

The proficiency of English communicative skills among homestay staff in Bangli for effective customer service

Anak Agung Gede Oka Geria¹, Ni Wayan Pastini², Luh Nyoman Tri Lilasari³

Politeknik Pariwisata Bali^{1,2,3}

¹Email: dokageria@gmail.com

²Email: pastini@ppb.ac.id

³Email: trililasari_ila@ppb.ac.id

Abstract - The growth of community-based tourism (CBT) in Indonesia has positioned homestays as a strategic avenue for rural economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism development. In Bangli, Bali particularly in renowned tourism villages such as Pengelipuran and Undisan – homestays serve as key interfaces between local communities and international visitors. As English functions as the global lingua franca of tourism, oral English communication skills are essential for ensuring high-quality guest experiences. However, many homestay staff possess limited formal English training, raising concerns about their capacity to meet the communicative demands of international tourism. This study aims to assess the oral English communicative competence of Bangli homestay staff using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as the evaluative benchmark. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of communicative competence and integrating insights from tourism communication research, the study adopts a task-based assessment approach to measure performance in practical contexts such as facility descriptions, cultural explanations, and guest interaction scenarios. The findings are expected to provide a nuanced profile of staff competencies across CEFR levels, identify specific linguistic and strategic strengths and weaknesses, and inform targeted training interventions. By aligning language development initiatives with the operational realities of CBT settings, the study seeks to enhance service quality, strengthen cultural exchange, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of homestay programs in rural Bali. This research further adds to the academic discourse on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in tourism, particularly within developing country contexts.

Keywords: community-based tourism, homestay Bali, oral communication, CEFR, English for Specific Purposes

1. Introduction

The tourism industry in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, shifting from conventional mass tourism toward more community-based tourism (CBT) models. One of the central instruments in this transition is the homestay program, which plays a crucial role in integrating local communities – particularly those in rural areas – into the tourism value chain. The homestay initiative is not merely an economic opportunity; it is a strategy for inclusive development aimed at empowering rural populations, promoting cultural preservation, and fostering sustainable tourism. Through this model, the government seeks to redistribute the



benefits of tourism, extending them beyond urban and resort centres to include village-based communities (Giampiccoli, & Saayman, 2018).

In essence, homestays offer a unique cultural exchange. Tourists are not simply visitors; they become temporary members of a host family, sharing meals, traditions, and routines. This immersive experience sets homestays apart from traditional accommodations. For the host families, this implies more than providing a room; it involves engaging in intercultural communication, understanding guest expectations, and offering a hospitable environment that meets international service standards (Clarke, & Chen, (2009). Bali, as Indonesia's leading tourist destination, has become a focal point for homestay development. Areas such as Pengelipuran Village and Undisan Village in Bangli Regency are notable examples of cultural and rural tourism integration. Pengelipuran is renowned for its strong commitment to Balinese traditions and its well-preserved village layout, while Undisan is emerging as a vibrant tourism village attracting a growing number of foreign visitors (Murti, 2019).

However, the influx of international guests presents a challenge: the need for effective English communication skills among homestay staff. English serves as the *lingua franca* in global tourism and is instrumental in ensuring quality guest service (Mesquita, 2021). Effective oral English communication facilitates better understanding between hosts and guests, minimizes service delivery issues, and enhances the overall guest experience (Khorsheed, & Saleh, 2024). Conversely, inadequate communication may result in service failures, cultural misunderstandings, and negative guest reviews, ultimately affecting business sustainability. Although many homestay staff in Bangli are high school graduates with limited exposure to formal English training, they are expected to perform multiple roles—including receptionist, guide, cook, and cultural ambassador—all of which require functional English proficiency (Putri et al. 2022).

Despite these challenges, anecdotal evidence suggests that homestays in Bangli continue to attract visitors and even experience a growing number of repeat guests. This paradox raises a critical question: To what extent do homestay staff possess the necessary oral English communication skills to interact effectively with their guests? This study seeks to investigate this phenomenon systematically, with a particular focus on assessing the communicative competence of homestay staff based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Previous research on homestay development in Bali has largely focused on management practices, cultural tourism, coastal empowerment, and specific language needs (Aritama, & Putra, 2021). However, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the actual oral English communicative competence of homestay staff. This gap is critical because effective communication is foundational to the hospitality industry, particularly in CBT models where interpersonal interaction is central to the guest experience (Shen et al., 2020).

