2020).

In practice, implementing EFT involves navigating multiple layers linguistic, pedagogical, and sociocultural hurdles. Linguistically, communicative competence cannot be measured solely by grammatical mastery but must include the capacity to use the language appropriately in varied social interactions (Hymes, 1972). Sociolinguistic competence requires tour guides to adapt their

speech based on contextual factors, such as tourist demographics and the structural setting differentiating speech patterns when joking outside or speaking inside a sacred traditional domain (Canale & Swain, 1980). Pedagogically, a mismatch remains as conventional training modules continue to favor rigid grammar translation methods over Task Based Learning (TBL), which hinders guides from practicing real world situational navigation (Ellis, 2003). Externally, the global tourism landscape has transformed due to post pandemic economic recovery and rapid digitalization, prompting international tourists to demand more authentic, highly personal cultural interactions (Rodriguez Diaz et al., 2020). Consequently, local guides face pressure to master adaptive listening to comprehend diverse global accents (*World Englishes*) and overcome lexical difficulties when translating unique local cultural concepts into English without losing their sacred essence or causing misconceptions (Nelson et al., 2013; Widiastuti et al., 2021).

The cross cultural barriers is vividly apparent in tourist villages rooted in local wisdom, such as Sade Traditional Village in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. As a cultural destination that preserves traditional Sasak customs and distinctive terminology, Sade requires its local guides to possess specialized linguistic adaptability. The English language needs of tour guides in this indigenous ecosystem cannot simply be generalized from empirical findings obtained in commercialized, structurally different hubs like Bali (Widhiastuty & Murdana, 2023) or Kota gede (Binawan & Ariani, 2024). Local guides in Sade are demanded not only to communicate but also to accurately interpret and transfer highly localized cultural narratives without losing their original philosophical meanings.

To capture this factual field reality precisely, this study applies a qualitative descriptive design utilizing a scoping study framework grounded in the protocol by Arksey & O'Malley (2005). This integrated framework allows a systematic synthesis of empirical field evidence and ESP parameters to map contemporary communication challenges alongside localized language target requirements. This study explicitly addresses two primary research questions: (1) What are the contemporary challenges faced by local tour guides in Sade Traditional Village in using English within the context of cultural tourism? and (2) What are the English language needs and competency standards required by these guides to optimize tourism services?. Theoretically, this study bridges the gap between linguistic constraints and professional occupational demands within the EFT and ESP literature. Practically, these insights provide a crucial empirical foundation for village managers (*Pokdarwis*), local governments, and training institutions to design sustainable, contextual English capacity building programs that align with real world field demands.

## METHODS

### Research Setting

This study was conducted in Sade Traditional Village, located in Rembitan Village, Pujut District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The empirical site was purposively selected based on three strategic considerations:

(1) its status as a prominent cultural tourism icon maintaining authentic Sasak architecture and customs amidst modern development. (2) its operational environment where all indigenous tour guides are selftaught English speakers, providing a clear context for evaluating nonformal communicative adaptation. (3) its location within the transit corridor of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (KEK), which has catalyzed an increase in the diversity of international visitors (*World Englishes*), thus escalating contemporary language barriers.

**Approach and Research Design**

To document and analyze these localized linguistic phenomena naturally without field manipulation, this study deployed a qualitative descriptive approach integrated with the scoping study framework developed by Arksey & O'Malley (2005). This methodological combination serves as a structured workflow to systemically map the empirical data gathered from the field against core English for Specific Purposes (ESP) target parameters, English for Tourism (EFT) needs analysis, and the international benchmarking scales of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

**Data Sources and Informants**

Primary data were gathered directly from field events, focusing on active English mediated interactions between local guides and international visitors during live tour guiding processes. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on three criteria: (1) registered officially as a local guide under the Sade Traditional Village Tourism Awareness Group (*Kelompok Sadar Wisata*/Pokdarwis); (2) possessing a minimum of two years of professional experience guiding international travelers to ensure familiarity with diverse communication scenarios; and (3) actively guiding foreign tourists with a minimum operational frequency of three to four times per week. To ensure organizational triangulation, the study documented the formal leveling system managed by Pokdarwis, which structures guides into four professional tiers: Lead Senior (10 personnel), Senior, Junior, and Candidate Junior. This hierarchy operates alongside a queue number system (numbers 1 to 55) implemented to maintain occupational fairness, ensuring that one arriving vehicle is autonomously allocated to one designated local guide as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Profile of Key Informants**

