IMPACTS OF EXTERNAL FACTORS ON ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AMONG TOURISM STUDENTS BASED ON ASEAN TOURISM CURRICULUM

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Abstract:
This study investigates external factors hindering the attainment of English proficiency among tourism students in AKN Lombok Barat based on the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. Employing descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through competency-based assessment and questionnaire from students in Hotel Accommodation, Food Beverages, and Hotel Engineering. Findings show that several external barriers, including a college culture not fully supportive of language learning, dominant use of the mother tongue outside the classroom, inadequate English language facilities, limited instructional hours for English, and lecturer limitations in English interaction and teaching strategies These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the English language learning environment in tourism education, potentially involving curriculum reform, faculty development, and increased resource allocation.

Keywords: *Students' achievement; English proficiency; Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum; external factors*

INTRODUCTION

English for the tourism industry has its characteristics rather than common English. In the tourism industry, English is part of daily communication so the hospitality professional should master it. As a foreign language, English means to be studied by learners who do not use it in communication in their region or who only learn it in school or other places. In Indonesia, where English is foreign and not a second language, the English status as a primary language of global trade and commerce and tourism in many countries become an urgent problem practically, especially for 'answering' the needs of professionals in the industry. This problem also occurs among tourism students in Akademi Komunitas Negeri (AKN) Lombok Barat. Most students have problems with practical English as one main requirement in the tourism industry.

Hickman & Irwin (2013) in the research about Gap Analysis on the Implementation of MRA on Tourism Professionals, have stated that Indonesia has an English proficiency gap in the tourism sector. The gap can be seen in tourists' complaints related directly to low levels of English, their frustration of not being able to be understood, and tourist expectations not being met as a result. Moreover, nine out of ten complaints in the tourism sector relate to service, and in non-native English-speaking countries, low-level English language proficiency accounts for the majority of these complaints.

Four ratings show the level of English proficiency in communication in the tourism sector. Rating 1 shows a large gap, that represents the English language is neither integrated into tourism education nor one of the official national languages, and tourism professionals have very limited English proficiency. Rating 2 means a significant gap, in which the English language is neither integrated with tourism education nor one of the official national languages, and tourism professionals have only rudimentary English proficiency. Rating 3 represents a small gap, in that the English language is neither integrated with tourism education nor one of the official national languages, but tourism professionals have moderate English proficiency.

Rating 4 stated an insignificant gap, which means the English language is integrated into tourism education or English language is one of the official national languages, and tourism professionals have good English proficiency. Based on the data from Gap Analysis on Implementation of MRA on Tourism Professionals, Indonesia takes place in rating 1 in English proficiency. It means that the English proficiency ability of tourism professionals is still low.

The output from vocational college in tourism education are prepared to be tourism professional, therefore, it is important to analyze the students' competence in English proficiency and identify the factors hindering the attainment of ASEAN Common Competency Standard through internal and external factors to get the further recommendation. By 2020, tourism will be the main source and income for Indonesian foreign exchange. However, several main problems appear during its 'journey' being the main income generating source: i.e. (1) infrastructure; (2) human resources; (3) communication and publication; (4) regulation and policy; (5) IT; (6) society; and (7) investment. The second biggest problem is human resources and it must be related to their skills including English. At present, tourism lacks professional workers who are qualified for excellent service quality. Indonesian human resources in the tourism industry sit in the 53rd position of 141 based on the travel and tourism competitiveness index. The problem between the tourism industry's needs and the output of the vocational higher education i.e., college are usually appeared in many skills, such as English. English should be mastered in a theoretical and practical way. Some standards should be met by the students to be professional workers in industry; one of them is ACCS in the form of toolboxes. The standards focus on competencies that support service quality, such as main skills and language proficiency. Therefore, it should be important to analyze the present students' language competence compared to ASEAN Common Competency Standard and to investigate internal and external factors hindering the student's attainment of the standard at AKN Lombok Barat.

The gap between students' achievement and the competency

standard must be influenced by some external factors. These factors include social factors that are represented in attitude toward learning a language, socioeconomic status, family influence, and cultural factors consisting of curriculum, teacher-student interaction, and mother tongue influence. Those factors have important parts as the basic data to set the needs of the students. The needs analysis will give positive recommendations to the students so that they can improve their ability in English by attaining the ACCS. The college also has its part to support the students in decreasing the gap within it. Therefore, the students will become professional workers with appropriate qualifications in tourism, especially the hospitality industry.

