

Needs Analysis of English for Tourism among Tourism Ambassadors in Demak

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the English for Tourism needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency, particularly in relation to their service duties, promotional roles, and real communication situations in the field. This study employed a qualitative approach that produced descriptive data through interviews and observation. The participants consisted of six tourism ambassadors and one coordinator selected through purposive sampling. The findings show that tourism ambassadors need English to welcome guests, introduce themselves, provide tourism information, guide visitors, explain local traditions, and promote Demak's cultural, religious, and historical potential. Events such as Grebeg Besar Demak show that tourism ambassadors may need to communicate information about event schedules, venues, local products, souvenirs, and cultural or religious values to wider audiences, including international visitors. Speaking and listening were identified as the most needed skills, while reading and writing supported the preparation of promotional texts and tourism information. The study also found that tourism ambassadors need vocabulary related to tourism, creative economy, greeting, guiding, destination promotion, and public speaking. The main challenges include limited vocabulary, difficulty speaking fluently, and lack of practice. Therefore, English for Tourism training should focus on practical communication, speaking practice, pronunciation, tourism vocabulary, guiding expressions, event-based role play, and promotional language related to Demak's local tourism potential.

Keyword : *English for Tourism; needs analysis; tourism ambassadors; Demak Regency; tourism communication*

1. INTRODUCTION

Demak Regency has a strategic position in the development of regional tourism, supported by its historical-religious heritage, cultural richness, and strong local economic base. In the 2025–2029 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Demak Regency (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Demak Nomor 5 Tahun 2025 Tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), tourism is positioned as one of the potential

economic sectors to be developed sustainably through the strengthening of regional image, improvement of the quality of events and tourist destinations, enhancement of inter-destination connectivity, development of the creative economy, and capacity building of tourism human resources. This policy direction is further emphasized in Demak Regency Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2019 concerning the Master Plan for Tourism Development of Demak Regency for 2019–2029, which affirms Demak's vision as a leading religious, dynamic,

competitive, and sustainable tourist destination. The regulation also positions destination development, marketing, industry, institutions, and tourism human resources as an integrated policy framework that must be developed sustainably (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Demak Nomor 5 Tahun 2019 Tentang Rencana Induk Pembangunan Kepariwisata Kabupaten Demak 2019-2029, 2019).

Within this framework, tourism ambassadors play an important role as promoters, communicators, and frontliners in introducing tourist destinations through social media, tourism events, community activities, and collaboration with tourism stakeholders (Diani et al., 2024). Tourism ambassadors contribute to building a positive image of the region, introducing tourism potential, and increasing public awareness of the values and strengths of local tourism (Septiani Rosana et al., 2024). Therefore, English for Tourism is important for tourism ambassadors because it enables them to communicate effectively with domestic and international visitors, provide clear information about destinations, explain local culture and attractions, respond to tourists' questions, and promote regional tourism in a more professional and globally accessible manner. Mastery of English for Tourism also supports their role in cross-cultural communication, tourism services, and destination promotion, particularly in representing Demak Regency to a wider audience.

In the context of Demak Regency, needs analysis becomes important because tourism ambassadors are expected not only to represent regional identity but also to act as communicators who can connect local tourism potential with wider audiences.

Previous studies on English for Tourism have generally emphasized the importance of needs analysis as a foundation for designing English for

Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, training programs, and teaching materials that are relevant to the real communication demands of the tourism sector. Prachanant's study on tourism employees in Thailand shows that speaking is the most important English skill, followed by listening, reading, and writing. The most needed communicative functions include giving information, providing services, and offering help, while the main problems include limited vocabulary, inappropriate expressions, and lack of grammar knowledge (Prachanant, 2012).

Similar findings appear in studies involving tourism industry employees in Indonesia and Malaysia. Malini et al. (2022) found that small hotel and restaurant employees in Nusa Lembongan considered speaking as the most urgent skill because they needed to guide, interact, and communicate with foreign tourists. Their English use was mainly related to general conversations, providing services, and giving information, while their difficulties included understanding foreign accents, using appropriate expressions, vocabulary limitations, and grammar problems. In Malaysia, Kholidi et al. (2022) also found that tourism employees had a high need for English skills, and the findings were recommended as a basis for developing English for Tourism curricula and ESP courses.

