

Toward integrative communicative competence: Linguistic and intercultural needs of tour guide trainees

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to identify the linguistic and intercultural needs of tour guide trainees as a foundation for developing integrative communicative competence through English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials that promote intercultural awareness. The trainees, who are currently at the A1 proficiency level, exhibit a rudimentary understanding of the intercultural aspects pertinent to tourists. This deficiency manifests in a conspicuous lack of self-assurance and proficiency in English communication. This case prompted an analysis of their specific learning needs. A qualitative case study was conducted, involving 23 trainees and one senior tour guide at Prambanan Temple. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicate that the primary need for trainees is the development of effective communication skills, particularly in listening and speaking, through materials that integrate linguistic competence and intercultural awareness. The analysis identified grammar and pronunciation as the most essential linguistic elements, while intercultural communication was deemed the most crucial cultural aspect. Consequently, ESP materials for tour guides should integrate B1-level English proficiency with intercultural understanding to prepare them for effective professional communication in global tourism contexts.

Keywords

integrative communicative competence, intercultural awareness, English for Specific Purposes, tour guide training, needs analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a growing global sector, and tour guides play a crucial role in facilitating interactions between tourists and destinations. The ability to communicate in English is not only crucial for the exchange of information but also serves as a conduit for effective understanding of cultural differences. In this context, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), or English tailored to professional needs, is a relevant approach to improving tour guide competency. ESP focuses on teaching language oriented to professional needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Furthermore, intercultural awareness is imperative for tour guides to communicate effectively and respectfully with tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. This perspective is consistent with the prevailing understanding of cultural competence as encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that facilitate effective intercultural communication. As recent studies suggest, communicative competence in the contemporary era necessitates the integration of both linguistic and intercultural elements to equip learners with the necessary skills to engage in effective professional interactions (Puspitasari, 2023; Wahyuni Floriasti, 2022).

Nevertheless, proficiency in English alone is insufficient for a tour guide to communicate effectively. Furthermore, intercultural awareness, defined as an understanding of the values, norms, and practices of diverse cultural groups, is imperative to prevent misunderstandings and enhance the travel experience. Intercultural awareness is regarded as one of the fundamental competencies in Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997), which underscores the significance of cultural sensitivity in cross-cultural interactions. In the context of tour guides, this entails not only the transmission of factual information about the destination, but also the capacity to adapt communication style, attitudes, and responses according to the cultural background of tourists (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Thus, the necessity for a combination of robust English language competencies and intercultural awareness constitutes a fundamental foundation for training tour guides, particularly in world heritage destinations such as the Prambanan Temple, which draws international tourists from diverse countries. This finding aligns with Puspitasari (2023) who emphasized that intercultural sensitivity is cultivated through effective interactions and reflective engagement with individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

A review of studies on tour guide training reveals a predominant emphasis on linguistic competencies such as vocabulary mastery, spoken communication proficiency, and active listening skills, while intercultural awareness is frequently disregarded in needs analyses. This situation highlights a research gap, particularly in light of the growing demand for tour guides who are not only proficient in English but also possess a deep understanding and ability to respond appropriately to the multifaceted cultural background of tourists. Consequently, a comprehensive needs analysis that integrates English language proficiency with intercultural sensitivity is imperative to develop more comprehensive training programs. Previous ESP-related research supports this integration, with Mandasari & Wulandari (2023) demonstrating that digital tools such as *Kahoot!* enhance linguistic engagement and motivation, as demonstrated by Wahyuni Floriasti (2022) who show that multicultural speaking and listening activities foster intercultural empathy and communicative competence. These studies affirm the mounting importance of designing ESP materials that integrate language proficiency and intercultural understanding, particularly in the context of tourism. Recent studies highlight that developing intercultural competence through pedagogical and critical incident tasks can significantly enhance learners' communicative ability in real-world contexts (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2025).

While several studies have examined the English language needs of local tour guides, highlighting skills such as speaking, listening, and contextual vocabulary, few have explicitly investigated the need for intercultural awareness as part of a comprehensive needs analysis for tour guides. Thus, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the importance of identifying culturally specific needs as a basis for developing ESP training for tour guides. Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating intercultural awareness into language learning (Idris, 2020; Kartikasari et al., 2019). Similarly, Su (2008) reported that ethnographic interviews facilitated students' cross-cultural understanding and communication skills. In the tourism context, Rejeki & Swetasurya (2023) as well as Ratminingsih et al. (2018) emphasised the need for ESP materials tailored to local culture and contextual situations for tour guides. Beyond tourism, Orna-Montesinos (2017) demonstrated how ESP programs can integrate intercultural elements through authentic tasks, and Phongsirikul (2019) revealed that students have positive attitudes toward intercultural learning experiences.

