The Roles of Qualified Translators and Interpreters in Realizing Quality Ecotourism

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Abstract: The aims of this study are to find out how importance qualified interpreters and translation in realizing quality ecotourism and the roles of higher education institutions in the effort of realizing quality ecotourism. This study applied descriptive qualitative method by taking data from various sources, such as, notices, signs, banners, websites, news from mass media and social media. For the purpose of analysis, two concept were applied, namely, the concept of ecotourism and translation. Based on the result of analysis it was found that qualified interpreters have major roles in realizing quality ecotourism. They have the role of preservation and sustainable ecotourism development; they are educators for visitors on knowledge of ecotourism objects and destination by informing their clients and providing their clients on certain custom, tradition and culture. And lastly, qualified interpreter increases economic development. On the other hand, qualified translators are important to make tourism-related translation, such as, website, brochures, pamphlet, notices, announcement, and so forth more accurate to guarantee their validity and legitimacy. And finally, higher education can take important roles through their three pillar of higher education programs.
Keywords: qualified translators, interpreters, quality ecotourism

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is a unique tourism activity containing three "eco" elements, namely paying attention to the ecological aspect, where ecotourism activities should be environmentally friendly, paying attention to economic aspects (Björk, 2000) - this activity is beneficial for the community, particularly for the community around where the activities are carried out, and paying attention to public perceptions, in which this activity should pay attention to the opinions and involves local communities (Western, 1995). This tourism activity began to be popularized in the 1990s. Indonesia, as one of the archipelagic countries having rich biodiversity, benefits greatly, because the concept of development based on the concept of ecotourism is one of the best alternative activities for a destination supported by abundant natural resources like our country. The concept of ecotourism arises from demands that lead to the responsibility of tourism industry for the environment towards destination management (Dávid, 2011; Dolnicar & Long, 2009). Ecotourism is a combination of various factors growing out of concern for environmental, economic and social issues. This ecotourism activity aims to minimize impacts, foster environmental and cultural awareness, to provide positive experiences for both tourists (visitors) and recipients (hosts) and to provide benefits and empowerment for local communities (Blamey, 2001; Lee & Moscardo, 2005). Ecotourism is predicted to be the tourism prima donna in the future in Indonesia. Therefore, all stakeholders should strive to realize this tourism activity to be sustainably improved to a quality tourism. Warmadewa University, as one of the stakeholders in higher education institutional level, seriously and actively sounds and promotes ecotourism. It is obviously depicted in its vision "To be a quality university with ecotourism insight and globally competitive in 2034." It means that Warmadewa University always upholds the preservation of environment and culture in the implementation of three pillars of higher education (education, research, and service). This vision is further elaborated in the vision of faculty levels as reflected in the vision of Faculty of Letters, Warmadewa University, namely "To be an educational center for English language and literature to produce quality graduates, ecotourism insight and globally competitive in 2034."

The concern of Warmadewa University to quality ecotourism has been crystalized in "Sapta Bayu" (seven power) as the spirit of Sri Kesari Warmadewa, where the 7th power reads "environmentally friendly based on Tri Hita Karana." Meaning that Warmadewa University applies the

principle of harmony of life consists of three interrelated elements (harmony between human and Divine God, human and human as well as human being and environment). This local wisdom is used as a foothold and basis in the effort to realize the development of ecotourism.

The development of ecotourism has encouraged researchers all over the world to conduct various studies. Many studies aimed at introducing the ecotourism destinations and objects, various studies observed its development and many focused on the measures to promote it. This study also intends to take a little part in this massive ecotourism development but from different point of view. This study observes ecotourism from different discipline, namely translation and interpreting. This study steps from the idea that a destination or an object needs promoting to be known by people from different countries, therefore, the language of promotion should be translated into other necessary languages, for instance from Indonesian into English, by qualified translator – a translator mastering not only language pairs but also register and style of language for specific purposes. Thus, the promotion media can be well understood and more attractive for readers without neglecting the essence of its original culture. A tour guide as an escort interpreter needs to have sufficient skill of interpreting to describe an object and to educate visitors for certain culture.

