

Challenges of internationalization of the Indonesian museum guides' communication skills competency

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ABSTRACT

As the front guards, museum guides need to master many skills that support the role of transferring information in the museum to every visitor who comes, both domestic and foreign. More specifically, every museum guide must master foreign language skills in order to serve foreign visitors. Unfortunately, not all museum guides have foreign language skills, especially English, and other supporting skills such as curation, communication, and public speaking. This paper investigates the limited ability of English mastery and other supporting skills of museum guides in two government-owned museums in Yogyakarta, the second tourism city in Indonesia, and how far they affect the internationalization of the two museums as representatives of other museums in Indonesia. This descriptive research uses data collection methods in surveys with questionnaires and in-depth interviews with guides and visitors of the museum, both domestic and foreign. This research found that limited foreign language skills, especially English and other professional skills of museum guides, can slow down the museum's internationalization process in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

Museum guides are tour guides who specifically work in the museum. The specific tasks of museum guides are to provide direction, information, and guidance on museum collections and other services [1]. Another term that is often used to refer to a museum guide is the museum educator [2] [3], [4]. The role of the guides or educators becomes fundamental to be owned by everyone who works in the museum as the museum's mission is as unlimited educational space. In a different case, there are specific divisions of tasks in the operation of museums aside from guides or educators in some museums which have enough human resources outside and inside Indonesia.

Museum guides are the front guards who play the role of transferring information to every visitor who comes, both domestic and foreign. As the front guards, museum guides give a good impression to visitors with good service and communication. The marketing function attached to museum guides in the form of services to visitors will affect the desire of visitors to come back to the museum [5], [6]. Therefore, every museum guide must master foreign language skills so that the museums where they work can be visited by foreign guests [7].

The development of technology is another challenge for museum guides. Today many museums have developed technology to facilitate visitors, so it is more convenient to get information about the museum. One of them is QR Code technology. In the past, museum visitors had to wait for an explanation from a tour guide manually. Now, visitors can get information directly from their respective devices after scanning the QR code that is placed in each collection or diorama [8]. Other technologies that have been developed as substitutes for tour guides are Bluetooth [9], augmented reality [10], [11], virtual reality [12], applications through smart devices (smartphones) [13], [14], even robots [15].

Referring to the Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI) for museum guides, three types of competencies must be mastered are general competencies, core competencies, and specific competencies. General competencies consist of six competency units, namely working with partners and visitors, working in different social environments, following health, safety, and security procedures at work, handling conflict situations, and developing and updating tourism knowledge about culture and tourism. Furthermore, the core competencies consist of five competency units, namely implementing the principles of museum guiding, developing knowledge about museum collection and exhibition, presenting information about museum collection and exhibition, interpreting activities, and guiding group visitors. Finally, the specific competencies comprise seven competency units, in the form of communicating by telephone, carrying out administrative procedures, searching and obtaining computer data, making documents with the computer, communicating orally in English at the basic operational level, reading in English at the basic operational level, and writing in English at the basic operational level [1].

Based on SKKNI in the field of museum guiding above, it is stated that a guide must at least master English language competence at the basic operational level in the form of verbal communication, reading, and writing. With this essential ability, museum guides are expected to communicate with visitors who visit the museum, especially foreign visitors who cannot speak Indonesian. This means that foreign language skills can encourage museum internationalization. In the notes of Boonkit [16], self-confidence, creativity in searching for topics, and speaking competence are vital aspects for a person to be able to improve his speaking ability in front of the listener; Zhang et al., [17] added self-efficacy. These four aspects are expected to be developed by museum guides in Indonesia. Unfortunately, not all museum guides have excellent foreign language skills, especially English.