This study addresses the following research questions: (1) How well do the homestay staff in Bangli communicate in English orally with their guests based on the CEFR? (2) What strategies and interventions are needed to improve their oral English communication skills?

This study has two primary objectives: (1) To assess the oral English communication competence of homestay staff in Bangli using CEFR descriptors. (2) To identify actionable recommendations for improving English oral communication skills among homestay staff in community-based tourism settings.

The outcomes of this study are expected to benefit multiple stakeholders. First, it will provide homestay operators with a clear understanding of their current communicative strengths and weaknesses, enabling targeted skill development. Second, it will assist local tourism authorities and vocational training centres in designing relevant training modules tailored to the specific communicative contexts of homestay operations. Third, it contributes to the academic discourse on language learning in informal, tourism-oriented contexts, especially within developing country frameworks. Ultimately, the study aligns with Indonesia's broader goals of sustainable tourism development and rural empowerment. By equipping local communities with



the linguistic tools necessary to engage confidently in international tourism, the homestay program can be transformed into a more effective agent of economic and cultural resilience.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is characterized by community ownership and participation, where tourism is developed and managed in ways that benefit local people socially, economically, and culturally (Giampiccoli, & Saayman, 2018). The homestay model is a practical application of CBT principles, offering visitors an opportunity to experience local life while generating income and preserving cultural heritage (Pakshir, & Nair, 2011). In Indonesia, the government has actively promoted homestay development through programs such as "1000 Homestays for 10 Priority Destinations". This initiative aims to address accommodation gaps while fostering grassroots participation in tourism (Ismail et al., 2022). Bali's unique sociocultural identity makes it an ideal setting for CBT, where homestays can function as sites of both economic exchange and cultural learning.

English functions as the global language of tourism and is essential for host-guest interactions, especially in international settings. Research has consistently demonstrated that linguistic competence directly influences service quality in tourism (De Carlos et al., 2019). For homestay staff, proficiency in English is not limited to grammatical correctness; it involves the ability to engage in small talk, explain cultural practices, handle guest requests, and resolve misunderstandings effectively (Saragih, 2024). The CEFR provides a comprehensive framework for assessing language competence across various contexts and proficiency levels. It emphasizes communicative functions over linguistic accuracy and is widely used in educational and vocational settings (Kyrpychenko et al., 2021).

Language is fundamentally intertwined with culture, identity, and cognition. As noted by Kramsch (1989), language acts as a marker of community identity, often leading speakers to reject external languages and cultures. This resistance underscores the deep connection between language and cultural affiliation. Sapir (1985) emphasized that language serves as an expressive conduit of culture, while Boroditsky (2011) and Lenda (2011) provided evidence of how language influences cognitive processes such as perception of space, time, and causality.

From a definitional perspective, the Oxford Dictionary characterizes language as a mass noun referring to structured human communication, either spoken or written. This dual mode of communication introduces a distinction: while oral communication is more intuitive and less formal, written communication demands structural and grammatical precision. Furthermore, non-verbal communication, including body language, plays a critical role in expressing meaning, highlighting the multimodal nature of language.

Language also functions as a national and cultural identifier. In Indonesia, over 700 indigenous languages coexist alongside the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. English, being the global lingua franca, holds a special role in international communication and industries like tourism. In Indonesia, proficiency in English is often linked to better employment opportunities, particularly in the hospitality sector, though disparities exist between urban and rural populations in language acquisition.

Communication is defined by the Business Dictionary as a bidirectional process involving encoding and decoding of messages to create shared meaning. It is influenced by contextual factors and utilizes both verbal and non-verbal channels. Effective communication skills are integral to personal and professional success. Curtis (1988) highlighted communication as the most valued skill in the contemporary job market. Further, a 2001 study cited in the *Journal of Research in Personality* established a link between extroversion and higher self-esteem, contributing to superior communication abilities. This suggests a strong correlation between personality traits and communicative competence. Additionally, a study in the *International Journal of Business* revealed that communication proficiency is a top hiring criterion for managers. Ability, defined as a person's capacity to perform specific tasks, is best measured using standardized tools. In language learning, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) serves as a robust scale to assess oral communication proficiency. In this study, CEFR will evaluate the English-speaking abilities of homestay staff in Bangli, Indonesia,



focusing on practical communicative tasks like giving facility tours and explaining cultural activities.

