



English Language in Tourism Industry: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: Language plays a critical role in the communication between tourists and those who are related in tourism industry. Since English is used as the international lingua franca in this modern era, most tourist establishments require people to be fluent in English since it can greatly help develop the tourism industry. Communication skills are crucial in the tourism sector, as they are required for the majority of tourism activities. The main purpose of this scoping review was to identify the importance of English language in tourism. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) standards were used to report this scoping review. For this review, three databases such as JSTOR, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Semantic Scholar were used for scoping data. About 10 studies were found that is suitable for selection.

Keywords: English language, english for tourism, language skills, communication

1. Introduction

The world has grown aware of the importance of tourism in a country's economic development, with tourism serving as the terms of profit in many countries worldwide. The tourism sector has significantly improved in recent decades, particularly in tourism management and industry. Learning a foreign language is an important element of the job for people in the tourism industry because it is the primary way of communicating with tourists (Pek et al., 2019). It also aids in the understanding of their cultural distinctions and improves the tourism industry's quality (Sindik & Božinović, 2013).

It is critical to be aware of a language's cultural aspects during the learning process, because knowledge of various cultures aids a learner's ability to acquire a language and appraise its cultural values (Hamza, 2018; Prachanant, 2012). In the tourism industry, mastering a foreign language is essential. Communicative language ability is also crucial for developing intercultural competence (Ne'matullah et al., 2021a; Tziora et al., 2016).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a language learning method centred on the learners' requirements (Hutchinson & Waters, 1997). It implies that the curriculum and teaching strategies used in ESP classes are centred on the needs of the students. It agrees with Xhaferi (2009), who claims that ESP courses focus more on "language in context" (grammar rules or methods of structuring the language) than "language usage." Given the difficulties mentioned above, higher education in tourism must provide its students with globally relevant abilities like management and language proficiency, which serve as the building blocks of communication in the tourism industry.

This review underlines the connection between the significance of the English language and the tourism industry between the workforce and tertiary level students in Asia. Consequently, the primary goal of this scoping review is to locate prior studies on the importance of the English language in Tourism in Asia.

2. Methodology

This scoping review was conducted based on Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework: 1) identifying research questions; 2) identifying relevant studies; 3) selecting relevant studies; 4) charting the data; and 5) collating, summarising and reporting the results. This scoping review was written according to preferred Reporting items for systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Ne'matullah et al., 2022). Fig. 1 depicts the stages discussed in the following sub-sections that pertain to this study.



Fig. 1. Methodological framework (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005)

2.1 Identifying the Research Questions

The importance of the English language on tourism has been considerably reviewed since tourism has been demonstrated worldwide. So, the research question for this scoping review was, 'What is observed from the existing literature about the importance of the English language on tourism?' as a guide, to a more significant extent, research in this study. Table 1 displays the fundamental research questions formed based on the research objectives derived from the PPC framework.

Table 1. Research questions were formed based on PPC (Population/ Concept/ Context).

| Research Questions | Research Objectives |
|--|--|
| 1. How is the research focused on the importance of the English language in the tourism industry distributed? | 1. To explore the distribution of research conducted within the last five years. |
| 2. What is the research design related to the studies of the importance of the English language in the tourism industry? | 2. To identify the main types of research methods used from the past study. |
| 3. What are the purposes related to the importance of the English language in the tourism industry? | 3. To analyse the purposes of the studies of the importance of the English language in the tourism industry. |
| 4. What are the elements of the study found in past research? | 4. To investigate the elements or factors from past studies related to the importance of the English language in the tourism industry. |
| 5. What are the findings of past studies on the importance of the English language in the tourism industry? | 5. To summarise the results of past studies on the importance of the English language in the tourism industry. |

2.2 Identifying Relevant Studies

The search method was purposefully broad to ensure that all relevant studies were found. This process involves using search terms related to the importance of the English language in the tourism industry.

