

Communication Strategies Used by Tour Guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach

Nurul Alany Asyiqin, Muhammad Amin, Arafiq

English Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram, Indonesia

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Corresponding Author

Author Name: Nurul Alany Asyiqin

Email: 49asyiqinalany@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study investigated the communication strategies used by tour guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach, Central Lombok, when interacting with foreign tourists. It aimed to identify the types of communication strategies the guides used and to describe how these strategies were applied. A descriptive qualitative design was employed with three tour guides working in the Kuta Mandalika area. Data were collected through observation, field notes (including video recordings), and interviews, and were analyzed using Celce-Murcia et al.'s (1995) classification of avoidance, achievement or compensatory, stalling or time-gaining, self-monitoring, and interactional strategies. A total of 37 utterances containing communication strategies were identified. Achievement or compensatory strategies were the most frequent (51.4%), followed by interactional strategies (16.2%), avoidance or reduction and self-monitoring strategies (13.5% each), and stalling or time-gaining strategies (5.4%). The guides mainly simplified, paraphrased, or described meaning to keep the conversation going despite limited vocabulary and grammar, and they rarely paused to gain time. These findings suggest that the guides prioritized fluency and message delivery over grammatical accuracy. Communication strategies therefore play an important role in helping tour guides reduce misunderstandings and maintain interaction with foreign tourists.

Keywords: communication strategies, tour guides, tourism, English communication, Kuta Mandalika Beach

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global lingua franca and is essential in many industries, including tourism (Harmer, 2001). Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors worldwide, and it requires effective communication across different cultures and languages. Tourism professionals, such as tour guides, hotel staff, and service providers, rely on English to communicate with international visitors and to serve their needs (Prachanant, 2012).

Lombok has become a major tourist destination in Indonesia, known for its beaches and its rich cultural heritage (Rahayu & Yanis, 2023). One of its most iconic destinations is Kuta Mandalika, which is part of a Special Economic Zone and a super-priority tourism destination, and which has become internationally known for its MotoGP circuit (Muliana & Khabib, 2025). Foreign tourists who visit Kuta Mandalika Beach are usually accompanied by Indonesian tour guides who explain the attractions of the area. In these conversations, unfamiliar terms often appear, so both the guides and the tourists need ways to cope with communication problems.

A preliminary observation at Kuta Beach showed that a tour guide had difficulty communicating with foreign tourists because of the language barrier. Such problems arise because guides and tourists differ in language and cultural knowledge, and guides often have to define or describe local terms that are new to foreign visitors (Asmin, 2022; Hanan & Sugianto, 2021). One way to overcome these problems is the use of communication strategies, which are the realization of strategic competence, one of the five components of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Canale (1983) defines communicative competence as the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for

communication. Saville-Troike (1986) adds that communicative competence includes knowing who may speak in a certain setting, when to speak and when to remain silent, and how to talk to people of different statuses and roles. Because cross-cultural differences can lead to misunderstanding, communication strategies help speakers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds understand each other and express their intended meaning in the target language (Castro Garcés & López Olivera, 2014).

Previous studies have examined the communication strategies of tour guides in Indonesia. Hanan and Sugianto (2021) found that tourist guides in Lombok used paraphrase, transfer, appeal for assistance, mime, and avoidance strategies to support their professionalism, while Asmin (2022) examined the intercultural communication strategies of tour guides in Toraja. Muliana and Khabib (2025) examined communication strategies involving global and local languages in the Mandalika destination. However, studies that classify the communication strategies used by tour guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach with Celce-Murcia et al.'s (1995) framework remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify the types of communication strategies used by tour guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach and to describe how these strategies are used in their interactions with foreign tourists.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is understood as a situated activity that positions the observer within the real-world context and seeks to describe and interpret phenomena based on observable data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It emphasizes understanding processes, meanings, and experiences rather than merely focusing on outcomes. Research design, in this

context, referred to the researcher's strategic plan for investigating a particular phenomenon within its natural setting (Ary et al., 2010). The study adhered to key characteristics of qualitative inquiry, including the use of natural settings, the researcher as the primary instrument, descriptive data in the form of words, inductive data analysis, and a focus on meaning. More specifically, this research employed an observational case study approach, which involved an in-depth examination of a small number of participants within a specific context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on analyzing communication strategies used by tour guides when interacting with foreign tourists.