Thornbury (2005) delineated a clear distinction between language knowledge and the productive skill of speaking. Speaking requires learners to move beyond recognition and understanding toward articulation and fluency. Language researchers typically analyse speaking through its functions, areas, and pedagogical implications. According to McKay (2008) and Hayes (2010), speaking is an interactive process aimed at shared understanding. Brown (2004) categorized speaking tasks into five types: imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive. Each category reflects varying degrees of linguistic and cognitive complexity. Five key components essential for effective speaking include: pronunciation (segmental and suprasegmental features), grammar (syntactic accuracy), vocabulary (lexical resource), Fluency (flow and pace), comprehension (listening and responding capabilities).

Brown and Yule (1983) proposed a binary classification: interactional (for social bonding) and transactional (for information exchange). Later, Richards (2008) expanded this into three categories: (1) Talk as Interaction: Social conversation maintaining interpersonal relationships. (2) Talk as Transaction: Functional communication for clear information exchange. (3) Talk as Performance: Monologic discourse like speeches or presentations.

Richards further linked speaking proficiency to *communicative competence*, a term initially introduced by Hymes (1972) and elaborated by Canale and Swain (2002). They delineated four components: Grammatical Competence: Mastery of syntax, vocabulary, and phonology, Discourse Competence: Cohesion and coherence across sentences, Sociolinguistic Competence: Appropriateness in social and cultural contexts, and Strategic Competence: Compensatory strategies for overcoming communication breakdowns. Together, these competencies foster an individual's ability to engage meaningfully in real-life communicative settings.

Yellen, Blake, and DeVries (2004) in their work *Integrating the Language Arts* identified pedagogical strategies like conversation, brainstorming, interviewing, and patterned dialogue as effective for language acquisition. Kayi (2006) expanded this repertoire to include discussions, role plays, simulations, information gaps, storytelling, and visual prompts.

The current study utilizes interviews and descriptive tasks to assess speaking proficiency. These exercises target practical communication scenarios relevant to homestay staff, including describing facilities and narrating daily routines. Recordings of these tasks will be transcribed and analysed to evaluate fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative effectiveness.

2. Method

2.1 Research Location

This study was conducted in selected sites within Bangli Regency, a district in Bali, Indonesia, where homestay accommodation has been increasingly developed as part of community-based tourism initiatives. Bangli offers a unique blend of Balinese cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and rural tourism experiences. Homestays in this area are typically constructed in traditional Balinese architectural styles, feature lush gardens, and integrate cultural hospitality practices such as offering guests herbal drinks, traditional meals, and opportunities to participate in local ceremonies. These establishments offer accommodation at reasonable prices, often include free Wi-Fi, and aim to provide guests with immersive cultural experiences rather than purely commercial lodging services. The choice of Bangli was strategic, as it represents both the opportunities and challenges in developing English communication skills among hospitality staff in rural tourism contexts (Wijayanti & Putra, 2020).

2.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study comprised all homestay staff working in Bangli Regency. The research employed accidental sampling (also known as convenience sampling) as the primary selection technique. This non-probability method was chosen for its practicality in field-based tourism research, especially when participants' schedules are unpredictable due to operational demands (Etikan et al., 2016). According to Bungin (2011), accidental sampling involves selecting



respondents who are encountered during the data collection period and who meet the criteria of belonging to the target population. In this study, any homestay staff encountered during site visits who were willing to participate were included, provided they were involved in direct guest interaction. The final sample reflected diversity in age, gender, years of experience, and English proficiency levels, thus allowing for a rich qualitative exploration of communicative ability across varying backgrounds.

2.3 Nature of Research Data

This investigation relied exclusively on qualitative data, focusing on oral English language usage among participants. The data were collected through two primary elicitation techniques: (1) Semi-structured interviews – aimed at obtaining demographic information, work histories, and self-perceptions of English communication ability. (2) Descriptive tasks – requiring respondents to explain aspects of their work, such as homestay facilities, cooking classes, traditional Balinese house layouts, the making of Balinese offerings, and the process of serving food and drinks. These methods were chosen to capture naturalistic language production in contextually relevant scenarios (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Wajdi, 2018). The oral communication data obtained serve as a direct reflection of communicative competence in professional hospitality settings.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The primary research instruments were: Interview Protocol – containing open-ended questions designed to elicit extended speech, Observation Checklist – noting non-verbal cues, pronunciation issues, vocabulary gaps, and code-switching patterns, and Audio Recording Devices – to ensure accuracy in transcription and subsequent linguistic analysis.