Other studies have focused on tourism personnel and students. Namtapi's study (2022) in Ayutthaya revealed that tourism personnel needed English for communicative tasks such as greeting tourists, giving directions, providing information, and offering or asking for help. Their main lacks were related to listening and speaking, especially understanding foreign accents, following tourists' fast speech, limited vocabulary, and grammar problems. The study also highlighted the importance of cross-cultural competence and local historical knowledge in English for

Tourism materials. Kusumastiti et al. (2021) found that tourism students need all four English macro-skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking but the frequency of use differs in the workplace. Reading was the most frequently used skill because students often encountered short functional texts such as announcements and notices during internships, followed by listening, writing, and speaking. However, the study focused on tourism students in an internship context, not on tourism ambassadors who perform service, promotional, public communication, and destination-branding roles. Meanwhile, Anam and Rachmadian (2020) found that tourism students needed all English skills, but speaking was especially important for providing excellent service in the tourism industry. Mulyono (2023) also found that tourism students learned English mainly to support future careers in hospitality and tourism, with a strong emphasis on speaking skills.

More recent research has begun to address English needs in community-based tourism and tour guiding contexts. Yanti et al. (2024) examined the English communicative needs of tourist guides on Untung Jawa Island and noted that ESP studies often focus on commercial tourism areas, while community-based tourism remains less explored. Their study used questionnaires, interviews, and job shadowing, and found that spoken English was not yet an immediate need due to limited encounters with international tourists. However, the guides needed written English scripts for specific communicative events. Napolita and Putri's study (2025) in Bedono Tourism Village, Demak, found that members of the community-based tourism group had high awareness of the importance of English, especially for direct communication with foreign tourists. Speaking skills, tourism vocabulary, local culture, and tourism-related information became the main training needs, while

limited vocabulary and lack of practice opportunities were the main obstacles.

These studies show that English for Tourism needs analysis has been widely conducted among tourism employees, hotel and restaurant staff, tour guides, community-based tourism groups, and tourism students. Most studies consistently identify speaking, listening, tourism vocabulary, service-related expressions, giving information, giving directions, handling questions, and cross-cultural communication as important components of English for Tourism. However, the existing studies have not specifically examined tourism ambassadors as regional tourism representatives who perform not only service and guiding functions, but also promotional, cultural, ceremonial, public-speaking, and image-building roles. Therefore, this research needs to be conducted to identify the specific English for Tourism needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency, particularly in relation to their service duties, promotional roles, and real communication contexts in the field.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach, which produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (2022)). The method was used to identify the specific English for Tourism needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency, particularly in relation to their service duties, promotional roles, and real communication contexts in the field. The data were collected through interviews and observation involving six tourism ambassadors and one coordinator. The participants were selected using purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2025), a sampling technique with certain consideration. This technique was chosen because the participants were directly involved in

tourism ambassador activities and were considered able to provide relevant information about the use of English in tourism services and promotion. The data collection was conducted on 24 May 2026. The process began with identifying participants who were actively involved as tourism ambassadors. After that, the researcher conducted observation to see the real communication context faced by the tourism ambassadors, especially in relation to tourism services, destination promotion, interaction with visitors, and public communication activities. The interviews were conducted with the six tourism ambassadors to explore their experiences, difficulties, and needs in using English for tourism purposes. The questions focused on their service duties, promotional roles, communication situations in the field, English skills needed, vocabulary needs, and challenges in communicating with tourists. An interview with the coordinator was also conducted to obtain broader information about the expected competencies, roles, and training needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency. During the observation, the researcher took field notes related to the ambassadors' activities, communication patterns, tourism-related tasks, and situations where English might be needed. The interview results and observation notes were then compared to identify the most important English for Tourism needs. The research process is illustrated in Figure 1.

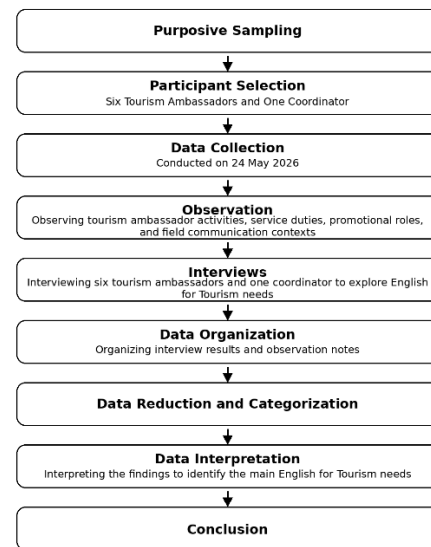


Figure 1. The Research Process

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the English for Tourism needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency are closely related to their service duties, promotional roles, and real communication situations in the field. As tourism ambassadors, they are responsible for assisting both local and international visitors. In international tourism contexts, English becomes necessary because they may need to welcome guests, introduce themselves, provide basic information, and guide visitors during tourism activities or official events. The findings show that some tourism ambassadors with good English proficiency are usually assigned to greet and guide tourists during events, while others still need to improve their English skills, particularly in greeting, welcoming, and guiding tourists.