The present study proposes a novel integration of linguistic needs, intercultural awareness, and task-based demands into a unified diagnostic framework for tour guide trainees. This combination has not been explicitly explored in previous ESP-for-tourism research. Contrary to the approach of preceding studies, which examined linguistic and cultural needs in isolation, this research adopts a holistic perspective that acknowledges their interdependence. The model conceptualizes integrative communicative competence as an operational model for material development in tourism contexts, emphasizing the need for coherence between language performance, intercultural sensitivity, and task execution. By integrating these competencies into a unified framework, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the necessary skills for effective communication in guiding settings.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a needs analysis of prospective tour guide trainees in the Prambanan Temple area. This is particularly important because the training conducted at HPI Prambanan did not employ learning media specifically designed to integrate intercultural awareness into their instructional materials. The program's utilization of materials was found to be deficient in its provision of historical and narrative content exclusively focused on the Prambanan temples. This limitation hindered the program's capacity to foster English language proficiency and enhance intercultural awareness, both of which are pivotal for professional guiding practices. Therefore, the present study focuses on identifying and analyzing the trainees' linguistic and intercultural needs as the foundation for developing integrative communicative competence. Integrative communicative competence is defined as a unified framework in which language skills, task performance, and intercultural awareness mutually reinforce one another within real-world guiding interactions. The establishment of such a framework necessitates a thorough examination of theoretical perspectives on needs analysis and intercultural awareness, which are indispensable components of ESP material design (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). In the context of tour guiding, these competencies entail not only proficient language skills but also contextual knowledge of tourism and the ability to interact effectively with foreign visitors. This aligns with Long (2005) assertion that needs analysis must encompass linguistic, pragmatic, and social competencies relevant to workplace communication.

Although this research focuses on needs analysis, the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework remains a relevant theoretical perspective. TBLT emphasises the use of authentic tasks as a means of language learning, enabling learners to acquire skills that can be directly applied in real-life situations (Nunan, 2004). In the context of ESP for tour guides, TBLT enables the design of activities that simulate everyday interactions with tourists, such as explaining the history of a temple, providing instructions, or responding to tourists' questions. Thus, the results of the needs analysis can form the basis for developing communicative tasks that are more contextual and relevant to the world of tour guiding work.

The concept of intercultural awareness refers to the awareness of differences in values, norms, and cultural practices that influence interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Byram (1997) developed a model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which encompasses knowledge, interpretive skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness. In the context of tour guides, these competencies are crucial because they must be able to navigate cultural differences in a way that respects tourists while maintaining local cultural identity. Integrating intercultural awareness into a tour guide needs analysis will provide a more comprehensive picture of the cross-cultural communication challenges faced in the field. The findings of recent studies, such as those by Permatasari (2023) and Puspitasari (2023), confirm that integrating linguistic and intercultural dimensions is central to achieving holistic communicative competence in globalized settings.

Based on the three theoretical frameworks above, a needs analysis for tour guides should include specific English language competencies (ESP), task-based learning strategies (TBLT), and intercultural awareness (ICC). Thus, the results of this study can provide theoretical and practical foundations in designing English language training for tour guides that are more in line with professional demands and the realities of cross-cultural communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design involving 23 English-speaking tour guide trainees over the course of a semester and a senior tour guide at the Prambanan Temple. The trainees aged 17-25 years are drawn from various institutions and major in Tourism and Hospitality. Two complementary instruments were used: a 20-item needs analysis questionnaire and unstructured interviews with senior tour guides. The questionnaire, developed based on CEFR descriptors Council of Europe (2001), (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), Blundell, Jon (1987), Nunan (2004) and intercultural competence frameworks by (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), provided a comprehensive overview of trainees' linguistic and intercultural needs by examining their target needs (necessities, lacks, and wants), learning needs (input, procedures, learner and trainer roles, and learning settings),

and personal background information. To enrich and validate these findings, unstructured interviews were conducted to gather deeper insights into participants' opinions, experiences, challenges, learning interests, and the materials used, as well as to identify skill gaps that may affect job performance.