Procedure: (1) Upon arrival at each homestay, the researcher introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the study, and obtained informed consent. (2) Interviews were conducted in a quiet location to minimize background noise. (3) Descriptive tasks followed, with prompts such as *“Please explain the facilities in this homestay to a guest who has just arrived”* or *“Describe how you conduct a cooking class for visitors.”* (4) All speech events were recorded using a digital voice recorder, later transcribed verbatim.

2.5. Integration of Respondent Transcripts

To preserve authenticity, selected respondent transcripts are presented here as illustrative excerpts. These transcripts demonstrate real-world communicative challenges faced by homestay staff.

Example 1 – Introducing Facilities:

“This homestay... we have two bedroom. Eh... two room. Every room have bathroom inside. You can see... eh... garden in front. Wi-Fi free, and... breakfast every morning. You can... join cooking class if you want.”

Example 2 – Explaining a Cooking Class:

“Cooking class start at nine. First, we go to market... traditional market... buy vegetable, spice... Then back to kitchen, we cooking together. You can learn make lawar, satay lilit... very delicious.”

Example 3 – Describing Balinese Houses:

“Traditional Balinese house have many building. Here... we have bale dangin, for ceremony. Bale dauh, for guest sleep. Kitchen separate. In middle, we have natah... like yard... for activity.”

Such transcripts not only highlight grammatical errors and lexical limitations but also reveal strategies for meaning-making, such as pauses, fillers (“eh”), and code-mixing.

2.6. Data Analysis

The analytical framework followed a qualitative content analysis model (Krippendorff, 2019), supplemented by reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to benchmark speaking proficiency.

Steps included: (1) Transcription – converting audio recordings into verbatim text. (2) Initial Coding – identifying recurring patterns such as grammar errors, pronunciation deviations, vocabulary limitations, and fluency markers. (3) Categorization – grouping codes into broader themes such as *facility descriptions*, *service explanations*, and *cultural narratives*. (4) Competence Mapping – aligning observed speech features with CEFR descriptors from A1 to C2. (5) Interpretation – drawing connections between linguistic performance, training exposure, and work experience.



This process ensured both linguistic rigor and practical relevance for hospitality training programs.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings presented in this section emerge from the structured oral interviews and descriptive tasks outlined in the Methodology. Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as the principal analytical tool, each respondent's English oral communication ability was assessed across multiple tourism-related scenarios. These tasks – such as explaining homestay facilities, describing traditional Balinese houses, conducting cooking class explanations, and interacting with guests during food and beverage service – were deliberately chosen to reflect authentic communicative demands in the local homestay context. Data analysis followed a respondent-by-respondent approach, integrating verbatim transcriptions to preserve the authenticity of spoken language, and scoring decisions were justified with reference to condensed CEFR descriptors. These results are further interpreted in light of the Literature Review's discussion on language as cultural identity (Kramsch, 1989; Sapir, 1985), communicative competence theory (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 2002), and speaking skill functions (Brown & Yule, 1983; Richards, 2008). This integration ensures that the quantitative CEFR classification and qualitative thematic interpretation are fully aligned with both the study's research design and its theoretical underpinnings.

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Respondent 1 (R1)

R1 is a homestay staff member responsible for guest reception, room orientation, and occasionally assisting in cooking class explanations. Their daily interactions with guests primarily involve providing practical information and addressing simple inquiries in English.

CEFR Level Assigned: A2 (Basic User – Waystage)

Condensed descriptor: Can handle short, simple exchanges on familiar topics, describe basic aspects of immediate environment, and communicate in routine tasks requiring a direct exchange of information, but may struggle when deviating from rehearsed material.

R1 demonstrates sufficient ability to greet guests, describe facilities, and provide simple procedural instructions. Vocabulary is functional but limited, often requiring pauses to search for words. Grammar control is basic, with consistent use of present tense and occasional errors in subject-verb agreement. Pronunciation is generally intelligible to sympathetic listeners, though stress patterns occasionally cause misunderstandings.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. "This is your room... you can see... uh... the bathroom inside... hot water... yes... and towel."
2. "Cooking class... we start at nine o'clock... we make... Balinese food... like... lawar and satay."

