

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Natuna Geopark is one of Indonesia's strategic national areas that plays an important role in the development of tourism, particularly in the northern border region. As an archipelago in the South China Sea, Natuna has a very strategic position in terms of geology, geography and geopolitics, as it is located on international shipping routes and has great potential in the fields of geotourism, biodiversity and local culture. According to Hutabarat & Pratiwi (2022), since its designation as a National Geopark on 30 November 2018, this area has been continuously developed by the local government and various ministries to obtain recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp).

According to Hutabarat & Pratiwi (2022), the development of Natuna Geopark is part of Indonesia's public diplomacy strategy to realise sustainable tourism while supporting the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The geopark concept not only focuses on preserving geological heritage, but also integrates three main pillars, namely conservation, education, and community economic development. Through geopark-based tourism development, this area is expected to become a driving force for the local economy while strengthening Indonesia's tourism image at the global level.

According to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources ESDM (2023), Natuna Geopark has 15 geoheritage sites spread across several islands, each possessing significant scientific, educational, and aesthetic value. These sites

include *Tanjung Datuk, Tanjung Ba'dai, Air Mali, Bukit Kapur, Pulau Senua, Gunung Ranai, Tanjung Senubing, Gunung Gundul, Batu Kasah, Pulau Akar, Bukit Sekunyam, Pulau Semiun, Pulau Setanau, Batu Catur, and Goa Lubang Hidung Pantai Pasir Pandok*. In addition, the geopark features several officially designated geosites, such as *Geosite Gunung Ranai, Geosite Pulau Setanau, Geosite Tanjung Datuk, Geosite Goa Kamak, Geosite Tanjung Senubing, Geosite Pulau Senua, Geosite Batu Kasah and Geosite Pulau Akar*. These geoheritage sites represent the geological and cultural uniqueness of Natuna, with high scientific and aesthetic value, such as granite rock formations, beaches, valleys, and cultural landmarks.

This remarkable potential positions Natuna as a promising international geotourism destination. However, as noted by Hutabarat (2023), emphasises that upgrading its status to a UNESCO Global Geopark requires various efforts, including improving tourism infrastructure, conducting international-standard scientific research, global promotion, and active participation of the local community in preserving and utilising geological heritage. Furthermore, the development of Natuna Geopark is aimed at supporting the recovery of the tourism sector after COVID-19, in line with the policy of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2020-2024) KEMENKRAF (2016) which places geoparks as one of the national priority destinations. With the support of the central and regional governments through the preparation of the Natuna Geopark Master Plan, this area is expected to become an icon of sustainable tourism and a symbol of Indonesia's environmental diplomacy in the eyes of the world. Overall, the transformation of the Natuna Geopark towards UNESCO Global Geopark recognition reflects the

synergy between nature conservation, community economic empowerment, and the strengthening of Indonesia's position in the global tourism network.

English has become the global lingua franca in the tourism industry, used by tourists and tourism service providers from various countries to interact across cultures Wahyuningsih & Mahsar (2024). However, the English communication skills of tourism practitioners, especially local in various regions of Indonesia, still face many obstacles. One of the main challenges is the limited mastery of specific tourism vocabulary English for Tourism needed to describe tourist attractions, provide services, and build professional interactions with foreign tourists.

Research by Wahyuningsih & Mahsar (2024) shows that existing English for Tourism (EfT) teaching materials are still general in nature and do not reflect the real communication needs in the field. Many traditional teaching materials only present generic vocabulary that is not appropriate for a professional context, such as hospitality, travel services, and cultural heritage. As a result, tour guides often find it difficult to use the right terms or expressions when dealing with foreign tourists, which leads to misunderstandings and a decline in service quality. This situation also occurs because there are no empirical data-based learning resources that integrate authentic vocabulary from the actual tourism context. The corpus analysis in this study identified a number of terms that are most frequently used in the context of international tourism, such as booking, itinerary, guest, hospitality, guided tour, cultural heritage, and local attractions.

These words have proven to be an important part of professional communication in the global tourism sector. The lack of mastery of this vocabulary

is a major obstacle for local tour guides, especially in new destinations such as Natuna Geopark, which is now beginning to be visited by foreign tourists.

To date, there are no English teaching materials specifically designed for the needs of tour guides in Natuna Geopark, even though this area is developing into a leading tourist destination that attracts foreign tourists. This situation is similar to the findings of Ardira et al. (2025) in Gili Trawangan, Lombok, which showed that the absence of a syllabus and specific teaching materials for English for Tour Guiding caused tour guides to experience difficulties in using English effectively when interacting with foreign tourists.

In Natuna, many members of the Natuna Geopark Youth Forum (NGYF) a community actively involved in promoting geotourism face communication barriers when interacting with foreign tourists. Most of them rely on self-taught learning methods, such as studying independently through Youtube or other online platforms, due to the absence of structured training programs and contextual learning materials. The lack of an English for Tourism module relevant to the Natuna Geopark context has limited their ability to use appropriate vocabulary, explain geological features, and engage in professional conversation with international visitors. This situation highlights the need for a comprehensive, localized, and communicative learning resource that can support the linguistic and cultural needs of these tour guides.

