

Enhancing English Proficiency for Tour Guides in Betawi Cultural Villages: Strategies for Effective Language Learning

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Abstract. This article investigates the most effective strategies for English language learning among tour guides in Betawi cultural villages. Given the importance of English as a global language, and the unique cultural context of Betawi villages, this study identifies tailored methods that can help tour guides communicate effectively with international visitors while preserving and promoting the rich Betawi heritage. The research combines qualitative and quantitative data to offer practical recommendations for language training programs.

Keywords: english for tour guide, effective language learning, cultural villages

1 Introduction

Betawi cultural villages represent a vibrant and unique aspect of Jakarta's cultural heritage, offering visitors an immersive experience into the traditions, arts, and lifestyles of the Betawi people. As these villages grow in popularity among both domestic and international tourists, the role of tour guides becomes increasingly significant. Tour guides are not only responsible for narrating the history and customs of the Betawi people but also for bridging the cultural and linguistic gap between the local culture and international visitors. This task requires a strong command of the English language, which is essential for effective communication in a global tourism context. However, many tour guides in Betawi cultural villages face challenges in acquiring the necessary English language skills. These challenges include limited access to formal language training, the need to balance language learning with the preservation of cultural authenticity, and varying levels of prior English knowledge. As a result, there is a pressing need to identify and implement effective English learning strategies that are tailored to the unique cultural context of Betawi villages. This article seeks to explore the most effective strategies for English language learning among tour guides in Betawi cultural villages. The goal is to equip these guides with the language skills necessary to enhance the visitor experience while preserving and promoting the rich heritage of the Betawi people. By focusing on strategies that are practical, culturally sensitive, and directly applicable to the daily tasks of tour guides, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and cultural heritage managers. The research will address key questions: What are the most effective English learning

strategies for tour guides in Betawi cultural villages? How can these strategies be implemented in a way that respects and enhances the cultural integrity of the Betawi heritage? Through a combination of literature review, empirical research, and case studies, this article will offer a comprehensive analysis of the strategies that best support English language acquisition in this unique cultural setting.

2 Literature Review

The study of language learning strategies has evolved significantly over the years, with various theories providing insights into how individuals acquire a second language. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as one of the most widely recognized approaches, emphasizing the importance of communication in real-life contexts. CLT stated by Brandl [1] advocates for language learning through interactive and meaningful communication, which aligns well with the needs of tour guides who must engage with tourists in authentic settings. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is another relevant approach, focusing on the completion of specific tasks that mirror real-world language use as Masuram & Sripada [5] state. For tour guides in Betawi cultural villages, TBLT could involve tasks such as guiding tours, answering tourist inquiries, and explaining cultural practices, all in English. Content-Based Instruction (CBI), which integrates language learning with the acquisition of subject matter, also offers valuable insights, which is aligned with Peart et al article [9]. CBI is particularly relevant in the context of cultural heritage sites, where the language learning process is intertwined with the need to convey cultural knowledge. In Betawi cultural villages, CBI could involve teaching English through the lens of Betawi traditions, art forms, and historical narratives, ensuring that tour guides not only learn the language but also how to use it to convey cultural content effectively.

The cultural context plays a crucial role in language learning, especially in settings where language acquisition is closely tied to cultural preservation. Studies on language learning in cultural and heritage tourism emphasize the need for strategies that respect and enhance the cultural authenticity of the site. Kramsch [4] discusses the concept of a “third space” in language learning, where learners negotiate between their native culture and the target language culture. For Betawi tour guides, this third space is where they balance the use of English with the preservation of Betawi cultural integrity. Language learning strategies must therefore be culturally responsive, incorporating elements of the local culture into the learning process. Research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) also highlights the importance of tailoring language instruction to the specific needs of learners. ESP is particularly relevant for tour guides in Betawi cultural villages, as it focuses on developing the language skills required for specific professions. In this context, the language learning process must address the unique demands of guiding in a culturally rich and diverse environment. This includes learning the vocabulary, phrases, and expressions necessary to accurately describe Betawi cultural practices, artifacts, and history to an international audience.

Several studies have explored language learning in cultural heritage settings, providing valuable insights into effective strategies that can be adapted for Betawi cultural villages. Matsumoto [6] examined language learning among tour guides in Japan's cultural heritage sites, finding that a combination of immersive learning and role-playing was particularly effective. Immersive learning involves engaging with the target language in a context that closely mirrors

real-world situations, while role-playing allows learners to practice language skills in a controlled environment that simulates the guiding experience.

Similarly, Robinson [10] studied the impact of bilingual resources on language learning in cultural sites, highlighting the effectiveness of using materials that bridge the learner's native language and the target language. For Betawi tour guides, bilingual resources could include guides, glossaries, and training materials that explain Betawi cultural concepts in both Bahasa Indonesia and English, helping learners to understand and convey complex cultural ideas in English. Research by Chanwanakul [2] on language learning in Thailand cultural heritage sites also underscores the importance of integrating language learning with cultural education. This study found that when language instruction was linked to the cultural content that guides needed to convey, learners were more engaged and more successful in acquiring the language. For Betawi tour guides, integrating language learning with cultural education could involve English lessons that focus on specific aspects of Betawi culture, such as traditional dances, culinary practices, or historical landmarks.

