



English Language Education for Tourism Development: A Case Study of Mekar Sari Village

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Abstract

This study examines the relevance of English language education to tourism development in Mekar Sari Village, East Lombok, Indonesia, with particular attention to local communication needs, community perceptions, implementation challenges, and educational requirements. The study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected over approximately one month through semi-structured interviews and field observations involving four key informants representing village government, instructor/Pokdarwis, MSME, and the surrounding community. Interview and observation data were coded and thematically analyzed, while source triangulation across stakeholder groups and method triangulation between interviews and observations were used to strengthen credibility. The findings indicate that English is particularly relevant to tourism-related communication, including welcoming visitors, explaining local attractions and culture, providing directions, promoting local products, and conducting service interactions. The data also reveal limited vocabulary and spontaneous communication, low confidence, limited access to tourism-specific materials and qualified instructors, discontinuity of training, and participants' occupational and family responsibilities. The findings suggest that English language education in Mekar Sari Village should be developed as contextualized English for Specific Purposes (ESP), supported by practical communication activities, continuous mentoring, flexible scheduling, and collaboration among local stakeholders. The study concludes that needs-based English education can function as one component of community capacity building for tourism communication without implying a direct causal effect on tourism outcomes.

Keywords: community-based tourism; English for Specific Purposes; language needs; needs analysis; qualitative case study

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism can support rural development and community resilience when local resources are combined with community participation and adequate institutional capacity (Sangnak, 2025; Sun et al., 2025; Hariyadi et al., 2024). In community-based and rural tourism, however, tourism activities are carried out not only through attractions and infrastructure but also through the participation of local stakeholders in coordination, services, business activities, and community-based management. Previous studies have highlighted community participation, training, empowerment, local leadership, and institutional support as important conditions for sustaining tourism initiatives (Chan et al., 2024; Tran & Ho, 2024; Albert et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2025). These findings place community capacity at the centre of rural tourism development because residents and organisations are active participants in tourism-related activities rather than merely recipients of tourism benefits.

One dimension of this capacity is the ability to communicate with visitors. English can function as a practical communication resource when local stakeholders interact with international visitors, particularly when they welcome guests, explain attractions and local culture, provide directions, describe or promote local products, and respond to basic service requests. The relevance of English in this context does not mean that general English proficiency alone is sufficient. Communication needs are shaped by the tasks, roles, and situations encountered in tourism activities. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) therefore provides an appropriate framework because it connects language learning with learners'

needs and the communicative demands of a particular context (Anthony, 2018; Kurniawati & Malasari, 2022; Basturkmen, 2026).

Needs analysis is consequently important for identifying what English community stakeholders actually need to communicate, how they use English, and what forms of learning are appropriate to their circumstances. Previous tourism and hospitality studies have identified vocabulary, expressions, speaking, listening, and interaction as important components of tourism-related communication (Prachanant, 2012; Guntoro, 2021; Bui Thi & Cheng, 2024; Do, 2026; Sankar & Aravind, 2026; Zaki et al., 2025). Other studies have shown the relevance of practical activities such as role-play, task-based learning, service interaction, and contextualised speaking practice (Kardijan et al., 2018; Simatupang, 2025; Zanah, 2025). The implication for the present study is that English education should be examined in relation to actual tourism communication tasks rather than assumed from general language-learning needs.

Tourism communication also involves cultural and community dimensions. Interactions with visitors may require local stakeholders to explain cultural resources, interpret local heritage, and communicate across cultural backgrounds (Trang & Phuong, 2023; Hien, 2024). At the same time, community-based tourism research emphasises participation, empowerment, training, and institutional support as part of sustainable tourism development (Chan et al., 2024; Tran & Ho, 2024; Amalina & Listyorini, 2025; Purbaningrum et al., 2024). Accordingly, English language education in a rural tourism setting needs to be considered as part of a wider community-capacity process. Its relevance depends not only on whether English is considered useful, but also on the communication tasks faced by different stakeholders, the barriers affecting participation and language use, and the institutional conditions required for continued learning and practice.

Although previous studies provide a strong basis for tourism-oriented ESP and community-based tourism, much of the existing work focuses on particular professional groups, tourism or hospitality students, formal hospitality workplaces, or specific tourism activities. Less attention has been given to English communication needs across different stakeholder groups within a rural community-based tourism setting. This is important because village-level tourism involves stakeholders with different responsibilities and opportunities for communication. Village government representatives may be involved in coordination and information provision; Pokdarwis or tourism instructors may interact directly with visitors and support tourism services; MSME actors may promote and explain local products and respond to customers; and other community members may participate in tourism activities in less formal ways. Their English needs therefore cannot be assumed to be identical.

