



## **The Role of English Language Skills in the Tourism Industry in the 4.0 Era in Kuningan District, West Java Province**

**Erwin Oktoma<sup>1</sup>**

*English Education/Faculty of Teacher  
Training and Education  
Kuningan University,  
Kuningan, Indonesia  
E-mail: [erwin.oktoma@uniku.ac.id](mailto:erwin.oktoma@uniku.ac.id)*

**Dadang Solihat<sup>2</sup>**

*English Education/Faculty of Teacher  
Training and Education  
Kuningan University,  
Kuningan, Indonesia  
E-mail: [dadang.solihat@uniku.ac.id](mailto:dadang.solihat@uniku.ac.id)*

**Rina Masruroh<sup>3</sup>**

*Department of Management  
Faculty of Economic and Business  
Kuningan University,  
Kuningan, Indonesia  
E-mail: [rina.masruroh@uniku.ac.id](mailto:rina.masruroh@uniku.ac.id)*

### **ABSTRACT**

Through communication media, English plays a significant role in the sustainable tourism sector with the goal of promoting foreign travel, service, effective communication between foreign visitors and tourism actors, and the surrounding community, all of which are ultimately related to the growth of local tourism in the industrial era's sustainable tourism sector. 4.0 Tourist actors need to be fluent in English, especially in the vernacular, which includes basic discussion, linguistic proficiency, and basic conversation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the advantages of English-speaking culture in West Java Province's sustainable tourism sector during the Industrial Era 4.0. Descriptive qualitative analysis is the analytical technique employed. This study demonstrates the necessity of English-speaking culture in Kuningan District, West Java Province's sustainable tourism industry in the industrial era 4.0 in order to promote the province's local tourist destinations overseas, increase the number of foreign visitors, and facilitate English-language communication. The ability to speak effectively in English is crucial for both those who work in the tourism business and those who live near popular tourist sites.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Destinations, Industry 4.0, Culture, English



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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the mainstay of foreign exchange sources because Indonesia is one of the countries that has various types of tourism, for example natural tourism, social and cultural tourism spread from Sabang to Merauke. Indonesia has a lot of natural wealth. Its beauty, both cultural and natural, has great potential to be developed sustainably. Many cultures and customs are created by the diversity of tribes in each province of Indonesia (Ismawardi, 2019). So this is a special attraction for foreign tourists to travel to one of the tourist destinations, namely Indonesia. In addition, the natural beauty in Indonesia can also be enjoyed.

Throughout the year, tourism development in each region needs to be a shared concern by stakeholders to increase foreign exchange, (Dewi, 2016). Tourism in various regions in West Java has begun to experience a revival after the pandemic, including in Kuningan District. Various tourist attractions are being organized and managed by local governments such as the tourism office or run by private parties or independently by residents in the area. As part of an effort to increase the number of national and international visitors, tourism events such as the Seren Tahun event which is routinely held by the Kuningan District government with support from various parties are important in supporting the development of the tourism sector properly and can be used as one of the tools in increasing local revenue by managing destinations and intensively exploring the tourism potential of the region. In addition, conducting promotions is also a major factor in supporting progress and increasing tourist visits.

Provision and improvement of supporting infrastructure is also very much needed. That is why it is very important for every individual and community to actively involve themselves in efforts to expand access for the entire global community (Ministry of Communication and Information, 2022). Technological advances have made it easier for people or foreign tourists to access information on interesting tourist destinations for traveling, (Heliany, 2019). However, on the one hand, technological advances have become fierce competition in the era of globalization. If people are unable to face it, they will be crushed by this progress. In addition, in facing global competition, people as tourism industry players are also required to master an international language, namely English, (Damayanti, 2019; Fitriani & Wulandari, 2021; Gunawan & Wachyuni, 2020).

In the current era of globalization, English language skills are a necessity that cannot be avoided (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). This is because each country has an official language as a unifying tool for the nation that is different from other countries. Language is used as a medium of communication between one another. The existence of language makes it easier for people to interact. The era of industry 4.0 information and communication technology (ICT) language is a means of communication that helps in various fields of life including in the world of tourism. In today's era it has become a basic need in an organization, company, government agency and educational institution. English language culture provides good benefits in the era of information and communication technology in the world of tourism as a means and infrastructure in promoting tourism that we often hear electronically under the name of digital marketing, (Warmayana, 2018; Rahmantya & Djazuli, 2019; Siregar et al., 2022) .