| Informant Code / Name | Role / Position | Guiding Experience | Key Focus of Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mr. Rianton** | Head of Pokdarwis | Institutional Lead | Overview of global tourist influx (European/Asian), guide organization, and training gaps. |
| **Mr. Talip (Amaq Aris)** | Senior Guide & Coordinator | 10 Years | Cultural vocabulary translation strategies and internal guide mentoring. |
| **Mr. Puri** | Senior Guide | 8 Years | Handling non-native English accents (World Englishes) and listening breakdowns. |
| **Mr. Amaq Mita** | Senior Guide | 7 Years | Diction strategies for explaining unique customs (e.g., cow dung flooring). |
| **Mr. Sen** | Junior Guide | 6 Years | Initial psychological anxiety, body |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | language politeness, and practical language needs. |
| **Mr. Choky** | Junior Guide | 2 Years | Overcoming shyness during initial eye contact and internal learning experiences. |

**Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection was executed through a three pronged triangulation approach:

1. Participant Observation: Shadowed local guides during live tours with international tourists. Observations were recorded into detailed field notes focusing on natural verbal fluency, localized vocabulary, and nonverbal communication strategies.
2. In Depth Interviews: Semi structured interviews were conducted utilizing a pre validated interview guide. Interactions focused on unearthing explicit sociolinguistic barriers, psychological anxieties, *World Englishes* accent adaptability, and subjective ESP target requirements. The qualitative inquiry was guided by a ten item structured interview protocol, validated to investigate linguistic barriers in translating localized artifacts (e.g., elopement customs and dung flooring), World Englishes accent adaptation strategies, and explicit pedagogical preferences for task based pocket guidebooks.
3. Documentation Study: Reviewing available structural monographs, including village profiles, tourist visitor logbooks, and legacy English learning notes to substantiate site demographics.

**Trustworthiness and Data Analysis**

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study deployed both *method triangulation* (cross verifying observation notes against interview transcripts and document records) and *source triangulation* (cross checking data across junior guides, senior guides, and Pokdarwis management), supplemented by informal *member checks* with key informants to validate transcript accuracy. Data were analyzed following the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), operating across four concurrent flows: data collection, data condensation (assigning conceptual codes such as TLING for grammatical/lexical barriers, ANX for psychological anxiety, and ESP NEED), data display, and conclusion drawing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Contextual Setting and Cultural Artifacts as ESP Content Demands

Administratively, Sade Traditional Village is located within Central Lombok Regency, situated strategically along the primary transit highway connecting the provincial capital to the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Topographically, the village occupies a low lying hilly, arid terrain that historically shaped the indigenous Sasak community's lifestyle, endogamous marriage systems (*makoq*), and the authentic architecture of thatch roofed bamboo houses (*bale*

*tani*). Etymologically derived from the Sasak word for "remedy" or "antidote," Sade's sociocultural history is deeply intertwined with the ancient Pujut Kingdom and the structural spiritual acculturation of Islamic propagation (*adat gama*) centered at the Rembitan Ancient Mosque and the historical figure of *Wali Nyatoq*.

When analyzed through the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework (Dudley Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), this specific geographic and sociodemographic setting serves as the primary environmental determinant defining the communicative needs of the local tour guides. Rather than operating in a sterile classroom setting, the selftaught indigenous guides function within a high exposure transit corridor accelerated by global tourism influxes, such as major international sporting events. Consequently, the distinct structural and historical components of Sade encompassing sacred architectural philosophies, ancestral weaving techniques (*sesek*), and complex customary narratives create highly specialized *target situation needs* (*necessities, lacks, wants*) that require a context driven, localized language framework.

**Contemporary Challenges Faced by Local Tour Guides**

Field findings reveal that English usage in Sade Traditional Village functions as an operational working tool within the cultural tourism ecosystem (English for Occupational Purposes). Data analysis identifies three major systemic communication barriers experienced by the guides, synthesized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Synthesis of Contemporary English Communication Challenges**

| Dimension | Specific Challenge Identified | Empirical Evidences / Field Manifestations | Conceptual/Theoretical Link |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sociolinguistic** | *World Englishes* & Accent Diversity | Listening breakdowns when interacting with non-native global accents (e.g., French, Italian, East Asian). | Sociolinguistic Competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) |
| **Psychological** | Communication Anxiety & Shyness | Nervousness, hesitation in speech production, and shyness during initial eye contact among junior personnel. | Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) |
| **Cultural / Lexical** | Translating Unique Cultural Concepts | Difficulty selecting appropriate English diction for unique Sasak customs (*merariq*, *bale tani*, cow dung flooring). | Diction & Sociopragmatic Competence |