Table 2. Search string

| Search Directory | Search String |
|------------------|--|
| ERIC | (Importance OR significance OR consequence OR relevance OR influence) |
| Semantic Scholar | AND (English OR "English language") AND (tourism OR "tourism industry" |
| JSTOR | OR "tourism management") |

2.3 Study Selection

The study inclusion criteria are provided in Table 3. All articles' titles and abstract screening are based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

| Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Articles published from 2018-2022 | 1. Articles before 2018 |
| 2. English language | 2. Not English language |
| 3. Focus on tourism | 3. Not related to tourism |
| 4. Focus on the Asia region | 4. Other regions besides Asia |
| 5. With full text | 5. Without full text |

2.4 Charting the Data

The researcher determined which articles to extract for summary and analysis after piloting the Microsoft Excel-based data charting form, providing a representative sampling of the research to be reviewed. The author, year of publication, country of origin, study design, topic, setting, theoretical model, target group, focus elements, purpose, and significant findings were all extracted using the finalised data charting form. Each article's data was retrieved and charted independently and then evaluated the extractions and updated the data charting form using an iterative process.

2.5 Collating, Summarising, and Reporting the Results

The author summarised the key findings from the charting process and reported. Using an inductive content analysis approach, the author integrated the key findings into potential evidence-informed suggestions. In order to condense and categorise data into mutually exclusive concepts, this method entailed applying codes to the key findings. Next, the author reviewed and revised the coding for relevant evidence-based recommendations and further reduced and grouped the data, which was then compiled into broader congruent categories.

3. Results

The search identified 188 studies through three selected databases of JSTOR, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Semantic Scholar. Fourteen titles were found from the JSTOR database, while 71 titles were identified from the ERIC database. One hundred three titles were extracted from the Semantic scholar database on the search sign applied. Nine duplicates were excluded from 188, leaving 179 articles screened by title and abstract. At the screening stage, 168 studies were excluded. 11 titles were assessed for qualification by data extraction from full text. Of the 11 articles, five were excluded for various reasons such as focusing on elementary school, variants and coinage, reality technology and not full text provided. Since there is not enough article to support this review, hand-search was used and found four more studies related to the importance of the English language in tourism. Hence, ten studies were identified and included in this review.