The industrial era 4.0 in West Java Province, especially in Kuningan District, the government has made tourism one of the mainstay sectors and the focus of attention. This is because this sector promises very high economic added value. In an effort to advance tourism, the government has made various efforts, including improving the quality of tourism services and improving the quality in areas related to tourism. The methods used include promoting tourism, trying to attract tourist attractions such as transportation and accommodation.

The problem faced by tourism industry players, especially in Kuningan District, West Java Province, is that English language skills are still minimal. This is one of the obstacles in selling tourist destinations and also makes it difficult for foreign tourists to interact to obtain information about the history of the tourist destinations offered. The role of English in tourism, as explained by Joseph Munghate (in Firli, 2022), consists of several aspects of the role, including:

- 1) Communicative/interactive role: English is the only alternative language used by international visitors at a tourist destination;
- 2) Integrative role: in this condition, English becomes a unifying language between different ethnicities, races and cultures;
- 3) Relation fostering role: English plays a role as a glue, strengthening relationships between people from various backgrounds;
- 4) Economic role: English becomes an economic necessity where business actors or workers who work abroad inevitably have to use English, as well as businesses including tourism businesses;
- 5) Functional role: this role plays a very vital role in the tourism industry, because it provides very meaningful assistance for tourists in getting specific information about the tourist attractions they visit.

Sustainable tourism development is highly dependent on management that requires capable human resources in their fields who not only master marketing techniques but are able to become guides and are able to master English to communicate with foreign tourists. Seeing the importance of English in the world of tourism, there needs to be research related to the Analysis of the Benefits of English Language Culture in the Sustainable Tourism Sector in the Industrial Era 4.0 in West Java Province..

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The world of tourism is rapidly evolving, driven by the convergence of sustainable practices, technological advancements, and the ever-changing cultural landscape. This paper aims to explore the intricate relationships between sustainable tourism, destinations, Industry 4.0, culture, and the role of the English language in shaping these dynamic interactions (Van, 2020; Manalu et al., 2023; Maulana et al., 2023).

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a critical concern, as destinations strive to balance economic growth with environmental preservation and cultural integrity (Pauzi et al., 2022). The standardized mass tourism of the past is giving way to a 'new tourism' that is more responsive to consumer preferences and focused on minimizing negative impacts. (Poon, 1994; Agustiana; 2017; Akhmaddhian, 2019; Akhmaddhian, 2020).

As destinations adapt to this shift, they must leverage the principles of sustainable development to enhance positive synergies between the living environment, protect sociocultural traditions, meet the needs of tourists, and generate economic benefits while mitigating adverse effects (Vuković et al., 2019). This requires the involvement of a variety of business entities and diverse types of cooperation in the planning and implementation of tourism activities (Wachyuni & Gunawan, 2021; Yunengsih et al., 2023).

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a crucial consideration for destinations seeking to balance economic growth, environmental preservation, and sociocultural integrity. As the industry embraces the principles of sustainability, destinations must navigate the complexities of implementing eco-friendly policies, promoting responsible travel, and engaging local communities. Industry 4.0, characterized by the integration of digital technologies, automation, and data-driven decision-making, offers both challenges

and opportunities for sustainable tourism (Harjadi & Fatmasari, 2017; Harjadi, et al., 2019; Harjadi & Gunardi, 2022; Harjadi & Nurfatimah, 2021; Harjadi, et al., 2023). The effective implementation of these technological advancements can enhance the visitor experience, optimize resource management, and foster greater environmental awareness among travelers. (Sutarman et al., 2023; Stankov & Gretzel, 2020).

Concurrently, the impact of culture on the tourism industry cannot be overlooked. Destinations must carefully curate their offerings to reflect the unique cultural heritage and traditions of the local population, while also ensuring that tourism activities are respectful and contribute to the preservation of cultural identity (Suhardi, 2021; Sumarni et al., 2022; Sunarjo et al., 2021; Suryani et al., 2024). The prominence of the English language, as a global lingua franca, plays a significant role in facilitating cross-cultural communication, marketing, and the dissemination of information within the tourism ecosystem (Maulidiyah, 2019; Wu, 2020; Oktoma et al., 2023).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Kuningan District, West Java Province with the consideration that Kuningan District, West Java Province is one of the Provinces that has potential tourist destinations to be further developed. The approach used in this study is descriptive qualitative. With the focus of the research that will be used as a benchmark for the research study is Increasing Foreign Tourist Visits, Facilitating English Language Communication and Local Cultural Promotion Events. The primary data source in the study was obtained through interview results in the form of responses and answers from informants (Head of the Kuningan District Tourism Office, West Java Province, related Stakeholders working in the tourism sector, Tour Guides and also the community around the tourist destination). Secondary data sources were obtained from documentation taken at the research location. In this study, the selection of informants as data sources was obtained through purposive sampling techniques.