The research was conducted at Kuta Mandalika Beach, located in Kuta, Central Lombok. This site was selected due to its prominence as a major tourism destination that attracts a high number of international visitors. The area encompasses various tourist attractions, including Kuta Beach Center, Mandalika Circuit, Gerupuk Beach, Selong Belanak, Marese Hill, and Tanjung Aan Beach. In addition, the location regularly hosts cultural and international events such as Bau Nyale and MotoGP, and it is historically associated with the legend of Putri Mandalika. These characteristics made the setting highly relevant for observing authentic interactions between tour guides and foreign tourists, thereby facilitating the collection of rich and contextual data.

The participants of this study consisted of three tour guides working in the Kuta Mandalika Beach area. One participant was affiliated with a local travel agency, while the other two operated as freelance guides. The selection of participants was intended to provide insights into communication strategies used in real-life interactions with foreign tourists. The participants varied in age, background, and professional experience, which contributed to a broader understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Data in this study were defined as raw materials collected from the field, including observational records, interview transcripts, and other documented interactions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These data served as the foundation for subsequent analysis.

Data collection was carried out using multiple qualitative instruments, including observation, field notes, and interviews. Observation was conducted directly in the research setting to examine how tour guides applied communication strategies during interactions with foreign tourists. Field notes were used to document important events and included video recordings as the primary form of data capture (Ary et al., 2010). Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to gather participants' perspectives, opinions, and experiences regarding communication strategies. The interviews were conducted over approximately three days and guided by questions related to the research focus. The researcher actively engaged in the data collection process, either as a participant observer or as a non-participant observer, and utilized tools such as a notebook, pen, mobile phone, and voice recorder to document interactions comprehensively.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984), which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data obtained from field notes, interviews, and documentation into

more manageable forms. This process occurred continuously throughout the research, including coding, summarizing, and categorizing data. Data display referred to the organized presentation of information, typically in textual or visual formats, to facilitate interpretation and understanding. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting patterns, relationships, and meanings within the data while continuously validating findings to ensure their credibility and accuracy. This iterative process ensured that the conclusions were well-grounded, reliable, and reflective of the actual phenomena observed in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data of this study were collected from conversations between tour guides and foreign tourists at Kuta Mandalika Beach. The data were obtained through observation, interviews, and video recordings conducted in natural tourism settings. Through these data collection techniques, the researcher was able to capture authentic interactions between tour guides and tourists. From these interactions, a total of 37 utterances containing communication strategies were identified and selected as the main data for analysis.

The data were analyzed using the communication strategies framework proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), which categorizes communication strategies into five types: avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies. This framework was chosen because it provides a comprehensive classification that is relevant to real communication situations, especially in contexts where speakers experience language limitations. By using this framework, the researcher was able to systematically classify and interpret the strategies used by the tour guides.

To make the presentation of the findings clearer and more systematic, the identified communication strategies were grouped and quantified based on their frequency of occurrence. The results are summarized in Table 1, which shows the distribution of each type of communication strategy used by the tour guides during their interactions with foreign tourists.

Table 1. Types of Communication Strategies Used by Tour Guides

No	Communication Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Achievement or Compensatory Strategies	19	51.4%
2	Interactional Strategies	6	16.2%
3	Avoidance or Reduction Strategies	5	13.5%
4	Self-Monitoring Strategies	5	13.5%
5	Stalling or Time-Gaining Strategies	2	5.4%
	Total	37	100%

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that achievement or compensatory strategies are the most frequently used strategies, accounting for 19 occurrences (51.4%) out of the total data. This finding indicates that tour guides tend to rely heavily on their ability to adjust, modify, or simplify their language when they encounter difficulties in expressing ideas. In many cases, the guides continue speaking even when their grammatical structures are not accurate, as long as the message can still be understood by the tourists. This

shows that communicative effectiveness is prioritized over linguistic accuracy in real communication situations.

The second most frequently used strategies are interactional strategies, with 6 occurrences (16.2%). These strategies reflect the interactive nature of communication between tour guides and tourists. The guides actively engage the tourists by responding to their questions, confirming understanding, and maintaining the flow of conversation. This indicates that communication is not a one-way process, but rather a collaborative interaction in which both parties contribute to achieving mutual understanding.

