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ENGLISH-FOR-TOURISM TRAINING TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH CAPABILITY OF TOURISM WORKERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, CULTURE, YOUTH, AND SPORTS OF BLITAR REGENCY

PELATIHAN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN BAHASA INGGRIS PARA PENGELOLA DESTINASI DAN USAHA WISATA DI DINAS PARIWISATA, KEBUDAYAAN, PEMUDA, DAN OLAHRAGA KABUPATEN BLITAR

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Scope:
Applied Science

A B S T R A C T

English plays a vital role in the tourism field since it supports tourism workers and business owners to provide excellent services. Numerous tourism destinations in Indonesia including the ones in Blitar Regency have become the center of attention for foreign tourists. Located in Blitar, East Java, Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation have also been continuously preparing their workers and business owners to provide efficient services for both domestic and foreign visitors. In accordance with providing excellent services to foreign tourists, tourism workers and business owners are expected to have good English mastery. **Objectives:** This community service aims to provide a support for the tourism workers and business owners under the supervision of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports and the Department of Tourism Promotion of Blitar Regency in terms of improving their English mastery, especially their communication skills in English. **Methods:** The activity was carried out in four stages, namely pre-training survey, two material sessions, group speaking practices, as well as classroom speaking practices and feedback. Due to COVID19 pandemic, the training sessions were conducted online in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency and the owners of Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation. The participants included workers and business owners of Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation. **Results:** This activity gave the participants an opportunity to practice serving a customer in English. Even though it was quite challenging for some of the participants, they felt encouraged to actively participate in the speaking activities and get familiar with expressions used in tourism and hospitality services. **Conclusion:** The supervision and training sessions in speaking English was very enlightening for the participants to improve their English mastery in tourism services. It needs a continuation to provide greater impact to the targeted participants.

A B S T R A K

Bahasa Inggris memegang peranan penting di dunia pariwisata karena sangat mendukung pengelola destinasi dan usaha wisata untuk memberikan pelayanan prima. Banyak destinasi wisata di Indonesia termasuk yang berada di Blitar menarik perhatian wisatawan asing. Oleh karena itu, Kampung Coklat dan Kebun Kopi Karanganyar secara kontinyu mempersiapkan pengelola destinasi dan usaha wisata untuk memberikan pelayanan prima bagi wisatawan domestik maupun asing. Dalam rangka memberikan pelayanan prima bagi wisatawan asing, pengelola destinasi dan usaha wisata diharapkan dapat meningkatkan ketrampilan berbahasa Inggris mereka. **Tujuan:** Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberikan dukungan bagi pengelola destinasi dan usaha wisata di bawah naungan Dinas Pariwisata, Kebudayaan, Pemuda, dan Olahraga dan Badan Promosi Pariwisata Kabupaten Blitar dalam bentuk kegiatan peningkatan ketrampilan Bahasa Inggris, khususnya ketrampilan berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Inggris. **Metode:** Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini direalisasikan dalam empat tahapan, yaitu survey pra-pelatihan, dua sesi materi, rangkaian kegiatan speaking dalam grup, dan rangkaian kegiatan speaking dalam kelas dan umpan balik. Peserta terdiri dari karyawan dan pemilik usaha di tempat wisata Kampung Coklat dan Kebun Kopi Karanganyar. **Hasil:** Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini memberikan kesempatan bagi pengelola destinasi dan usaha wisata untuk berlatih melayani pengunjung dalam Bahasa Inggris. Meskipun hal tersebut terasa cukup menantang, peserta kegiatan juga merasa termotivasi untuk berpartisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan speaking dan merasa familiar dengan ungkapan – ungkapan Bahasa Inggris yang digunakan dalam pelayanan pariwisata. **Kesimpulan:** Kegiatan supervisi dan pelatihan ini sangat bermanfaat bagi peserta kegiatan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan ketrampilan Bahasa Inggris mereka dalam pelayanan di bidang pariwisata. Keberlangsungan kegiatan sangat dibutuhkan untuk menghasilkan dampak positif yang lebih besar.