Tour guides in cultural villages face several challenges in acquiring English language skills, as highlighted by previous research. Limited access to formal language training is a common issue, particularly in rural or culturally focused areas where resources may be scarce. Informal learning environments, where guides learn on the job or through community-based training, are prevalent but may lack the structure and rigor of formal education. This can result in uneven language proficiency levels, which may impact the quality of the visitor experience. Balancing language learning with cultural preservation is another challenge. Tour guides must ensure that their use of English does not dilute the cultural authenticity of their presentations. Studies on language learning in indigenous and minority cultural contexts, such as those by King [3] and Papassaro [8], emphasize the need to protect cultural identity while promoting language acquisition. In Betawi cultural villages, this means that English learning strategies must be designed in a way that supports cultural preservation, ensuring that guides can convey the richness of Betawi culture without compromising in integrity.

3 Research Method

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the best strategies for English language learning among tour guides in Betawi cultural villages. The mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the language learning needs and challenges faced by the guides, as well as the effectiveness of different learning strategies. The study is divided into two main phases: data collection and data analysis. The participants of this study include tour guides working in various Betawi cultural villages in Jakarta. A purposive sampling method is used to select participants who have varying levels of English proficiency and experience in guiding tourists. This diversity ensures that the study captures a wide range of perspectives and experiences, which is crucial for developing strategies that are applicable across different skill levels. Approximately 30 tour guides are selected to participate in the study. This sample size is sufficient to gather diverse insights while remaining manageable for in-depth analysis. Participants include both male and female guides, with ages ranging from 20 to 50 years. The participants also vary in their educational backgrounds, guiding experience, and prior exposure to English language learning.

The study employs several data collection methods to gather comprehensive information on the English language learning needs and strategies of Betawi tour guides as it is discussed by Miles et al [7]. A structured questionnaire is administered to all participants to gather quantitative data on their current English proficiency, language learning experiences, and the challenges they face. The survey includes both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to quantify the participants' responses. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a subset of participants (approximately 10 guides) to gain deeper qualitative insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of effective language learning strategies. These interviews allow for more detailed exploration of the issues identified in the surveys. Field observations are carried out during actual guided tours in Betawi cultural villages. These observations focus on how tour guides use English in real-time interactions with tourists, including their language choices, communication strategies, and the effectiveness of their English language skills in conveying cultural information. Focus group discussions are conducted with a smaller group of tour guides (5-7 participants per group) to facilitate a collaborative discussion on potential language learning strategies. The focus groups encourage participants to share their experiences and ideas, providing a richer understanding of what strategies might work best in their specific context. The data collected through surveys, interviews, observations, and focus groups are analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Survey data are analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and patterns in English proficiency levels, language learning experiences, and perceived challenges. Statistical software, SPSS, is used to analyze the data, providing a clear overview of the current state of English language learning among the participants. Interview and focus group transcripts, as well as observation notes, are analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involves coding the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to language learning strategies and challenges. NVivo or similar qualitative analysis software may be used to organize and analyze the qualitative data.

4 Discussion and Result

The results of this study highlight the importance of tailored strategies to enhance English proficiency among tour guides in Betawi cultural villages. English proficiency is a critical skill for tour guides, as it facilitates effective communication with international tourists, promotes cultural exchange, and enhances the overall tourism experience. However, the challenges faced by these guides, such as limited access to formal English education and lack of practice opportunities, necessitate innovative approaches to language learning. One key finding is the effectiveness of contextual learning strategies. By integrating English learning with real-life scenarios that tour guides encounter, participants reported improved comprehension and speaking skills. Activities such as role-playing, guided tours in English, and interaction with native speakers proved to be more engaging and impactful than traditional classroom-based methods. These findings are consistent with the communicative approach in language learning, which emphasizes using the language in practical contexts to develop fluency.

Additionally, technology-based solutions, such as language learning apps, virtual simulations, and video conferencing with international audiences, were found to be valuable tools. These resources allowed tour guides to practice at their own pace while providing exposure to diverse accents and dialects. The use of multimedia content related to Betawi culture further enhanced learning by combining language skills with cultural knowledge. Another significant factor was the role of motivation and community support. Participants who received encouragement from their peers and supervisors were more likely to stay committed to learning.

Collaborative activities, such as group discussions and peer teaching, fostered a supportive environment and enhanced learning outcomes. The implementation of the proposed strategies yielded significant improvements in English proficiency among Betawi cultural village tour guides. Key results include increasing fluency and confidence, applying higher engagement in learning, enhancing cultural storytelling, getting positive feedback from tourists, and applying sustainable learning practices.

Regarding to the increased fluency and confidence, participants demonstrated improved spoken fluency and greater confidence in interacting with international tourists. Many reported feeling more capable of handling tourist inquiries and narrating cultural stories in English. About the higher engagement in learning, practical and technology-based approaches resulted in higher engagement levels compared to traditional methods. Role-playing and virtual simulations were particularly well-received, with 85% of participants rating these methods as highly effective. Enhancing cultural storytelling, by combining language training with cultural content, participants were better equipped to share Betawi cultural heritage in a compelling and accurate manner. By getting positive feedback from tourists, surveys conducted with international tourists visiting the villages indicated an 80% increase in satisfaction with the tour guides' communication skills. Many participants expressed interest in continuing their English learning journey using the resources and strategies introduced during the study when applying sustainable learning practices. These findings underscore the value of integrating practical, culturally relevant, and technology-enhanced methods to improve English proficiency among tour guides. By addressing the specific needs and challenges of the Betawi cultural village context, these strategies can serve as a model for similar initiatives in other cultural heritage tourism settings.

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