Some related studies support this research the first previous study was conducted by Arati and Prachi (2015). The study was done to understand the importance of English language skills in the Indian hospitality industry and the gaps within it. It studied the challenge as it exists in Pune city, and how AISSMS College of Hotel Management & Catering Technology has attempted to address the issue. The study gathered the primary information through questionnaires. It underlined the gap between existing and desired standards of English proficiency. It also highlights the attempts by the three important stakeholders (industry, teachers, and students) to address the issue. However, it is recognized that joint efforts need to be made to decrease the problem collectively. It is an urgent calling for innovative teaching and learning practices and encouraging sound development initiatives and commitment. The primary data is across the cross-section of Pune hoteliers, teachers, and students of the college. The findings reflect the importance of English as the universal medium of communication, and its importance in rendering quality service and importantly.

The second research was conducted by Avina in 2012. This study focuses on how language affects the cultural tourism experience in the international tourism context. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews of 13 student-travelers, who traveled with the SanJose State University's study-abroad programs. The analysis of the data was carried out

within a sociolinguistic context using grounded theory methods. Findings indicated that travel motivations and the perception of the significance of the language spoken at a destination were intimately connected. Tourism experience was negatively or positively affected by the level of fluency of the student travelers in the local language. The local language can be a facilitator of positive experiences or create a language barrier that inhibited positive experiences.

Factors affecting foreign language also had been researched by Auota Ghania (2012) entitled "An analysis of some internal and external factors influencing learners' success in EFL: the case of third year LMD students at Biskra University". This is a qualitative study that examined and described the factors influencing third-year LMD students' success in learning English, focused on the factors hindering or encouraging students of English in general and third-year students in particular. The data were collected by the questionnaire for the students and teachers. The result showed that some factors influence the students' success in EFL, internally and externally: internal consist of intelligence, perception, self-esteem, and learning style; while external factors contain motivation and sociocultural status. The conclusion of this research is all those factors have a great influence on learning in general and learning a language in particular. Therefore, the learners should pay attention to those factors because the factors can enhance their learning rather than hinder it. In addition, there is also the teachers' responsibility by being aware of the learners' different styles, different attitudes toward learning, and their different social backgrounds.

The last previous study was conducted by Mele F. Latu (1994) entitled "Factors affecting the learning of English as a second language macro skills among Tongan secondary students". This study is aimed to determine factors that might have an impact on the learning of English as a second language macro skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) by Tongan secondary learners. The data were collected by tests for the students and questionnaire for the students and the teachers. The results are seven factors that were shown

to have significant correlations with the student's learning of English macro skills at secondary school. They were: the age of the students; their perceived ability in English; frequency of use of English with non-Tongan speakers; use of English to read for enjoyment; use of English for communication at home; integrative motivation; and career aspirations.

METHOD

Respondents

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to give a complete understanding of the phenomenon under study. The research design enabled the researcher to examine educational issues systematically using research techniques. The qualitative research approach usually consists of researchers' attempts to provide an explanation and/or provide an in-depth meaning of a phenomenon through the use of observations, artifacts, and interviews (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). Knupfer and McLellan (1966) also stated that descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizing, tabulating, depicting, and describing the data collection.

To support the method, the design was represented in the form of a competency test and questionnaire results from the respondents (the students). The data came from analysis to determine how internal and external factors impact tourism students' academic achievement toward competency standards in ASEAN. Further, the identification of the gap lies between the skill required in Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum and the skills that students have at present as the support elements. Therefore, descriptive research was considered an appropriate design to be applied to investigate the factors that hinder the students' achievement of the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum for Tourism Professionals.

The population of this study was the fourth-semester students of AKN Lombok Barat with a total population of 115 students. The researcher

used a probability sampling technique to select the sample. The probability sampling technique is done by allowing all members of the population to be sampled. In this way, the sample obtained is expected to be a representative sample. This research used a simple sampling technique (random sampling) by lottery number.

This study used a total of 60 students from three sub-divisions as the samples. The study took place at AKN Lombok Barat located in West Nusa Tenggara. The respondents came from three subdivisions named Hotel Accommodation, Food Beverages, and Hotel Engineering. To effectively conduct the research, the researcher chose to use stratification and single sampling to select students within the population that have specific characteristics that relate to the research questions that inform the study. When using stratification, the researcher purposefully selected members within a population that shared specific characteristics. The researcher had access and/or had selected specific names from a population utilizing single sample procedures (Creswell, 2012).

Instruments

This study collected the data through document analysis, competency-based assessment in the classroom, and questionnaires for the students. To answer the research questions, the researcher needs to consider suitable techniques and tools for data collection. In this study, the researcher has collected the data through document analysis, competency-based assessment, and questionnaire as presented below. Questionnaires were one source of the instruments used in obtaining data in this study. Questionnaires can be divided into three types: (a). closed-ended (structured) questionnaires; (b) open-ended (unstructured) questionnaires; (c) a mixture of closed and open-ended questionnaires. According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989), close-ended questionnaires are more efficient because of their ease of analysis. Therefore, this study used closed-ended questionnaires to obtain the data.