Avoidance or reduction strategies and self-monitoring strategies are used with equal frequency, each appearing 5 times (13.5%). The use of avoidance strategies suggests that tour guides sometimes avoid certain topics or messages due to limited vocabulary, lack of knowledge, or uncertainty in expressing ideas in English. On the other hand, self-monitoring strategies show that tour guides are aware of their language use and attempt to improve clarity by adjusting or simplifying their speech. This reflects their effort to ensure that the tourists can understand the information being delivered despite linguistic limitations.

The least frequently used strategies are stalling or time-gaining strategies, with only 2 occurrences (5.4%). This indicates that tour guides rarely use fillers, pauses, or hesitation devices to gain time while thinking. Instead, they tend to immediately respond to tourists and continue the conversation without significant delay. This behavior may reflect their practical communication style, where maintaining interaction is considered more important than taking time to produce grammatically correct sentences.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that tour guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach rely predominantly on achievement or compensatory strategies to overcome language barriers and maintain communication with foreign tourists. The dominance of this strategy highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability in real-life communication, particularly in tourism contexts where speakers often interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Types of Communication Strategies

Based on the analysis, five types of communication strategies were identified in the interaction between tour guides and foreign tourists. Examples of the utterances for each strategy are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of communication strategies used by the tour guides

Type of strategy	Example utterances (guide)
Achievement or compensatory	"You have some any question and there a beach or and there so many buffalo." (DR) "In other the coastal climates in Lombok same like in Bali." (RJ) "So that why this beach is the most famous among everyone." (ID) "That's called Selong Belanak. This is also a very famous beach." (DR) "Every Sunday, people come with their families and bring their own picnic equipment." (RJ) "Unlike before, food prices were still affordable." (ID)
Interactional	"Just the way I think the culture of people in Lombok is similar like in Bali too." (RJ) "Go slowly and maybe we will arrive in 10

Type of strategy	Example utterances (guide)
	minutes." (DR) "It's time for us to walk along this beach." (ID) "That makes it look like you're really enjoying that coconut." (RJ)
Avoidance or reduction	"The meaning of Tanjung Aan, Tanjung meaning cape, and Aan is the name." (DR) "And now people building center near the beach are the like in Bali." (RJ) "I don't know why the price." (ID) "Before it was like this, this beach was also quiet before." (DR) "But this is also good for the development of tourism for a beautiful coastal area like this." (RJ)
Self-monitoring	"You can see the buffalo coming closer to me." (DR) "So, be careful not make you scary, but just make take care yourself." (RJ) "Because here the holiday is one week at a time so the beach will be crowded with people on Sundays." (ID) "And there are not many sellers around the beach who sell things like this." (DR) "That's why, you only see a few sellers busy around this beach." (RJ)
Stalling or time-gaining	"You know buffalo? So I can tame it. So I'm great." (RJ) "This like a hill. From the top of the hill, you can see the expanse of white sand of Tanjung Aan Beach, surrounded by enchanting blue waters." (DR)

Achievement or compensatory strategies were used most often. The guides kept delivering information about the beaches and local life even when their vocabulary or grammar was limited, using simple and sometimes incomplete structures. Although the sentences were not accurate, the meaning could still be understood, which shows that the guides prioritized communicative effectiveness over grammatical correctness.

Interactional strategies appeared when the guides involved the tourists in the conversation by giving instructions, sharing opinions, and responding to the tourists' reactions. These strategies created a natural exchange in which both parties contributed to the conversation.

Avoidance or reduction strategies were used when the guides simplified an explanation or chose not to elaborate because of limited knowledge or language ability. The expression "I don't know why the price" clearly shows avoidance, as the guide chose not to give further information. In other cases, the guides shifted to general statements instead of detailed explanations to prevent a communication breakdown.

Self-monitoring strategies were identified when the guides adjusted, repeated, or simplified their speech to make it clearer. Although the sentences were not always grammatical, the guides organized their ideas so that the message could be understood.

Stalling or time-gaining strategies were the least frequent. The guides used expressions such as "you know," pauses, and repeated structures to gain time while organizing their thoughts, which allowed them to keep speaking instead of stopping completely.