Based on the background described above, this study is going to raise two problems, namely:

1) What is the importance of the qualified translator and interpreter in the efforts to realize quality ecotourism?
2) What are the roles of Higher Education in promoting quality ecotourism?

METHODS

The method applied for this research is descriptive quantitative. The data of this research were taken from texts of signs found in the tourist destinations, newspaper, internet. The data in the form of signs were taken by taking photos of some signs. While the data in the form of text were taken from mass media or social media. Some data were taken by browsing through the internet.

The collected data were then analyzed in two main types. First, related to interpreting (verbal translation) and the second one related to text, whether text on the signs, media or other forms. The results of the analysis were presented using formal and informal techniques. Formal techniques were used in presenting data by using symbols, while informal techniques were used in presenting the results of the analysis by using sentences to elaborate the analysis of data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The need for interpreters in the tourism industry is undeniable. We see them working in hotels to entertain guests, in tourist destinations to explain the significance of the place, in tour companies to serve as an escort interpreter (guide) to foreign guests, and even in restaurants to cater to non-English speakers.

Though it seems that their job is really simple, but the fact is that it also has a huge impact to the economy. Some studies have proven that these interpreters have a major contribution to the tourism industry (Bassnet-McGuire, 1991) of every country. The actual fact, however, not all tourists were assisted or accompanied by tour guides in travelling. Many tourists particularly backpackers commonly travel without being assisted by tour guides, even they travelled themselves, driving on their own. They rarely knew the tradition and culture of certain places, like temples, they did not know well about the natural condition of an object, and so forth. Although some tourists have read information from books, internet and other media, they might still be unable to the culture and philosophy underlying certain tradition or activities. As a result, many offences of norms and tradition were committed by tourists visiting certain places. For example, a viral offence of norm committed by two female tourists in Lembongan Island, two years ago prior covid-19 pandemic, where one tourist sat on the holy shrine and took photos. They thought that the shrine was very beautiful with carving and gold color, as it looked like a chair of king and she decided to try to sit. But after they were found by the local people and then they were taken to the authorities and interviewed, they admitted to do it, as they did not know the function of the place culturally and did not know underlying philosophy of the building. Then, they

asked apology and pledged not to do again. Other example occurred in a temple in Bali, where two tourists having profession as artists dance at the temple without clothes (naked) and recorded. After being question the reason why, they also said as they did not know the culture and prevailing custom in the area. Finally, they asked for apology. From these two examples, it seems that escort interpreter (tour guide) is very important to assist and accompany tourists in travelling or visiting certain places.

The Importance of Qualified Interpreters in Realizing Quality Ecotourism.

From the above description, here are the importance or major roles played by qualified interpreter in the effort to realize quality ecotourism:

1. Preservation and sustainable ecotourism development
   A qualified escort interpreter would provide tourists or visitors with a sense of belonging. Therefore, tourists understand what is happening in their environment. This measure makes the tourists more interested in staying longer and even coming back in the future. These tourists would also promote and recommend the object or destination to their friends from their home country upon having received such services from the qualified escort interpreter.
2. Education
   Interpreters in a certain ecotourism would also help visitors understand more about the object they visit. So, they would recognize and understand the culture and tradition better. As the result, they would not commit any behavior or action which might offend the culture and even they would have a deep sense of respect to the place. Thus, when they return back to their home country to tell their friends about said experience. They surely would promote, entice, and support other families, friends and others from their home country to visit the place as well.
   It is the task of interpreters to correct and clarify misconceptions and misleading information about the place that tourists visit. They will let them understand through stories or by presenting facts and evidence. Therefore, tourists would have a better and even deeper understanding about the place and remove their former biased information.
   In other words, a qualified interpreter has a duty to educate new comers (visitors) about culture, nature and straightforward the misleading information, so tourists have better experience, knowledge of a ecotourism and finally they would be the speaker and marketer for the place in the future.
3. Culture
   Tourists from different countries would have different interest to a certain object or destination. Moreover, they have obtained information from other former tourists having poor experience assisted by less qualified interpreter. It is the task of the qualified interpreter to enlighten tourists or visitors to make them have better notion and understanding about culture, such as temple ceremonies, cultural activities, like cremation (ngaben), etc. Serving and providing them better understanding on the underlying background of certain ceremonies or cultural activities, and providing them the don'ts and the do's in a certain culture might make tourists more interested in the culture.
4. Economic
   Tourists would be encouraged to spend more in terms of accommodation, refreshment and entertainment if they understand the culture more. As a result, this will be a big boost to the local economy. Local people could enjoy better income from the multiplier effects of tourist's visits. For instance, tourists might intend to try certain local cuisines, to taste local farming products, souvenirs produced by local people. If they do not understand what the dish is, surely, they would not be encouraged to buy it. The role of escort interpreter, in this course of activities, is paramount. A qualified interpreter plays challenging role in this case, the success of a qualified interpreter would be clearly reflected from interested tourists to try, buy and enjoy the ecotourism object.
   The more visitors would visit a specific place for its tourist attraction, the more local government would have funds to develop other places in the area. As a result, more tourists would visit as they would have more ecotourism destinations to see.