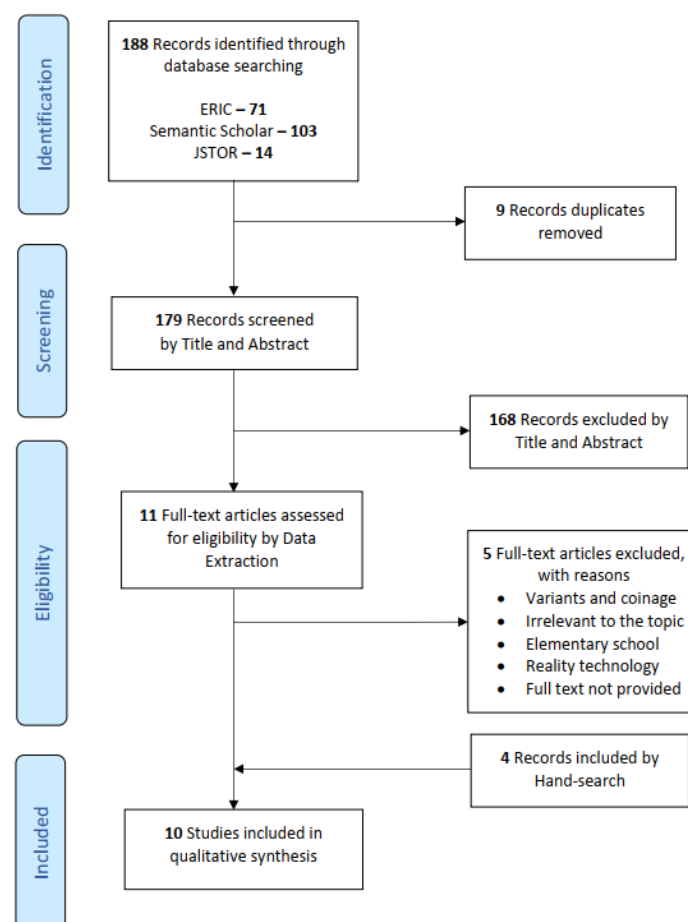


Fig. 2. Flow diagram of the scoping review

Table 4. Characteristics of included studies

| Author(s)/Country | Research Design | Purpose | Elements | Findings |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Khoirunnisa et al. (2018) Indonesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Semi-structured interview | This study focused on teachers' and students' opinions on teaching speaking for the Tourism program in a private Vocational School in Indonesia. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English for tourism Teaching Speaking | The findings revealed that English for Tourism places a greater emphasis on improving students' speaking abilities. |
| Yusoff et al. (2020) Malaysia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | This study investigates pupils' willingness to communicate in English as a second language by how much tourism activities may influence students' English proficiency. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Communication Readiness Willingness to communicate | The findings revealed that pupils' attitudes and behaviours in utilising English during school hours were impacted by their willingness to communicate in L2. |
| Chumphong & Embree (2022) Thailand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Test & Post-Test Surveys Satisfaction questionnaire | The purpose of this study is to 1) look into the impacts of CBI training on awareness and content knowledge, investigate the English knowledge of young people involved in mangrove forest conservation and ecotourism and 2) learn more about how young people think about the relevance of mangrove forests, natural resources, and ecotourism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English training course Content-based instruction Ecotourism | The findings show that as a result of the training course, all participants' language abilities have considerably improved. |
| Amirbakzadeh & Vakil Alroaia (2020) Iran | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive survey | This study focused on analysing the effects of learning English, listening, speaking, reading, and writing on tourism development in Iran by utilising the mediating functions of teaching in English and effective communication. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism development Language skills | According to the findings, effective communication and education in English are influenced by listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. On the other hand, effective communication and teaching in English impact tourism development. |
| Almomani et al. (2020) Jordan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative survey | This study focuses on the significance of English in the tourism industry's development, and the importance of collaboration between the educational and tourism sectors, which provide tourism services to tourists, is highlighted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native language Cooperation Development | The findings show that most foreign visitors to Aqaba have difficulty communicating with locals. |
| Husain et al. (2021) Indonesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative survey (Focus group) | The primary goal of this study is to strengthen the Dumati village community's knowledge and comprehension of the relevance of the English language in relation to the management of tourism attractions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable tourism English training | The findings of this article that related to the topic are that the mastery of a foreign language, notably English, is essential to the entire process of communication between locals and foreign tourists. |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Rahayu (2019) | • Cross-sectional survey | This study intends to elucidate students' perceptions of the value of communications abilities (speaking, reading, listening, and writing) in the English language among hospitality students. | • Communication skills • Perceptions • English language | The findings reveal students' perspectives on the value of each English skill and their approach to studying English. |
| Indonesia | | | | |
| Al-Malki et al. (2022) | • Quantitative Cross-sectional survey | The study's goal was to examine the Saudi tourism workforce's English language communication demands and propose an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) model for teaching English based on their needs. | • Language teaching ESP • Communication • Tourism | The findings show that understanding instructions and requirements, as well as providing information about tourist attractions, were found to be highly crucial to their profession. Also, writing and grammatical accuracy were less significant than reading and vocabulary. Based on these findings, the study recommends that these courses are restructured and that the teaching methods used to be reconsidered to ensure that learners receive effectively instruction that is geared toward the intended learning goals and fulfils their future workplace demands. |
| Saudi Arabia | | | | |
| Qaddumi et al. (2021) | • Qualitative and Quantitative Survey | This study looked at how English is used to train students for jobs in tourism and hospitality in Palestinian tourist destinations. | • Tourism • Hospitality • Workplace | According to the findings, English plays a critical role in the development of the tourism business. |
| Palestine | | | | |
| Widiastuti et al. (2021) | • Qualitative Survey (Interviews and Open-ended questionnaire) | The purpose of this research was to look into the function of English in the development of tourism and the economy in Indonesia. | • English development • Tourism • Economy | |
| Indonesia | | | | |

3.1 Past Studies Distribution

Ten studies were published between 2018 and 2022 in Asia, as shown in Fig. 2. In 2018 and 2019, a total of n=1 articles (Rahayu, 2019; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018) were found each year to have researched the importance of the English language in the tourism industry. Additionally, n=3 studies were identified in the year 2020 (Almomani et al., 2020; Yusoff et al., 2020; Amirbakzadeh et al., 2021, 2020; Husain et al., 2021; Qaddumi et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021) from the three databases. A total of n=2 titles was found in 2022 (Al-Malki et al., 2022; Chumphong & Embree, 2022), corresponding to the importance of English in tourism.

For the distribution of studies by country, the highest number of studies were conducted in Indonesia with =4 (Husain et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021; Rahayu, 2019; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018) sequentially. Six countries, namely Malaysia, Thailand, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Palestine, had been recorded with one study each on the importance of the English language in the tourism industry.