Multiple data collection techniques were employed, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis, to obtain comprehensive information aligned with the research objectives. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews served as the primary tools, while observations captured natural behaviors and documents provided contextual support. All data were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed systematically using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Widoyoko's (2012) formula, Likert-scale intervals, and SPSS for more advanced statistical processing. Qualitative data from interviews and field notes followed Lodico et al. (2010) procedures of organizing, examining, coding, and interpreting the data to identify emerging themes. Together, these methods ensured a thorough and well-validated understanding of the research problem.

For deeper interpretation, the study applied Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing alongside Braun & Clarke (2016) thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns within the dataset. Data were organized into descriptive narratives and tables, followed by the formulation of conclusions that addressed the research questions and guided the development of material recommendations. Data validity was ensured through source and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documents to strengthen accuracy and reliability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research serve as a fundamental basis for developing and designing instructional materials for tour guide trainees. These findings will later be utilized in the creation of the English for Tour Guides – Incorporating Intercultural Awareness learning materials, which are intended to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process and support the improvement of trainees' intercultural awareness.

Tour Guide Trainees' English Proficiency Level Based on CEFR

The questionnaire distributed to the trainee included statements related to their English proficiency levels. The purpose of this section was to determine the extent of the trainees' English competence.

Table 1. The Current Level of English Skills of Trainees

Level of English Skills		The Number of Trainees	Percentage
Basic User	A1	8	35%
	A2	6	26%
Independent User	B1	6	26%
	B2	2	9%
Proficient User	C1	1	4%
	C2	0	0

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it can be observed that the majority of participants possess English proficiency at the A1 level, indicating that most trainees are still categorized as basic users. This proficiency level is below the intermediate level (B1), which is regarded as the considered necessary for professional tour guides, according to a senior tour guide from HPI Prambanan. This finding aligns with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001), which defines B1 as the minimum threshold for independent communication in professional and intercultural contexts.

In addition to general language proficiency, trainees reported difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills, which hinder their ability to interact effectively with tourists. These challenges echo Hutchinson & Waters (1987) view that ESP learners require language skills that are both communicative and contextually relevant to their specific professional domains. They also acknowledged the importance of intercultural communication

competence, as limited knowledge of historical and cultural traditions, as well as potential stereotypes, can affect their interactions with visitors. The senior tour guide emphasised that, beyond general proficiency, mastery of pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and awareness of cultural norms is essential for competent tour guide performance. This reflects Permatasari (2023) and Puspitasari (2023) argument that limited linguistic proficiency, especially in speaking and pronunciation, restricts learners' ability to perform effectively in cross-cultural exchanges.

Furthermore, the trainees' awareness of intercultural communication competence was limited, particularly regarding historical and cultural traditions, which occasionally led to communication barriers or unintentional cultural misunderstandings. This reflects Byram's (1997) argument that intercultural communicative competence involves not only linguistic and sociolinguistic abilities but also attitudes of curiosity, openness, and respect toward other cultures. As the senior tour guide noted, beyond general proficiency, mastery of pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and cultural awareness is essential for achieving professionalism in tour guiding. This aligns with Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) framework, which positions cultural awareness as integral to effective meaning-making in intercultural encounters.

In line with these findings, recent ESP-based research (Mandasari & Wulandari, 2023; Wahyuni Floriasti, 2022) underscores the need for materials that simultaneously strengthen language accuracy and intercultural sensitivity through interactive, task-based learning. Therefore, this study highlights that enhancing tour guides' English competence must be complemented by developing their intercultural awareness to meet the communicative demands of global tourism effectively.

ESP Learning Topics Needed by Tour Guide Trainees

The development of instructional materials plays a crucial role in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training programs for tour guides that integrate intercultural awareness. The main goal is to ensure that learning activities are relevant and aligned with the trainees' actual needs. As Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) emphasize, ESP materials must be directly derived from a thorough needs analysis so that they meet learners' target situation and learning situation requirements. Therefore, such programs should not only provide effective training but also deliver creative and context-based instruction that reflects real-life situations and the specific learning objectives of the participants. This aligns with Long's (2005) argument that needs analysis must capture the linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural competencies necessary for workplace communication.

