

Research Article

INDONESIAN TOUR GUIDE'S BILINGUAL EXPERIENCES IN MALANG: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY STUDY

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Abstract.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of a bilingual Indonesian tour guide in guiding foreigners coming to Malang, Indonesia. More specifically, this study intended to explore the challenges and strategies in learning and applying two languages. Narrative inquiry is employed in this study to examine the participant's experiences before and after learning and practicing two languages. This study used a qualitative research design in which the data is described in the form of a description. The research instrument was in the form of open-ended interviews. The participant of this research is a senior tour guide who lives in Malang. The findings of this narrative inquiry indicated that less practice could hinder the participant in applying the two languages and hinder the participant from communicating with foreigners. To cope with the challenges, the participant applied communication strategies by self-taught learning and practice. The study suggests it is crucial to always use and practice the languages, especially for native speakers, to master them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As one of the tourism midpoints in East Java, Malang is known to be rich in exciting tourism spots. Furthermore, tourism places are a sanctuary for workers around the world to put their minds at ease from demanding daily routines (Camilleri, 2017, as cited in Az-Zahra & Kirana, 2021). Moreover, Malang is also a historic city that has many historical heritages such as heritage that have existed since the olden Royal era until the independence era (Priandani, Tolle, Hapsani, & Fanani, 2017). Tourism in Malang City is one sector that contributes to regional income. In addition, since there are a lot of interesting tourist places in Malang, this can attract tourists to visit and place themselves in the beauty tourist attractions. This is in line with the availability of tour guides to provide the best service and lead the tourist in traveling around Malang.

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Furthermore, the tour guides must be familiar and have sufficient knowledge as one of the efforts to provide such an excellent experience during the trip.

Early tourism studies have explored the roles of tour guides (Al-Okaily, 2021). Holloway (1981) suggested that the main role of the tour guide is to serve as an 'information giver' and a 'mediator'. Other than that, Cohen (1985) emphasized that the tour guide's roles included acting as a 'pathfinder' and 'mentor'. A pathfinder is a geo- graphic guide who helps navigate through unfamiliar settings, whereas the role of the mentor involves giving interpretations of the places visited. Pond (1993) also suggested four main roles of the tour guide: as a leader who assumes responsibilities; an educator who enhances tourists' understanding of the visited social environment; an ambassador who represents the destination visited; and finally, as a host who accommodates the guests in every possible way. More recently, Weiler and Yu (2007) emphasized the role of the tour guide as a cultural broker through which they mediate three tour-related issues: physical access, social encounters, and meaningful understanding of the places visited.

Furthermore, some research found that tour guides' performance impacted on tourists' satisfaction with the tour, and subsequently, their loyalty in terms of recommendations and return intentions (e.g., Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016; Chan, Hsu, & Baum, 2015). Geva and Goldman (1991) and Huang, Hsu, and Chan (2010) indicated that tour guides' services had limited direct impact on tourist satisfaction with the tour operators and with the overall tourist experience. Overall, the guides' performance can also influence the construction of a destination image along with the sustainability of tourism resources through their interpretations and practices during their tours (Randall & Rollins, 2009).

In dealing with tour guide performance, however, the tour guide surely has deep knowledge and ability to explain clearly about the tourism place during the trip in order to give satisfaction to the tourist. One of the senior tour guides in Malang has a unique way to deliver the information to the tourist. Along the trip, he tries to share the explanation with two languages which is called bilingualism in order to introduce the visitors with the Indonesian.

Although several studies have contributed significantly in investigating the tour guide's performance, little is known to investigate the tour guide's experience of speaking two languages. The explanation above can emphasize the research gap from the previous study. For this purpose, this current study aims to answer a research question, "*What stories do the participants tell about the speaking experiences while being a tour guide?*". Moreover, this current study also aims to explore the strategy used by the participant in maintaining the two languages. Further, this current study is expected to highlight an updated issue in bilingual context.

2. METHOD

The main focus of this study is to engage a small narrative inquiry in which the narrative data was collected from an Indonesian tour guide's experience in speaking two languages or bilingual. In accordance with its purpose; therefore, narrative inquiry was used. As Creswell and Poth (2018) mentioned that in narrative research, the data was gathered through the collection of stories, reporting and discussing the meaning of individual experiences. An Indonesian tour guide who, by the time of the study, was a tour guide in Malang, Indonesia was selected to engage in this study. To select the participants, some criteria were prioritized. The participant needed to have been a tour guide who speaks two languages. This is pivotal as the purpose of this study is to explore the participant's speaking experiences in the context of bilingualism. Moreover, the participant's willingness to get involved in this study was also prioritized. For those who signed and returned the informed consent became the participants of the current study. Therefore, Rudi (pseudonym), a male tour guide from Malang, Indonesia, was involved in this study.