Discussion

Types of Communication Strategies Used by Tour Guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach

The findings of this study reveal that five types of communication strategies were employed by tour guides in their interaction with foreign tourists at Kuta Mandalika Beach, namely avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies. The identification of these five categories indicates that tour guides actively utilize various linguistic strategies to maintain communication despite limitations in their English proficiency. The dominance of *achievement or compensatory strategies*, which accounted for 51.4% of the data, reflects the tendency of tour guides to prioritize meaning over grammatical accuracy. This pattern demonstrates that communication in tourism contexts is primarily oriented toward message delivery rather than structural correctness, as effective communication is essential in ensuring that tourists understand the information provided (Brown, 2000, p. 246).

The presence of all five types of communication strategies in this study aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), which categorizes communication strategies into five major types. This alignment indicates that the theoretical model is applicable in real-life communication settings, particularly in multilingual tourism environments. The concept of *communicative competence* emphasizes not only the mastery of linguistic rules but also the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). The findings support the idea that communication strategies are part of strategic competence, which enables speakers to overcome communication difficulties and maintain interaction (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). The role of cultural and social context is also evident, as tour guides adjust their language according to the needs and backgrounds of foreign tourists (Hymes, 1989, p. 54).

The dominance of achievement or compensatory strategies in this study can be explained by the nature of tourism communication, which requires continuous interaction and immediate delivery of information. Tour guides are often required to explain cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of a destination, even when they lack specific vocabulary or grammatical accuracy. In such situations, they rely on alternative expressions, paraphrasing, or simplified language to convey meaning effectively. This finding is in line with Hanan and Sugianto (2021), who reported that tourist guides in Lombok relied on paraphrase techniques, such as approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution, and linked the use of communication strategies to the guides' professionalism. The consistency of these findings suggests that achievement strategies are a fundamental aspect of communication in tourism settings.

The relatively low use of stalling or time-gaining strategies, which accounted for 5.4% of the data, indicates that tour guides tend to minimize hesitation during communication. This pattern suggests that maintaining the flow of interaction is considered more important than taking time to construct grammatically accurate sentences. In tourism contexts, where communication is interactive and time-sensitive, hesitation may disrupt the overall experience of tourists. Therefore, tour guides tend to continue speaking

even when they are uncertain about linguistic accuracy. This behavior reflects the concept of fluency-oriented communication, in which the continuity of interaction is prioritized over linguistic precision (Burns & Joyce, 1997, p. 45). The findings also indicate that effective communication in tourism is closely related to service quality and visitor satisfaction (Rahayu & Yanis, 2023, p. 1612).

The findings also show that avoidance and self-monitoring strategies were used in moderate proportions. The use of avoidance strategies indicates that tour guides sometimes simplify or redirect communication when they encounter difficulties, which may be influenced by limited vocabulary or lack of knowledge. Meanwhile, the use of self-monitoring strategies reflects an awareness of linguistic accuracy and an effort to clarify meaning during communication. These findings demonstrate the dynamic nature of communication strategies, where speakers continuously adjust their language use based on situational demands. The integration of multiple strategies reflects the complexity of communication in intercultural contexts, where linguistic and cultural differences must be negotiated simultaneously (Saville-Troike, 1986, p. 63). Overall, the findings confirm that communication strategies play a crucial role in facilitating effective interaction between tour guides and foreign tourists.

How Communication Strategies are Used by Tour Guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach

The use of communication strategies by tour guides in this study reflects a practical and adaptive approach to language use in real communicative situations. These strategies are not applied in isolation, but rather emerge dynamically during interaction with foreign tourists. The findings indicate that tour guides use communication strategies as a means of overcoming linguistic limitations while maintaining the continuity of communication. This demonstrates that communication in tourism contexts is highly context-dependent and requires speakers to adjust their language use according to immediate communicative needs. The ability to apply such strategies indicates that effective communication is not solely determined by linguistic competence, but also by the ability to manage interaction and negotiate meaning (Muliana & Khabib, 2025, p. 160).