Learning materials refer to instructional topics and resources that guide both teaching and learning processes. Consequently, the English for Specific Purposes materials integrated with intercultural awareness for tour guide trainees are designed to achieve targeted learning outcomes that correspond to the learners' specific needs. As Byram (1997) notes, intercultural communicative competence requires learners to develop not only linguistic skills but also the ability to mediate meaning across cultures. Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) similarly, highlight that intercultural learning fosters reflection on one's own and others' cultural perspectives, an aspect crucial for tour guides who must represent local culture to diverse international visitors.

Based on the results of the survey, several potential topics were identified as necessary to facilitate the trainees' learning goals. The needs analysis revealed several preferred learning topics relevant to the objectives of English for Specific Purposes in tour guide training programs. The preferences are presented in the Table 2.

The findings indicate that more than half of the trainees (56%) expressed the need for topics related to explaining the history and culture of tourist attractions, as these are essential for effectively delivering information to tourists during guiding activities. This finding aligns with studies by Ratminingsih et al. (2018) and Rejeki & Swetasurya (2023), who argue that ESP materials for tour guides should integrate both linguistic and cultural components relevant to the local tourism context to enhance effective engagement. This suggests that their primary learning goal is to develop English proficiency that enables them to accurately convey cultural and historical information about tourist

Table 2. Learning Topics Needed by Trainees

No	Learning Topics	The Number of Trainees	Percentage
1	Explaining the history and culture of tourist attractions	13	56%
2	Topics related to tourism laws and regulations, including responsibilities as a tour guide, such as being humble and polite to tourists, understanding safety procedures, site regulations, and explaining itineraries	12	52%
3	Topics related to local and foreign cultures, including norms, traditions, Indonesian culture, dance, and cuisine	6	26%

sites. It also reflects the perspective of Permatasari (2023), who highlights that mastery of professional discourse, such as describing cultural sites and explaining local traditions, contributes significantly to communicative competence in tourism.

Beyond content knowledge, the trainees emphasized the importance of maintaining politeness and humility, understanding site procedures, and explaining itineraries clearly, as these interpersonal skills are vital for performing their professional duties effectively. This emphasis resonates with Byram's (1997) framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which positions attitudes such as respect, curiosity, and openness as foundational for successful intercultural interactions. The senior tour guide similarly stressed that mastering tourism-related topics and demonstrating appropriate interpersonal conduct are essential for guides to communicate relevant information and maintain positive guest relationships.

The trainees' emphasis on politeness and flexibility also parallels findings in tourism ESP studies, such as Su (2008) and Prachanant (2012), who reported that cultural adaptability is critical in service encounters. However, unlike those studies, the present research reveals that the trainees' intercultural discomfort often stems not from cultural unfamiliarity alone but from limited linguistic confidence, particularly when responding to unexpected questions or repairing misunderstandings. This contrast suggests that developing intercultural competence for tour guides requires not only cultural awareness but also strengthened language resources to support confident communication in real-time interactions.

Given these findings, the discussion points to several pedagogical implications. ESP materials for tour guide training would benefit from integrating tasks that combine linguistic practice with intercultural scenarios, such as explaining cultural taboos to international tourists, simulating misunderstanding repair strategies, handling culturally sensitive requests, and practicing variations of polite greetings across cultures. Such integrated tasks may better address the trainees' expressed needs by building both linguistic readiness and intercultural comfort in real-world tourism contexts.

Skills of Intercultural Understanding Needed by Tour Guide Trainees

Understanding intercultural aspects is a crucial component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training for tour guides, as it equips them to interact effectively with tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), ESP instruction should be directly aligned with learners' communicative context and professional needs, while Byram (1997) emphasizes that language learning is inseparable from cultural understanding, as it fosters the ability to mediate between different cultural perspectives. The integration of intercultural awareness into ESP thus ensures that learning outcomes address not only linguistic competence but also cultural adaptability in real-world tourism communication.

