

A PORTRAYAL OF MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES IN MADURA TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Abstract: Multilingual practice is valuable for potential and established tourists as it can help promote the tourism industry. This study aims to describe the opinions of the Madurese people about the use of multilingual languages in Madura tourist destinations. The researcher collected data by distributing questionnaires about the use of Madurese, Indonesian, and English to respondents in the four districts of Madura; Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. Questionnaires were analyzed based on the answers given by the respondents to the questions. The results show that tourist destinations in Madura ought to use three languages. The multilingual practices influence the tourism sector in Madura. Especially when the tourism stakeholders master several languages, more tourists may visit Madura and other tourist destinations.

Keywords: tourism, tourist destination, multilingualism, Madurese

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most popular industries in the world. This industry requires and engages people with different skills and interests to work together to provide the best service. One way to make tourism services better is to implement multilingualism in the tourism industry, for example, by using and promoting local and national languages along with international languages such as English as the lingua franca of the industry (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau (2009), Danuwijaya & Abdullah (2021), Seong Pek et al., (2019), and Suhaimi & Abdullah (2017)). There is a clear relationship between tourism and multilingualism. This relationship is a means of communicating with visitors from various countries with diverse languages. Therefore, implementing multilingual practices in the tourism industry can improve services because visitors will feel more comfortable when language is no longer a big problem (Suhaimi & Abdullah, 2017).

Multilingualism is a condition where people use more than one language for daily communication. This practice is foundable in

many nations, such as India, Taiwan, and Malaysia. People in these countries come from different ethnic groups with their regional languages. Thus, they apply multilingualism in their daily life. Multilingualism can be profitable, especially in the tourism and hospitality industries. Multilingualism has a strategic role and can be used as a managerial tool in the tourism industry, for example, in tourism call centers (Danuwijaya & Abdullah, 2021; Duchêne, 2009).

Language and multilingual practices are crucial in the tourism industry. The reasons are: First, language is a tool in this new economy. Second, people with good communication skills have a competitive advantage in the industry. Third, multilingualism develops due to the need for transnational. Not to mention, the international world automatically involves and requires the practice of multilingualism. The industry needs to reach out to a larger market, which is almost multilingual (Danuwijaya & Abdullah, 2021; Duchene, 2009). Therefore, the tourism industry demands language as a necessary working

tool, which leads to multilingualism or diversity of languages within the industry.

Multilingualism is beneficial because the skill is considered a commodity in tourism (Heller et al., 2014). Heller and Duchêne (2014) state that language can also be commodified, like general commodities. They use 'commodification' to describe how an object or process is conventionally available and eventually exchanged in the market. Thus, language becomes a commodity that can be traded by those working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Thus, the use of language in tourist areas has a critical role in the success and sustainability of the tourism industry. Tourist destinations deserve attention in terms of providing information in several languages, one of which must be an international language such as English (See, e.g., Widiastuti et al., 2021; Bobanovic, 2011; Carroll, 2010; Dawson et al., 2012; Kuosuwana, 2016).

This research will focus on multilingual practices in Madura tourist destinations, especially the opinions of the Madurese community regarding the use of Madurese, Indonesian, and English in Madura tourist destinations. This opinion comes from native people who live and settle in Madura, especially those who work in the tourism sector. It aims to analyze and understand how multilingual practices and the multilingual abilities of the local community interact with visitors and the role of these abilities in Madura tourism.

Madura Island is one of the islands in East Java Province, which has many tourism options, such as natural, cultural, culinary, and other tourist spots. These options are either artificial or natural and have been famous for a long time. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia, Madura Island received around 840,905 visitors in 2019. These visitors came from local and foreign tourists.

Visitors who come to Madura have various needs ranging from vacations, and work, to just visiting a place. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states that international visitors visit a country outside their residence for up to 12 months with a specific purpose and do not aim to work. There are two classifications of visitors, namely excursionists, and tourists.

Consequently, Madura Island visitors are not native people who live and settle in Madura. Hence, most visitors need to speak or understand the local language, Madurese.

