

# The Challenges Faced by Street Hawkers on the Use of English Language in Their Transaction Activity

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The high interest of international tourists to buy souvenirs in Yogyakarta allows street hawkers to meet international tourist as their costumers. They used English language to communicate with street hawkers. However, in reality many street hawkers still have difficulty in speaking English language.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research was to find the challenges faced by street hawkers on the use of English language in their transaction activity.

**Methods:** The researcher used qualitative research method and descriptive research design in collecting the data. To achieve the research purpose, the researcher hold observation and interview to three participants at Malioboro street.

**Results:** The challenges faced by street hawkers on the use of English language were lack of vocabulary mastery, difficulty in arranging complete sentences, difficulty in pronunciation, lack of self-confidence in speaking English language, difficulty to respond to the international tourists' speed and accent. And the researcher also found the reasons causing challenges. Those were age factor, low level of education, anxiety, the nature of first language and second language, lack of experience on using English language, and lack of motivation on learning English language.

**Conclusion:** Having challenges on the use of English language often happened among street hawkers. Those challenges and reasons were mostly caused by they perceive themself

**Keywords:** Tourism, English for tourism, street hawkers, challenges, English language.

## Introduction

Indonesia has a big potential being world tourist center. It is proven by the number of development and improvement places of tourism in several regions in Indonesia. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2017 there are 4.2 million tourists visiting Indonesia during January-April 2017. There is an increase of 19.34 percent compared to the same period in 2016. Based on Pesona Indonesia (as cited in Hilal, 2017), there are lots of famous places that become a target for international tourism. Those are Bali, Yogyakarta, Papua, Sumatera, and other spectacular tourism places.

Viko (2001) mentioned Yogyakarta is a popular city in Indonesia that is visited by many international tourists, because Yogyakarta has a lot of tourist destinations, such as Prambanan temple, Malioboro street, Brinjarjo market, Taman Sari, Parangtritis beach, and many others destinations. This is also proven by BPS (2017) data which mentioned the

number of regular visits of international tourists to Yogyakarta in 2017 reached 397,000 visits. There are several reasons that make international tourists choose to visit Yogyakarta. These were the attractiveness of tourism spots, culinary and cultural destinations (Viko, 2001).

The final report on tourist shopping analysis by tourism office of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) in 2017 showed the comparison of total expenditure of international tourists when traveling in Yogyakarta has increased from 2016 to 2017. That is from US \$ 408.8 to US \$ 428.34, and a total of US \$ 46.22 was used to buy souvenirs. The final report on tourist shopping analysis by tourism office of DIY (2017) also showed 13.8% silver, 10.0% batik, and 76.2% handicraft products (bags, accessories, and many more.) were bought by international tourists. The data showed being a street hawker is one of great business opportunities, because international

tourists have considerable interest to buy the souvenirs. The data of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (UMKM) (2017) showed more than 20% people in Yogyakarta are street hawkers.

The researcher's interest in this research was caused by the frequency of the researcher visits to Malioboro Street. The researcher visited Malioboro in every month. The researcher often found international tourists to buy souvenirs. They used English language to communicate with street hawkers. The researcher often found that when the street hawkers used English language, but some of them still have difficulty in speaking English language. The researcher also found that the international tourists feel uncomfortable because they are difficult to understand what street hawkers are talking about. If this phenomenon continues, it can cause the loss of desire of international tourists to shop, this reduces the income for street hawkers. And the greater impact of this phenomenon that the international

tourists do not want to visit Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta. That is why the researcher needs to do this research in order the street hawkers and the government could overcome this problem.

Then, this phenomenon encourages the researcher to conduct preliminary observation. After doing preliminary observation, the result showed that street hawkers may have challenges in speaking English language. Therefore, the researcher intends to find what are challenges faced by the street hawkers on the use of English language in their transaction activity with international tourists.

### **Research Methodology**

Qualitative research method was chosen in this study because the researcher intended to find the deep and detail explanation about the challenges on the use of English language among street hawkers by doing observation and interview.

Under the qualitative research method, the researcher intended to choose descriptive research design. The researcher asked some questions to the street hawkers. The researcher asked more detail explanation about their stories and experiences on using English language in their transaction with international tourists. The researcher supposed to find the information that naturally happened among street hawkers, what are their challenges of using English language in their transaction activity.

The research conducted at Malioboro street in Yogyakarta. The researcher chose Malioboro street because it was a strategic place to find a lot of street hawkers. Malioboro street has many shopping destinations from local market and malls. There are a lot of souvenirs that they sell. People also can find the cheap shopping area in the center of Yogyakarta, such as bags, shirts, shoes, accessories, and more souvenir items. Besides Malioboro street is a strategy place and

sells many variety of souvenirs, the researcher also found that many street hawkers did transaction with international tourists.