This research investigates the limited ability to master English and other supporting skills for museum guides in Indonesia and the extent of their impact on the opportunities of internationalization of museums in Indonesia. Based on his research in Indonesia, Salazar notes that tour guides have a significant role in becoming an essential agent in introducing local culture to the international world, called "glocalization" [18]. In another study in Tanzania, Salazar said that tour guides who have a global discourse obtained from various sources such as handbooks, magazines, websites, and videos effectively increase their ability to become storytellers and be able to interact with tourists. In the context of the museum guides, Salazar's statement is also relevant [19], [20].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Internationalization: An effort to be globalized

Internationalization is defined as an effort to introduce anything globally [21]. Internationalization develops along with the presence of globalization. Internationalization is a multidimensional concept that presents international standards in an institution. Today's internationalization has become a demand to ensure the sustainability and future of institutions in line with global challenges that always demand competition. Therefore, internationalization requires multiple stakeholders who work to improve the performance of primarily internal institutions [22]. So far, internationalization research, especially in Indonesia, are dominated by the internationalization of higher education [22]–[25], internationalization of companies [26]–[28], and internationalization of social organization [29], [30]. In particular, museum internationalization is not much studied; therefore, there is an opportunity for the novelty of this study. As a place that holds collections and presents local information about Indonesia to the world, the discourse of internationalization of the museum, which is linked to the professional skills of museum guides, including the mastery of foreign languages, especially English, needs to be further discussed.

2.2 Museum Communication

Communication is a relatively common phrase that has been used in a lot of different subjects. Communication, in general, enfold features of sending and receiving information. Museum communication, however, comprises complex contexts. Nielsen [31] mentions that museum communication “encompasses central concepts of learning, meaning-making, and interpretation already heavily used by museums.” She defines museum communication as “the articulation of understandings.”

Further, she explains the meaning of articulation as “a process of formulation, transmission, transformation, interpretation, and experimentation.” Whereas understanding is defined as “a concept of meaning-making, relevance, learning, experience, interaction, and participation.” Combining this “process” and “concept” specifies the focal point of museum work, approaches, and responsibilities. The articulation of understandings applies to internal as well as to external museum work. Internal and external museum communication will influence each other and constantly broaden communication practices. This definition then applies to the role of museum guides in articulating the understandings towards the museum visitors or tourists and the exhibits.

In addition, communication skills are one of the competencies of museum guides identified by Schep et al. [32] in their research. Although the research was mainly performed on museum guides who lead tours of school students in art and history museums, it is still applicable in general museum guides. There are seven areas in this competency.

Area 2: Communication Skills

15	<i>Clear talk</i>	The guide speaks clearly, audibly, and with an appropriate intonation.
16	<i>Vocalization and expression</i>	The guide breathes quietly, speaks with a pleasant timbre, and is able to engage the students through his or her intonation, rhythm, timing, and mimics. The guide knows how to use his or her voice without damaging it.
17	<i>Careful listening</i>	The guide listens carefully and sincerely and uses the input of the group to enrich the dialog.
18	<i>Linguistic skills and use of language</i>	The guide is linguistically skilled, has an extensive general and specialized vocabulary, and adjusts his or her use of language to the level and perceptions of the students.
19	<i>Conversation techniques</i>	The guide is skilled in starting and facilitating a conversation in different ways and is capable of encouraging participation of the students.
20	<i>Nonverbal communication</i>	The guide gives clear non-verbal cues to the students, and the non-verbal communication (e.g., body language, mimics, posture) is in line with the verbal communication.
21	<i>Awareness of one's own communication</i>	The guide is aware of his or her own posture, use of voice, and body language and is capable of adjusting this to the situation.

Source: Schep, et.al [32, p. 15]

One of the areas mentioned in the communication skills competency is linguistics skills and the use of language. It is mentioned that the guide “is linguistically skilled, has an extensive general and specialized vocabulary, and adjusts his or her use of language to the level and perceptions of the [tourist].” This area then applies to the mastery of foreign languages, especially English, by the museum guides.

3. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a practical investigation and observation. The method of data collection used was a survey through questionnaires and interviews with museum guides and visitors of the museum in two state-owned museums in Yogyakarta, namely Fort Vredenburg Museum managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia and Sonobudoyo Museum managed by the Yogyakarta Special Region Government on February-April 2019. These two museums were chosen since these museums are state-owned museums that have the most visitors in Yogyakarta. Both museums are located in the center of the city, so there is a significant number of visitors coming; therefore, making data collection easier. Although this research was employing questionnaires, researchers precisely did not determine the number of respondents because this study was not quantitative.

The data collection in this study is information on the work environment of museum guides. It consists of the work duration, the ability and use of English, the expectations expected by visitors from a museum guide, the pieces of training provided by the museum to the guides, the duration of time learning a skill specifically to support the task of a tour guide, the skills of a tour guide, the curatorial work in museums, as well as the policies adopted by the museum.

Other data collected are from museum visitors. The data consists of the reasons for visiting the museum, the expectations expected from the museum guides, the importance of English language skills for museum guides, the English language skills that museum guides must improve, the difficulties found in communicating with museum guides, the extent to which museum guides helped during his/her visit in the museums, and the input for aspects that need to be provided by the museum.

The procedure adopted in this study is, first, the initial stage of visiting Fort Vredenburg Museum and Sonobudoyo Museum to process the research permit. After obtaining permission, the researchers took the data by leaving the questionnaires to be filled by museum guides. As for visitors, the questionnaires were given directly when the visitors came to the museum spontaneously. After a few days, the researchers returned to the museum to questionnaires that the museum guides had filled out and confirmed several items in the questionnaires by interview. In the interview process, the researchers recorded information from museum guides. The data obtained were then analyzed and synthesized to obtain the results of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Fort Vredenburg Museum and Sonobudoyo Museum: A Brief Discription

The Fort Vredenburg Museum first opened in 1987. This museum utilizes the fort building, which was first built during the VOC period in 1760 which utilizes the land of the Yogyakarta Sultanate. This fort building has shifted its control several times as the political situation in Yogyakarta during the colonial period changed. It is recorded that this fort was once controlled by the Dutch, British and Japanese. This museum is located in the center of Yogyakarta city, in the old colonial area of Yogyakarta, which is only less than 500 m from the Yogyakarta Palace. Since 1992, this museum was managed directly by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia [33]. In comparison, Sonobudoyo Museum is located just north of the north square of the Yogyakarta Palace and about 200 m from Fort Vredenburg Museum. This museum utilizes buildings and assets from the Java Instituut, which has been operating since 1919. In 1935 this institution was inaugurated as a museum that is still managed by the Java Instituut, which was officially handed over to the central government in 1974. Subsequently, the museum was handed over to the provincial government in 2002. This museum houses various types of museums—collections, from geological to ethnographic collections [34].



Fig. 1. The main Building of Sonobudoyo Museum. Credit: Yabesto Sitorus

4.2. The supporting skills for the professionalism of museum guides

Referring to the Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI) for museum guiding, there are several descriptions that distinguish museum guides from general tourist guides [35]. Based on the Decree of the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration N0. 57/MEN/III/2009 concerning tourist guiding, it is known that general unit and specific competencies for tour guides are the same as museum guides. The difference is in supporting competence. The competence of tour guides, in general, is broader than that of museum guides. Competency units that must be controlled by public tour guides include basic knowledge and ethics, providing pick-up and delivery services, developing and choosing the required general knowledge, coordinating and operating tour trips, leading and guiding tour groups, preparing and presenting tour information, conducting tours activities that are interpretative, developing interpretative material for ecotourism activities, managing extended tourism, examining and sharing general information about Indonesian culture and interpreting aspects of Indonesia's local ethical culture [36].