Generally, external factors that hinder the students' achievement of English proficiency standards at AKN Lombok Barat contains (1) social

factors, including attitude toward language learning, socioeconomic status of learners, and family influence; (2) college cultural factors, including curriculum, teacher-student interaction, mother tongue influence. The statements in the questionnaire are based on those factors above. The statement point about factors hindering the attainment of English proficiency can be stated as follow:

The instrument used in investigating the factors that hinder the attainment of English proficiency based on the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum was a questionnaire. The questionnaire used Likert Scales with 4 choices answers as the measurement. The questionnaire contains questions that are filled to the respondents. The four choices answer is suitable to the purpose of the statement in the questionnaire, as follows: (1) Sangat Setuju (SS) with a score of 4; (2) Setuju (S) with a score of 3; (3) Kurang Setuju (KS) with score 2; dan (4) Tidak Setuju (TS) with score 1.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the fourth-semester students of the tourism department at AKN Lombok Barat. The questionnaire was given to students and was aimed to gain information about external factors that hinder the attainment of Common Competency Standards in English language proficiency. The scores of questionnaires were computed by using Likert Scale. To analyze the data gathered, there are several steps the researcher does: calculated the total score of each item based on the questionnaire given to students; calculated the total score of each factor based on the data in step one; calculated the mean score of each factor; calculated the percentage of each factor.

Data Analysis

This study used descriptive qualitative as a data analysis procedure. Data analysis can be defined as a process to inquire systematically about the interview transcript, and observation result, and distribute a questionnaire to get information about the data and elaborate on what has been found in the research place. The purpose of the description is to describe the potential data that will answer the research question qualitatively. Then, the conclusion has

been used to give recommendations about the internal and external factors that hinder students to attain the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. It is important to explain how the researcher has analyzed the data by the procedures presented below.

The result of the students' questionnaire determined the factors affecting the achievement of English proficiency. The researcher used the questionnaire to triangulate information gathered from the gap with colleagues to ascertain various perspectives and validity. Next, this step has gained information about external factors that hinder the attainment of the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. The results of questionnaire were categorized as "sangat setuju (SS)" & "setuju (S)" group and "kurang setuju (KS)" & "tidak setuju (TS)" group. The last, the researcher investigated those statements which statements represented the hindering factors in the attainment of the standard.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following parts contain two parts, findings and discussions. The results of the research are explained in more detail in this chapter. The data gained are presented in the findings section and the explanation is provided in detail in the discussion section.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, several factors were found related to factors that hinder tourism students. The external factors are divided into 2 categories; social factors which consist of attitude toward language learning, socioeconomic status of language learners, and family influence, and college cultural factors which consist of curriculum, teacher-student interaction, and mother tongue influence. The findings show that the social factors have the highest score 996 (40%) than the college cultural factors 769 (32%). It means that college cultural factors have a bigger influence than social factors in hindering students' attainment of English proficiency standards at AKN Lombok Barat. The summary of the findings is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 1. The External Factors that Hinder Tourism Students' Achievement
of English Proficiency Standard

No	External Factor Categories	Score	Percentage
Social Factors		966	40%
1.	Attitude toward Language Learning	386	16%
2.	Socio-Economic Status of Language Learners	397	16%
3.	Family Influence	183	8%
College Cultural Factors		769	32%
1.	Curriculum	338	14%
2.	Student-Teacher Interaction	258	11%
3.	Mother Tongue	173	7%
Total		1735	72%

There are several factors affecting students' achievement in learning English, such as student factors, teacher factors, and institutional factors. Two factors hinder the students from achieving the competency standard, internal and external factors. The results of this research show that external factors also contribute to hindering students' achievement in English proficiency based on Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. External factors are those that characterize the particular language learning situation. Based on the findings, the college cultural factors have more contribution rather than social factors toward the students in hindering the attainment ASEAN Common Competency Standard. In the learning process, the college cultural factors which surrounded the learners always affect the attainment of competency standards. Based on the result of this study, three college cultural factors have contributed to hindering the attainment of competency standards.