The Importance of Qualified Translators in Realizing Quality Ecotourism.

Unquestionably, the development of the internet has had an impact on many facets of our life. This is especially evident when we consider how the tourist sector has evolved over the past ten years. Customers are now actively involved in creating their ideal vacation through the use of travel websites, making "traditional" travel agents that we were used to, including those with a bricks-and-mortar presence on local high streets, a thing of the past (TripAdvisor being an obvious example).

As a result, companies intending to grow in this sector are now aware of how crucial it is to be able to connect with as many clients as possible by giving them as much information as possible. And translation is the only option for companies to connect with a global clientele.

Why translate tourism-related content?

Travel-related information can be found in a variety of formats, including menus, pamphlets, signs, websites, catalogues, and brochures. Although the internet is arguably the most useful tool for those who are planning a trip, print materials are still commonly used for informational and promotional purposes.

Even though English is a universal language, it has been shown that at the beginning of the planning process, travelers are better at peace when they can do their homework, gather facts about their destination, and organize their vacations in their own language.

According to studies, not only do customers prefer to browse websites with content in their native tongue, but also roughly half of them would be willing to pay more for information in that language. Travelers today, who are becoming more and more demanding by the minute, no longer rely entirely on travel agents and instead conduct their research on the "mighty" web. It is apparent that the need for translation in the travel and tourism sector has grown significantly. However, large corporations are more and more attracted to use automatic translation to meet this need. But is this tactic actually worthwhile? Of course, accuracy of machine translation is not guaranteed, even human translation from less qualified is not guaranteed that the message contained in the text of the website, notice, announcement or signs are accurate which might cause misconception or even misleading information. For this purpose, qualified translators are required to make sure and guarantee that the intended objective of the text is conveyed and perceived by the readers in this case tourists or visitors in similar equivalence.

Translation absence and issues in ecotourism objects

The issues of cultural or norm offenses committed by foreign visitors as described above would not occur if there was signs or notice prohibiting such actions. Offenses are not impossible to be done by domestic tourists coming from different ethnic groups or cultures, if there are no signs banning them to do. Thus, signs in any form deemed necessary, such as, plates, sign board, notice, banner, etc. are very much needed. If possible, they are created in some languages, for example, in Balinese, Indonesian and English (as global universal language). The absence of those properties at the ecotourism destinations inevitably results in the offenses committed by the visitors.

The presence of notices or signs is not guarantee that there is no violation, as many notices cause translation blunders, even misleading and controversies. See the following example:



Picture 1.

The translation of this sign is absolutely misleading. The objective of this notice to remind people to stay away from narcotics but it tends to lead people to hide it. This is the result of translation done by non-qualified translator.
Similar example is found in the notice of public place adjacent the airport.



Picture 2.

The issue with computer or machine translation is that its accuracy simply cannot be trusted. Therefore, employing it entails significant hazards.