The researcher chose Malioboro street in order to get the suitable participants that the researcher need for the research. The observation and interview were held in Malioboro street several time. The researcher observed and interviewed the participants on October 2018. The researcher tried to choose the right time for observing and interviewing the street hawkers. It started with observation in the morning. Then, the researcher interviewed the participant in the afternoon.

There were three criteria of the participants in this research. First, the street hawkers should have experiences doing transaction with international tourists. Second, the street hawker in Yogyakarta, especially they sell souvenir at Malioboro street. And third, they were available and willing to be participants.

There are three participants in this research. They are Wati, Nur, and Utami.

Table. 01 Participants of the research

No.	Name	Products they sell	Years of selling
1	Wati	Batik clothes, t-shirts, bags, wallets, hats and others.	Twenty years
2	Nur	Bags, hats, sandals and others souvenirs.	Two years
3	Utami	Hat, bag, purse, others souvenirs.	Eleven years

There were two data collection methods in this research. First, the researcher used observation. Observation was used by the researcher to find out the information about challenges faced by street hawkers that occurs in the field. The researcher took the data in a way that was directly involved with participants. The researcher wanted to see everything that happened during street hawker's transaction with international tourists. It made the researcher got the real information from the participants.

The researcher used unstructured observation, because the researcher did not

have a hypothesis. The purpose of this observation was to find the data and determine the questions that the researcher wanted to ask to the participants in the interview. The data collecting technique in this observation was non-participant observation. The researcher intended to find the real information about challenges faced by street hawkers in their transaction activity by looking at participant without directly involved with their activities. The researcher only analyzed each data recorded or seen everything that happened in street hawkers' transaction with international tourist.

The researcher held observation before the interview because the researcher wanted to find the data in order to help the participant deciding the interview question. After doing observation, the researcher conducted interview. The researcher used interview as the data gathering instrument, the researcher used interview because it was a flexible tool for data collection. The aim of the researcher

to interview the participants was to clarify whether the data was right or wrong that researchers found when doing observation. It was helped the researcher to get the real, rich and detail explanation.

Besides using some questions based on observations, the researcher also prepared to use interview guide approach. The researcher prepared the interview guidelines by arranging some questions base on research questions that the researcher formulated. Interview guide approach was helped the researcher, because topic and issue was covered in earlier, in outline form, the researcher was decided some questions. It is very useful in order to keep the questions inline and increases the comprehensiveness of the data. On the other side, the researcher thought interview guide approach can help her to remember what the questions and the sequences of the interview.

The researcher started with creating observasi guideline and interview guideline. It took times a day. Then, the researcher

found the participants using snowball sampling. The observation conducted before doing interview. It started from first participant until the last participant. Observation and interview were held in several days. After the researcher conducted the interview, the researcher transcribed the data interviews from the recording. It took time approximately around several days. Then, the researcher analyzed the data from the interview by using coding and content analysis.

The first stage in data analysis process was transcribing. The researcher transcribed all the data recordings into written text. The data analysis that used in this study is coding. In this study, the researcher gives name or label to a piece of text or the transcript data from the interview. By used coding as a data analysis, it meant the researcher should identify the similar information and categorize them into specific term. The researcher did all the stages of coding such

as open coding, analytical coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

### **Finding and Discussion**

Initially the researcher only wanted to find a challenge faced by street hawkers on the use of English language in their transaction activity. But when the researcher collected and analyzed the data, the researcher interested to discuss the findings about the reasons causing challenges appear. It was because the researcher believed that when street hawker, government, and community service want to overcome the challenges, they must know about the caused of challenges first.

#### **The challenges on the use of English language.**

**Lack of vocabulary mastery.** Having lack of vocabulary mastery was one of Wati's challenges from her-self. When she was interviewed, Wati explained that she had problem to remember the English words. She said "So it was hard to remember the English words that I wanted

to say". Based on the observation data, the researcher found Wati was lack of vocabulary mastery. When Wati spoke she had difficult to speak some English language words. Then, Wati combined Bahasa Indonesia with English language. In the observation data, Wati said "Ohh, yes, yes, wait, many colors. This red, white, blue, *coklat*, *ungu*, *grey* and this, this". She said that sentence while showing the examples colors of clothes to the international costumer.