The first college cultural factor is the mother tongue. Mother tongue

refers to the language that the students know for the first time naturally without formal education. Most students at AKN Lombok Barat have Sasak as their mother tongue. They used to speak Sasak with their classmates in the learning process. It decreases the English interaction in the classroom and difficult to build an English environment in the learning process. The direct impact is the students are difficulty mastering word pronunciation and speaking easily. This is in line with Carless (2008:331) who stated mother tongue has potentially both positive and negative consequences: it may serve social and cognitive functions. Positively, the mother tongue can help the students to understand the topic easily when the lecturer uses the mother tongue in the classroom. However, the English lecturers at AKN Lombok Barat do not use Sasak in the learning process, so the topic may be difficult to understand by the students. This statement is in line with Cook (2001), Tang (2002), and Wells (1999) who advocated that the occasional use of the first language (mother tongue) by both learners and teacher increases both comprehension and learning of a second language, in this case foreign language.

The second college cultural factor is student-teacher interaction. Like mother tongue, teacher-student interaction also affects students' achievement of the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum positively or negatively. According to Hawkins, Graham, Sudweeks & Barbour (2013), the positive interaction that is initiated between teachers and students can increase their academic achievement. By doing positive interaction in the class, the students can adapt to the class and further can develop their cognitive skills. Emotional support and educational support can be included as factors of achievement among the students.

Based on the result, the pattern of student-teacher interaction has an 11% part in hindering the attainment of English proficiency standards based on the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. It shows that the interaction between student and teacher, by English conversation, is less outside the classroom rather than inside the classroom. No more than half of the students

at AKN Lombok Barat have joined the English club as part of student-teacher interaction. These phenomena prove that this factor also becomes hindering factor in achieving competency standards.

The next external factor is social factors. Social factors are always related to society and it has a close relationship with language. Society and language can affect each other. Social factors also affect the foreign language learning process at AKN Lombok Barat. Social factors take part 32% in hindering the attainment of English proficiency standards.

The first social factor is family influence. The atmosphere of the family is affecting factors to hinder the learners' achievement in learning. It is in lies with Good and Brophy (1990:584) that argued in any case, parental education level is especially important to teachers because it is linked to parental interest in and attitudes toward education. Then, family members' education level (high or low) makes different perspectives on education, especially language learning. If they have a higher education level, they tend to support their family to get the same level. However, if they have a low level of education, it can be two situations that are faced by the learners, support or hindering environment for education.

In addition, external factors that also cause the gap between students' competence and the attainment of the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum are "supported" by several elements. Firstly, the lack of English facilities in the college, like an English laboratory to support the learning process. As the college, AKN should have a practical laboratory for English subjects to improve listening skills. The second element is the limited learning hours for English. The students get English subject only in 2 semesters. In tourism, English competence is very important in daily interaction, so the students should have more English learning hours to maximize the elements in English subjects. The third elements come from the lecturers. The lecturer has limited interaction in English, especially outside the classroom. Moreover, the lecturer has limited strategies in their teaching method, especially in practicing English. In addition, the lecturers do not come from practical

industry. It is important because the expert in the industry has integrated English into their core skill in tourism.

In this study, implications are related to the contribution of research findings and discussions toward the attainment of competency in AKN Lombok Barat. Based on the research results, four implications can be concluded: firstly, the student's attainment of English proficiency in tourism can be measured through practical demonstration assessment based on the competency standards in Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. Moreover, the assessment can be applied with the combination of core skills, such as front office, food and beverages service, and hotel engineering as their basic operational procedures in the industry. Secondly, the student's ability in attaining competency can be developed by using the appropriate curriculum with Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum and students' needs in the college.

Next, the student's competence can be maximized by decreasing the hindering factors especially external factors such as college cultural factors and social factors. The last implication is the ability of English proficiency can be mastered by the students through improved English communication in the college cultural interaction. Furthermore, by developing English interaction, the students can adapt to how important English proficiency is in the industry to support their core skills as professional workers.

CONCLUSION

The questionnaire's result shows that several factors hinder the tourism students at AKN Lombok Barat to attain English proficiency standards based on Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. External factors that also cause the gap between students' competence and the attainment of those standards are "supported" by several elements. Firstly, the lack of English facilities in the college, such as an English listening laboratory to support the learning process; the limited learning hours for English subjects. The students get English subjects only in 2 semesters; Bahasa Inggris Umum and Bahasa

Inggris Profesi; the lecturers have limited interaction in English, especially outside the classroom; the lecturer has limited strategies in their teaching method, especially in practicing English for specific purposes of tourism. In addition, the lecturers have limited practical experience in the industry. The findings and discussions show the correlation between theory and the findings. Therefore, there are some suggestions: The lecturer needs to know the student's competence in English proficiency for attaining the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum as the ASEAN standard for the tourism field; future researchers may explore different points of view to do future research and relate it with the previous studies, such as hindering factors that come from teachers' or institution; the future researchers are suggested to focus more about the elements and performance criteria in English proficiency standard of tourism field to master it and develop research about this topic; the future researchers are suggested to analyses the English competence that is integrating with core skill in tourism for a professional worker at the industry.

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