1. **Sociolinguistic Barriers and Accent Diversity (World Englishes):** Tour guides consistently encounter comprehension obstacles (*listening breakdowns*) when interacting with nonnative English speakers who carry heavy native language interference (*mother tongue interference*). According to the institutional narrative provided by the Head of Pokdarwis, Mr. Rianton: *"In July and August, European tourists are very busy here... Automatically,*

*many tourists pass through here, whether from native speaking countries like America or those with different accents like China, Italy, or Spain. Naturally, there are specific difficulties in that regard."* Senior Guide, Mr. Puri, substantiates this phonological constraint: *"Sometimes word stress from Japanese or French tourists is very different from the English we usually hear from Australian or American tourists. We really have to listen carefully so we don't misunderstand their questions."* Furthermore, the guides must navigate challenging regional dialect variations, such as the phonological features of Australian English (e.g., pronouncing the word 'water' as 'woda'). This interactional breakdown occurs not due to a deficit in vocabulary acquisition, but rather because the guides' phonological memory is exclusively attuned to standard reference accents (*General American*).

2. **Initial Psychological Barriers:** Affective factors severely impede the communicative performance of junior personnel. In alignment with Stephen Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, emotional variables such as situational nervousness and apprehension toward maintaining prolonged eye contact temporarily hinder the speech fluency of junior guides during their initial days on duty. Mr. Sen (a junior guide) stated: *"At first, I was a bit nervous. Nervous, yes, the first time. But after about 3 to 4 days, it became normal because interacting with guests helps us adapt."* A matching psychological pattern was articulated by Mr. Choky: *"At first, you're still a bit nervous producing words... So initially, it's a bit awkward making eye contact with arriving tourists."* Empirical evidence indicates that this affective filter significantly depreciates within three to four days due to the adaptive, highly supportive communal environment of the village.

3. **Difficulty in Explaining and Translating Unique Cultural Concepts:** Conceptual cultural barriers manifest when guides are required to select appropriate target English diction (*lexical choices*) to articulate sacred ancestral customs without triggering hygiene misconceptions or conflicting with the sociocultural logic of international tourists. This specific pragmatic strain is illustrated by a junior guide, Mr. Sen: *"When they ask about unfamiliar things, they are usually surprised to hear about local traditions, like marriage where proposing isn't allowed instead, the bride is abducted. And another thing is coating house floors with cow or buffalo dung..."* Senior Guide, Mr. Amaq Mita, emphasizes the importance of cultivating specialized sociopragmatic competence: *"Explaining cow dung floors to foreign tourists is challenging. If you choose the wrong words, they might think our homes are dirty or smelly. We must explain in English that its function is to clean dust and strengthen floors according to ancient ancestral tradition."*

**Mapping Target Language Needs and Competency Standards**

By employing Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) ESP needs analysis framework and aligning it with the real world operational matrices, the target English language requirements of the Sade tour guides are systematically structured into three strategic dimensions as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3. Framework of ESP Needs and CEFR Target Standards**

| ESP Needs Category | Description of Field Needs | Target Competency / Skill | Target CEFR Standard |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Necessities** | Mastery of functional oral communication to explain architecture, customs, customs law (*awig-awig*), and weaving. | Functional Speaking & Active Listening | B1 Level (Threshold / Intermediate) |
| **Lacks** | Limited formal ESP training; reliance on autodidactic learning; vulnerability to unfamiliar accents. | Phonological adaptation & specialized cultural vocabulary | Shift from A2 (Elementary) to B1 |
| **Wants** | Practical, task-based English training focusing on conversational fluency and polite non-verbal body language. | Politeness strategies & Task-Based Learning (TBL) | B1 Level (Professional Tour Guide Standard) |

Objectively, the indigenous tour guides in Sade do not require complex, theoretical academic grammar (*grammatical competence*). Their primary occupational demand centers on mastering functional, workplace oral communication benchmarked against the CEFR B1 Level (Threshold/Intermediate) parameters. Attaining B1 proficiency is critical because it empowers the guides to independently navigate cultural narratives with interactional flexibility rather than operating on rigid, memorized scripts.

**Politeness Strategies and Training Institutional Disparity**

The empirical data uncovers that when Sade tour guides confront sudden lexical limitations, they proactively deploy positive politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and nonverbal communication as vital strategic compensation mechanisms to preserve interactional comfort. This interactional strategy is explicitly described by Mr. Sen: *"If I forget the English word for something, I usually just smile right away and use hand gestures. The most important thing is that we remain polite, friendly, and show them that we respect them. Usually, the tourists understand our situation and even help us guess the word we mean, so the atmosphere remains comfortable."* (Interview, June 2026).