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INTRODUCTION

English plays a paramount role in the tourism field. In this case, English may function as (1) communicative/ interactive role, (2) integrative role, (3) lingua-franca role, (4) relation-fostering role, (5) economic/ business role, and (6) functional role (Munghate, 2012). If the ones engaged to tourism field play those roles effectively, they may significantly contribute to the brighter future of tourism and hospitality industries (Munghate, 2012). Therefore, it is urgent to encourage tourism workers and business owners to master English skills (Erazo et al., 2019) because good English mastery can broaden the tourism destination promotion (Widiastuti et al., 2021). Besides, English mastery could affect someone's career advancement in the tourism field (Prabhu & Wani, 2016) as it has become a requirement to achieve managerial positions (Al-saadi, 2015). It is closely related to providing excellent services (Widiastuti et al., 2021) since it may increase the customers' satisfaction, the foreign tourists' motivation and interest, and the tourism workers and business owners' understanding about what foreign tourists need to adapt to local culture and explore the tourism destinations (Al-saadi, 2015).

Numerous tourism destinations in Blitar Regency have become the center of attention for foreign tourists, some of which are Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation (Kebun Kopi Karanganyar) that are well known for their historic Dutch heritage buildings. Nevertheless, the number of foreign tourists coming to Blitar has not been significantly in line with the English mastery of the tourism destination and business organizers. According to a report from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency, tour guides, especially, did not possess sufficient English skills yet. This finding confirms Iriance's (2018) statement that Indonesian people's English skills are still considered low, within the range of 38.45 – 54.06.

Still coping with the problem of insufficient English skills possessed by the tour guides, COVID19 pandemic started striking in 2020. The pandemic has significantly affected both tourism destinations since it drastically reduced mobility. Consequently, the number of both foreign and domestic visitors had been drastically declining. Inspired by this condition, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency considered that it was the appropriate time for human resource development, one of which was English skill improvement. Thus, the vision of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency matched the authors' initiative to conduct a community service activity in holding an English-for-tourism training as a collective effort to prepare better quality hospitality workers and small business owners to welcome higher number of foreign tourists once COVID19 pandemic is subsiding. Therefore, the authors conducted a community service activity that involved two partners, namely the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency as the cooperation partner, and Kampung Coklat as well as Karanganyar Coffee Plantation as the target partners.

This community service activity highlighted the following statements of problem:

1. The limited number of tourism workers and business owners with good English skill mastery for both oral and written communication,
2. The limited number of language supervisors to improve the tourism workers and business owners' English skill mastery in the tourism field, and
3. The absence of bilingual feature in the information and customer service for both print and electronic media.

According to the problems above, the authors arranged a community service activity for the tourism workers and business owners under the supervision of the Department of

Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Blitar Regency. In this case, the community service activity focused on holding a training session for workers and small business owners from Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation, concentrating on speaking practices to improve training participants' mastery and confidence in speaking English.

METHODS

This community service activity was conducted in 2021. Due to COVID19 pandemic, offline meetings were not possible; thus, the activity was carried out online via Zoom meeting. In particular, this series of activity was conducted through four stages starting from February to August 2021. It was initiated in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports in Blitar Regency as the cooperating partner and involving Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation as the target partners. The community service activity was conducted in the form of training session focusing on speaking practices for workers and small business owners from Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation. There were 18 people participating from both tourism destinations, comprised of 7 males and 11 females.

Firstly, pre-training survey was conducted in February 2021 to discover the learning needs of the target partners. At this stage, the workers and the small business owners from both tourism destinations had to fill in an online pre-training survey to obtain data about the participants' educational background, length of employment, English competence level, and English learning motivation. Besides, all pre-training communications were conducted online due to COVID19 pandemic. After obtaining data from online pre-training survey, the authors used the data to design instructional activities in the training session that would be conducted on 4 August 2021.