Achievement or compensatory strategies were primarily used when tour guides encountered difficulties in expressing ideas due to limited vocabulary or grammatical knowledge. In such situations, guides used simplified language, paraphrasing, or descriptive expressions to convey meaning. This strategy enables speakers to continue communication without interruption, ensuring that the intended message is understood by the listener. The frequent use of this strategy indicates that tour guides rely on flexibility and creativity in language use to achieve communicative goals. This finding supports the view that communication strategies function as tools for bridging gaps in linguistic competence (Castro Garcés & López Olivera, 2014, p. 18). The use of compensatory strategies also highlights the importance of fluency in spoken interaction, where maintaining communication is more critical than achieving grammatical accuracy (Prachanant, 2012, p. 515).

Interactional strategies were used to facilitate mutual understanding between tour guides and tourists. These strategies include asking for clarification, confirming

understanding, and responding to feedback from the listener. The use of interactional strategies indicates that communication is a collaborative process, in which both speakers actively contribute to the construction of meaning. This finding supports the idea that communication involves negotiation of meaning, particularly in intercultural contexts where participants may have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Saville-Troike, 1986, p. 68). The use of such strategies also reflects the role of tour guides as mediators of information, who must ensure that tourists understand the explanations provided.

Avoidance strategies were used when tour guides chose to avoid certain topics or simplify their responses due to limited knowledge or linguistic resources. This strategy allows speakers to maintain communication while minimizing the risk of misunderstanding or error. The use of avoidance strategies indicates that tour guides are aware of their limitations and strategically manage communication to avoid breakdowns. This behavior reflects the adaptive nature of communication strategies, where speakers make decisions based on their linguistic capabilities and situational demands. The findings suggest that avoidance strategies function as a protective mechanism, enabling speakers to maintain confidence during interaction (Bipin, 2023, p. 5).

Self-monitoring strategies were used when tour guides attempted to correct or clarify their speech during communication. This includes rephrasing statements or simplifying expressions to enhance understanding. The use of self-monitoring strategies indicates an awareness of linguistic accuracy and a willingness to improve communication effectiveness. This finding supports the concept of strategic competence, which involves the ability to monitor and adjust language use in real-time (Canale, 1983, p. 10). The presence of self-monitoring strategies suggests that tour guides actively evaluate and improve their speech during interaction.

Stalling or time-gaining strategies were used less frequently, indicating that tour guides tend to prioritize fluency over accuracy. These strategies were employed when speakers needed additional time to think or organize their ideas. However, the limited use of such strategies suggests that tour guides prefer to maintain the flow of communication without hesitation. This behavior may be influenced by the expectations of tourists, who require immediate responses and continuous interaction. The findings highlight the importance of fluency in tourism communication, where delays or pauses may negatively affect the overall experience of tourists (Muliana & Khabib, 2025, p. 162).

The overall pattern of communication strategies used in this study indicates that tour guides employ a combination of strategies to manage communication effectively. These strategies are used flexibly and adaptively depending on the context of interaction. The findings suggest that communication strategies are essential tools for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers in tourism settings. The ability to use these strategies effectively contributes to successful communication and enhances the quality of interaction between tour guides and tourists. The study confirms that communication strategies are a fundamental component of communicative competence, enabling speakers to achieve communicative goals despite limitations in language proficiency (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that there are five types of communication strategies used by tour guides at Kuta Mandalika Beach, namely avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies. A total of 37 utterances were identified, with achievement or compensatory strategies accounting for 51.4%, avoidance or reduction strategies 13.5%, self-monitoring strategies 13.5%, interactional strategies 16.2%, and stalling or time-gaining strategies 5.4%. These findings show that tour guides employ a variety of communication strategies to support interaction with foreign tourists.

Communication strategies are used by tour guides as a means to maintain communication and overcome linguistic limitations during interaction with foreign tourists. The most dominant strategy, *achievement or compensatory strategies*, was used when tour guides experienced difficulties in vocabulary or grammar but continued speaking by simplifying, paraphrasing, or describing meaning. Interactional strategies are used to confirm and clarify understanding, while avoidance strategies are applied when guides chose to avoid certain topics. Self-monitoring strategies were used to adjust and clarify speech, and stalling strategies were used to gain time when thinking, although they were rarely applied. This pattern indicates that tour guides tend to prioritize fluency and message delivery rather than grammatical accuracy in real communication situations. Future research may further examine the linguistic features of tour guides' communication to contribute to the development of language studies.

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