These utterances illustrate R1's reliance on formulaic sequences, consistent with Thornbury's (2005) observation that basic speakers often operate within rehearsed chunks rather than spontaneously constructed discourse. The ability to convey essential information aligns with Brown's (2004) "responsive" and "transactional" speaking categories, yet limitations in fluency and lexical range suggest restricted strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 2002). In tourism service delivery, R1's level suffices for basic guest orientation but may constrain the ability to manage unexpected guest requests or engage in extended cultural explanations.

3.1.2. Respondent 2 (R2)

R2 is assigned to guest check-in procedures, cultural briefings about the homestay, and guiding visitors during short village tours.

CEFR Level Assigned: B1 (Independent User – Threshold)

Condensed descriptor: Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling, produce connected speech on familiar topics, and describe experiences, events, and plans with reasonable fluency and accuracy.



R2 shows an ability to move beyond basic formulaic expressions, constructing short narratives about Balinese customs and explaining local practices to guests. Lexical range is adequate to support simple elaboration, and grammatical errors do not usually impede understanding. There is evidence of emerging discourse competence, particularly in connecting ideas coherently.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"In our village, we have temple ceremony every six month... we prepare offering with flowers and rice... very colorful."*
2. *"If you want to join cooking class, first we go to market to buy the ingredients... you can see the local people selling fish, vegetable, and spices."*

The excerpts reveal competence in sequencing information and using linking devices ("first... then..."). This ability supports the "talk as transaction" and "talk as performance" functions described by Richards (2008). Compared to R1, R2 displays stronger sociolinguistic competence – adapting explanations to what a tourist might find novel or interesting – though occasional grammatical slips remain (e.g., "every six month" instead of "every six months"). From a service perspective, this level enables effective guest engagement and contributes positively to perceived cultural authenticity, supporting Kramsch's (1989) assertion of language as a cultural mediator.

3.1.3. Respondent 3 (R3)

R3's role centres on food and beverage service, including explaining menu items and recommending dishes to international guests.

CEFR Level Assigned: A2+ (Basic User – upper band)

Condensed descriptor: Can describe immediate needs and preferences, give simple directions and recommendations, and sustain brief exchanges on routine topics, with occasional success in more extended turns. R3's speech is generally clear and functional in service-related contexts but becomes hesitant in less familiar topics. Vocabulary is food-service oriented, with limited extension into other domains. Pronunciation is relatively accurate for memorized terms (e.g., "chicken satay," "fried rice"), but fluency declines when improvising explanations.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"This one is nasi campur... mix rice... with vegetable, chicken, and egg."*
2. *"If you like spicy, we have sambal... but very hot... careful."*

These short but functional utterances highlight strong transactional communication skills within a restricted semantic field. As Brown and Yule's (1983) framework suggests, R3 excels in "transactional" exchanges but shows limited "interactional" range. Strategic competence is partially evident in the warning "careful," indicating awareness of guest needs. However, limited grammatical variety and minimal use of discourse markers signal the need for structured language development programs to expand beyond food-related vocabulary.

3.1.4. Respondent 4 (R4)

R4 is a senior staff member responsible for guest orientation, facilitating cooking classes, and providing cultural explanations about Balinese traditions. Their role often requires extended interaction with guests and handling questions about local customs.

CEFR Level Assigned: B1+ (Independent User – upper threshold)

Condensed descriptor: Can produce connected speech on a range of familiar topics, sustain conversation without undue strain for either party, and explain viewpoints on cultural and practical matters with moderate detail.

R4 demonstrates confidence in explaining multi-step processes and conveying cultural narratives. Vocabulary is richer than A2-level respondents, and grammar is mostly accurate with occasional lapses in tense consistency. Fluency allows for minimal hesitation, especially when discussing well-rehearsed topics such as cooking or ceremonies.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"We start the cooking class by taking the guest to the market... there, we show them how to choose fresh vegetable and spice... after that, we come back and begin the preparation."*



2. *"In our tradition, every ceremony has different kind of offering... for example, for temple anniversary we prepare bigger one with more decoration."*

These utterances show the ability to organize information sequentially and provide context for cultural practices, aligning with Richards' (2008) "talk as transaction" and "talk as performance." R4's ability to blend procedural description with cultural insight enhances sociolinguistic competence, a key factor in tourism communication. Compared to R2, R4 integrates more cohesive devices ("after that," "for example") and sustains longer turns, indicating greater discourse competence.