The survey results indicate the priority areas of intercultural awareness that the trainees considered most important for their professional development. The preferences are presented in Table 3. The data show that intercultural communication ranks as the highest priority, indicating that trainees recognize the importance of communicating appropriately and effectively with tourists from various cultural contexts. This supports Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) notion that intercultural communication involves awareness of how meanings, values, and behaviors vary across cultures, and the ability to interpret them within context. The second priority, history and intercultural

Table 3. Intercultural Awareness Skills Prioritized by Trainees

Rank	Intercultural Awareness Skills
1	Intercultural communication
2	History and intercultural traditions
3	Accents and dialects
4	Intercultural values and norms
5	Lifestyle and cultural customs
6	Intercultural etiquette
7	Stereotypes and generalizations in culture
8	Intercultural adaptability

traditions, which highlight their interest in understanding the cultural backgrounds and heritage of both local and foreign tourists. Other aspects such as accents and dialects, values and norms, and etiquette are also viewed as essential for fostering mutual respect and avoiding cultural misunderstandings. These findings are consistent with Wahyuni Floriasti (2022), who found that exposure to multicultural speaking and listening tasks enhances learners' empathy and cultural responsiveness in communication.

The interview results revealed that cultural understanding plays a crucial role in guiding international tourists. The senior tour guide highlighted that learning about tourists' cultural backgrounds and behavioral norms before interaction helps avoid miscommunication and improve service quality. This aligns with Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which posits that effective intercultural engagement requires knowledge, interpretive skills, and openness to cultural difference. Similarly, Permatasari (2023) and Puspitasari (2023) underline that integrating intercultural awareness into ESP enhances learners' communicative confidence and intercultural sensitivity, key factors in cross-cultural professional contexts.

Overall, these findings suggest that developing intercultural communication competence should be a central focus of ESP materials for tour guide trainees. Integrating intercultural awareness with linguistic instruction not only supports grammatical and lexical proficiency but also nurtures the confidence, adaptability, and empathy required for meaningful interaction in multicultural tourism settings, echoing the pedagogical insights of Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) on intercultural learning as reflective, context-driven, and transformative. The results of this study align with Rahimi and Ortega (2025), who found that embedding cultural elements in English language instruction effectively promotes learners' intercultural awareness and communicative adaptability.

Ideal English Learning Materials Needed by Tour Guide Trainees

The development of English learning materials for tour guide trainees should align with their specific needs and professional contexts. In English for Specific Purposes (ESP), materials are expected to reflect authentic communicative situations that tour guides commonly encounter in their work, such as explaining tourist attractions, interacting with guests, and managing intercultural communication. Therefore, identifying the ideal types of learning materials is crucial to ensure that the content provided in the training program is both relevant and applicable in real-world situations.

Based on the results of the needs analysis questionnaire, trainees were asked to indicate their preferences for English learning materials that best support their learning objectives as future tour guides (Table 4). The results show that most trainees prefer English learning materials that focus on dialogues or monologues related to tourism contexts (69%), followed by materials that integrate intercultural awareness (48%). This indicates that trainees expect materials that not only improve their language proficiency but also enhance their cultural understanding, which is essential when interacting with foreign tourists from various backgrounds. These findings are consistent with Byram's (1997) model of ICC, which stresses that language learning should include both linguistic and cultural dimensions to develop learners' ability to mediate between different worldviews.

According to the senior tour guide, the ideal English learning materials for tour guides should emphasize practical application over theoretical knowledge, incorporating audio-based dialogue practice and opportunities for field-based experiential learning. This aligns with the principles of

Table 4. Learning Materials Needed by Trainees

No	Learning Materials	The Number of Trainees	Percentage
1	Dialogue/monologue focusing on language relevant to tourism	16	69%
2	Picture dialogue/monologue with intercultural awareness material	11	48%
3	Dialogue/monologue with common expressions, idioms, and phrases	9	39%
4	Dialogue/monologue that contains conversation exercises	3	14%

Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT), which encourages learners to engage in meaningful, real-world communication through effective tasks (Nunan, 2004). The emphasis on practice and exposure also resonates with Mandasari & Wulandari (2023), who found that interactive, technology-supported ESP activities, such as gamified dialogues, significantly improved learners' motivation and language use. The findings of this study are consistent with Smith and Chen (2025), who reported that learners exposed to intercultural communication modules, whether online or face-to-face, developed a greater ability to interpret, evaluate, and respond appropriately to cultural diversity in communicative situations.

These findings suggest that the trainees' needs are consistent with the expectations of professional tour guides in the field. While the trainees prioritize communicative and culturally contextualized materials, the senior tour guide reinforces the importance of experiential learning, where practice and exposure play a significant role in language mastery. Therefore, developing learning materials that combine practical communication tasks with intercultural awareness training can effectively support tour guide trainees in achieving both linguistic competence and intercultural sensitivity.