The informants in this study were the Head of the Kuningan District Tourism Office, West Java Province, related Stakeholders working in the tourism sector, Tour Guides and also the community around the tourist destination. The data collection method in this study was carried out through Observations conducted by directly visiting the Kuningan District Tourism Office, West Java Province to conduct systematic observations and records in order to determine the benefits of English-speaking culture in the sustainable tourism sector in the era of industry 4.0. Interviews by collecting data through verbal questions to predetermined informants.

Documentation by collecting data through materials in the form of images or writings at the research location related to the variables being studied. The data analysis techniques used in this study are Data collection. Researchers collect data by interviewing informants. Data presentation. The data obtained by researchers from the results of interviews are then displayed in the form of narrative text whose language has been changed to a more scientific language. Conclusion Drawing. The data that has been displayed in the form of narrative text is then studied according to the theory used in this study to then draw conclusions.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Tourist visit trends



Figure 1. Number of tourist visits (2021: 2. 215.601), (2022: 2.867.834), (2023: 3.081. 058)  
Source: Badan Pusat Statistik, Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2024. <https://jabar.bps.go.id/>

Based on the figure 1 above, it can be seen that in Kuningan District, West Java Province, the trend of tourist visits from 2021 to 2023 has fluctuated. In addition, government support for the development of tourist destinations in Kuningan District is very intensively implemented considering that Kuningan District is a very potential area for developing its tourist destinations. The location of Kuningan District, which is also very strategic between West Java Province and Central Java Province, is very advantageous as a connecting route or route passed by tourists in both provinces.

Government support is stated in the regional regulation of Kuningan District, West Java Province number 4 of 2011 concerning the regional spatial plan or RTRW which determines several areas that have the potential to be developed as tourism areas in Kuningan District. The area is spread across various sub-districts and districts in Kuningan District, such as the Curug Putri Palutungan tourist destination which is located in the Gunung Ciremai National Park area in Cigugur District, Kuningan Botanical Gardens located in Padabeunghar Village, Pasawahan District, Darma Reservoir destination located in the southwest of Kuningan City, precisely in Jagara Village, Darma District and other tourist destinations.

### Foreign Tourist Visits

In February 2024, visits by foreign tourists (tourists) in Indonesia will reach 1.04 million visits. This number increased by 11.67 percent compared to January 2024 month-to-month (M-to-M) and increased by 38.24 percent compared to the same month last year year-on-year (Y-on-Y). Foreign tourists visiting Indonesia in February 2024 were dominated by foreign tourists from Malaysia (20.66 percent), Singapore (10.89 percent), and China (10.16 percent). Cumulatively, foreign tourist visits from January to February 2024 increased by 26.87 percent compared to the same period in 2023. This increase in visits was mainly recorded at the Ngurah Rai and Soekarno Hatta airports, increasing by 34.31 percent and 33.37 percent respectively (Central Statistics Agency, Kuningan District, 2024).