3.1.5. Respondent 5 (R5)

R5 works mainly in housekeeping but occasionally assists in guest check-ins and facility explanations when needed. Their exposure to English interaction is less frequent than that of front-facing staff.

CEFR Level Assigned: A2 (Basic User – Waystage)

Condensed descriptor: Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases, introduce self, and describe aspects of their job in simple terms. Limited ability to handle unexpected conversation shifts.

R5's English use is functional but narrow in scope, with speech largely confined to memorized patterns. Grammatical control is minimal beyond basic present tense, and vocabulary is limited to immediate workplace needs.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"Here is the towel... and extra blanket... if you need more, you can ask."*
2. *"Check-out time is twelve o'clock... please put the key in reception."*

R5's output reflects the functional memorization typical of minimally trained service staff. As Brown (2004) notes, such speakers often rely on "responsive" speech acts with predictable patterns. This approach works for routine operational exchanges but lacks adaptability for guest-initiated topics. The minimal use of discourse markers and reduced fluency in non-routine situations highlights the gap in communicative competence and the need for targeted oral practice.

3.1.6. Respondent 6 (R6)

R6 handles guest tour coordination, explains itinerary details, and liaises with local guides. Interaction with guests often involves clarifying schedules and providing brief historical or cultural context.

CEFR Level Assigned: B2 (Independent User – upper range)

Condensed descriptor: Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity, produce clear and detailed descriptions, and explain viewpoints on topical issues with relevant examples.

R6 shows a strong ability to maintain extended discourse, adapt language to different guests' levels of English, and link ideas coherently. Grammar is largely accurate, and vocabulary includes both service-related and general terms.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"Tomorrow, we will visit the rice terrace in the morning... you can take picture and also learn how the farmer plant the rice... later, we go to the coffee plantation to see the process of making Balinese coffee."*
2. *"If you are interested, I can also arrange visit to the temple... the guide will explain the history and the meaning of the ceremonies."*

R6's speech exemplifies strong "talk as performance" with organized sequencing and clear cultural mediation, supporting Kramsch's (1989) theory of language as a carrier of culture. Compared to lower-level respondents, R6 displays better strategic competence, adjusting vocabulary to the audience's presumed knowledge. This proficiency is particularly beneficial in tourism contexts where detailed, culturally enriched narratives enhance the visitor experience.

3.1.7. Respondent 7 (R7)

R7 works in food service but often engages guests in casual conversation, introducing them to Balinese daily life.



CEFR Level Assigned: B1 (Independent User – Threshold)

Condensed descriptor: Can handle the majority of situations encountered while traveling, maintain interaction on familiar topics, and express opinions with supporting details.

R7 blends transactional and interactional functions, able to both deliver service information and engage socially. Vocabulary is moderately varied, and grammatical errors rarely hinder comprehension.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"In my village, many people work as farmer... but some also open small shop for tourist."*
2. *"If you like sweet, you can try black rice pudding... we make it with coconut milk and palm sugar."*

R7's ability to merge cultural explanation with product recommendation reflects sociolinguistic competence and audience awareness. The use of cause-effect ("but some also...") indicates emerging discourse control. While fluency is adequate, complex grammar structures are rarely attempted, suggesting potential for development into B2 territory with focused training.

3.1.8. Respondent 8 (R8)

R8 is primarily responsible for guest reception and handling complaints, requiring rapid comprehension and flexible language use.

CEFR Level Assigned: B2 (Independent User – upper range)

Condensed descriptor: Can understand main ideas of complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics, interact with native speakers with relative ease, and produce clear, well-structured speech.

R8's language reflects an ability to improvise, negotiate meaning, and resolve misunderstandings. Vocabulary breadth includes service terminology and soft interpersonal language for complaint handling.

Verbatim Excerpts:

1. *"I understand the air conditioner is not working well... I will call the technician immediately, and we can offer you a fan until it is fixed."*
2. *"If you prefer quieter room, we can move you to the back side where there is less noise from the street."*

R8's speech integrates politeness strategies and problem-solving language, hallmarks of strong strategic competence. The capacity to reframe issues positively ("offer you a fan," "move you to the back side") reflects advanced service communication skills. Such abilities directly contribute to guest satisfaction and align with service excellence frameworks in hospitality literature.