Learning Materials Designed for Tour Guide Trainees

Based on the results of the survey and interviews, it was found that there are several potential topics for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials that can be developed to meet the learning needs of tour guide trainees. The findings indicate that the selected topics should not only focus on improving linguistic competence but also integrate elements of intercultural awareness. This integration aims to enable trainees to communicate more confidently and effectively with international tourists by understanding their cultural backgrounds and expectations. This approach aligns with Hutchinson & Waters (1987), who assert that ESP materials should be derived from a thorough needs analysis to ensure that instruction corresponds to learners' professional and situational demands.

From the needs analysis data, the researcher identified several English learning topics that align with the objectives of the tour guide training program. These topics are designed to support both language mastery and intercultural understanding, ensuring that trainees are well-prepared for real-world guiding situations. The preferred learning topics are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Learning Materials Designed for Trainees

No	Learning Topics	Main Inputs
1	Meet the Tourists at the Airport	Dialogues for starting conversations and greetings across cultures; vocabulary list; review of the simple present tense.
2	Outlining the Itinerary	Monologues on explaining itineraries; dialogues for gathering travel info; grammar focus on <i>future tense</i> (will, going to).
3	Visiting Prambanan Temple	Monologue about Roro Jonggrang legend; dialogues for showing interest and sharing facts; grammar focus on <i>past tenses</i> .
4	The History and Culture of the Royal Palace (Keraton)	Explanation of royal history; dialogues for giving opinions and instructions; grammar on <i>During, For, While</i> .
5	Yogyakarta Heritage: Batik and Gudeg	Explanation of cultural meanings; dialogues for giving suggestions and recommendations; grammar on <i>active vs. passive voice</i> .

The findings of this study reaffirm the perspectives of Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and Long (2005), asserting that a comprehensive needs analysis is indispensable in the design of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials, as it enables a detailed identification of learners' target situation and learning situation needs. Data derived from questionnaires and interviews indicate that tour guide trainees require instructional content emphasizing authentic, context-based communication aligned with their professional responsibilities, such as explaining historical and cultural landmarks, managing itineraries, and engaging effectively with international tourists. Furthermore, the results reveal that trainees primarily need to strengthen their communicative competence, particularly in listening and speaking, through materials that integrate linguistic proficiency and intercultural awareness. Grammar and pronunciation were identified as the most essential linguistic components to support fluency and accuracy, whereas intercultural communication emerged as the most critical cultural dimension necessary for effective performance in multilingual and multicultural contexts. These findings demonstrate a pedagogical orientation consistent with TBLT principles (Nunan, 2004), which advocate for language learning through meaningful, task-based experiences that reflect the realities of professional communication.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of integrating intercultural awareness into ESP materials. According to Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), intercultural awareness involves the ability to understand, interpret, and respond to cultural differences appropriately in communication. In the context of tour guiding, this competence is essential for establishing effective interaction with tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. As revealed in the findings, trainees who possess greater intercultural understanding tend to feel more confident and less anxious when communicating in English. This result echoes Puspitasari (2023) finding that intercultural sensitivity emerges through authentic communication and reflective engagement in multicultural interactions, reinforcing the view that intercultural competence develops through experience and self-awareness.

The senior tour guide also emphasized that intercultural competence begins with learning about the tourists' cultural backgrounds before engaging with them. This aligns with the notion that language learning and intercultural learning are inseparable, as proposed by Byram (1997), who argues that communicative competence in a global context must include the ability to mediate between one's own and others' cultures. Similarly, Wahyuni Floriasti (2022) demonstrated that integrating multicultural speaking and listening activities can effectively improve both language proficiency and intercultural empathy, showing that exposure to diverse communication contexts helps learners understand different cultural perspectives. Therefore, materials that integrate linguistic competence (grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) with intercultural knowledge (values, norms, and communication styles) will more effectively prepare trainees for authentic professional communication.