3.2 Research Design Used

Of the ten identified articles, n=4 studies applied qualitative survey as a research design (Husain et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018; Almomani et al., 2020). Furthermore, n=1 studies applied quantitative surveys (Yusoff et al., 2020), as shown in Table 4. One study used qualitative and quantitative research designs (Qaddumi et al., 2021). There was n=1 study, each with Pre-Test and Post-Test Surveys and satisfaction questionnaires (Chumphong &

Embree, 2022) and a descriptive survey (Amirbakzadeh et al., 2020). Two articles used cross-sectional survey research design types (Al-Malki et al., 2022; Rahayu, 2019).

3.3 Purposes of the Study

The articles show there were several reasons for conducting the study of the importance of the English language in the tourism industry. All of the causes were different areas such as the focus on communication skills, function of the English language in tourism development, and educational purpose. Based on Table 4, there were $n=3$ articles that focused on communication skills on how knowledge of English affects advanced tourism (Yusoff et al., 2020; Al-Malki et al., 2022; Chumphong & Embree, 2022). Next, there were $n=3$ studies conducted concentrating on how the English language can help develop the country's tourism industry (Husain et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021; Amirbakzadeh et al., 2020). As shown in Table 4, $n=4$ research focuses on English skills in education for tourism (Qaddumi et al., 2021; Almomani et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2019; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018).

3.4 Elements of the Study

As shown in Table 4, English for tourism was divided into four elements discussed in the past research: readiness and willingness, teaching and training students, communication skills, and economic development. One article emphasises enthusiasm and desire to communicate in English (Yusoff et al., 2020). A total of $n=5$ studies discussed teaching and training English for the tourism field (Chumphong & Embree, 2022; Al-Malki et al., 2022; Husain et al., 2021; Qaddumi et al., 2021; Almomani et al., 2020). On the other hand, $n=3$ research focuses on communication skills for tourism purposes (Amirbakzadeh et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2019; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018). Additionally, one study focuses on the economic development of the tourism industry (Widiastuti et al., 2021).

3.5 Findings of the Study

Based on the findings of this scoping study, $n=4$ studies showed that mastery of the English language is essential in tourism (Al-Malki et al., 2022; Husain et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021; Amirbakzadeh et al., 2020). A total of $n=3$ findings related to the importance of improving speaking ability in tourism (Chumphong & Embree, 2022; Qaddumi et al., 2021; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018). The subsequent $n=2$ findings of the research emphasise that people's attitudes are impacted by the willingness to study English (Yusoff et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2019). In addition, one article stated that foreign visitors faced difficulties communicating with the locals (Almomani et al., 2020).

4. Discussion

The importance of English in the tourism industry is crucial. Employees in the tourism industry must communicate effectively in English to be used in their workplace. Davies' (2000) study was one of the first to look into the language demands of the tourism industry. Her findings in the UK showed that knowing a foreign language benefited people working in the tourism industry. English is widely used for interpersonal communication because employees in the tourism and travel industry have a variety of responsibilities, such as handling the telephone, providing destination guides, making online ticketing, making online hotel bookings, arranging for car rentals, and so on (Al-khatib, 2005).

In line with the previous study (Chumphong & Embree, 2022; Husain et al., 2021; Widiastuti et al., 2021; Almomani et al., 2020), the majority of the participants stated that English is critical to their jobs. They ranked the following skills as follows: speaking and pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, writing, and reading as well as grammar. In relation to teaching the English language for tourism, the studies (Al-Malki et al., 2022; Chumphong & Embree, 2022; Qaddumi et al., 2021; Amirbakzadeh et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2019; Khoirunnisa et al., 2018) discovered that speaking, listening, reading, and writing class can motivate students to speak English more actively. Pham and Malvetti (2012) found a similar effect in a study of teachers' attitudes toward teaching English for the ESP Program. Besides, similar needs for the English language were found in the study by Ne'matullah et al. (2021b) on foreign construction workers.

That being the case, it is clear that the English language is really important in the tourism industry since the significant focal point is English (Pek et al., 2019). Tourism communication requires many skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The previous study highlighted the crucial aspect of English's importance in tourism by relating how it affects the workplace and tertiary level students. In order to achieve the desired goals in the tourism industry, it is necessary to give both employees and students an effective way of learning and teaching English in the developing tourism industry since it is crucial because English is the lingua franca in this modern era.

5. Conclusion

The result of the studies in the above section presented how important is the English language in developing the tourism industry in Asia. As previously said, the topic of the importance of English language in tourism is still a concept that is studied in specific and local contexts. This limits the ability to generalise its potential effects on specific elements of English language in tourism sector in Asia. This scoping review aids in documenting best practices that can be applied in various situations and contexts.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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