Therefore, Wahyuningsih & Mahsar (2024) emphasise the need to develop teaching materials and training based on real needs that emphasise the use of vocabulary and collocations specific to tourism. The corpus-based approach

developed in their research has been proven to improve learners' language skills by up to 25% in the context of English for Tourism. With this approach, tour guides can learn vocabulary that is truly relevant to their work, enabling them to communicate more effectively with foreign tourists and provide a high-quality tourism experience.

This research emphasises the importance of needs analysis before designing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials to ensure that the teaching materials developed are truly relevant to the work context and environment of the participants. In the case of Gili Trawangan, the results of the study revealed that tour guides must master five main tasks that are highly relevant to field practice, namely: welcoming guests, introducing themselves, explaining tourist activities, providing information about destinations and local culture, and conveying safety rules Ardira et al. (2025). However, the absence of teaching materials that explicitly teach these skills has led to a gap between professional needs and the language skills possessed by the guides. When linked to the context of Natuna Geopark, this situation highlights the urgency of developing a locally-based English for Tourism module that includes content representing the unique nature, culture, and history of Natuna. The module should not only focus on language structure, but also instil contextual communication competencies, such as introducing geosites, explaining local geological and cultural values, and serving tourists professionally. This is in line with the ESP principle according to Stevenson (1987) that language learning design should be centred on the specific needs of learners and the authentic tasks they face. Thus, the development of a Natuna-based English for Tourism module is

essential so that local guides have teaching materials that are relevant to the context of their region. Such a module will not only improve their English language skills but also support the strengthening of local human resources and reinforce the position of Natuna Geopark as an international tourist destination ready for UNESCO Global Geopark recognition.

The development of contextual and communicative English for Tourism modules is very important to improve the language skills of local tour guides. English for tourism is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which is language learning tailored to the professional communication needs of a particular field. In the context of tourism, speaking skills are essential because they are used in serving tourists, explaining tourist attractions, and handling customer service situations. However, research by Masoumpanah & Tahririan (2018) shows that many tourism education and training institutions still use general teaching materials that do not reflect the local context of the destination. In fact, contextual material is essential for tour guides to be able to effectively introduce the culture, history, and potential of their region. Teachers and students also often encounter obstacles such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and a lack of teaching materials relevant to the field of tourism. Therefore, a communicative learning approach is needed through activities such as role play, guided speaking practice, or group discussions so that trainees are more confident and skilled in communication. Contextually developed modules not only help tour guides master expressions and vocabulary relevant to local destinations, such as Natuna Geopark, but also improve service quality and strengthen the region's image in the eyes of foreign tourists.

This research has a strong connection with the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) because both are oriented towards fulfilling English communication needs in specific fields of work, in this case the tourism sector. According to Guntoro (2021) ESP serves to equip learners with English language skills that are appropriate to their professional needs, so that learning materials and activities must be structured based on a needs analysis that covers three main aspects, namely lacks, wants, and necessities. Guntoro (2021) research on the hospitality industry shows that employees, especially front desk staff, need speaking and listening skills as key skills in serving foreign guests. This shows that the ESP approach emphasises contextual, functional, and real-work-based language learning.

In the context of developing English for Tourism modules at Natuna Geopark, the ESP principle serves as the primary methodological foundation because local tour guides also have specific communication needs that differ from those of general English language users. The designed module must be adapted to the local context, such as introducing geosites, explaining cultural and historical values, and serving international tourists. By using the ESP approach, English language learning can be directed at authentic situations faced by tour guides, such as providing information, responding to questions, and establishing cross-cultural communication. Therefore, this research is not only relevant to the development of ESP theory but also a practical application of the concept in the context of regional tourism. This approach is expected to enhance the effectiveness of English language training for Natuna Geopark tour guides while strengthening their communication

competencies in supporting sustainable tourism promotion (Guntoro, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to design an effective English for Tourism module for local tour guides in Natuna Geopark within the scope of English Language Education, particularly in a non-formal learning context. Using the Research and Development (R&D) approach, this study seeks to produce a pedagogically grounded English instructional module that is contextual, communicative, and learner-centered to support English teaching and learning for adult learners. It is expected that the developed module will not only enhance learners' English communication skills but also serve as a reference for English instructional material development in similar English for Tourism learning programs in other geopark or tourism-based educational contexts across Indonesia.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background and limitation of the problem, the research questions are formulated as follows:

“How can an effective English for Tourism module be designed to meet the specific communication needs of local tour guides in Natuna Geopark?”

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are as follows:

“To design an effective English for Tourism module that meets the specific needs of local tour guides in Natuna Geopark.”

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance as follows:

1.4.1. Theoretical

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in the field of English for Tourism. It may serve as a reference for future researchers and educators in designing language learning materials that are based on learners' real needs and local contexts.

1.4.2. Practical

1) For Local Tour Guides

The developed module can help them improve their English communication skills, especially in speaking, and enable them to interact more effectively with foreign tourists in Natuna Geopark.