To obtain the stories related to the participant's speaking experiences, an in-depth narrative interview was used. In the interview session, the questions and answers were held in the language with which the participant was comfortable in telling the stories. In other words, the participant was allowed to speak Indonesian or English when he told the stories. The interview was conducted for about 30 minutes. During the interview session, the personal reaction was minimized to avoid the distraction of the stories. Moreover, a voice recording was used in order not to miss the stories which were told by the participant.

Moreover, thematic analysis was used in analysing the data. The thematic analysis aims to find the important theme to explain specific issues in the research. For this current study, the six thematic analysis steps were applied (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, focus attention on the participant's story. Second, what the research participant was told to transcribe. It was used to make the translation process easier. In the next process, the transcription was read repeatedly before coding as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested. Next, the coding technique began while reading. Marking in statements was used to give codes containing the important information. Fifth, the codes were grouped to give the theme as the next step. The last step, the theme was obtained based on the purpose of this study regarding to explore the participant's speaking experiences in using two languages as a tour guide.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Told Story

In this section the story shared by the participant regarding his experience in guiding some foreigners using bilingual language. The narrative of the participant including his past experience in learning and applying languages especially English as a tour guide were separately presented.

3.2. Rudy's Story: Learning English

Rudy learned English when he was in junior high school and senior high school. However, he was not interested in English at that time. Then, after he graduated from his senior high school, he finally realized that English is important. Then, he decided to take an English course and learn seriously about English conversation. As he did not have enough money to pay for the course, he learned English by himself. He used the lesson that he got in the English course as his background knowledge. After having the background knowledge, he learned everything self-taught. He revealed that he tried to learn English by applying some strategies such as reading books, listening to the radio and practicing the conversation. He specifically stated,

“I have a strong determination in learning a communication. Someone who can master communication and information is the one who will be onward. Communication also makes it easier for us to talk and tell stories with foreigner. One of the things that need to be mastered in communication is a language. So, I decided to learn English after I graduated from my senior high school. Then, I took an English course to master it.”
(Rudy, personal communication)

3.3. Rudy's Learning Strategies

3.3.1. Listening to Radio

Rudy felt so motivated in learning and practicing English. He learned everything by himself. He applied some strategies to improve his English ability. He said that he listened to the Australian radio to add some vocabulary and learned the pronunciation of some words. After he listened to the pronunciation, then he practiced it by repeating the correct pronunciation of those words.

“I used to listen to Australian radio, known as ABC or Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I try to imitate the broadcaster for example saying “listen to me” and “good morning”.” (Rudy, personal communication)

From the statement above, it can be seen that Rudy tried to enhance his vocabulary by listening to the radio. Moreover, by listening to the radio, he could ensure the pronunciation as well.

3.3.2. Reading Books and Magazine

Besides, he also read some books and magazines, so that he could get new vocabulary and knowledge about English. He frequently read some grammar books to develop his ability in using tenses and time signals, so he could easily use them in making a sentence. He specifically explained how he learned and maintained his English ability,

“My friend gave me some books related to English. Then, sometimes I also went to a second-hand bookstore to read some English books. As I don’t have enough money to buy it, I just read it there. However, it also helps me a lot in improving my English.” (Rudy, personal communication)

3.3.3. Having the Conversation Club

English speaking or English conversation is the most interesting skill based on Rudy’s statement. He practices it all the time. The first thing that he did was build a conversation club with his friend. He said that the conversation club was held once a month. Before having the meeting, the club decided the topic that would be discussed. Then, they shared their ideas about the topic. Based on his story, the benefit of that club was the new knowledge and new insight into a topic. Besides, he also got new vocabulary. The other advantage was the peer feedback. When he or his friend faced difficulty in pronouncing the word, they would help each other.

“My purpose for building this club is to help the students in practicing the English conversation since there are various topics to be discussed.” (Rudy, personal communication)

3.3.4. Practicing in the Restaurant (Observing-Imitating-Practicing)

Moreover, after having background knowledge of English, he worked in a restaurant as a waiter which was mostly visited by foreigners around the world. He tried to practice his

English by having conversations with foreigners. When he had difficulties in saying the English word, he used Bahasa Indonesia. Besides, he also observes how the foreigner pronounced the word, then he tried to imitate the pronunciation. Moreover, if he didn't know the English word, he also checked the dictionary. After he could pronounce the word correctly, he practiced it with another foreigner to get feedback. He specifically stated,

“My foreign languages can be improved by practicing with other foreigners who visit the restaurant.” (Rudy, personal communication)

Being a Tour Guide as His Hobby (Observing-Imitating-Practicing)

In practicing his English, he is also a tour guide since it is his hobby. He worked as a tour guide when he had a day off from his restaurant. He used that opportunity to practice his English conversation. He accompanied the foreigners that came from different backgrounds such as painters, doctors, etc that visited Malang. He explained some heritage places in Malang. Besides, he also explained the culture and Indonesian traditional food. When he explained about the culture of Malang, he used two languages, namely English and Bahasa Indonesia. The foreigners were supposed to understand what he explained although by Bahasa Indonesia.

