

## Tourists' Perception of Using The English Language In The Tourism Industry

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**ABSTRACT:-** The study aimed at exploring tourists' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry. The subjects were 126 tourists participating in the study including (53.2%) male and (46.8%) female tourists. Questionnaires were mailed to the respondents to collect data. The questionnaire was self-developed with a (.935) Cronbach's alpha. The participants have different educational qualifications including /primary Intermeiary0.8%), Secondary (5.6%), Diploma (23.8%), Undergraduate (35.7%) and Postgraduate (34.1%). The data was descriptively analyzed to find the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry. The results of the study indicated that the English language would play an important role in the tourism industry. According to the respondents' perception, the language could be essential in sociocultural, management, and marketing/promotion, accordingly.

### I. INTRODUCTION

A language is shown to be a network of spoken and/or written symbols capable of expressing thoughts, feelings and impressions (Akoumianakis, 2009). As a result, it seems crucial to know the functions of a language, and its organizations to enhance the speakers communication skills (Anderson & Rasmussen, 2004), to be able to communicate online in the contemporary world in which the role of technology is dominant (Barker, 2008), to build consumer loyalty, and last but not least, to manage efficiently in the tourism industry. People cannot comprehend what others enquire because they cannot converse on their own terms with those not from the same mother language background (Barlas et al, 2002). That is why vocabulary learning is believed to be one of the challenges in developing the skills needed when learning a new language (Atifnigar, Zaheer, & Alokozay, 2020). In this regard, vocabulary, according to Barner-Rasmussen & Bor, 2003, tends to give rise to more curiosity - a major force affecting competition and cooperation. Therefore, the role of communicative competence seems to be undeniable, especially in organizations in which interpersonal communications are inevitable. In the tourism industry where the English language is largely used due to its role as the widely introduced medium of international communications, it will act as a tourist-marketing tool (Kim et al, 2010), without which exchanging ideas might be hindered. English as the Lingua Franca of international communication, with tourism not being an exception, leaves traces in every aspect of global interactions. According to Harzing, & Feely 2008, the function of language has evolved from a developmental construct to an incremental one in recent years.

Thus, considering the great role English is highly likely to play in the tourism industry, this research was carried out to investigate three objectives: first, to identify tourists' perception of using English in tourism management; second, to explore tourists' perception of using English in socio-cultural aspects of tourism, and third, to investigate tourists' perception of using English in marketing and promotion of tourism to know the importance of the English language in the tourist industry.

## 1. Tourism

Tourism is a social, political, and economic phenomenon mainly aimed to bring citizens to countries or areas outside of their natural settings for personal or business / professional purposes. These are considered travelers who may be either tourists or hikers; residents or non-residents, and tourism is correlated with their activities, most of which require their spending money (Unmanner, 2010).

According to the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is a diverse sector and is one of the main economic drivers of socio-economic development in a number of destinations around the world. Tourists seek out a thorough travel program, involving airlines, tour providers, casinos, shipping services, the digital technology sector and the tourist destination host culture (UNWTO 2011). The growing population of the elderly and disabled requires special assistance and services in the tourism sector, not just in Europe but all over the world, and this has created the next evolving consumer market known as 'open tourism'.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE IN GENERAL