The last three stages were included in the training session on 4 August 2021. The

training session was started with material delivery. The materials were comprised of 'Why English Skills are Essential in the Hospitality Sector', and 'How to Build Up Your Confidence When Speaking English'. These materials were delivered online via Zoom meeting through hands-on activities where the participants were encouraged to actively participate in discussions and practices regarding the materials.

The third stage included group supervision and English speaking practices. In this circumstance, the English Diploma Program students and alumnae divided the participants into small groups where they intensively supervised each of the groups according to the provided module.

The last step was the classroom speaking practices and feedback. After the supervision and training sessions, the participants from all groups would join a second round of practices with the lecturers of English Diploma Program, Faculty of Vocational Studies, Universitas Airlangga. In this case, the lecturers would be the ones supervising the practices as well as providing feedbacks to the participants after each of their performances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 18 participants, consisting of 7 males and 11 females attending the training session of the community service activity that was carried out online via Zoom application on 4 August 2021. They came as the representatives of Kelompok Sadar Wisata/Pokdarwis (Tourism-Awareness Community) from Ngadipuro, Modangan, Pantai Pangi, Penataran, Pantai Jolosutro, Sawentar Districts; Homestay Tourism Activists from Plosorejo, Tambakrejo, Bakung; Semen and Tenggalang Tourism Village; Kampung Cokelat (Cokelat Village) and Kampung Gerabah (Gerabah Village); as well as Museum Tour Guides and alas kembar.

The pre-training survey results were comprised of the participants' educational

background, length of employment, English competence level, and English learning motivation. Firstly, the participants came from various educational levels including 13 or 72.2% high-school graduates, 4 or 22.2% bachelor degree graduates, and 1 or 5.6% diploma program graduate. Moreover, 7 or 38.9% people had worked for less than a year, 4 or 22.2% for one-two years, 1 or 5.6% for two-three years, 4 or 22.2% for three-four years, and 2 or 11.1% for more than four years.

In terms of the participants' English competence level, two of the participants (11.1%) claimed to possess good level of English skills, 5 or 27.8% average level of English skills, 7 or 38.9% slightly below average level of English skills, and 4 or 22.2% of poor English skills. Further, among the four skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, 7 people or 38.9% claimed to perform best in speaking, 7 other people or 38.9% in reading, 1 person or 5.6% in listening, 1 person or 5.6% in writing, and 2 people or 11.1% admitting that they did not confidently perform in any of the skills. Surprisingly, despite the high percentage of the participants claiming that they performed best in speaking, the same number of the participants (7 people or 38.9%) also admitted that they were experiencing difficulties in speaking in English.

Interestingly, all of the participants (100%) agreed that speaking was the most important skill to master in hospitality industries, followed by listening skill (8 people or 44%), reading skill (7 people or 38.9%), writing skill (38.9%), grammar (2 people or 11.1%), then interpreting (1 person or 5.6%). In line with these results, all of the participants (18 people or 100%) expected to specifically learn to speak in English in the training session. They admitted that mastering English may help them interact with foreign visitors better and become more open-minded dealing with cultural differences.

The results of pre-training survey also indicated that English was still perceived to be highly important in tourism and hospitality

industries, and speaking skill was placed first before listening and reading skills. The prioritized components of speaking skill to master included giving information, followed by providing services and offering help as tourism workers have been mainly dealing with communication skills in English (Widiastuti et al., 2021). These results became the foundation in designing instructional activities in the training session, putting emphasis on speaking practices.

The second stage consisted of two material sessions. The first material session discussed 'Why English is Essential in the Hospitality Sector' delivered by Sidarta Prasetyo, S.S., M.A. TESOL as shown in Figure 1. It was started by a presentation about English as a Lingua Franca where English was used as the world communication media in business field including tourism. Also, English language covers adequately extensive registers for tourism and hospitality sectors such as "hotel reception manual, instructions for workers in hotels/ travel agencies, guide on English for travel, training materials for travellers, the need analyses for language skill in hospitality, training materials for hotel workers, the analysis of the language of tourism, etc." (Blue & Harun, 2003: 76). Therefore, the tourism and hospitality activists are expected to be proficient in English since it will be closely related to how they are capable of providing interesting and exciting experiences for clients and guests coming from around the world.