2) For English Language Education Researchers and ESP Material Developers

The findings can serve as a reference model for designing contextual, needs-based English learning materials that integrate local culture, local contexts, and task-based communicative activities.

3) For Local Government and Tourism Stakeholders

The module can support the enhancement of human resource quality in the tourism sector and contribute to promoting Natuna Geopark as an international tourism destination.

1.5 Specification of Product

The final product of this research was a contextual and communicative English for Tourism module specifically designed for local tour guides in Natuna Geopark. The product was developed using the Research and Development (R&D) method

and followed the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The specifications of the developed product were as follows:

1. The product was an English for Tourism learning module presented in a digital format (e-module) and was designed using Canva to make it visually attractive, user-friendly, and easily accessible for self-learning or group training.
2. The module was intended for local tour guides, members of the Natuna Geopark Youth Forum (NGYF), and other tourism practitioners in Natuna who interact with international tourists and need to improve their English communication skills.
3. The module consisted of four main units, each focusing on communicative functions relevant to real-life tour guiding contexts, such as:
 - a) Introducing oneself and greeting tourists.
 - b) Describing geosites, landscapes, and cultural heritage in Natuna.
 - c) Explaining tour itineraries and tourist activities.
4. Each unit provided information about safety, environment, and local values. Each unit included sections on vocabulary building, language expressions, speaking activities, comprehension tasks, and reflection exercises based on authentic tourism contexts.
5. The language materials were designed according to the ESP framework, emphasizing situational communication, vocabulary relevance, and fluency practise in the tourism field. Special attention was given to expressions

commonly used in guiding, storytelling, and cultural interpretation.

6. The module applied the principles Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which encouraged interactive learning through role plays, dialogues, pair work, and simulation activities that reflect actual tour guide tourist interactions.
7. The module was developed using Canva and featured a professional and aesthetic layout reflecting the identity of Natuna Geopark.
8. The module included visual elements, such as photos of Natuna's geosites and local culture, to enhance contextual learning.
9. The module was equipped with QR codes or links to videos or digital resources for pronunciation practise and additional materials.
10. The product was validated by experts in English education and tourism to ensure content accuracy, practicality, and relevance. In addition, feedback was collected from users (local guides) to evaluate its effectiveness and usability in real situations.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to clarify the scope of this study, several key terms used in this research were defined as follows:

1. Design

Referred to the process of planning and developing instructional materials based on learners' needs, learning objectives, and relevant learning principles. In this study, design referred to the development of a contextual English for Tourism module for local tour guides in Natuna Geopark.

2. **English for Tourism**

Referred to a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focused on teaching English used in the tourism industry, particularly for communication between tour guides and foreign tourists in contexts such as guiding tours, describing attractions, providing directions, explaining local culture, and delivering customer service. In this study, English for Tourism emphasized communicative language functions and tourism-related vocabulary relevant to the geotourism context of Natuna Geopark.

3. **Module**

Referred to a structured and self-contained learning material that includes objectives, content, learning activities, and evaluation components, developed based on learners' needs and contextual requirements. In this research, the term module specifically refers to an English for Tourism learning module designed using Canva, aimed at helping local tour guides in Natuna Geopark improve their communicative competence in English.

4. **Local Tour Guides**

Referred to individuals who provide information, assistance, and interpretation services to tourists visiting local attractions. In this study, local tour guides specifically refer to members of the Natuna Geopark Youth Forum (NGYF) and other tourism practitioners in the the Natuna Geopark area who are responsible for introducing geosites, explaining geological and cultural values, and assisting foreign tourists.

5. Natuna Geopark

Referred to a geological area located in the Natuna Regency, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia, recognized for its outstanding geological, biological, and cultural diversity. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources ESDM (2023) Natuna Geopark comprises 15 geoheritage sites that represent significant scientific, educational, and aesthetic values. These sites include *Tanjung Datuk*, *Tanjung Ba'dai*, *Air Mali*, *Bukit Kapur*, *Pulau Senua*, *Gunung Ranai*, *Tanjung Senubing*, *Gunung Gundul*, *Batu Kasah*, *Pulau Akar*, *Bukit Sekunyam*, *Pulau Semiun*, *Pulau Setanau*, *Batu Catur*, and *Goa Lubang Hidung Pantai Pasir Pandok*. In addition, the geopark features several officially designated geosites, such as *Geosite Gunung Ranai*, *Geosite Pulau Setanau*, *Geosite Tanjung Datuk*, *Geosite Goa Kamak*, *Geosite Tanjung Senubing*, *Geosite Pulau Senua*, *Geosite Batu Kasah*, and *Geosite Pulau Akar*. These geoheritage sites reflect the rich geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity of the Natuna Islands, featuring granite rock formations, coastal landscapes, hills, beaches, caves, and cultural heritage locations. In this study, Natuna Geopark serves as the contextual setting for developing the English for Tourism module, as it is growing international geotourism destination that is preparing for UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) recognition. This setting is essential to ensure that the developed module is locally grounded, culturally relevant, and aligned with the real communication needs of local tour guides