3.2. Discussion

Across the 8 respondents, CEFR levels ranged from **A2** to **B2**, with the majority clustering at **B1–B1+**. This aligns with the literature on rural tourism language profiles, where exposure to authentic English use is episodic and heavily task-specific (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). The higher-level speakers (B2) tend to hold roles requiring regular, varied guest interaction—such as tour coordination, reception, and cultural facilitation—while lower-level speakers (A2) often operate in support roles with minimal direct guest contact.

Respondents at A2–A2+ predominantly operate in transactional modes—providing information, fulfilling requests, or giving instructions—whereas B1+ and above integrate interactional **elements**, including cultural sharing, humour, and guest rapport building. Brown and Yule's (1983) framework proves useful here: the most effective communicators among the staff are those who can shift fluidly between transactional precision and interactional warmth.

Applying Canale and Swain's (2002) model, differences across respondents emerge clearly: grammatical competence: Stable for B2, partial for B1, basic for A2, discourse competence: Evident in the use of cohesive devices ("after that," "for example") by B1+ and above, sociolinguistic competence: Higher in respondents who explain cultural meaning, not just



process, and strategic competence: Well-developed in those handling complaints or unexpected questions (notably R8).

As Kramsch (1989) notes, language carries culture; here, higher-level respondents often act as cultural mediators, contextualizing Balinese practices for foreign guests. This is particularly valuable for community-based tourism (CBT), where immersive cultural exchange is a key selling point (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

The data reveal consistent needs in expanding vocabulary for cultural and service-related topics, increasing grammatical accuracy in past and future tense use, and enhancing discourse structuring for A2-level staff to move toward B1. Role-specific language training, anchored in CEFR descriptors, could accelerate development. Simulation-based tasks—such as guided tours, complaint role plays, and cultural storytelling—would directly address these gaps while aligning with CEFR performance benchmarks.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Conclusion

This study examined the oral English communication skills of homestay staff in Bangli Regency within the framework of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Through a detailed respondent-by-respondent assessment supported by verbatim transcripts, the research revealed significant variations in proficiency levels, ranging from A2 (Basic User) to B2 (Upper-Intermediate). These differences were strongly correlated with the nature of each staff member's daily tasks, their prior language learning experiences, and the extent of direct guest interaction in their roles. Staff members with guest-facing responsibilities, such as conducting cultural tours or explaining local traditions, demonstrated higher fluency, broader vocabulary range, and better pragmatic skills, often reaching B1 or B2 levels. In contrast, those in operational or back-of-house roles exhibited more restricted language repertoires, limited grammatical accuracy, and less confidence in spontaneous conversation, often remaining at A2 or low B1 levels.

These findings reaffirm the theoretical perspectives discussed in the Literature Review, particularly the significance of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 2002) and the functional differentiation of speaking skills (Brown & Yule, 1983; Richards, 2008). They also underscore the strategic role of English in community-based tourism (CBT) as both an operational tool and a cultural bridge, enabling richer and more meaningful host-guest exchanges.

4.2. Suggestions

Role-Specific Language Training – Develop targeted English training modules tailored to the specific communicative demands of different job roles. For example, front-office and tour-guide staff should focus on narrative skills, cultural explanations, and negotiation language, while food service staff may benefit from vocabulary related to menus, dietary preferences, and hospitality etiquette.

Integration of Task-Based Learning (TBL) – Incorporate authentic, tourism-related tasks into language training, such as role-playing guest check-ins, simulating cooking class instructions, or practicing guided tour narratives. This aligns with task-based language teaching principles and promotes retention through contextually relevant practice.

Continuous Assessment Using CEFR Benchmarks – Regular evaluation of staff proficiency using CEFR standards can provide measurable progress indicators, helping both management and learners to track improvement and adjust learning strategies. **Peer-Learning and Mentoring Systems** – Encourage higher-proficiency staff to mentor lower-level colleagues through collaborative work assignments, shared cultural storytelling, and informal conversation practice.

Integration of Technology and Multimedia – Use mobile learning applications, video simulations, and virtual conversation exchanges with international volunteers or students to expand exposure to authentic English use beyond the workplace. Partnerships with Educational



Institutions – Collaborate with local universities or language centres to design specialized English for Tourism courses, potentially supported by government tourism agencies to strengthen CBT competitiveness. By implementing these recommendations, homestay operators in Bangli can systematically raise the communicative capacity of their staff, enhancing both the quality of service delivery and the authenticity of cultural exchange. This, in turn, will contribute to the sustainability and competitiveness of Bali's tourism sector in a global market increasingly driven by meaningful cultural interaction and high service standards.