The findings are consistent with several prior studies that underscore the necessity of integrating linguistic and intercultural dimensions within ESP instruction. Mandasari & Wulandari (2023) revealed that technology-mediated, interactive learning, such as game-based ESP activities, significantly enhances learners' motivation and vocabulary acquisition, reflecting the importance of engagement in professional language learning. Similarly, Wahyuni Floriasti (2022) demonstrated that multicultural speaking and listening activities improve students' linguistic competence and empathy toward cultural diversity. These outcomes affirm that ESP learning should not only focus on content knowledge but also embed intercultural values that reflect real-world diversity and professional practice. Within the framework of Hutchinson & Waters (1987), this finding exemplifies the learning-centered approach, where learners' experiences and social contexts guide the design of meaningful ESP materials.

From a pedagogical perspective, integrating intercultural awareness into ESP-based training ensures that learning materials respond to the social realities of tourism communication. This research confirms Permatasari's (2023) assertion that EFL instruction in Indonesia often emphasizes grammar over intercultural adaptability, resulting in limited communicative preparedness among learners. By designing materials that incorporate intercultural content, such as culturally specific greetings, taboos, and storytelling styles, tour guide trainees can cultivate both cognitive and affective dimensions of intercultural competence. Furthermore, Puspitasari's (2023) findings on

developing intercultural sensitivity through authentic engagement reinforce the need for reflection-based learning tasks. For example, role-playing multicultural interactions or discussing culture-specific tourist expectations can nurture empathy and adaptive communication skills, strengthening the intercultural dimension of communicative competence. Therefore, materials and tasks should be designed to foster not only frequent exposure to target languages but also reflective and guided intercultural interactions that improve interaction quality (Li, Yuan & Kulich, 2025)

The integration of ESP principles and intercultural frameworks in this study contributes to a broader conceptualization of integrative communicative competence, a synthesis of linguistic, pragmatic, and intercultural abilities. Byram's (1997) ICC model and Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) intercultural language learning theory both stresses that communication involves negotiation of meaning and identity. Likewise, Task-Based Language Teaching (Nunan, 2004) provides a relevant pedagogical foundation, as it encourages the use of authentic tasks to simulate real-world guiding situations, such as explaining itineraries or narrating cultural stories. When aligned with ESP principles (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), these frameworks ensure that learning is both purposeful and professionally grounded. In the case of tour guide training, this integrative approach enables trainees to become not only proficient English speakers but also cultural mediators capable of representing local heritage with global awareness.

Overall, the integration of intercultural awareness into ESP-based English learning materials for tour guide trainees is not merely an addition but a fundamental necessity. It ensures that language learning is meaningful, contextually relevant, and responsive to the realities of the tourism industry. This view resonates with the theoretical stance of Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), who assert that intercultural learning involves critical reflection on how meaning is constructed across cultural boundaries. Through such integration, trainees can develop both linguistic proficiency and intercultural sensitivity, enabling them to perform their professional roles confidently and effectively in diverse global settings. As ESP scholars and intercultural communication theorists alike have emphasized (Byram, 1997; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Permatasari, 2023; Puspitasari, 2023). The synergy between language and culture lies at the heart of communicative competence, an essential foundation for the professional identity of tour guides in a globalized world.

CONCLUSION

The results of the needs analysis indicate that tour guide trainees at Prambanan Temple require learning materials that address both their linguistic and intercultural needs. The findings show that trainees generally have a basic level of English proficiency and therefore need practical and context-specific materials that mirror authentic communicative demands in tourism settings. The analysis also demonstrates that their primary learning priorities involve strengthening listening and speaking skills through materials that integrate language competence with intercultural understanding.

The study further highlights that grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary serve as essential linguistic foundations for effective communication, while intercultural awareness, particularly the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to cultural differences, is a crucial component in guiding interactions with international visitors. Integrating authentic, communicative, and culturally responsive tasks allows trainees to develop not only linguistic accuracy and fluency but also intercultural empathy and adaptability.

Overall, this study confirms that combining linguistic and intercultural elements within ESP-based materials is fundamental to meeting learners' real communicative needs. The analytical process carried out in this research underscores the importance of designing materials that are pedagogically sound, contextually relevant, and aligned with the professional demands of tour guiding. Therefore, incorporating both language competence and intercultural awareness in English training is essential for preparing globally competent tour guides capable of engaging effectively in diverse cultural contexts.

Despite these contributions, this study has limitations, particularly the reliance on a participant group composed solely of local trainees with limited exposure to international tourism, as well as the use of only one senior tour guide as an expert source. These constraints may narrow

the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore involve a wider range of industry practitioners and trainees from varied tourism contexts to capture more comprehensive insights.

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