Their promotional roles are also important because tourism ambassadors are expected to promote Demak Regency as a tourism destination. Demak has

strong religious, historical, and cultural tourism potential, including events such as Grebeg Besar Demak, which is known as a cultural and religious tourism attraction connected to the history of Wali Songo and the Demak Sultanate. The event also strengthens Demak's identity as Kota Wali and attracts visitors through its cultural and religious values. In this context, tourism ambassadors need English to introduce local attractions, cultural heritage, religious tourism sites, traditional events, local products, and regional identity to wider audiences. They may use English during tourism events, exhibitions, social media promotion, and direct interaction with visitors.

The communication situations faced by tourism ambassadors are varied. In the field, they may need to greet tourists, explain tourist destinations, describe local traditions, give directions, answer spontaneous questions, introduce tourism programs, and communicate with guests during official tourism events. For example, during the Grebeg Besar event series in Demak, tourism ambassadors may be asked to explain the event, the schedule of activities, the location of the venue, local food, souvenirs, and the cultural or religious significance of the celebration. The 2026 Grebeg Besar program also included public activities such as a people's market at Taman Parkir Tembiring Jogo Indah. This situation shows that tourism ambassadors may also need English to explain event facilities, local products, and local economic activities to visitors.

Based on these duties and communication contexts, the most needed English skills are speaking and listening.

Speaking is needed to explain destinations, promote tourism, welcome guests, and deliver short presentations. Listening is needed to understand tourists' questions, requests, and responses. Reading and writing are also needed, especially for understanding tourism information and preparing captions, promotional texts, brochures, or short descriptions in English. In terms of vocabulary, as reinforced by the coordinator, tourism ambassadors need words and expressions related to tourism and the creative economy.

An interview with the coordinator was also conducted to obtain broader and more comprehensive information about the expected speaking competencies and training needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency. The coordinator was considered an important informant because they have a wider understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations of tourism ambassadors, not only in regular tourism activities but also in competitions at the local, provincial, and national levels.

Through the interview, the researcher explored the speaking abilities that tourism ambassadors are expected to have, such as the ability to introduce themselves, describe tourist attractions, explain Demak's cultural and religious heritage, promote local products, answer questions, and deliver short presentations in English. The coordinator also provided information about the kinds of English communication skills needed during tourism ambassador competitions, including public speaking, self-introduction, question-and-answer sessions, tourism promotion, and

presenting regional identity in a clear and confident manner.

In addition, the interview helped identify the types of training needed to improve the ambassadors' English competence. These training needs include speaking practice, tourism vocabulary, pronunciation, guiding expressions, and promotional language. Therefore, the coordinator's perspective strengthened the data obtained from the tourism ambassadors by providing institutional and practical insights into the English for Tourism competencies required in both field duties and competition contexts.

However, the main challenges they face include limited vocabulary, difficulty speaking fluently, and lack of practice. Therefore, English for Tourism training for tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency should focus on practical communication, tourism vocabulary, greeting and guiding expressions, event-based role play, and promotional language related to local tourism potential.

4. CONCLUSION

The English for Tourism needs of tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency are strongly connected to their service duties, promotional roles, and real communication situations in the field. As representatives of regional tourism, they need English to welcome guests, introduce themselves, provide information, guide visitors, explain tourist attractions, describe local traditions, and promote Demak's cultural, religious, and historical potential. Events such as Grebeg Besar Demak show that tourism ambassadors may be required to communicate information about event schedules, venues, local products, souvenirs, and cultural or religious values to wider audiences, including

international visitors. Therefore, speaking and listening are the most needed English skills, supported by reading and writing skills for understanding tourism information and preparing promotional texts.

The findings also show that tourism ambassadors need specific vocabulary and expressions related to tourism, creative economy, greeting, guiding, destination promotion, and public speaking. The coordinator's interview strengthened these findings by showing that English competence is needed not only for field duties but also for tourism ambassador competitions at local, provincial, and national levels. However, the main challenges faced by the ambassadors include limited vocabulary, difficulty speaking fluently, and lack of practice. Therefore, English for Tourism training for tourism ambassadors in Demak Regency should focus on practical communication, speaking practice, pronunciation, tourism vocabulary, guiding expressions, event-based role play, and promotional language related to Demak's local tourism potential.

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