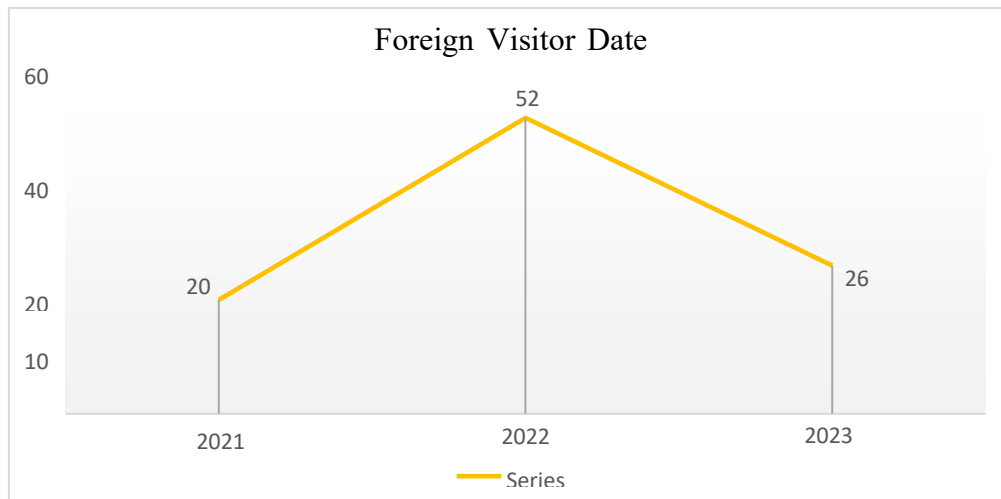


Figure 2. Number of foreign tourist visits (Wisman) (2021: 20), (2022: 52), (2023: 26)  
Source: Central Statistics Agency of West Java Province, 2024. <https://jabar.bps.go.id/>

The number of foreign tourist visits (wisman) in Kuningan District has fluctuated, increasing from 2021-2022 and decreasing in 2022-2-23. However, the Kuningan District government remains optimistic and is targeting three million tourist visits for 2024. To achieve this target, various strategic steps have been prepared, including promoting new tourist destinations and improving facilities at existing tourist attractions. <https://travel.kompas.com>.

Some of the efforts made by the Kuningan District Government include improving the governance system and supporting infrastructure at tourist attractions, so that tourists feel at home to do recreation and other efforts implemented, namely by attracting private investors to invest or open new destinations to advance the tourism sector in Kuningan District. Then, the Kuningan District Government also provides space for the surrounding community to be actively involved in managing destinations that can be a source of their economy or income. "There is tourism that must be managed by the community. There is also investment. We have mapped this out. So that in the future our work will produce positive results," he explained (<https://www.antaranews.com/>).

## DISCUSSION

### The Role of English in the Tourism Sector

English is one of the official international languages recognized by the UN and has a very important contribution in the tourism industry, especially in communication media. When someone communicates with foreign tourists who have different languages, mastery of a foreign language is very necessary, so that in communicating they can understand each other's intentions and goals. In terms of tourism services, foreign tourists coming to Indonesia are guests who must be served, so that tourism actors are servants who must serve guests who come. That is why in communicating with foreign tourists, namely, tourism actors in tourist attractions, especially the people of Kuningan District, West Java Province around tourist destinations, must master English, so that they can communicate well and serve visiting tourists.

The ability to master English is basically a communication process that is needed when communicating with foreign tourists. So that the role of English in increasing the number of foreign tourist visitors is very influential, especially in terms of service, one of



which is the promotion of tourism abroad, reservations, services accommodation (travel and hotel), guiding services, communication between tourists and the community.

Tourism actors in Kuningan District, West Java Province, on average, some of the people who provide services can communicate fluently with foreign tourists, because they have mastered English, some are still not fluent, namely the local community who communicate with tourists in basic English. Some tourists also use Indonesian guides who master English to help them travel to the tourist attractions they visit.

English is not only needed when communicating in the world of tourism. The level and challenges of globalization are also no less important in mastering English. Because English is a very strategic language. When foreign tourists who come from various corners of the world come with the aim of traveling, their mother tongue or the language of their country of origin is generally less helpful in other countries as tourist destinations. So English has an important role here as a language of communication in the international arena. For that, the people of Kuningan District, West Java Province, especially in the tourism sector, should really master English as a medium of communication between the two parties in order to increase foreign tourist visits.

In line with the research results from Galela (2014) stated that the role of English in Tobelo is very important in supporting communication and providing services to foreign guests visiting Tobelo. Therefore, improving the community's ability to use English needs to be taught to tourism industry players or tour guides, (Zulkarnain, 2016). In addition, the community also needs to be given training in increasing their English language proficiency capacity. Like research from (Febriani et al., 2019) in facing the development of the era to be able to compete in the industrial era 4.0, it is important to provide technical guidance and training for the community as provisions in the field so that the community or tourism actors have the confidence to face global challenges. English, in addition to having a role as a medium of communication, also serves as a unifier. English has a role in connecting everyone regardless of their background. In the tourism sector of Kuningan District, West Java Province, where the community states that English is a medium for foreign tourists and tourism industry players, where it can be said to be a social language or medium for people around tourist attractions with various languages, especially at tourist attractions.