Figure 1. The first material session about 'Why English is Essential in the Hospitality Sector' by

Sidarta Prasetyo, S.S., M.A.TESOL

The second material session talked about 'How to Build Up Your Confidence When Speaking English' presented by Lutfi Ashar Mauludin, S.Pd., M.A., M.Pd., a lecturer from D3 English Language, Faculty of Vocational Studies, Universitas Airlangga as shown in Figure 2. He conveyed that English speaking skill mastery could be gained from practices and intensive habits. One of the ways to practise was by speaking in English with one or two people each day. Besides, having a more experienced peer to practice may provide constructive feedbacks that positively contribute to their speaking skill development (Ardianti, 2017).



Figure 2. The second material session about 'How to Build Up Your Confidence When Speaking English' conveyed by Lutfi Ashar Mauludin, S.Pd., M.A., M.Pd.

Furthermore, it was also important to increase exposure to English through a variety of practices. First, repeat television or radio lines to get more familiar with English sounds and learn new vocabulary. Second, reading-out-loud could hone our pronunciation skills and get more familiar with English sentence structure. Third, chatting with people online would gradually increase our courage and establish our language reflex to speak in English. Fourth, talking to people while doing errands (grocery store, post office, library, gas station, bus depot/ bus, taxi, theatre, department store, etc.) would also increase our exposure to English at the same time accelerate the language reflex establishment, so that it would be easier for us to speak in English spontaneously. Other activities we

can do to improve our speaking skills included volunteering to talk in English, practicing with a friend, targeting an area such as doing role-play in specific contexts, asking for help if encountering difficulties, and believing we could persistently practice speaking in English and eventually improve our speaking skill. If done consistently over time, the variety of speaking practices above could eventually build a new habit; hence, it is easier to speak in English.

In the next activity, the participants were divided into several small groups where they were practicing speaking in English while being supervised by the students and alumnae of English Diploma Programs, Faculty of Vocational Studies, Universitas Airlangga. They were given 50 minutes to complete several speaking practices provided in the module while being facilitated by the students and the alumnae. The following figures depict samples of Speaking Practices.

SPEAKING PRACTICE 1: READ OUT LOUD

Read out loud one of the following reviews of Karanganjar Coffee Plantation. Upon completing the reading, close the text and retell what you have read.

Eric S.
Hamburg, Germany
94 contributions

Home of coffee
Apr 2017 • Couples

We get the trip to Karanganjar Kopi Plantation for some days. The O.G. Restaurant with a great kitchen, tasty different kind of coffee and a big choose of juices is a good place to relax. There are so many activities to do as well. You can have a off road trip by jeep, rent a ATV for motocross or have a special action at the shooting range. Playground and out bond area for kids and different animals. Even a small cute monkey.

If you are interested to know something about coffee, you will find the barrista's of plantation in the Roostroom close to the restaurant. They have a very big knowledge about coffee. Also you can buy some coffee as well.

We recommend the Karanganja Koffieplantage and will come back.

[Read less](#)

Written April 21, 2017
This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC.

Figure 3. Speaking Practice 1

The first speaking practice was reading out loud as shown in Figure 3. This reading-out-loud activity was carried out to facilitate the participants get more familiar with English pronunciation (Badawi et al., 2021). In fact, many participants seemingly hesitated reading the text. They admitted that they got accustomed to spoken English even though they may not be familiar with how the words were written. Yet it is understandable because

English pronunciation is more complex than Indonesian pronunciation. In addition, English has wider variety of consonants and vowels compared to Indonesian language. Hence, learning English tends to be difficult for Indonesian people who do not use English in daily interactions (Fadillah, 2020; Saputra et al., 2020; Sundari, 2018).

