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Improving Practical English Competence and Speaking Confidence of Local Youth to Support Local Wisdom-Based Culinary Tourism Services

Imroatul Ma'fiah¹, Ida Ismiyati², Oktiana Handini³, Benedicta Vania Kharisma⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Slamet Riyadi, Surakarta, Indonesia

Email: imroatulhardiyanto@gmail.com; idaismiyati017@gmail.com; handini0710@gmail.com; Ayuvnia02@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Local wisdom-based culinary tourism requires local youth to have practical English competence to support tourism services and promote cultural identity. In Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta, limited English proficiency reduced youths' ability to welcome visitors, describe local dishes, handle service interactions, and explain the cultural values of culinary products. Pre-training assessment showed an overall mean score of 2.46 (low category) across four practical English indicators.

Purpose of the Study: This community service program aimed to improve the practical English competence and speaking confidence of local youth involved in culinary tourism services, and to strengthen their ability to communicate local culinary identity to domestic and international visitors.

Methods: The program applied a contextual training approach based on Communicative Language Teaching and English for Specific Purposes. Materials focused on greetings, dish descriptions, order-taking, tourist questions, culinary storytelling, and digital promotion. Activities included role-play, guided speaking practice, restaurant simulations, storytelling workshops, and direct facilitator feedback. Twelve youth participants attended the core training.

Results: The program improved participants' ability to greet tourists, describe menus, take orders, and respond to visitor requests. Post-training assessment showed an overall mean score increase from 2.46 to 4.04 (good category), with an improvement of 1.58 points. Participants also showed increased speaking confidence. Feedback results were positive, with mean scores ranging from 4.42 to 4.75 (very good category). A practical training module (English for Culinary Tourism), a glossary, and an English-based promotional video were also produced to support sustainability.

Keywords

Practical English
Competence; Speaking
Confidence; Culinary
Tourism; Local Wisdom,
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Corresponding Author: Imroatul Ma'fiah; Email: imroatulhardiyanto@gmail.com; Universitas Slamet Riyadi

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Introduction

The rapid growth of the tourism sector has increased the need for local communities to develop communication skills that support service quality, destination branding, and cultural promotion. In this context, English plays a strategic role as an international language that enables local tourism actors to interact with foreign visitors and introduce local products and traditions to a wider audience. For culinary tourism destinations, practical English competence is particularly important because service encounters often require direct communication, such as greeting visitors, explaining menus, describing ingredients, handling orders, and responding to tourists' questions (Harmer, 2012; Richards, 2022; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Language learning in this context should therefore emphasize meaningful communication and functional use rather than isolated mastery of grammar rules.

Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta in Karanganyar Regency has considerable potential as a local wisdom-based culinary tourism destination. Its attractiveness lies in local dishes, traditional culinary heritage, and the active involvement of community members in tourism-related activities. However, the community still faces several challenges in optimizing this potential. Based on the situation analysis conducted in this community service program, one of the main problems was the limited practical English competence of local youth who are actively involved in culinary tourism activities. A preliminary observation indicated that most youth members were not yet able to confidently greet tourist, describe local dishes, or respond to simple service-related questions in English. A pre-training assessment was conducted through a simple performance-based observation involving 12 participants. The assessment focused on four practical English indicators relevant to culinary tourism services, such as greeting and welcoming tourists, introducing local dishes, taking simple orders, and responding to simple tourist questions. The result of pre-training assessment are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Initial English Competence of Participants

Indicators	n	Mean	Category
Ability to greet and welcome tourist	12	2.58	Low
Ability to introduce local dishes	12	2.42	Low
Ability to take simple orders	12	2.50	Low
Ability to respond to simple tourist questions	12	2.33	Low
Overall mean score	12	2.46	Low

As shown in Table 1, As shown in Table 1, the participants' initial English competence was categorized as low, with an overall mean score of 2.46 on a 5-point scale. The highest mean score was found in the ability to greet and welcome tourists in English ($M = 2.58$), while the lowest mean score was found in the ability to respond to simple tourist questions in English ($M = 2.33$). The pre-training assessment used a five-point scoring scale, in which scores of 1.00–1.80 were categorized as very low, 1.81–2.60 as low, 2.61–3.40 as moderate, 3.41–4.20 as good, and 4.21–5.00 as very good. Therefore, although the overall mean score remained in the low category, it was close to the moderate level. These findings indicate that the participants had basic English knowledge but still required considerable prompting, support, and guided practice when using English in basic tourism service interactions.

