

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism

Tourism has become one of the key sectors contributing to economic development and improving people's quality of life in many countries (Dwyer et al., 2010; Mishra, 2011; Polas et al., 2022; Song & Wu, 2022; Swangjang & Kornpiphat, 2021). The tourism industry not only generates economic benefits through job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development, but it also promotes cultural exchange and international understanding among people from different backgrounds (Sharpley, 2022). As a result, many countries have increasingly relied on tourism as an important strategy to support national and regional development.

Every year, a large number of travelers visit various destinations around the world for leisure activities, cultural exploration, or business purposes (Barbhuiya & Chatterjee, 2020; Bonham et al., 2006; Korstanje, 2011; Lepp & Gibson, 2003). These international tourist movements create opportunities for destinations to attract more visitors by offering unique attractions, cultural experiences, and quality services. Consequently, competition among tourist destinations has become more intense, encouraging tourism stakeholders to continuously improve the quality of their tourism services and facilities.

In the context of Indonesia, Yogyakarta serves as one of the country's paramount cultural and historic tourism hubs, consistently drawing a significant influx of both domestic and foreign visitors. The city's rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and vibrant local arts create a unique appeal for international tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences. Consequently, maintaining high-quality tourism services and

effective cross-cultural communication in Yogyakarta becomes essential to accommodate these diverse international arrivals and sustain destination competitiveness.

As the tourism industry continues to expand rapidly, destination managers and tourism service providers have become increasingly concerned with identifying the factors that influence tourists' decisions when selecting a destination (Drimili et al., 2020; Pal, 2021; Pulido-Fernández, 2019). Factors such as service quality, accessibility, cultural attractions, hospitality, and communication play an important role in shaping tourists' experiences and satisfaction during their visit. Among these factors, effective communication between tourists and service providers is considered a crucial element in ensuring a positive tourism experience. PRAYU

In the context of Yogyakarta, tourism serves as a primary driver of regional economic development, generating revenue through local businesses, hospitality, regional taxes, and employment opportunities for local communities. Effective communication between international tourists and tourism service providers plays a pivotal role in sustaining this economic ecosystem by directly shaping foreign tourists' travel experiences. As highlighted by Hanan and Sugianto (2021), communication skills are a key dimension of professionalism in tourism services, enabling tourists to access local information and interact seamlessly with service providers. Furthermore, Blue and Harun (2003) emphasize that English proficiency in hospitality and tourism is an essential competence that elevates overall service quality and tourist satisfaction, which is particularly crucial for Yogyakarta as it continues to expand its appeal to international visitors.

2.2 Tourism Services

Tourism services refer to a range of services provided to meet the needs of tourists during their travel and stay at a destination. These services support tourists throughout their journey and contribute to the overall tourism experience. According to Herasymenko (2013), tourism services include various supporting activities available at tourist destinations such as transportation, accommodation, food services, entertainment, tourist information, and other facilities designed to assist visitors during their stay. These services are essential in ensuring that tourists can travel comfortably and access the facilities they need while visiting a destination.

Furthermore, tourism services are often characterized by their intangible nature because they cannot be physically stored or owned like tangible products. The production and consumption of tourism services usually occur simultaneously and involve direct interaction between tourists and service providers (Zeithaml et al., 2023). Therefore, the quality of tourism services depends heavily on the performance of tourism staff and their ability to deliver services effectively to visitors. High-quality tourism services can enhance tourists' satisfaction and create positive impressions of a destination, which may influence tourists' decisions to revisit the destination in the future (Kim & Park, 2022; Zeithaml et al., 2023).

In addition, tourism services consist of several sectors that work together to support tourism activities. These sectors include accommodation services such as hotels and guesthouses, transportation services, food and beverage establishments, tour guiding services, and recreational facilities. The availability and quality of these services play a significant role in shaping tourists' experiences and perceptions of a tourism destination (Herasymenko, 2013). In summary, tourism services form an

interconnected system where service quality and interpersonal interactions directly influence overall visitor satisfaction and destination image.

2.3 English in Tourism Industry

Language In international tourism, English functions as an indispensable communication tool that bridges service providers and foreign visitors from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Blue & Harun, 2003). Communication is central to the tourism experience, as tourists require detailed information regarding transportation, accommodation, local attractions, and hospitality services throughout their stay. Without a shared language, effective service delivery and tourist satisfaction are significantly hindered (Leslie & Russell, 2006).

Within the tourism industry, the application of English extends beyond general conversational skills to operate as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), tailored directly to operational requirements. According to Leslie and Russell (2006), foreign language competence in tourism requires functional, task-oriented skills. Personnel across hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and tour guiding services rely on specialized English registers to deliver accurate information, manage bookings, explain cultural contexts, and handle complex customer inquiries. Furthermore, Blue and Harun (2003) state that effective communication in these settings directly determines overall service quality and destination image.

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Furthermore, Blue and Harun (2003) state that communicative competence in tourism English serves as an essential professional skill that facilitates real-time problem solving, mitigates service breakdowns, and elevates overall guest satisfaction.

Rather than requiring complex academic fluency, English in the tourism industry prioritizes practical communication, conversational clarity, and professional politeness. When tourism personnel demonstrate practical English proficiency, international tourists can navigate local services with confidence and clarity. Conversely, a lack of functional language skills can lead to miscommunications and service errors, ultimately diminishing the quality of the visitor experience.

2.4 Tourist Perception

In tourism research, tourist perception represents the process through which foreign visitors evaluate their overall destination experiences based on direct service encounters (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Prayag et al., 2023). In a culturally rich destination such as Yogyakarta, foreign tourists rely heavily on effective English communication to navigate local services, historical landmarks, and hospitality settings. Consequently, foreign tourists' perception of English usage serves as a critical indicator of perceived service quality and communicative accessibility.