This challenge was also experienced by Nur. She was lacking of vocabulary mastery. She said "I felt that I don't know enough vocabulary". This also occurred when the observation was held. The researcher found Nur could not say any words in English language. When the costumer asked the colors of the clothes to Nur, she could not answer all the name of colors using English language. Nur said "Yes, I have black, pink, yellow color, *coklat*, *ungu*, and *biru tua*"

Utami's challenge was also lack of vocabulary mastery. Utami stated when she spoke English language she always thought about the words that she wanted to say. She said "I thought about the words". And she also stated "I still lacked of vocabulary". In the observation, the researcher also found that Utami could not speak some words in English language. In Utami's conversation with the international costumer, she said "No, *adanya yang lebih kecil*, small bag". She spoke stammered.

Wati, Nur, and Utami were participants who had challenge on vocabulary mastery. They realized that challenge came from themselves. Nation (2001) explained vocabulary knowledge allows the use of language, and the use of language leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. That was illustrated the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and the use of language as complementary in order to understand the language its-self. Nation

(2001) also said vocabulary is crucial to be mastered by the English language user. Vocabulary mastery is needed to reveal our ideas and to be able to understand the other people's sayings.

**Difficulty in arranging complete sentences.** Second challenge was lack of difficulties in arranging complete sentence. This also came from Wati's personal challenge. It made Wati hard to arrange the words being a sentence. In the interview, she revealed "When I was talking, I can't connect the sentence properly, I spoke intermittenly. When I wanted to talk long, I can't make it". In the observation data the researcher found that Wati spoke intermittenly. It was show when Wati was having a conversation with international costumer, Wati said " No Mr,,, no,,, this, only one hundred thousand. If yes,,, yes, if not,,, not" [spoke intermittenly].

Nur also had a challenge on arranging the complete sentences. She explained "I was confused when arranging the words. It was really difficult". In the



observation, the researcher also found that Nur had difficulty in arranging the words to be a sentence. When she wanted to ask the costumer about the number of clothes that the customer wanted to buy, she said “Oke, no problem,,, I give you,,,, you get if you buy five”.

Difficulty in arranging complete sentences was also Utami’s challenge. Utami felt confused in arranging the words to be a sentence. She said “I was often confused about arranging the words”. It also showed by the way Utami spoke to the international costumer. When Utami spoke, she spoke slowly and Utami’s face looked like to think many things in her mind.

This challenge experienced by all participants. Wati, Nur, and Utami realized that they had challenge in arranging complete sentences. According to Debata (2013), someone does not have a good knowledge of grammar then it will inhibit the smoothness of communication. Without grammar, a language will be

ambiguous and ineffective. Therefore, learn the grammar will create clearer and more effective communication.

**Difficulty in pronunciation.** Beside lacking of vocabulary mastery and difficulty arranging the complete sentences, Wati also had difficulty in pronunciation. She felt English words made her tongue felt stiff, because Wati was very familiar with Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia. In the interview data, she mentioned “It was hard to say, my tongue felt stiff when I spoke English language, because the words were more difficult to speak than Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia”. This challenge also showed when observation occurred. Wati had difficulty to pronounce the price of the souvenirs that she sold. She said “This two, *seratus empat puluh ribu*, emm one hundred fourteen [ ,fɔ:’ti:n ] thousand”. It showed by Wati’s mispronounced “forty” [ ’fɔ:ti ] to be “fourteen” [ ,fɔ:’ti:n ].

The second participant, Nur also felt difficulty in pronunciation. Sometime

Nur understood what the international customer said, but it was hard for her to say what she wanted to say. “Sometimes I understand what they said, but it is hard for me to said” Nur said. This challenge also appeared when the observation held. Nur mispronounced the word “Green” and “color”. She said “green” [ gri:n ] to be [ gran ], and she said “color” [ 'kʌl.ər ] to be [ 'kʌl.ər ]

The third participant, Utami felt confused when she wanted to speak English words. She spoke stiffly. It was because Utami always thought how to pronounce the words in English language. Utami explained “Then, I thought how to pronounce it”. She also explained “I have to think hard if I want to speak English language, so I spoke stiffly”.

All the participants also faced this challenge. Wati, Nur, and Utami mentioned that they were difficulty in pronunciation. They often mispronounced the English words that they wanted to say. Dewlash (2018) states improper

pronunciation can lead to negative impressions, misconceptions and ineffective communication. Dewlash (2018) also mentioned pronunciation errors can cause serious misunderstandings. Bad pronunciation can result in failure to convey messages and may cause problems in communication.