The present study addresses this gap through a qualitative case study of Mekar Sari Village, Suela Sub-district, East Lombok Regency. The study examines four complementary stakeholder perspectives—village government (VG), instructor/Pokdarwis (IP), MSME representative (MSME), and community member (CM)—to understand English communication needs within the local tourism context. The study also considers field observations as contextual evidence alongside documented interview notes. This design is intended to identify recurring and role-related patterns while retaining differences among stakeholder perspectives, rather than treating the four groups as a single homogeneous community voice. In this sense, the contribution of the study lies in connecting role-specific communication tasks with the practical, affective, institutional, and participation conditions that shape context-appropriate English language education in a rural tourism setting.

The study is deliberately bounded as a needs-oriented and context-sensitive inquiry. It does not test the causal effect of English language education on visitor numbers, tourism competitiveness, income, or other tourism outcomes. Instead, it examines the conditions that should inform the design of English education as a communication-capacity resource within community-based tourism. The analytical focus is therefore aligned with four interconnected areas: (1) English communication needs arising from tourism-related tasks; (2) stakeholders' perceptions of the practical value of English and their motivation to learn and use it; (3) linguistic, affective, institutional, and participation-related challenges affecting implementation; and (4) educational and institutional requirements for contextual, practical,

sustainable, and collaborative English language education. This framing also recognises that the usefulness of English depends on opportunities for practice, appropriate materials and instructors, continuity, mentoring, flexible scheduling, and coordination among local stakeholders.

Therefore, this study aims to examine English language education for tourism communication in Mekar Sari Village by exploring: (1) the English language communication needs of local tourism stakeholders; (2) their perceptions of and motivation toward English language education; (3) the challenges affecting the implementation of English language education; and (4) the educational and institutional conditions required for context-appropriate and sustainable English language education. The findings are intended to provide a contextual basis for tourism-oriented ESP and community capacity-building initiatives, while recognising the limits of a single qualitative case and avoiding claims of direct causal effects on tourism outcomes

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach. A qualitative case study was selected because the research examines experiences, perceptions, communication needs, and implementation conditions within the specific context of Mekar Sari Village, East Lombok, Indonesia (Neuman, 2013; Yin, 2018). The design is intended to provide an in-depth contextual account rather than to estimate the causal effects of English language education on tourism outcomes.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in tourism-related activities and the research objectives. Four key informants represented complementary stakeholder perspectives: one village government representative (VG), one instructor/Pokdarwis representative (IP), one representative of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME), and one community member (CM). These roles represent village-level coordination, tourism services, local business activities, and community participation.

Data were collected over approximately one month through semi-structured interviews and field observations. The interviews explored participants' experiences and perceptions concerning the use and importance of English in tourism activities, communication needs, previous learning experiences, implementation challenges, and expectations for future training. Because the interviews were not audio-recorded, the interview data were documented as structured interview notes rather than verbatim transcripts. Field observations documented tourism-related activities and communication contexts, including visitor reception, information and directions, explanations of local attractions or cultural resources, product-related interactions, and other service situations. Observation notes were treated as contextual evidence to be compared with participants' accounts, rather than as a substitute for interview data.

The data were analysed thematically through repeated reading of the documented interview notes and observation records, initial coding of meaningful segments, grouping of related codes into categories, development of candidate themes, review and refinement of thematic coherence, and final definition and naming of the themes. The analysis was conducted in relation to the research questions and the delimited case context, consistent with a reflexive thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Source triangulation was conducted by comparing accounts across VG, IP, MSME, and CM. Method triangulation involved comparing interview notes with field observation records. Convergent evidence was used to strengthen interpretations, while differences between sources were retained as analytically relevant variations rather than treated as errors. The analysis yielded four themes: English communication needs in tourism activities; community perceptions and motivation; challenges in implementing English language education; and requirements for context-appropriate and sustainable English language education.

Data Sources and Analytical Roles

VG – village government: community capacity, tourism communication, and institutional support; used as one stakeholder perspective in source triangulation.

IP – instructor/Pokdarwis: communication and learning needs, and teaching-related constraints; used as one stakeholder perspective in source triangulation.

MSME – MSME representative: product promotion, transactions, and visitor interactions; used as one stakeholder perspective in source triangulation.

CM – community member: basic visitor interactions, motivation, and participation constraints; used as one stakeholder perspective in source triangulation.