“When I explain something to foreigners, I usually speak in Bahasa Indonesia and English.” (Rudy, personal communication)

From the statement above, it can be seen that he applied the bilingual language in explaining something to foreigners.

The Way Rudy Faces the Challenge in Learning English

Challenges cannot be avoided in learning new things. In learning a language, the challenge arises because he learned in an era where not many people were interested in English. Therefore, Rudy felt it was difficult to find a source for learning English. However, even though he felt it was difficult to find the source, it did not make Rudy lose his motivation in mastering English. He tried so many ways to get learning sources. He borrowed his friend's book. He also went to a second hand book store. Finally, he could get some input and practiced it directly with the foreigners.

“I usually borrowed my friends' books to learn English because I didn't have much money to buy books and dictionaries.” (Rudy, personal communication)

3.3.5. Teaching English

Since he had a difficult experience in looking for the sources to learn English, he decided to build a course in his village to help some students in learning English easily. Mostly his students were Elementary students. He taught the structure of English and gave some vocabulary to the students. He did not give any specific fee for his course. He spent the money to buy some books and also a dictionary. He did it to provide various sources that can be used by the students to improve their English ability. He specifically stated,

“Because I had bad experience in looking for the sources, therefore, I built an English course and I became the teacher. I did it to help the students in learning English.” (Rudy, personal communication)

“I taught Grammar and Speaking for the students.” (Rudy, personal communication)

From the statement above, it can be seen that Rudy had another aim which was to help some students in learning English. Therefore, Rudy not only practiced the new language, but he also delivered what he learned to the students.

3.3.6. Be Confident and Focus on the Goal

Rudy thought that English is not easy to learn and many people are too afraid to practice their speaking. Therefore, Rudy always tried to be confident because it is the key to learn new things, especially for communication. As he stated,

“The important thing in learning a new language is to be confident to speak. The more you practice, the better you will be. Then, focus on your goal. If you have focused on your goal, you can get what you want.” (Rudy, personal communication)

From the findings, it can be seen that Rudy uses language mixing in the interaction between foreigners. It can be found when Rudy explained the way he speaks in explaining something to foreigners. This study supports the previous study which explained the language transfer, such as the use of language mixing commonly found in the bilingual learning process (Nurjaleka & Supriatnaningsih, 2021). Moreover, from the findings, it can be found that Rudy started learning Bahasa Indonesia first and then started learning another language in a time lag. Therefore, it can be said that the learning time for Rudy in mastering two languages is called sequential bilingual since there is step by step in learning the language. This finding also supports Nurjaleka and Supriatnaningsih (2021) that stated that the learning time for bilingual learning processes can be simultaneously bilingual and sequential bilingual. Besides, this current study

also supports the findings of Wallner (2016) who stated that bilingualism can occur when people decide to learn a new language on their own. It can be seen from Rudy's statement that he decided to learn English after he graduated from senior high school because he believes by learning English, he can connect with many people around the world. Furthermore, this current study found that Rudy also created an English environment by building a conversation club and an English course to help some students in practicing their English, especially speaking and grammar skills. It supports the findings of Nursanti (2016) that mentioned that by using bilingual in teaching English, the students will feel easy in understanding new vocabulary and help the students to do exercises.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study adds to information of research in Bilingualism, especially for the implementation and process of applying English for Indonesian tour guides. The finding demonstrates that the participant had been practicing and learning English for a long time ago. He also implemented some learning strategies to improve his English performance such as listening to radio, reading books and magazines, having a conversation club, practicing in the restaurant and enacting tour guides as his hobby. In his process of learning and applying bilingualism, some challenges could not be avoided. However, he tried to solve it in some different ways. First, because of the limitation of learning sources, he borrowed the book from his friend. Sometimes, he also bought some second hand books to support his process of learning English. Second, he chose to teach English to some children in his village. He tried to explain the material that he has learned from the book that he read. He implemented this way because he believes that if he transfers his knowledge to others, the knowledge will be more mindful for him. The last way to face the challenge is being a confident person and focusing on the goal. It can be seen from the way he practiced his language to some foreigners to build his confidence.

This current study is important for the progress of education, especially for bilingualism. This small-scale study has discussed the experiences of Indonesian tour guides while learning and practicing English and mixing the language in explaining some places, cultures, and local food to his visitors. However, this is not to say that this study itself is without limitations for the participants may not be representative since they were merely limited to one Indonesian tour guide. Further research, the researchers recommend to include a larger sample of Indonesian tour guides that not only master in English but also the other foreign languages. The next researcher

also can have more than one participant that may come from another region to know deeper and broader on the strategy in applying bilingualism. Lastly, the results of this study cannot be generalised to the experience of tour guides generally as it specifically investigates Indonesian tour guide learning-experiences. Nevertheless, further research in quantitative studies could use these results as a reference point for constructing interview questions.

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