#### Fluent English for Tourism Actors

Mastery of English is very important even though there are several tourist attractions or hotels, English is not used as a means of communication continuously. Some tourist attractions or hotels do not use English for daily communication, so English can be divided into 2, namely occasionally, and rarely (Erazo et al., 2019). Occasionally is where English is only used at certain times, while rarely is English that is rarely used. This results in the tourist destination not being a tourist destination for foreign tourists, of course tourism actors only communicate with local tourists who have the same language, namely the National language.

In addition, tourism actors who interact directly with foreign tourists, where the people of Kuningan District, West Java Province around the tourist attractions can be invited to communicate by foreign tourists. If there is a guide in communicating, of course it is not a problem, but the local community can also communicate using English, so this is considered a positive thing and will give an extraordinary impression to tourists, even though what is used is a simple language. English language proficiency for tourism actors is important in terms of communication media between tourists and tourism actors. If you master English in the world of tourism, it can provide benefits, namely it can increase tourist satisfaction, motivate international tourists that mastery in communicating using

English will certainly be able to increase the interest of international tourists to visit and will be more effective.

English language proficiency will greatly help understand the needs of tourists better, meaning that with good communication, all the needs and requirements of tourists can be understood and addressed. With good communication, of course, you can understand other cultures through dialogue between tourists and tourism actors. The community around tourist attractions must know and master English, at least the basics of English, simple vocabulary in getting to know each other, or just greeting foreign tourists to ensure that they can understand all communications established with foreign tourists without misunderstandings. By mastering English, tourism actors will understand the culture of foreign tourists and be able to provide maximum service and be able to give a good impression and even image so that they have an influence in increasing the progress of the tourism industry in Kuningan District, West Java Province.

#### Local Cultural Promotion Events

To introduce domestic tourism, especially local tourism to other countries, there are several ways that can be done. The advancement of information technology today is the main thing used to promote through cyberspace and is the most effective way to introduce local tourism to foreign countries. The method is to use promotions based on the internet (web) in English which is an international language. With this website, foreign tourists can access it anytime and anywhere. However, if you do promotions through cyberspace, it must be complete and clarified and can be designed as attractively as possible. Based on research, the tourism sector of Kuningan District, West Java Province can develop the potential of tourist destinations through promotional events. The promotion carried out is none other than to make the tourist attraction in question have its own tourist attractions and be better known by prospective tourists to visit and enjoy the place.

The tourism sector is currently competing to create and create various products in accordance with tourism development, the products in question are, introducing the beauty of nature, culture and customs that are diverse and the uniqueness of the tourist attraction such as flora and fauna and ecosystems including natural beauty. The era of technology known today as the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is one of the solutions in the tourism sector in increasing competitiveness in Indonesia which is quite relevant. Over the next few years, the demand and supply of tourism have quite large potential. In this industrial era 4.0, it can be utilized in various forms as a promotional event.

Tourism information services use English, because English is the first global language used by foreign ethnic groups from anywhere. Therefore, the use of English is a reason for tourism actors in the world of tourism to use English very important. According to observations from several community shops in the tourist destination area in Kuningan District, West Java Province, some are already able to use English, especially those involved in tourism in terms of providing services and information to tourists with communication media that are in accordance with foreign tourists, namely communication in English. Thus, of course, this is very helpful for the community and government in developing professionalism in the tourism sector to encourage the realization of the use of English-speaking culture in the sustainable tourism sector in the industrial era 4.0. (Kawatak et al., 2020).

#### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion above about the benefits of English language culture in the sustainable tourism sector in the industrial era 4.0 in Kuningan District, West Java



Province, it can be concluded that English has good benefits for tourism industry players. The use of good English can increase the confidence of foreign guests to come to Kuningan District. This is because guests can easily communicate and provide services to get information about the destinations they visit according to the needs and desires of foreign tourists. The use of English in promotions is also very much needed. Tourism industry players are highly required to master a foreign language, at least English, to be able to provide services and satisfaction to foreign tourists which will later increase tourism sector income as the development and progress of local tourist destinations, especially in Kuningan District, West Java Province. It is hoped that foreign languages or English for tourism industry players, especially in Kuningan District, can be improved through training organized by the government as an effort to support the development of the sustainable tourism sector. Abundant tourism potential and adequate infrastructure without being equipped with capable human resources will make it very difficult to realize sustainable tourism in Kuningan District, West Java Province.

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