With a lack of understanding of the Madurese language, Madura tourists communicate in Indonesian with local tourists and in English with foreign tourists. In addition, native Madurese are used to speaking the Madurese language. There are three main dialects of Madurese; Bangkalan, Pamekasan, and Sumenep (Zainudin, 1978). Consequently, there are three dominant languages in Madura tourist destinations. Those are the Madurese, English, and Indonesian languages. These languages are tools for communication, such as transactions, greetings, and small talk. Therefore, many native Madurese have learned Indonesian and English well because the tourists do not understand the Madurese language.

Tourist destinations ought to provide information in Madurese. The aim is that non-local visitors can experience the Madurese language. This experience will be a unique cultural tourism experience for them. For example, many places and typical Madurese foods in Madura have names in the Madurese language. The information presented in these three languages will add value to the tourism industry and become a distinct brand. Thus, it will support the advancement of the tourism industry, which will ultimately increase local revenue from the tourism industry.

Several studies examine the Madurese community. Rani (2014) analyzed tourism potential development in the Madura district. He explained that one of the vital assets in Sumenep tourism is Lombang Beach. In his research, he focused on the development and the constraints and benefits experienced by the government and the local community, especially in the Sumenep tourism sector. There is also other research on tourism on Madura Island conducted by Arifin (2017). He discussed digitization carried out by the Madurese community to promote local tourism. This digitalization also aims to change the image of Madura to outsiders. It is from being famous for violence or marginalized society to being a place full of beautiful destinations. The government and the local community work together in digitalization, especially tourism.

Another study is about the noble values revitalization of local Madurese traditions. This study was conducted in 2007 by Susanto. He emphasized the importance of revitalizing to find problems caused by modernization domination and hegemony. He highlighted various indigenous traditions from Madura, for example, building houses traditions that could have been more attractive to the public. Unfortunately, few studies still discuss Madurese tourism destination opinions on matters, especially in languages.

METHOD

This quantitative research uses data in numbers (i.e., percentages or averages) (Levy, 2017). All presented data came from questionnaires distributed to several respondents using a random sampling method. The analyzed data is based on descriptive statistical methods. The data is a response from the Maduranese community to questions about the use of Madurese, Indonesian, and English in tourist areas in Madura. One of the advantages of the quantitative method is that it can obtain as many participants as needed (See Creswell (2012) and Levy (2017).

In this study, the researcher randomly distributed 200 questionnaires to respondents who live in Sumenep, Pamekasan, Sampang, and Bangkalan. Nevertheless, solely about 150 respondents met the requirements. Data from respondents were analyzed by examining all available data from questionnaires collected using quantitative data analysis techniques (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher examined data based on descriptive statistical methods. The results were in percentage form. The researcher adjusts the presentation of the findings to the emerging patterns or themes that have been identified and classified. The discussion relates to relevant theories and previous research findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and the discussion organized in the following way: First, the researcher will present findings about multilingual practices in tourist attractions in Madura. The researcher specifically addressed two main questions. Those are whether tourist destination

facilitations should be in Madurese, Indonesian, and English, and hotel information should be in these languages. Second, the researcher will discuss the role of local government in facilitating English language learning for tourism workers.

The Use of Madurese, Indonesian, and English in Madura's Tourist Destinations

The researcher asked three main questions to 150 respondents regarding the use of Madurese, Indonesian, and English in tourist destinations in four Madura districts. The first question is whether tourist destinations should be in Madurese, Indonesian, and English. Most respondents (85%) considered tourist destinations in Madura must use Madurese, Indonesian, and English, while the rest (15%) did not.

The three languages are not merely to communicate in tourist spots but also to write the facilities banners, such as rest areas, parking lots, supermarkets, mosques, toilets, Etc. One of the reasons, some visitors may solely be able to read Madurese, some may understand Indonesian, and some foreign tourists can only speak and read English. Thus, by providing in these three languages, visitors can convey all information.