**Lack of self-confidence in speaking English language.** Another Wati’s challenge was lack of self-confidence in speaking English language. Wati felt that she was afraid of making mistake, because she would not even made her international costumers felt uncomfortable. She explained “Yes, like I said earlier, because my English was bad. Finally there was a fear to speak. The effect of feeling fear finally made me stammer. And I was confused when I spoke”. Other statement from Wati “I was afraid of being wrong, I was afraid they will feel uncomfortable”.

Utami also felt lack of self-confidence in speaking English language. She was nervous. Utami said “I was often

afraid talking English language". The other statements, she said "I felt nervous before talking, automatically I spoke haltingly". And "Yes, it was a problem, I felt embarrassed, and I was also feeling afraid if they will uncomfortable shopping at my place".

The first and third participant, Wati and Utami often felt afraid when talking English language. They revealed the challenge was actually from theirself. The statements mentioned previously were in line with Smith (2013) who said the one who lack of self-confidence in speaking a target language will be difficult to develop their language acquisition than those who have confidence.

**Difficulty to respond to the international tourists' speed and accent.** One of Wati's challenges, it was lack of listening ability in English language. In the interview finding, Wati revealed that she often got international customers, and some challenges were coming from them. The challenges were accent and speed of

speech. Some of international customer spoke very fast to Wati, and they also spoke with different accent. Wati said "I was confused what he was talking about, because he spoke very fast" and "I felt unclear when he spoke, the accent was different". This challenge also occurred while the observation was held. Based on the observation, this was also seen from the interaction between Wati and one of the international customers. Wati was silent and looking confused when she heard an international customer talking very fast to her.

Weinrauch and Swanda (as cited in Sullivan, 2011) suggest that listening is the most important form of communication, but still often overlooked; maybe more attention should be directed at the subject listening. Both students and employers may need to better recognize the importance of this communicative function. Krashen (as cited in Hamouda, 2013) argued that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic

information they hear. Thus language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input. Without understanding inputs at the right level, there will be misunderstanding.

### **The reasons causing challenges.**

**Age factor.** For Wati, age factor caused her challenges on using English language appear, because Wati was the oldest participants. She believed age was a trigger that made difficult for her to remember English language words. She said “I was already old, so it is hard to remember the English words that I wanted to say”. She also stated “I was old so I often forgot the vocabulary”. This finding was related with Moyer (2004) said a relatively late onset of English studies was arguably another important reason for speaking problem.

**Low level of education.** The other reason that made Wati’s challenges appeared was low level of education. The low level of

education made Wati lacked of vocabulary mastery. She said “I graduated from elementary school. In the past, when I was at school, I never learned English language”. Wati revealed that her educational background caused difficulties in speaking English.

This reason also caused Utami’s challenge, because she graduated from junior high school. Utami thought she did not have many experiences in learning English. She said “I graduated from junior high school”. She just learnt English language at school but it was a long time ago. She explained “Once, but some of English lessons I have forgotten because it is been long time.” According to Schwarz and Terrill (2000), the other reason for lack of ability in English foreign language user is low level of education. The low level of education will cause the difficulties in learning a second or foreign language.

**Anxiety.** Wati stated one of the reasons caused challenges appear was anxiety. She

felt afraid of making mistake. The effect of feeling afraid of making mistake caused the difficulty in pronunciation. She was afraid to make her costumer felt uncomfortable. Wati said “I was afraid of being wrong. I was afraid they will feel uncomfortable”. In other question, Wati also answered “If you told to people who did not connect. It would not even make them feel comfortable”. She also mentioned “I felt afraid of being wrong. And finally I found difficult to speak English language”.

Feeling afraid of making mistake was also felt by Utami. She stated “Yes, like what I said earlier, because my English was bad, finally there was a fear to speak. The effect of feeling fear finally made me stammer. And I was confused when I spoke”. Utami’s feeling also made her to think hard about how to speak English language well. It made her thought too much. She thought about what is the words, how is the grammar, and how is the pronunciation. And all that thought caused

Utami felt confused and nervous when she spoke.

Anxiety is a feeling of fear, nervousness, worry and a sense of tension associated with the autonomic nervous system (Horwitz, 2001). Crookall and Oxford (as cited in Horwitz, 2001) suggested that problems with self-esteem, risk-taking, and confidence in language are caused by language anxiety and it will end up inhibiting proficiency in a second or foreign language.

**The nature of first language and second language.** This reason stated by Wati. She felt difficult to speak English language because the comparison of native language. Wati explained “Because the words were more difficult to speak than Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia”. The comparison of Bahasa Indonesia made Wati felt difficult for her to remember and pronounce the English language words.