On the other hand, professional translation uses human translators and many editors to ensure accuracy. It's the wise decision! It is also crucial in the tourism industry, as it is in most other sectors. This is an important consideration, especially for visitors who cannot speak the local tongue and should, therefore, rely completely on their mother tongue while visiting another nation. Consider signs as an example. Despite how simple they may seem, they are frequently difficult to localize, leading to issues that can only be solved by engaging a professional translator.
Finding yourself in front of this sign might leave you amused, but also definitely confused:



Picture 3.

The tourism industry is full of such translation blunders, which most of the time can prove detrimental rather than comical. Qualified professional tourism translators, who are experts when it comes to specific terminology and jargon, would have never let this happen.

Why we need qualified translators to make your website stand out

Automated or machine translation can appear to be less expensive than professional translation, but over time it can actually do more harm than good, costing organizations far more money than they would have if they had gone with professional translation from the start. This holds true for information-transmission materials like signage, as previously mentioned, as well as travel-related websites and brochures. The customized information you have painstakingly created for your website will only sound as appealing and correct in the target language through professional translation.

It serves no purpose to translate your content into another language if Google penalizes you and ranks your website lower than others. Travel information can only be made appealing for a new audience and remain among the top Google search results with the aid of skilled translators who will conduct keyword research while utilizing their linguistic talents.

The benefits of qualified translation in the effort to realize quality ecotourism

In our increasingly globalized culture, the tourism sector is thriving, but its global success can only be attained if ecotourism managers are able to connect with all clients, regardless of their home tongue. As a result, translation is essential to the expansion of this important sector of many nations' economies. By spending money on qualified translation, you may satisfy client demands. This helps to build your brand in many regions, validates your company's legitimacy, and creates a clear path for a successful expansion in the future.

The Roles of Higher Education Institutions in Realizing Quality Ecotourism

Higher education institutions through their three pillars of higher education may take major roles to achieve quality ecotourism. In the first pillar, in education for example, higher education may include and focus subject on translation and interpreting. This is intended to create more translators and interpreters. It will be of much benefit if the university students taking those subjects are place at the translating agencies or ecotourism objects or tourism destination in general for on-the-job training or apprentice. It will not beneficial for the students only but also for the tourism objects themselves. In term of less formal measures, higher education institutions may hold short courses or training and seminar and workshop to support the translators and interpreters to be more qualified to realize quality ecotourism.

Regarding the second pillar, research, the higher education institutions can promote more and more researchers and lecturers to conduct researches both individually as well as group, event collaborative research on tourism translations of various parts, such as, hotels, restaurants, transportations, tour guides, tourism objects and destinations. The results of the research can be used as a program or plan to do preservation, cultural maintenance, economic enhancement and surely improvement for better quality tourism in general and ecotourism in particular.

The last pillar is community services. This program commonly derives from the result of research. For example, if the research shows absence of notices, signs, or banners, then it is the task of higher education to provide them. It can be conducted through community services either funded by the government or institution themselves or even in collaboration with government or private agencies.

The major role which can be taken by higher education institution to solve the issues of tourism translation and interpreting is by conducting community services.

Recommendation for Stakeholders

1) Although it would appear simple to translate for international tourists in a certain location, it is not. Here are some pointers that you should keep in mind if you work in this profession or want to.
2) When learning a foreign language, it is important to comprehend the people's culture as well as the words. It's crucial so that you do not just translate their words for them but also include their culture.

3) Do not mislead the tourists. If you are not certain about the translation of certain words, be honest about it. It is better than giving them false information.
4) An escort interpreter should be joyful all the time. A number of queries are occasionally asked by visitors. They may even ask multiple questions at once. It occasionally can be perplexing. Just maintain your composure and calm if this occurs. Maintain a positive attitude at all times and be willing to amuse visitors.
5) It is very remarkable how interpreters and translator contribute to the tourism sector's sustainable growth.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above it can be concluded that qualified interpreters have major roles in realizing quality ecotourism. They have the role of preservation and sustainable ecotourism development; they are educators for visitors on knowledge of ecotourism objects and destination by informing their clients and providing their clients on certain custom, tradition and culture. And lastly, qualified interpreter increases economic development.

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