A language, as the main medium of human communication, is a network of spoken and/or written symbols capable of expressing thoughts, feelings and impressions (Akoumianakis, 2009). Linguistic proficiency helps organizations to enhance their communication skills (Anderson & Rasmussen, 2004), run digital technologies more efficiently (Barker, 2008), build consumer loyalty, and manage better in the field of tourism. Thus, as mentioned, it is hard to comprehend what someone is communicating provided that one converses on his/her terms with others. Spawa & Hassan (2013), cited in Zaheer et al. (2020), mentioned that those who speak English to communicate, for the first, second time a foreign language. They believe that speaking is an essential skill mainly because it is used for real-life purposes such as to further their studies, to communicate, and to apply for job purposes. Therefore, the ability to communicate efficiently plays a crucial role in any enterprise. In tourism organizations, Buck and Communication is the critical connection between impact and practice (Batt, 2008). When individuals in a company can handle it, they can do it anywhere. Draft & Wiginto (1979) identified the partnership between organizational management of language and tourism. As suggested, low language diversity is easy when it comes to tourism organizational management. Strong linguistic diversity is more of a nuance and appears to lead to more errors. In reality, the vocabulary of classification in tourism organizational management appears to be both correct and erroneous. It is also suggested that dealing with a variety of language usages will help organizations. Communication within and between organizations had better consist mainly of a range of vocabulary items to make comments on the programs clear. Given operational management in tourism, citizens in hierarchical environments need to implement various modes of communication. Regardless of what organizational management of tourism it is, particularly at the managerial stage, there seems to be striving for precision. Language roles are thus described as "a factor that relates to organizational tourism". Management requires interpersonal language skills (Bergenholtz, & Johnsen, 2006). All considered, numerous pivotal dimensions have been established which tend to contribute to performance:

- (a) The ability to enhance consumer satisfaction;
- (b) The ability of tourists to develop and retain language skills;
- (c) The ability to inspire foreign tourists;
- (d) The ability to fully communicate on demand;
- (e) The ability to interpret culture; and
- (f) The ability to establish successful internal and external contact.

## III. WHAT IS TOURISM MANAGEMENT?

Tourism management is a system of preparing, coordinating, managing and contributing to the accomplishment of the tourism organizational target such as happiness, or the efficiency of fulfilling the desires of foreign tourists, wishes and aspirations. Dowling & Welch (2004) described tourism organizational management as ideas with value-based and language-equipped elements of management approach. Thinking management theory includes vocabulary which can be learned by focusing on the study of discourse.

Organizational control of tourism tends to focus on communicative intervention. It reflects on company concepts including accounting, human resources and a corporate philosophy, systems of organizations, work roles, task obligations, and responsibility. The management of tourist organizations also involves problem solving, promotion, recruiting personnel, team development, budgeting, and creating strategies and practices for clients as well as leadership. It embraces infrastructure, professional recruitment of staff, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Eraqi, 2006). Since humans are generally in need of direct contact and decision-making capabilities (Etzol, 2008), language seems essential to this goal and in terms of the tourist industry, the core here, to the management of tourism organizations. The effectiveness of the corporate management of tourism directly depends on communicating productively with foreign visitors or clients, vendors and officials of any government. Miscommunication and confrontation may contribute to broken partnerships, company failure, dissatisfied consumers and employees as well.

Tourism corporate management aims at overall quality control arising from strategy, strategic preparation, tourism orientation, human capital emphasis, project management, and knowledge processing (Forey, & Nunan, 2002). Total quality control provides better support, reduces prices and results in more happy clients or overseas visitors. Developing language skills is a way of maintaining professional service (Henshaw, 2009). The interaction between language functions and the consequences of tourism operational management should be taken into account, in general, to observe a close interaction between linguistic functions and corporate management of tourism. Organizational management of tourism can be anticipated by giving more attention to language positions, which in turn might lead to attracting more foreign visitors.

### The English Language policy and development of tourism management

As mentioned, research has concluded that the English Language tends to act as a tourist-marketing tool, paving the way for policy makers to manage the industry more effectively. A language policy can be characterized as the organized practices and actions conducted within a corporation or agency to achieve the company's objective (Kolman, D. (2010). Thitthongkam & Walsh (2010) divided a language policy into two categories as a whole: general and particular language policies. The former includes language selection in a foreign sense; language selection of organizations, businesses and organizations; language selection in a national or global sense; and language selection in a specific context in relation to language instruction. The latter, on the other hand, provides broad recommendations on whether communicating with a particular language should be optimized. Regarding management, the English Language plays a big part in the culture of organizations, both within one and between them as a network of networks, and social media. In addition, using a shared language enables the exchange of technical skills, and technology transfer (Ladkin & Weber, 2010). The Ministry of Tourism and Sports tends to rely more on infrastructure and consistent corporate management practices to strengthen cooperation so as to promote more shared knowledge. Paying attention to the role of language in handling tourism may even have the benefit in administrative environments. Language is known to have major advantages for tourism management, such as promoting official records and promoting informative interactions (Lauring, 2007).

## IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To identify tourists' perception of using the English language in tourism management.
2. To explore tourists' perception of using the English language in socio-cultural aspects of tourism.
3. To investigate tourists' perception of using the English language in marketing and promotion of tourism.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The present research was carried out based on a quantitative approach. A self-developed questionnaire with .935 Cronbach's alpha was prepared, and then sent to two hundred tourists. A total of one hundred and twenty-six questionnaires were collected successfully. In addition, the questionnaire was on a five-point Likert scale; (1) Unimportant (2) Less-important (3) Average (4) Important (5) Very Important. It also contained 32 items taking into account the participants perceptions of using the English language in the tourism industry. Moreover, the questionnaires covered three components, i.e. management, sociocultural, and marketing/promotion.

## VI. FINDINGS

### 6.1 Respondents' Demographics

Table 1: Demographics

Respondents' Demographics		
	Category	Respondents%
Age	18-24	10.3%
	25-34	31.0%
	35-49	32.5%
	50-64	20.6%
	65+	5.6%
Gender	Male	53.2%
	Female	46.8%

<b>Education</b>	Primary/Intermediately	0.8%
	Secondary	5.6%
	Diploma	23.8%
	Undergraduate	35.7%
	Postgraduate	34.1%
<b>Number of Foreign Visits</b>	Once	15.9%
	Twice	32.5%
	Thrice	23.0%
	Four+	28.6%

Respondents' demographics considering their age, gender, education, and the number of foreign visits.

As can be seen in Table 1, the largest percentage was for those aged 35-49, 32.5%, and the lowest was 5.6% which belonged to 65+ age group, with more than 50% being males. In terms of education, approximately 70% of them were undergraduate and postgraduate students, while just 0.8% of them were of primary education. In addition, almost a-third of them visited foreign countries twice, which was the largest percentage, compared to 15.9% which was for those travelling just once.

## 7.2 General tourists' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry

Table 2 indicates the overall mean and standard deviation of management, sociocultural, and marketing and promotion regarding respondents' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry.

Table 2: Management, Sociocultural, Marketing & Promotion

Overall Mean and Standard Deviation			
Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Management	126	3.75	.55
Sociocultural	126	3.76	.62
Marketing & Promotion	126	3.59	.62

Table 2 illustrates the overall mean and standard deviation of the data. Sociocultural segment showed the largest mean, 3.76, which was almost the same as management, just 0.01 difference, with the overall mean for marketing and promotion being 3.59. On the other hand, standard deviations were the same in sociocultural, and marketing and promotion segments, 0.62, with 0.55 for management.

### a. Respondents' perception of using English in tourism management

English is essential in tourism management because it makes it easy to communicate with people of other native languages, known as travelers or holidaymakers. Table 3 illustrates the respondents' perception of using the English language in tourism management.

Table 3: Management

Management			
Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
English language (EL) helps to inform visitors of destination's customs	126	3.69	.76
EL helps get knowledge of destination	126	3.72	.91
EL provides better communication	126	4.32	.85
EL helps to be flexible	126	3.58	.84
EL enables to solve problems	126	3.69	.91
EL affects choosing facilities	126	3.73	.86
EL helps to seek safety regulations	126	3.78	.93
EL helps in saving time	126	3.84	.88
EL assists in better organizations	126	3.80	.88
EL enhances destination image	126	3.75	.78
EL brings motivation	126	3.62	.90
EL helps in making competitive advantages	126	3.69	.80

As can be seen in Table 3, management was evaluated considering 12 criteria. The means were equal in how

Helpful English was in informing the visitors about the destination's customs, how much English enabled them to solve problems, and the effect of English on making competitive advantages, (3.69). The highest mean, 4.32, was related to the English language providing better communication, and the lowest to the helpfulness of English in being flexible, 3.62. On the other hand, the largest standard deviation was .91, which was related to English helping them to get knowledge of destinations, and it enabled them to solve problems. The smallest was .76, being connected to the role of English in informing visitors of the destination's customs. Standard deviations were also equal, .88, in how helpful English was in saving time and in better organizations.