Field observations (OBS-01–OBS-06): communication situations and contextual participation conditions; used for method triangulation with interview notes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of documented interview notes and field observation records, four interrelated themes were identified. The first concerns English communication needs arising from tourism activities. The second concerns community perceptions and motivation. The third concerns linguistic, affective, programme-related, and participation challenges. The fourth concerns requirements for context-appropriate and sustainable English language education. The analysis compared accounts across the four stakeholder roles and used field observations as contextual evidence. Because the interviews were not audio-recorded, the findings below are reported as paraphrased accounts rather than verbatim quotations.

Theme 1. English Communication Needs in Tourism Activities

The four stakeholder accounts indicate that English is relevant primarily in practical tourism communication. The village government representative (VG) associated English with welcoming visitors, introducing the village and its attractions, explaining local culture, and providing information or directions. The instructor/Pokdarwis informant (IP) emphasised greeting, guiding, giving directions, and responding to visitors. The MSME informant identified product descriptions, prices, promotion, and simple transactions, while the community member (CM) referred to greeting, providing information, and showing visitors where to go. The recurring pattern is therefore functional communication linked to concrete tourism tasks rather than broad general English proficiency.

Field observations provide contextual support for this interpretation. OBS-01 to OBS-04 documented situations involving visitor reception, information giving, directions, explanations of local attractions, and interactions concerning local products. The observations therefore correspond with the communication functions identified in the interview notes. They should, however, be understood as contextual evidence for the reported needs rather than as a quantitative measure of how frequently English was used.

The interview notes indicate that current English use is generally at a basic level. Informants described familiarity with simple vocabulary and expressions, while longer explanations or unexpected questions were more difficult to handle. IP particularly identified speaking and listening as important because tourism interactions require participants to understand visitors' questions and formulate appropriate responses. The MSME informant also indicated that translation applications or assistance from others may be used when communication becomes difficult. These accounts suggest a gap between knowledge of basic expressions and the ability to sustain spontaneous interaction.

OBS-02 and OBS-05 provide corresponding contextual evidence: simple communication can be maintained, whereas more extended or spontaneous communication may become constrained and may require alternative communication strategies. The finding is therefore better interpreted as a functional proficiency gap than as a complete absence of English ability.

Although the four stakeholder groups share several communication needs, the content of those needs differs according to role. Village-level actors require language for presenting village information and coordinating tourism-related communication; Pokdarwis members require language for guiding and visitor services; MSME operators require language for product descriptions, promotion, prices, and transactions; and community members require accessible expressions for direct visitor interaction. This role differentiation supports an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach in which language objectives are derived from

the communicative tasks of particular learners rather than from a uniform general-English curriculum (Anthony, 2018; Basturkmen, 2026; Kurniawati & Malasari, 2022).

The comparison across stakeholder accounts shows substantial convergence around greeting visitors, providing information, practical communication, product promotion, and basic English needs. At the same time, not every communication function was equally prominent in every role. Explanations of attractions and local culture were more prominent in the VG, IP, and CM accounts, whereas product-related communication was particularly salient for the MSME informant. Stakeholder collaboration was also more explicit in some accounts than others. These differences are analytically relevant because they indicate that a common programme may require shared foundational content together with role-specific tasks.

The stakeholder accounts also show a preference for practical learning. The informants identified greeting visitors, explaining local history and culture, guiding tourists, promoting local products, and practising tourism-related conversation as more relevant than theory-dominated instruction. This pattern corresponds with research emphasising task-specific communication and interactive activities such as role-play in tourism and hospitality English education (Bui Thi & Cheng, 2024; Do, 2026; Yogyanti et al., 2025; Kardijan et al., 2018; Simatupang, 2025; Zanah, 2025). The present study extends this perspective to a community-level rural tourism setting involving several stakeholder roles.

Theme 2. Community Perceptions and Motivation

Across the four stakeholder accounts, English was perceived as useful for communicating with visitors, supporting tourism services, providing information, and promoting local products. The perceived value was therefore closely connected to situations that participants could recognise in their own activities. This finding is consistent with community-based tourism research that places participation, empowerment, and local capacity within broader processes of tourism development (Chan et al., 2024; Tran & Ho, 2024; Amalina & Listyorini, 2025).

The informants expressed a preference for learning activities that could be applied directly, including greeting tourists, explaining local attractions and culture, giving directions, promoting products, and practising service conversations. The observed tourism situations in OBS-01 to OBS-04 correspond with these reported learning preferences. This correspondence suggests that perceived usefulness is linked to the possibility of applying learning to recognisable tourism communication tasks.

An important distinction emerges between perceived usefulness and observed language use. The interviews indicate that participants regard English as useful, but the observation notes indicate that Indonesian or a local language remained more prominent when explanations became longer or more detailed. Simple English expressions were used in relevant situations, but the observations do not establish that English was the dominant language of tourism interaction. The finding therefore indicates an emerging communication requirement rather than consistently high levels of English use.