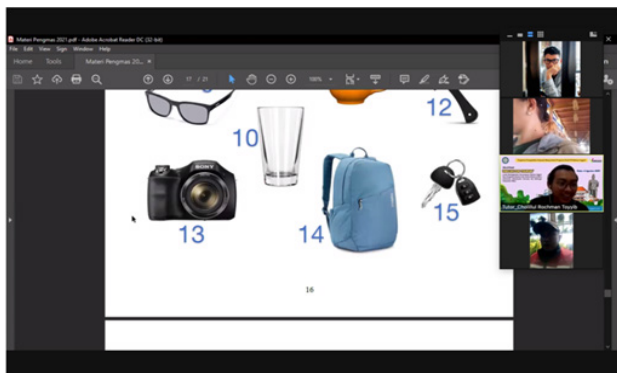


Figure 4. The participants practising 'describing things'

After warming up through reading-out-loud activity, the participants were asked to describe pictures as shown in Figure 4. This activity aimed to train the participants speak in English spontaneously. In this circumstance, the participants tended to elicit short description with simple vocabulary, but they were able to produce accurate description of the objects such as their colours, shapes, and materials. Describing pictures has been used to improve students' interest in learning speaking English across ages since pictures present interesting visuals (Aprilia & Andreani, 2020; Lavallo & Briesmater, 2017).

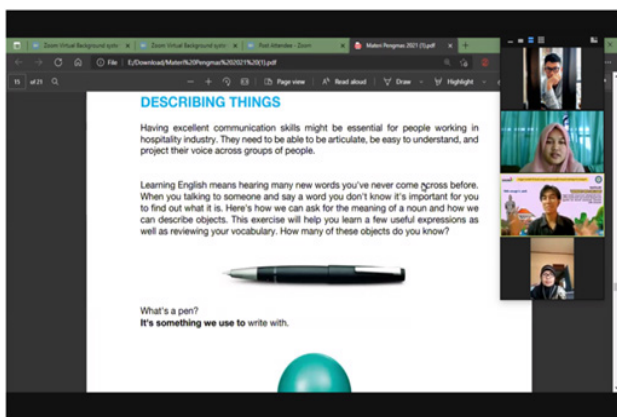


Figure 6. The participants supervised by the

students and alumnae of English Diploma Program

As a follow-up after the describing practices, the trainers provided examples of description for the participants to get more familiar with natural expressions used in describing things. Hence, they can improve the way they describe things. It is important to use natural expressions such as common vocabulary, less slang, and shorter sentences to yield more comprehensible inputs (Fabianto & Hartono, 2015), especially when communicating with foreign tourists.

After describing things, the participants were invited to do self-introduction. As they were workers and small business owners in Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation, it is an essential skill to introduce themselves well to tourists. In this activity, they were encouraged to elaborate their self-introduction with their specific duties and/or their businesses. Firstly, the trainers asked the participants how often they introduced themselves to foreign visitors to get the participants more familiar with the task. The trainers, then, invited them to practice their own version of self-introduction. Following up the practices, the trainers showed the participants some models of self-introduction related to their field as shown in Figure 5. The trainers, then, invited the participants to discuss common expressions used in doing self-introduction and invited them to do a second round of self-introduction practice by incorporating the common expressions they had learnt. This practice was in line with the theory of dynamic assessment by Vygotsky (1978) where the participants upgraded their performances after getting feedback from more experienced people, in this case the trainers.