The core competence of the museum guides is based on the Decree of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, No. 58/MEN/III/2009 consists of five competency units, namely implementing the principles of museum guiding, developing knowledge about museum collection and exhibition, presenting information about museum collection and exhibition, conducting interpretive activities, and guiding group visitors. At first glance, the difference between general tour guides and museums guides seems visible; however, there are some points where the competency units are intertwining. Those are on preparing tourist information, interpreting explanations, leading groups of visitors, and developing tourist information about Indonesian culture. The significant difference is that museum guides revolve around museums, while general tour guides are outside the museum and between destinations [1].



Fig. 2. A museum guide at the Vredeburg Fort Museum is guiding a group of guests. Credit: Reni Widiastuti

Museum guides, in some cases, have specific tasks and are required to master museum-related skills such as curation. Curation is a skill to investigate and search for information and collections that make the museum more complete and informative. In addition, a person who performs curation is called a curator. The museum curator is defined as "an official organizer of the museum—their position as guardian of the collection under his responsibility" [36]. If referring to Kusuma, what is defined as the curator is the head of the museum, which is not infrequently directly carrying out the task of education, guiding, and even preservation. This specific skill makes museum guides are more special than general tour guides.

In Indonesia, generally, museum management or operation is divided into two main areas, namely education and preservation of collections. Museum guides specifically are in the education section. Nevertheless, it does not actually rule out the possibility of museum guides to be in the preservation part, i.e., those who do curation can also become an educator. In Sonobudoyo Museum

and Fort Vredeburg Museum, where this research was conducted, the heads of the museums have delegated specific tasks to other structures underneath them.

In Sonobudoyo Museum, under the head of the museum, there are two sections, namely the Information and Preparation Guidance Section; and the Collection, Conservation & Documentation Section. An additional structure to those two sections is in the form of an administrative office as a support system (sonobudoyo.com). While for Fort Vredeburg Museum, under the head of the museum, there are two working groups, namely the Study and Preservation Working Groups; and the Presentation and Education Guidance Working Group. Each working group is divided into four divisions. The Study and Preservation Working Groups consist of the Study, Preservation, Registration, and Administration of Collection, as well as Documentation and Library Division. While the Presentation and Educational Guidance Working Group consists of the Presentation, Publications, and Public Relations, Educational Guidance Division, and Special division responsible for the Museum Perjuangan Yogyakarta (Museum about the struggle for Independence of Yogyakarta), which is the responsibility of the operator of the Fort Vredeburg Museum.

With responsibility as educators and curators, another skill that is demanded to be mastered by museum guides is a marketing communication. Today the museum demands that its educators creatively design innovative programs and can package them in a marketing medium that attracts visitors to come. Based on the observations in the field, the average visitor who came to the museum wanted to get information on history, culture, and travel. Their biggest expectation was to get the latest exhibition information owned by the museum. This means that the operator's creativity in preparing temporary exhibitions or heavy labor in the curation process to find new collections that support existing collections must be done. In addition, the delivery to the public with a good communication strategy is also necessary. Therefore, these days, the professional skills of museum guides that are needed in addition to public speaking skills are making educational and marketing programs.

4.3. English as museum guides' competency

Referring to the Decree of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, No. 58/MEN/III/2009 concerning Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI) for museum guiding that the ability to speak English becomes the specific competency/specific support of museum guides. English language skills that become the standard competency of the museum guides are in three competency units, including mastering English language competence at the basic operational level in the form of oral communication, reading, and writing. Each of these competency units has specific competency elements and performance criteria. [1]

It was explained in the SKKNI in the field of museum guiding that the competency unit "communicating verbally in English at the basic operational level" consists of two competency elements. The first is communicating with visitors and colleagues about basic and daily activities at work and visitor activities. The performance criteria are "terms, expressions, and body language understood and used to clarify verbal communication related to requests and comments, factual collection of information, conducting simple transactions, answering simple questions, asking questions to clarify issues, providing assistance within the scope of his/her responsibility, giving advice for certain things, giving instructions or simple explanations, meeting the needs of visitors and colleagues clearly, providing appropriate assistance to speakers, providing explanations that are easy to follow slowly and in the right order, and providing additional information about the collection as needed by visitors. The next performance criteria are "using polite and friendly sentences and understanding when to use formal or informal sentences in greetings, goodbyes, apologies, and thanks." Whereas the second element of competence is "talking on the phone" with performance criteria: greeting properly, offering help, asking the caller to wait when requesting to speak to the desired person, apologizing to the caller if the desired person is not available, and record the callers' data.