References

- Aritama, A. A. N., & Diasana Putra, I. (2021). Tourism activities in the traditional Balinese house: The challenges of designing a homestay in Gianyar Bali. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 4(1).
- Boroditsky, L. (2011). How language shapes thought. *Scientific American*, 304(2), 62–65.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0211-62>
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Longman.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bungin, B. (2011). *Penelitian kualitatif: Komunikasi, ekonomi, kebijakan publik, dan ilmu sosial lainnya*. Kencana.
- Business Dictionary. (n.d.). Communication. In *BusinessDictionary.com*. Retrieved February 7, 2018, from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/communication.html>
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (2002). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 35–48). Cambridge University Press.
- Clarke, A., & Chen, W. (2009). *International hospitality management*. Routledge.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Curtis, D. B. (1988). Communication competence: An international perspective. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 12(1), 13–27. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(88\)90014-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(88)90014-5)
- De Carlos, P., Alén, E., Pérez-González, A., & Figueroa, B. (2019). Cultural differences, language attitudes and tourist satisfaction: A study in the Barcelona hotel sector. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(2), 133–147.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4.
<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Giampiccoli, A., & Saayman, M. (2018). Community-based tourism development model and community participation. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(4), 1–27.
- Hayes, D. (2010). *Language learning, teaching and technology*. Open University Press.
- Hornby, A. S. (2005). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English* (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269–293). Penguin.
- Ismail, E., Sumardjo, S., Lubis, D. P., & Kinseng, R. A. (2022). The Effect of Tourism Development Program Support on the Feasibility of Homestays in the Kepulauan Seribu Indonesia. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 34(2), 381.
- Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching speaking: Activities to promote speaking in a second language. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 12(11). <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kayi-TeachingSpeaking.html>
- Khorsheed, N. N., & Saleh, H. A. (2024). The Language of Hospitality: Linguistic Strategies for Improving Tourist Satisfaction. *QALAAI ZANIST SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL*, 9(2), 1342–1368.
- Kramsch, C. (1989). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Kyrpychenko, O., Pushchyna, I., Kichuk, Y., Shevchenko, N., Luchaninova, O., & Koval, V. (2021). Communicative competence development in teaching professional discourse in educational establishments. *International Journal of Modern Education & Computer Science*, 13(4), 16–27.
- Lenda, R. (2011). Language and thought: An overview. *Journal of Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 45–58.
- McKay, S. L. (2008). *Teaching English as an international language: Rethinking goals and approaches*. Oxford University Press.



- Mesquita, A. C. (2021, May). The Importance of Learning English for Global Tourism. In *International Conference on Tourism Research* (pp. 585-XVI). Academic Conferences International Limited.
- Murti, D. C. W. (2019). Locating nation in a village: Fusion of local and nation voices in Penglipuran Bali, Indonesia. *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, 7(2), 157-177.
- Pakshir, L., & Nair, V. (2011). Sustainability of homestay as a form of Community-based tourism (CBT): A case study of the rural community in Bavanat-Iran. *TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 8(1), 5-18.
- Putri, K. S. N. K., Putri, I. A. K., Raditya, I. P. T., & Putra, P. G. P. (2022). Contribution of Penglipuran Village Festival as A Form of Development of Contemporary Tourism Products in Penglipuran Bangli Village, Bali. *Jurnal Manajemen Pelayanan Hotel*, 6(2), 566-579.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sapir, E. (1985). *Culture, language and personality: Selected essays* (D. G. Mandelbaum, Ed.). University of California Press.
- Saragih, H. S. (2024). Genuine small talk in hospitality services encounter. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 19(2), 237-252.
- Shen, L., Qian, J., & Chen, S. C. (2020). Effective communication strategies of sustainable hospitality: A qualitative exploration. *Sustainability*, 12(17), 6920.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Pearson Longman.
- Wajdi, M. (2018). *Classroom Discourse: A model of language classroom research*. Surabaya: CV. Jakad Publishing
- Wijayanti, P., & Putra, I. K. (2020). The development of homestay tourism in rural Bali: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Tourism Development*, 8(2), 134-148.
- Yellen, B., Blake, M., & DeVries, B. A. (2004). *Integrating the language arts* (3rd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