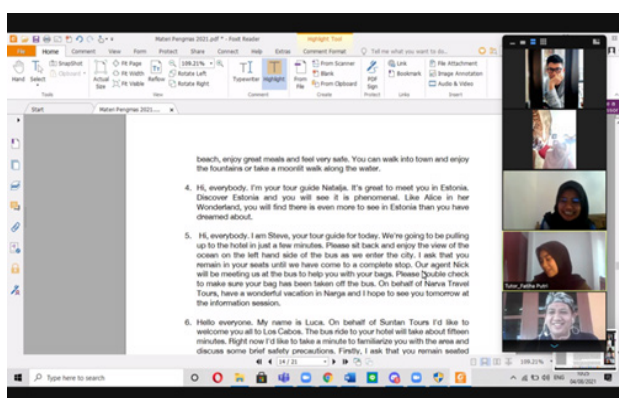


Figure 5. The participants practising 'self-introduction' in English

Engaging the participants into a sequence of activities helped them get used to interacting with English expressions directly. It situated them to an authentic learning environment as if they were communicating with the real customers in English. Thus, the sequence of activities aimed to encourage them to be confident not only in speaking English, but also improving their understanding of the application of English expressions in the tourism field.

The last activity was comprised of individual performance and feedback delivered by the lecturers of D3 English Language, Faculty of Vocational Studies. As depicted by Figure 7,



Figure 7. The participant's individual performance

the participants were joining the second round of practice with the lecturers. They were starting from describing things, then introducing themselves in English. Since they had a sequence of practices with the

trainers, they tended to be more confident and more fluent. In this case, they participants surprisingly had no pauses during their oral performances even though they frequently made grammatical errors in verb forms and nouns as well as pronunciation inaccuracies.

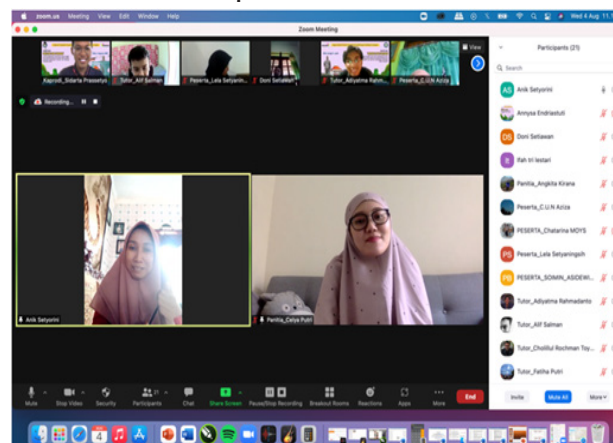


Figure 8. Feedback delivered by a lecturer of D3 English Language, Faculty of Vocational Studies, Universitas Airlangga

To optimize the participants' learning experience, feedback was given as a scaffolding to help them reflect on their learning progress as shown by Figure 8. This is in line with the concept of dynamic assessment where scaffolding was used to help learners improve their learning achievement (Vygotsky, 1978). In this case, the lecturers as more experienced people provided feedback for the participants to help them discover their performance's strengths and weaknesses, so that they knew which aspects they had to improve.

The training session was concluded by testimony from the participants. The participants expressed that they were excited to get the opportunity to demonstrate and improve their English skills. Several participants admitted that they were feeling more nervous practicing with the lecturers compared to practicing with the trainers. Nevertheless, they felt enlightened that they finally discovered what to do to cope with their speaking limitations. In addition, they expected the training to be conducted longer and more regularly for more significant

improvement.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Tourism industry has become one of the fields highly affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Even though the pandemic had been worsening, industries were optimistic that it would eventually subside. Therefore, despite the drastically declining number of both foreign and domestic visitors due to the mobility restriction policy, professional development and improvement should be continuously attempted to cope with these difficult times and prepare for any possibilities. In this case, the authors initiated a community service activity in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports in Blitar Regency, and involved Kampung Coklat and Karanganyar Coffee Plantation as the target partners. After being conducted from February to August 2021 through four stages and participated by 18 people from both tourism destinations, the training session yielded positive responses from the participants as they felt the benefits of joining the activity. Those benefits included getting informed about any activities they could do to improve their speaking skill independently, getting more familiar with natural expressions, and discovering their strengths and weaknesses in speaking English, so that they could decide which activity they could do to maintain their strengths and improve their weaknesses. The next event is expected to be conducted offline, so that it could be participated by higher number of people, thus results in more interesting interactions.

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