Motivation was associated with practical relevance, but participants also emphasised the need for continuity. A short training session was not considered sufficient to develop and maintain usable communication skills. Repeated practice and ongoing guidance were identified as important, particularly because opportunities to use English may be limited. This indicates that motivation should be considered together with programme conditions that make continued participation and practice feasible.

The positive perceptions reported in this study should not be interpreted as evidence that English education directly increases tourism competitiveness, visitor numbers, or revenue. The research examined communication needs, perceptions, observed contexts, and implementation conditions rather than tourism outcomes. The contribution of the finding is therefore to identify conditions under which English education may support community communication capacity.

Theme 3. Challenges in Implementing English Language Education

The reported linguistic barriers include limited vocabulary, difficulty constructing sentences, and difficulty responding spontaneously to unexpected questions. IP particularly emphasised speaking and listening, while MSME and CM accounts indicated reliance on

translation applications or assistance when communication became difficult. OBS-02 and OBS-05 provide contextual support for this pattern. The central issue is consequently the distance between basic language resources and the demands of spontaneous tourism interaction.

Affective barriers were also present in the stakeholder accounts. Informants described hesitation, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about pronunciation when speaking with visitors. Such concerns may reduce willingness to initiate or extend interactions. This suggests that tourism-oriented English education needs to address confidence through guided speaking, role-play, repeated practice, and supportive feedback, alongside vocabulary and sentence development (Simatupang, 2025; Zanah, 2025).

The interview notes identify limited continuity of training, limited access to suitable instructors, and a lack of tourism-specific materials as programme-related constraints. These claims are primarily interview-derived. The observation records do not independently establish the availability or qualifications of instructors or the adequacy of materials. Instead, the observations demonstrate the types of tourism communication situations for which relevant instructional materials would be needed. Maintaining this distinction strengthens the evidentiary boundary of the study.

Participation is also shaped by participants' occupational and family responsibilities. The stakeholder accounts indicate that agriculture, MSME activities, and other daily responsibilities can make fixed training schedules difficult to follow. OBS-06 provides contextual support by documenting the varied activities occurring within the community. Flexible scheduling is therefore better understood as a programme-design requirement arising from local participation conditions.

Taken together, the four stakeholder accounts reveal recurring requirements concerning relevant materials, competent instruction, repeated practice, continuity, confidence building, and flexible scheduling. This pattern is better understood as convergence across the available stakeholder accounts rather than as consensus representing the wider community. The distinction is important because the study involved four purposively selected informants rather than a representative sample of all residents.

Theme 4. Requirements for Context-Appropriate and Sustainable English Language Education

The findings indicate that learning content should be derived from actual tourism communication situations. Relevant content includes welcoming visitors, explaining destinations and local culture, providing directions, describing and promoting products, and handling basic tourism transactions. OBS-01 to OBS-04 provide contextual situations that can serve as bases for such materials. This supports a needs-based ESP design in which the syllabus begins with target communication tasks rather than general English content alone.

Practical learning should combine common foundational functions with role-specific activities. Shared activities may address greetings, basic information exchange, and visitor interaction, while additional tasks can focus on guiding for Pokdarwis members, product descriptions and transactions for MSMEs, and village or cultural information for village-level and community actors. Role-play, guided dialogue, and simulated service encounters can provide opportunities to practise these functions in a controlled environment.

The stakeholder accounts indicate that continuity and mentoring are necessary because participants may have limited opportunities to practise English outside learning sessions. A sustainable programme therefore requires repeated practice and follow-up support rather than a single short-term training event. Such continuity is compatible with broader tourism-village research emphasising institutional support, empowerment, and community participation (Hariyadi et al., 2024; Rahman & Natalia, 2025; Albert et al., 2024).

Flexible learning arrangements are required because tourism and community activities occur alongside work and family responsibilities. Scheduling should therefore be adapted to participants' availability, while learning activities may use short, focused practice sessions that can be connected to actual tourism tasks. This requirement emerges from the reported participation constraints and the contextual evidence in OBS-06.

Collaboration is another programme requirement, although it was not equally explicit in all stakeholder accounts. The VG, IP, and CM accounts provided clearer support for coordination among village authorities, tourism groups, community members, and educational institutions, whereas the MSME account focused more directly on business communication needs. This difference should be retained rather than converted into a claim that every stakeholder explicitly requested the same collaborative arrangement. Nevertheless, the distribution of language needs across several roles indicates a practical rationale for cross-stakeholder coordination.