This information can be designed creatively, such as brochures, leaflets, and billboards. It aims to reach a broader range of potential tourists or visitors. In addition, the community can also introduce visitors to the local language as a form of cultural heritage. It will be very relevant, especially for visitors interested in understanding culture through regional languages such as Madurese.

In addition, the researcher specifically focused on hotel announcements using these three languages. It includes oral and written. This announcement is one of the facilities provided by the hotel for hotel guests. Thus, the role of language is crucial because visitors need sufficient and clear information while in the hotel. Availability of adequate information requires more than one language (one of which must be an international language such as English). It aims that hotel guests can understand information clearly.

The researcher asked questions to respondents about providing hotel information using the three languages. Most

respondents (85%) agreed that hotel management should provide information in Madurese, Indonesian, and English. The remaining 15% of respondents considered these three languages as an additional service at the hotel not needed. The researcher observed that several hotels in Madura provided brief information using two languages, namely Indonesian and English, such as information about where to eat and brief directions inside and outside the hotel. Longer informational texts are available in the hotel room or the lobby, such as Madurese culture and crafts and how to make them, most of which are in Indonesian. In the future, hotels need to complement this information with broader multilingual practices in collaboration with related parties, such as the tourism office in each district in Madura. Lately, tourism has also spread via the internet, namely digital promotion.

Digital promotions make it possible to reach a wider audience more efficiently. It usually uses an international language, English. For example, Carroll (2010) observed that several prefectures in Japan use Japanese and English on their travel websites. Japanese people realize that Japanese and English will make the information on the website more readable, especially for non-Japanese speakers. Recognizing this potential, local governments consider the linguistic needs of foreign speakers who live within or outside their communities.

Furthermore, the implication of using English on their website is that local governments in Japan also act to automatically promote and build internationalized, multilingual, and to a certain extent, multiculturalism in Japanese society. They know that language should not be a barrier to tourism activities but should facilitate the tourism industry. Therefore, language is a tourism commodity, namely a linguistic commodity (Danuwijaya & Abdullah, 2021; Heller et al., 2014). linguistik (Danuwijaya & Abdullah, 2021; Heller et al., 2014).

There are advantages of providing multilanguage in tourism, such as an additional value for tourist destinations as better tourism service providers (Carroll, 2010), introducing culture through language, and providing valuable tourist experiences for visitors (Okafor et al. (2018). Each visitor has

different goals. One of the goals is to get cultural tourism, such as understanding the local language.

Local languages, such as Madurese, have the potential to be added values that differentiate one place from another. Lonardi (2022) found that minority languages are considered native by cultural tourists and are used to promote destinations. Promoting the use of the Madurese language in the tourism industry will also help its preservation. It prevents negative impacts on local culture; for example, the extinction of regional languages, a condition in which a language is no longer used and is in demand by native people. Thus, apart from using local languages as cultural tourism objects, multilingual practices are also beneficial for preserving and promoting cultural tourism.

McKercher and Du Cros (2005) categorized cultural tourists into four types, purposeful cultural tourism, sightseeing cultural tourism, serendipity cultural tourism, casual cultural tourism, and incidental cultural tourism. To the local cultural experience, purposeful cultural tourists are the most relevant and usually outperform other cultural tourist types. However, they intend to experience the culture, including the language.

Cultural tourists visit a cultural tourism destination to gain cultural experience, not only to look around but also to learn about it. Consequently, they usually pay attention to details, including the language used in these cultural tourism destinations. They consist of academics, cultural activists, and cultural researchers. Thus, facilitating tourist destinations using the Madurese language, for example, can attract them. Drozdowski (2011), Gómez et al. (2018), Iglesias (2017), Xamaní (2015), and Carvalho et al. (2023), in general, were concerned with the role of language in the tourism industry and considered language to be an object of tourism.