The competency unit "reading in English at the basic operational level" consists of four competency elements, namely recognizing common signs used in the cultural tourism business, reading simple instructional texts, and reading simple diagrams. Each element of competency has the same performance criteria, which can identify the purpose and core of the text, respond to the objectives identified from the text if necessary and seek help if needed. Finally, the competency unit "writing in English at the basic operational level" consists of three competency elements. The first is

able to write basic and everyday documents at work. The performance criteria are identifying the reading and the purpose of the text, preparing the right type of document, tracking ideas correctly and using language appropriate to the purpose and format of the text, giving telephone messages in detail, explaining activities in written form, understanding when to use formal and informal language, using proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar for business-related writing. The second is completing standard forms with performance criteria of writing for the core collection information in a suitable space by providing factual collection information, filling in data related to standard forms, answering questions, and responding to questions. The third is writing basic and daily instructions with performance criteria of identifying the reading material and the purpose of the text, using keywords, simple expressions, and sentences, tracking instructions and directions correctly, using proper spelling, marking, reading, and grammar to business-related writing, and using communication with visual collection information such as signs, maps, diagrams, and forms if needed.

Based on the research, museum guides at Sonobudoyo Museum and Yogyakarta Fort Vredeburg Museum felt they had sufficient English language skills. Most of them thought that the ability to communicate in the form of conversation with visitors was the ability that was most expected by visitors. Occasionally reading and writing skills in English were honed through communication via email. Most museum guides said that public speaking skills in both local and English languages were needed by museum guides. Regarding the use of English in the workplace, almost all respondents answered that they were using English in the workplace. Nonetheless, almost all museum guides used English in a low intensity, and more than half of the respondents said they almost never use it. Most respondents said that the use of English for daily work was when reading and replying to emails and providing general information at the museum's information center. Of the four language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking, reading skills, according to respondents was most often used compared to others; even though, in the communication practice, speaking and listening should be more dominant. In general, the majority of respondents said that they had difficulty communicating in English despite their possession of basic skills.

Based on field observations, the average visitors had rated that museum guides were fluent in English, although a small number was not. On a scale between 0-100, the visitors gave the guides grades ranging from 70-80, but most did not provide grades. There was a high possibility that the guides' actual English abilities were below 70. Visitors to the museum assessed their ability with the emphasis that their ability to speak to be improved, followed by listening ability. It is reckoned that both speaking and listening are the main language skills of museum guides. Thus, in general, the main language skills need to be improved. Despite all the limitations of the museum guides, visitors did not find difficulty during their visit to the museums.

4.4. Towards the internationalization of the museum

If internationalization is going to be implemented for museums, some of the strategies above can be pursued in three main strategies:

1) Improvement of museum guides' English proficiency

The results of field observations at the Fort Vredeburg Museum and the Sonobudoyo Museum show that there was a gap between the recognition of the English language abilities of the museum guides and their performance when serving visitors. Visitors, especially from abroad, felt that museum guides in Indonesia need to improve their speaking and listening skills. On the other hand, museum guides realized that the most important thing they must master in English was the ability to speak. In consequence, increasing the ability to communicate using the English language for the museum guides in Indonesia is absolutely necessary. Another thing that becomes a problem of museum guides that has the potential to hamper the process of internationalization is the limited use or application of the language they have. It was admitted that almost all museum guides rarely and almost never used English in their daily work activities.