The four themes can be connected through a communication-capacity perspective. Tourism activities generate communication tasks that are distributed across stakeholder roles. These tasks create specific English language needs, which can provide the basis for contextualised ESP content. Practical learning, repeated practice, mentoring, and flexible participation can then support the development of communication resources that community members may use in tourism-related interactions. From this perspective, English language education can be conceptualised as a communication-capacity resource within community-based tourism development rather than as an independent driver of tourism development.

The four themes form an analytical sequence rather than four unrelated categories. First, tourism activities generate concrete communication demands. Second, stakeholders perceive English as useful when it is connected to those demands. Third, linguistic, affective, programme-related, and participation barriers constrain the development and use of English. Fourth, these constraints point to the need for contextualised, role-sensitive, practical, continuous, and flexible English education. The resulting interpretation is therefore a needs-analysis and programme-design logic: tourism roles → communication tasks → English needs → contextualised ESP → practical communication practice → community communication capacity.

This synthesis also clarifies the scope of the study's contribution. The study does not demonstrate that English proficiency causes tourism growth, increased visitor numbers, higher revenue, or greater competitiveness. Instead, it demonstrates how English communication needs are distributed across stakeholder roles and how those needs correspond with observed tourism communication contexts. This provides an empirical basis for designing English education that is more closely aligned with the communication conditions of a rural tourism community.

The local context is central to interpreting these findings. The communication needs identified in Mekar Sari are embedded in the village's tourism activities, local products, cultural resources, and stakeholder structure. Accordingly, the findings should not be treated as directly generalisable to other tourism villages. The analytical principle may nevertheless be considered in comparable rural tourism settings: identify the tourism tasks performed by different stakeholder groups, determine the language functions required for those tasks, and design learning activities around the resulting needs. Transferability therefore lies primarily in the needs-analysis and programme-design logic rather than in assuming identical English needs across communities.

The study has several limitations. It involved four purposively selected informants within one village and data collection over approximately one month. Interview data were documented as notes rather than audio-recorded verbatim transcripts. The analysis therefore depends on the quality and completeness of the field documentation. In addition, the observation records provide contextual evidence but do not constitute a measure of the frequency or effectiveness of English use. Future research could involve a broader participant base, longer observation periods, systematically recorded interviews where ethically appropriate, and longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine changes in language competence and tourism-related outcomes.

Overall, the evidence indicates that English language education in Mekar Sari is most appropriately understood as a component of community capacity building for tourism communication. Its relevance derives from concrete communication tasks, while its potential usefulness depends on contextualised content, practical learning, continuity, mentoring, flexible participation, and institutional support. This interpretation preserves the distinction between what the present qualitative data demonstrate—communication needs, perceptions,

barriers, and programme requirements—and outcomes that would require separate longitudinal or outcome-based investigation.

CONCLUSION

This study found that English language education in Mekar Sari Village is closely related to the communication tasks performed by different tourism stakeholders. Four interrelated themes emerged: functional and role-specific English communication needs, perceived practical value and motivation, linguistic and implementation challenges, and requirements for context-appropriate and sustainable English language education. The findings indicate that English needs are not uniform across stakeholder groups; rather, they vary according to the communication tasks associated with each role.

The study further suggests that tourism-oriented English education may be more appropriately designed as a contextualised communication-capacity intervention. Learning content can be derived from actual tourism tasks and supported through practical activities, repeated practice, mentoring, flexible participation, and stakeholder involvement. This interpretation positions English as a communication-capacity resource within community-based tourism rather than as an independent driver of tourism development.

These findings should not be interpreted as evidence that English education directly increases tourism visits, revenue, or competitiveness, as such outcomes were not measured in this study. The transferability of the findings lies primarily in the needs-analysis and programme-design principles that may be considered in comparable rural tourism contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For tourism and community stakeholders, English learning activities should be developed around actual tourism communication tasks, including welcoming visitors, giving directions, explaining local attractions and culture, describing products, handling basic transactions, and responding to common visitor questions. Materials should be derived from local communication needs rather than relying exclusively on general English content.

For English instructors and programme developers, learning should combine common foundational communication functions with role-specific ESP tasks. Role-play, guided dialogue, simulated service encounters, repeated speaking practice, and supportive feedback can be used to address both linguistic and affective barriers.

For village authorities and tourism management, programme continuity should be supported through coordination among relevant stakeholders, access to competent instructors and appropriate materials, and scheduling arrangements that accommodate participants' work and family responsibilities.

For future research, broader participant groups, longer observation periods, and systematically documented interviews should be considered. Longitudinal or mixed-method research could subsequently examine changes in English communication competence and, where appropriate, relationships with measurable tourism-related outcomes.

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