#### 7.4 Respondents' perception of using the English language in Sociocultural

Sociocultural plays a crucial role in the tourism industry in terms of using the English language because during tourists' stay in the destination, they interact with residents. The outcome of their relationship may change the host in different ways. For example, the quality of their life, value system, and family relationship. The table below describes the respondents' perceptions of using the English language in sociocultural.

Table 4: Sociocultural

Sociocultural			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
EL affects respecting customers	126	3.74	.82
EL leads to good presentation skills	126	3.85	.89
EL creates friendly environment	126	3.76	.81
EL results in being always available for help	126	3.65	.82
EL helps to exchange culture	126	3.72	.83
EL assists in exchanging experience	126	3.78	.85
EL affects tourists' satisfaction	126	3.81	.79
EL provides better interpersonal relationships between local and foreign tourists	126	3.74	.78

Table 4. In terms of sociocultural effects of the English language, as the table shows, the largest mean, 3.85, was in English resulting in good presentation skills, and the smallest, 3.65, in the language resulting in being always available to help.

#### 7.5 Respondents' perception of using English in marketing and promotion

Using the English language can help the tourism industry to increase the number of foreign tourists. The following table indicates respondents' perception of using the English language in marketing and promotion.

Table 5: Marketing & Promotion

Marketing & Promotion			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
EL helps in foreign exchange business	126	3.61	.86
EL causes saving money	126	3.67	.78
EL enables easy downloads of e-brochures	126	3.55	.78
EL helps with better product presentation	126	3.51	.87
EL assists in using social media easily	126	3.66	.87
EL enables to participate in any international and local event or program	126	3.53	.90

Table 5 illustrates the means and standard deviations of the criteria appointed to analyze marketing and promotion. As can be seen, how much English helped with better product management indicated the smallest mean, 3.51, while the mean for the role of English in saving money accounted for the largest amount, 3.67, with the means of the others considered being within this range.

Turning to the standard deviation column, .86, the smallest SD, is for English helping in foreign exchange business, with the largest being related to English providing participation in any international and local event or program.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The population who participated in the study was divided into five age groups, with the largest number being in the 32-49 age group. More than 50% were male, and considering the participants' education level, the



largest percentage of them were undergraduates. In addition, the biggest proportion of them had the experience of traveling overseas twice. The data represented in the findings section clearly show the participants' attitude to the role of English in tourism management, its sociocultural aspect, and tourism marketing and promotion. In particular, the relationship between the means, ranging from three to five and the standard deviation showing figures smaller than one indicated that the selected sample was a representative of a larger population.

## VII. LIMITATION

Research limitations included not all of the visitors approved the study questionnaires. The researchers could also have conducted interviews to gather in-depth information on the respondents' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry. The researchers mainly used the questionnaire as a tool to collect information.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the tourists' perception of using the English language in the tourism industry. The findings showed that using the English language in the tourism industry would play a big role in sociocultural, and management, but not a large role in marketing and promotion. The participants believed that in sociocultural, English caused good presentation skills, but not enough availability for help. Management was the second indicator where the respondents expressed their perceptions. They showed a good perception of providing better communication but not enough flexibility in helping others. However, marketing and promotion accounted for the lowest perception indicator of using the English language in the tourism industry. In terms of saving money and assisting in using social media easily, there were high perceptions, whereas there were concerns with how English would help with providing better product presentations and enabling them to participate in any international and local event or program.

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