Same with Wati, Utami told to the researcher that she felt nervous when speaking English language to her

international customer, because she felt more comfortable spoke Bahasa Indonesia instead of speaking English language. She said “It was hard for me. I was nervous, if I asked to choose I wanted to sell using Bahasa Indonesia.” Utami also said “Because I felt more comfortable when I spoke Bahasa Indonesia instead of speaking language”. According to Schwarz and Terril (2000), other reasons for the lack ability in speaking English language were the lack of effective study habits, and comparison of learner’s native language, particulary if the learner is used to a non-Roman alphabett, and the lack of practice outside.

**Lack of experience on using English language.** This reason came from Nur. She realized that she never learned English language enough. She explained “Because I realized I have not learned enough. My experience was also very lacking because I had only been selling for two years”. Nur’s statement was inline with Tatham and Morton’s (2006) statement. They said

many people reported that they can understand a language but they cannot speak, it was because lack of experiences and education.

**Lack of motivation in learning English language.** Then, the other reason was lack of motivation on learning English language. The effect of lacking motivation in learning English caused the lack of vocabulary. Nur told to the researcher, when she was at school. She was very rare to learn English language, because she didn’t like her English teacher. She said “When I was in school, I was very rare to pay attention to my English teacher”. She also explained “He [Nur’s English teacher] was a fierce person, so I didn’t like him, if I was wrong I would have been scolded. He said I was lazy to study, he said I just played”. The effect of lacking motivation in learning English caused the lack of vocabulary. Nur explained “I realized I have not learn enoughts, so I still lacked of vocabulary mastery”.

According to Al-Mahrooqi and Tabakow (2013) explained motivation is an effective factor of a deep self-confidence to achieve something, feelings, learning attitudes, and personality types. The lack of motivation in learning English language seems to be common challenges. Schwarz (2003) also explained the lack of motivation will effect on employment and academic pursuits, social interactions and personal relationship, and self-esteem.

In conclude, the researcher found two findings from the interviews and observation. First, the researcher found all the participants had challenges on using English language in their transaction activity. The challenges were lack of vocabulary mastery, difficulty in arranging complete sentences, difficulty in pronunciation, lack of self-confidence in speaking English language, difficulty to respond to the international tourists' speed and accent. And second, the finding was about the reasons caused challenges appear. Those were age factor, low level of

education, anxiety, the nature of first language and second language, lack of experience on using English language, and lack of motivation on learning English language.

### **Conclusion**

English language for tourism is the language used to communicate in certain areas of tourism. It aims for the success of a communication among people who use it in the tourism sector as between them and their costumers (Vukovic-vojnovic & Nicin, 2008). Prachanant (2012) also mentioned the role of English language is necessary for tourism sector as a means to communicate, negotiate, and execute transactions with tourists. However, speaking English language well was very necessary among street hawkers. But in reality, street hawkers had challenges on the use of English language. The data were obtained by observing and interviewing three participants. The findings of this study had addressed a research question. The research question was what are the

challenges faced by street hawkers on the use of English language in their transaction activity with international tourists.

To answer the research question in this study, the researcher identified the findings into two categories, those were the challenges faced by street hawkers on the use of English language in their transaction activity, and the reasons caused the challenges appear. For the first category, it was about the challenges faced by street hawker. The challenges were lack of vocabulary mastery, difficulty in arranging complete sentences, difficulty in pronunciation, lack of self-confidence in speaking English language, difficulty to respond to the international tourists' speed and accent.

Second category was about the reasons caused the challenges appear. First reason was age factor. Second, it was low level of education. Then, it was the nature of first language and second language. Fourth, it was anxiety. Then, the reason was lack of experience on using English

language. And the last was lack of motivation on learning English language.

In conclusion, the street hawkers often used English language for their transaction activity with international tourists. But on the other hand, having challenges on the use of English language often happened among street hawkers. Those challenges and reasons were mostly caused by they perceive themselves

### **Recommendation**

**For street hawkers.** These findings gave some views about how the street hawkers perceive themselves on the challenges of using of English language. Street hawkers assumed that the challenge came from their self. Street hawkers should change their views. They should motivate themselves to be more confident in speaking English language.

**For language institution and government.** The findings can be used as a consideration for conducting community services. By knowing street hawkers' challenges and the reasons causing the



challenges, the community services and the government should help them to overcome their English language challenges. The community service and government should design the course that focuses on giving motivation and self-confidence to the street hawkers on the use of English language.

**For pre-service teacher.** Pre-service teacher could use this finding in order to find the solution when they met their students' challenges on the use of English language. Pre-service teacher should motivate their students to be more confident. They also should make a course for their students that focus on giving motivation and self-confidence.

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