Carvalho (2023) identified four types of language tourists, 'Aficionados,' 'The Devoted,' 'Pragmatists,' and 'Less Committed.' The community also needs to accommodate the needs of cultural tourists to complete their cultural experience, including their interest in learning languages and understanding culture, one of which is by encouraging multilingual

practices in the cultural tourism industry, at least using Madurese, Indonesian, and English.

The Role of the Local Governments in Facilitating English Learning for Tourism Employees

Next, the researcher examined the local government's role in facilitating English language learning for tourism employees. To advance Madura tourism, the government ought to increase the ability of human resources and financial assistance needed. Most respondents (89%) assumed that the local government needs to provide such training to maximize tourism services in Madura, while only a small number (11%) disagreed. These results indicate that local governments should improve the English skills of employees in the tourism industry. Their English skills will contribute to the advancement of tourism services and growth.

Erazo et al. (2019) found that adequate English proficiency or competency is necessary for the tourism and hospitality employees industry. The purpose is to make visitors or tourists feel comfortable during their stay. It will give the visitors a positive experience. It will be a free promotion for the tourism industry. Thus, it demonstrates that having English skills will impact positivity in all tourist areas.

Widiastuti et al. (2021) studied the important role of English in the tourism industry development in Bali. According to them, employees with good communication skills in English can encourage tourism development because they can expand sales programs and provide more effective and efficient services. Therefore, tourism stakeholders (for example, local government and tourism offices) ought to improve the English competence of their employees by organizing English language training programs.

There are several things that local governments can do to enhance the English language skills of tourism candidates and employees in Madura. First, through the tourism and education offices, local governments can cooperate in providing free English courses for active or potential tourism employees in their respective regions. It would be better if the local government supplied a study center for them (Kuosuwan,

2016). These courses can use existing resources in the respective area. Also, local governments can recruit English teachers from schools in their districts. Second, the government can facilitate English learning facilities independently, which can be in providing platforms for English learners to practice what they have learned during the course. Thus, they can come to meeting activities once every few weeks.

In addition, local governments can cooperate with English language course institutions and universities in their respective districts. For course institutions, local governments can open course registration and send participants who have registered to the institution concerned. Meanwhile, the government also can partner with local universities in Madura. Gede et al. (2020) stated that higher education is morally responsible for increasing the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values necessary to create a sustainable future.

Such programs need to consider which language skills are most valuable and relevant to employees in the tourism industry (Yasmin et al., 2016; Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). Bury et al. (2017) recommended that English language skills in the tourism and hospitality industry should focus on communicative competence, self-confidence, listening to English, and speaking English. Another consideration is English skills which are considered challenging by most workers (Davies, 2000; Erazo et al., 2019). These considerations can help them design suitable and practical programs for trainees.

The local governments can focus on providing English language training for prospective tourism employees in their respective regions. Thus, stakeholders have a division of tasks and responsibilities in improving human resources in language skills, especially for the tourism and hospitality industry benefit in Madura. In addition, local tourism employees, government officials, and non-governmental organizations in the hospitality and tourism sector can cooperate regularly and actively, especially to promote English communication skills for local tourism employees (Gede et al., 2020; Kuosuwana, 2016). Therefore, consolidation and synergy between stakeholders are necessary for

efforts to improve and develop human resource English skills.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to describe and understand the views of the tourism community towards multilingual practices in tourist destinations in Madura. The researcher found that they authenticated positive opinions about Madurese, Indonesian, and English in tourist destinations in Madura since most of the participants agreed to use these three languages in tourist destinations in Madura.

It is necessary to promote the use of these three languages in tourism activities to increase the attractiveness of Madura to potential visitors from within Madura, other areas outside Madura, and even foreign countries. It can be a tourist attraction because visitors may be interested in learning

the uniqueness of Madurese culture or other regional cultural products. Hence, all tourism information must be in three languages.

In addition, future researchers also need to pay attention to the representation of respondents in terms of age, gender, social class, place of residence, education, and district of origin. These terms are critical to map differences in attitudes, perceptions, and opinions towards multilingual practices in Madura. Thus, people's understanding of multilingual practices in the tourism industry will be more holistic.

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