

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Indonesia has thousands of tourist destinations, many of which can be classified as international destinations due to the large number of foreign tourists who come to visit. One area in particular is Pangandaran Regency which is located in West Java, Indonesia. The issue of implementing English in the Pangandaran tourism area is a specific impact on the use of English in Indonesia. As a Non-English-speaking country, English is not the primary language of Indonesian people. According to the English Proficiency Index (EPI), Global Research by Educational First (EF) 2021, Indonesia was placed 80th out of 112 countries in the world and 14th in Asia. The result showed that Indonesia has low proficiency in using English. On the other hand, Indonesia received 16.11 million foreign visits in 2019 recorded by The Central Bureau of Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*). Based on this data, Indonesia is one of the most visited countries in Southeast Asia. However, it is not supported by foreign language knowledge as a counterbalance.

As people living in the Pangandaran tourism area, the researcher often finds several public services that have difficulty communicating with foreign tourists. For example, this happens to the hotels, tour guides, and travels staff directly associated with the tourism industry. This situation will certainly affect the implementation of tourism in Pangandaran as international tourism. Therefore, Indonesian people or public services, in particular, must increase their English knowledge to take part in the tourism industry's development.

English is the most widely spoken language in the international tourism industry as a medium of communication that can improve the quality of services. Bobanovic and Grznic (2011) stated that finding a common language between the supply and demand sides is necessary. Employees who work in the tourism industry are entirely and highly aware of its importance, and they must have a good command of English in their workplace (Nahid et al., 2017). In the tourism industry, English plays a significant role as a means of communication used by the public services (front gate officers, tourism information centers officers, hotels, and restaurant officers). They are expected to have a certain degree of knowledge related to how to establish a line of communication to obtain the quality of services.

The researcher believes that English has a vast concept to understand, and to make it more framed, he significantly leads this research into the field of English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) concept. ETP is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The tourism industry has become a social and economic force on a global scale. Cho (2005) believes that English for tourism is viewed as an area of business English by bridging workplace communication. Understanding the basics of ETP is crucial for those working in public services. In this case, public services are categorized as people who work in hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, information centers, and tourist attractions. The researcher will conduct various investigations to understand how proficient the public services use English during their tasks through foreign tourists' perceptions.

Perceptions are the opinions or expressions in presenting information from the experiences that have been passed. Akoumianakis (2009) stated that

perceptions, as the main medium of human communication, are a network of spoken and written symbols capable of expressing thoughts, feelings, and impressions. Therefore, in terms of analyzing public services' English skills, the researcher will use foreign tourists' perceptions as a medium for getting the data.

The previous research on the same topic has been conducted by Nabilla (2019), entitled "The Importance of English Speaking in the Tourism Sector in Accordance with Stakeholders." Her research results were obtained from stakeholders' and local tourists' experiences. Her findings explained that English was essential for developing the tourism area and became an input for stakeholders regarding the English language that must be applied in the Sabang tourism area. Both kinds of research have significant differences, such as the object and the result. In this research, the objects were foreign tourists' perceptions, and the results showed the proficiency of public services in providing services by using English in the Pangandaran tourism area. This research was qualitative and used a case study as a research method.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problems**

The research is formulated in the following question:

What are the foreign tourists' perceptions of public services' English skills in the Pangandaran tourism area?

## **1.3 Operational Definition**

The following keywords are designed to avoid misinterpretation of this research:

- A. Foreign Tourists' Perceptions : Foreign tourists' perceptions are the opinions of foreign tourists regarding the English skills of public services in the Pangandaran tourism area.
- B. Public Services : Public services include tourism government officers (front gate officers, destination crew officers, tourism center officers), tour guides, travel agents, hotels, and restaurant staff.
- C. Public Services' English Skills : Public services' English skills are the communication aspects, including oral and written communication, and psychological aspects, including self-confidence, anxiety, and fear.
- D. Pangandaran Tourism Area : Pangandaran is a district in West Java, Indonesia, often visited by foreign tourists because of its natural and cultural beauty, and it is classified as an international tourism area.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Research**

This research investigated the use of English by public services in the Pangandaran tourism area as a means of communication based on foreign tourists' perceptions.

#### **1.5 The Significances of the Research**

There are three points of this research significance:

- A. Theoretical Use : This research provides new data of foreign tourists' perceptions on public services' English skills in the Pangandaran tourism area, which can be used as a reference for further research and pedagogical needs.
- B. Practical Use : The results of this study can be a public services model in the Pangandaran tourism area to establish effective communication with foreign tourists using English.
- C. Empirical Use : This research will increase the researcher's knowledge about the use of English and how to provide services using English in the Pangandaran tourism area.