This sociopragmatic positioning is also tactfully utilized by the guides to deescalate tourist anxieties regarding heavy commercialization and nontransparent guiding fees. This compensation mechanism is professionally framed by senior personnel, such as Mr. Amaq Mita: *"Foreign tourists often worry about fixed high prices, so we respectfully clarify: 'No fixed price, up to you after finish tour if you enjoy'."* Integrating these functional language capabilities with authentic hospitality directly generates favorable economic outcomes for the local community. International visitors express their satisfaction by providing higher gratuities and executing voluntary word of mouth marketing across personal social networks. As acknowledged by Mr.

Choky: *"If they feel happy and comfortable with the way we explain things even though our English is sometimes broken or hesitant, they often give us bigger tips at the end of the tour... many of them say they will recommend this place to their friends or family through social media or direct word of mouth."*

Nevertheless, the institutional management of English training in Sade faces structural sustainability issues. External capacity building initiatives provided by universities or the regional Tourism Office remain temporary and incidental. This operational landscape creates an institutional disparity wherein junior guides are systematically marginalized, forced to rely almost entirely on informal internal knowledge transfer through a traditional *shadowing* mechanism (an informal apprenticeship where candidates walk behind senior personnel for one to two months). Conversely, access to formalized, certified external training programs is heavily dominated by senior guides. Mr. Choky added: *"For local or junior guides, training is provided internally by village leaders. While senior guides receive external training."* This structural imbalance is corroborated by the Guide Coordinator, Mr. Amaq Aris, who revealed that only approximately 20 out of 55 active junior personnel are currently trusted to independently guide international tourists. This operational gap represents a critical bottleneck that must be structurally resolved in sustainable human resource development frameworks.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This scoping study concludes that English language proficiency among local tour guides in Sade Traditional Village functions strictly as an operational working tool within the cultural tourism ecosystem (*English for Occupational Purposes*). Rather than focusing on rigid academic grammar, their linguistic competence relies heavily on the dynamics of intercultural communication. The primary contemporary challenges encountered in the field stem from sociolinguistic barriers related to global accent variations (*World Englishes*), psychological constraints such as communication anxiety and situational nervousness among junior personnel (*affective filter*), and lexical complexities in translating sacred ancestral customs (*merariq* and the philosophy of cow dung flooring) without causing cultural misconceptions.

The ESP target needs analysis underscores a critical necessity to elevate the guides' proficiency from a basic CEFR A2 level toward a standardized CEFR B1 (Threshold) level. Field data demonstrates that the guides successfully deploy nonverbal positive politeness strategies to strategically compensate for their lexical limitations. This interactional strategy directly boosts tourist satisfaction, improves local financial returns through the voluntary tipping system, and drives effective word of mouth marketing. However, the long term sustainability of this occupational competence remains structurally threatened by severe training institutional disparities between senior and junior personnel.

### Recommendations

Based on the empirical evidence gathered from the field, several actionable recommendations are proposed:

1. **For the Pokdarwis Management and Village Policymakers:** Formulate a standardized language curriculum rooted in Task Based Learning (TBL). Additionally, institutional leaders should compile an official *English Pocket Guidebook* that explicitly addresses specialized

Sasak cultural terminology to structurally eliminate knowledge and competency gaps between senior and junior guides.

2. **For Academic Institutions and the Tourism Office:** Future community empowerment and language capacity building initiatives must explicitly shift from conventional General English models toward specialized, contextual *English for Tourism* (EFT) and ESP training. These programs should specifically emphasize active listening adaptation to varied international accents and tactical communicative compensation strategies in real world scenarios.

3. **For Local Tour Guides:** Senior personnel should transition from informal *shadowing* mechanisms toward formalizing a structured peer mentoring framework for candidates and junior staff. Concurrently, junior guides must adopt a proactive approach by initiating direct verbal interactions with international visitors from their first day of duty to dismantle their psychological affective filters.

4. **For Future Researchers:** Subsequent empirical studies should focus on the rigorous design, implementation, and pedagogical evaluation of task based ESP instructional materials explicitly tailored to indigenous cultural tourism sites. Furthermore, future academic literature could expand these findings by integrating mixed method quantitative metrics or conducting comprehensive assessments of foreign tourists' direct evaluation regarding guide communication quality.

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