The strategy to improve the ability and habit of English-speaking museum guides in Indonesia is to train English-speaking guides regularly. For the sake of intensity, it can be done by practicing guiding with English domestic guests. Opportunities are wide enough to partner with colleges or secondary schools. To improve the level of capacity of foreign language of museum guides, the museum should invite foreign tourists periodically to take familiarization trips at the museums. The museums funded by the government can do this. The Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of

Indonesia also has this Familiarization Trip program to introduce Indonesian tourist destinations to foreign tourists [37].

2) Strengthening the professional skills of museum guides

Based on the results of field observations, mastery of supporting skills such as curation, public speaking, creative and digital event design crucially supports guides' work in museums. Mastering those skills will also support the internationalization of the museum because as front guards, museum guides will be the key to the success of the museums to convey information that the museums have to the visitors. Therefore, this opens up opportunities for visitors to come back to satisfy their curiosity about the museum [5], [6].

In general, the museums have indeed developed their human resources. Some examples of programs that have been carried out to increase their human resources capacity are English language training, guiding techniques and interpretations, curatorial interpretations, presentations, and so on. Yet, in the future, it is necessary to conduct more structured and intensive training for museum guides in accordance with the SKKNI in the field of museum guiding and to conduct competency tests regularly to meet the internationalization of the museum. For visitor satisfaction, museum guides must be able to explain the latest collections of the museum with a comprehensive explanation to visitors. Some museums in the world have opened temporary exhibitions periodically [38], [39], sometimes every three months to 6 months, to display the latest collections or interpretations of the museum as attractions. Certainly, these services require the complete skills of museum guides.

3) Adding facilities and developing international cooperation and marketing strategies

The results of field observations showed that museum visitors, especially those from foreign countries, complained about the lack of supporting facilities for museums in Indonesia. Some of the facilities complained about are the lack of signpost information boards in the museum. More specifically, for museums whose dioramas are located in separate buildings, such as Fort Vredenburg Museum and Sonobudoyo Museum, detailed signposts are much needed. Other facilities needed are explanations in dioramas that use foreign languages. There are still many museums in Indonesia in which the description of the collection only includes the Bahasa. Other facilities needed by visitors are a cafeteria or a representative dining place in the museum for a short break. In addition, the technology-based development for museums needs to be designed for the modernization of museums in Indonesia, such as QR codes, virtual reality, augmented reality, robots, and so on. Museum operators really need to have a strategic design to add excellent facilities to the museum in facilitating visitors [40], [41].

In the context of internationalization, it is a must that museum operators have international cooperation and marketing strategy designs. In many instances, comparative studies of Indonesian museum staff, including museum guides, would have been done to museums abroad, as well as capacity-building cooperation by conducting workshops and training in foreign museums. However, it seems necessary to design more intensive and specific overseas training models to strengthen the guidance and interpretation techniques in order to provide exposure to foreign languages to museum guides. Regarding international marketing, museum operators need to sit together and synergize with the relevant ministries to maximize the Familiarization Trip program, overseas exhibitions, or other government overseas promotion models.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that language skills and professional supporting skills are two crucial aspects that must be mastered to support the duty of guides in museums today, and it becomes an important capital for the internationalization of the museum. In general, the ability of foreign languages, especially English, as a supporting professional skill of museum guides has not been fully mastered and is not sufficiently honed to be used in the daily professional duties of museum guides. Similarly, there are some professional supporting skills of museum guides that need to be mastered gradually, such as curation, communication skills, public speaking skills, and so on. The lack of these skills will certainly hamper the process of internationalization of museums in Indonesia. Museums in Indonesia, especially those which are located in the cities that become the main destination for domestic and foreign tourists such as Yogyakarta, must prepare strategies in order to answer the challenges of internationalization by increasing the ability of foreign languages,

especially English, increasing the professional skills of museum guides, and adding facilities to museums and promoting adequate international cooperation and marketing.

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