During their visits to Yogyakarta, foreign tourists form perceptions through functional evaluation parameters. These parameters include assessing whether frontline personnel, such as hotel staff, tour guides, and local service providers can deliver clear instructions, explain cultural contexts, resolve service inquiries, and maintain conversational fluency (Zeithaml et al., 2023). When language barriers arise,

miscommunications can diminish the tourist's sense of comfort and overall satisfaction with the destination.

Furthermore, in contemporary digital tourism, user-generated content (UGC) in the form of online reviews provides authentic evidence of these tourist perceptions (Buhalis & Park, 2021; Liao & Chen, 2023; Sparks & Bradley, 2021). Rather than relying on prompted surveys, post-consumption evaluations shared across digital platforms reflect unprompted accounts of real-time service encounters. Analyzing online reviews collected from platforms such as Agoda, Booking.com, Google Maps, and TripAdvisor allows for a direct assessment of how international visitors perceive English communication quality during their stay in Yogyakarta. Therefore, positive language interactions directly shape favorable tourist perceptions and foster positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for Yogyakarta's tourism sector.

2.5 Previous Studies

Several Several recent empirical studies have examined the intersection of language competence, communication quality, and tourist satisfaction in international hospitality settings.

Alanzeh (2018) investigated the role of professional communication in enhancing international tourist satisfaction within heritage tourism sites, finding that frontline language competence directly shapes tourists' emotional comfort and overall service evaluation. Extending this focus to service interactions, Tsang and Lee (2023) evaluated frontline service quality and language proficiency in international hospitality, demonstrating that verbal clarity and task-oriented English registers significantly mitigate service errors and customer frustration. In a similar vein, Pratama and Lestari (2023) examined frontline staff communication competence and foreign

tourist satisfaction in Indonesian destinations, highlighting its critical role in service encounters. Furthermore, Sulistyawati and Halili (2023) explored the communicative gaps between local hosts and foreign tourists in Indonesian destinations, emphasizing that functional English proficiency remains an essential operational competence for local tourism workers.

A comparative synthesis of these previous studies reveals that while existing literature firmly establishes language proficiency as a core determinant of perceived service quality, most research focuses either on formal hospitality environments (Alanzeh, 2018; Tsang & Lee, 2023) or broader destination image evaluations (Prayag et al., 2023). However, there remains a notable empirical gap regarding how foreign tourists evaluate English communication through spontaneous, post-experience user-generated content (UGC) across diverse tourism touchpoints including accommodation, local transport, and cultural attractions, specifically within culturally rich destinations like Yogyakarta.

While previous studies primarily relied on traditional survey questionnaires, this present study addresses this research gap by utilizing thematic analysis of contemporary online reviews (2020–2025) to capture authentic, unprompted foreign tourist perceptions. Therefore, this study fills a crucial contextual and methodological gap by examining how English communication directly influences foreign tourists' perceptions of service quality in Yogyakarta's unique cultural tourism environment.

In evaluating tourist perception, foreign visitors' evaluations primarily manifest across two major behavioral dimensions: positive communicative interactions and various levels of communication challenges during service encounters.

On one hand, positive tourist perceptions are formed when frontline staff and tour

guides demonstrate adequate or multilingual proficiency, facilitating seamless hospitality operations such as check-in processes and guided tours (Zeithaml et al., 2023; Parasuraman et al., 1988). When visitors experience supportive communication and staff fluency, their overall satisfaction and perceived service quality increase significantly.

On the other hand, tourist perceptions are negatively impacted by language barriers, ranging from limited English fluency to severe communication breakdowns in basic services (Blue & Harun, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Inadequate language skills from service providers often lead to guest frustration, unfulfilled service expectations, and diminished destination comfort.

Within contemporary digital tourism, these dual perceptions encompassing both smooth interactions and operational language barriers are directly reflected in online user-generated content (UGC) across platforms such as Agoda, TripAdvisor, and Google Maps, ultimately shaping public electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for the destination

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study serves as an analytical guide to examine how foreign tourists perceive English communication in Yogyakarta's tourism services through online user reviews. Rather than focusing broadly on destination choice factors, this study adopts a service-encounter framework that centers on cross-cultural communication quality during service interactions (Ladhari & Morales, 2020; Tsang & Lee, 2023).

In international tourism destinations like Yogyakarta, service encounters across various touchpoints, such as accommodation, cultural attractions, local transportation, and tour services, require effective communication between local frontline staff and foreign visitors (Sulistyawati & Halili, 2023). According to Zeithaml et al. (2023), language competence and communicative clarity are core dimensions of perceived service quality that directly shape customer emotional comfort, trust, and overall satisfaction.

To analyze this phenomenon empirically, this study utilizes post-experience online user-generated content (UGC) as authentic textual representations of tourist perceptions (Buhalis & Park, 2021; Sparks & Bradley, 2021). When foreign tourists post online reviews on platforms such as Agoda, Google Maps, TripAdvisor, and Booking.com, their evaluations contain qualitative feedback regarding their communicative encounters with tourism personnel (Riswanto, 2023).

Following Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis framework, these textual online reviews are systematically coded, categorized, and synthesized into core thematic dimensions: (1) Effective English Communication, which leads to

satisfaction, trust, and positive destination image, and (2) Communication Barriers, which result from language limitations and cause miscommunication or service dissatisfaction. Through this framework, the analysis directly connects raw online review data to theoretical dimensions of service quality and tourist perception in Yogyakarta.