The target group in this program consisted of youth members of the local *Karang Taruna* who actively support community-based tourism activities. Youth participation plays an important role in tourism development, as young people tend to be more adaptive to communication training, more familiar with digital promotion, and more likely to become agents of social change. In Makladuta, although these youth are actively involved in tourism services, many of them have not

received contextual English training related to culinary tourism. During the implementation of the, 12 out of 27 registered youth members participated in the main training session due to schedule constraints, indicating both the availability of a target group and the need for broader follow-up engagement.

Another important issue was the limited access to contextual English learning materials specifically designed for tourism. Although the Karang Taruna youth had attempted to learn English, their learning was still largely limited to English for General Purposes (EGP), which does not adequately address practical communication needs in culinary tourism settings. Such learning does not sufficiently support skills such as introducing traditional dishes, explaining cooking processes and ingredients, narrating the cultural meaning of dishes, or responding politely to customer requests and complaints. This condition highlights the need for a context-sensitive and needs-based training model. This condition highlights the need for a training model that is not only language-oriented but also context-sensitive and community-based (Amirbayeva, 2024; I Gede Astawa & Eka Anastasia Wijaya, 2024). In language pedagogy, this approach is consistent with the principles of *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP), which emphasize the adaptation of materials and learning activities to the specific needs of learners in particular occupational or social settings (Dwee et al., 2016; Ma'fiah & Sumardiono, 2023; Woodrow, 2018). Likewise, communicative learning is more effective when learners are engaged in interaction that resembles real-life situations (Broughton et al., 2003; Doeur, 2022).

However, there is still limited community-based intervention that integrates ESP and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) specifically for culinary tourism contexts. Therefore, this community service program introduced English for Culinary Tourism as a practical and contextual training model tailored to the needs of local youth in Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta. CLT emphasizes the use of language as a tool for meaningful communication, while ESP focuses on developing language competencies relevant to a particular field or professional context (Azarnoosh et al., 2018; Kaçar, 2023). In this program, both approaches were adapted to culinary tourism services so that participants could learn functional expressions and immediately apply them in simulated and real-life service situations. The training materials were organized into practical units, including greeting and welcoming tourists, describing local dishes, taking orders, handling tourist questions, culinary storytelling, and digital promotion in English. The training materials were organized into practical units, including greeting and welcoming tourists, describing local dishes, taking orders, handling tourist questions, culinary storytelling, and digital promotion in English. These materials were delivered through interactive strategies such as role-play, guided speaking, restaurant simulations, storytelling workshops, and direct facilitator feedback.

From a broader academic perspective, this program is relevant to studies on tourism communication, ESP, youth empowerment, and community-based learning. Previous literature has shown that effective language teaching should encourage learners to become active participants in the learning process and develop practical competence through authentic engagement (Freire, 2000; Kremer & Pinto, 2025). In addition, reflective and context-based learning supports learners in connecting language skills with everyday communication needs and social realities. In a community service setting, this approach is especially important because the objective is not merely to transfer knowledge, but also to empower participants to use that knowledge for social and economic improvement.

Based on these conditions, this community service program aimed to enhance the practical English competence of local youth in Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta in order to support local wisdom-based tourism services. More specifically, the program aimed to improve participants' ability to use English in welcoming tourists, describing local dishes, taking orders, handling simple requests, and promoting local culinary culture. In addition, the program sought to produce a contextual training module entitled *English for Culinary Tourism* that could be used as a sustainable learning resource for the partner community.

The expected social change of this program was the strengthening of local youth capacity as community-based tourism actors who are more confident, communicative, and capable of promoting local culinary identity to a wider audience. In practical terms, the program was expected to improve service quality, support more inclusive interaction with foreign visitors, and reinforce the role of youth as local culinary ambassadors. The results of the program indicate that participants showed improvement in practical English use and speaking confidence. They were able to introduce themselves, explain menus, take orders, and respond to simple tourist requests more effectively in English. In addition, the program produced a training module that may support the sustainability of future community-based tourism development initiatives.

Method

This community service program employed a participatory training approach aimed at improving the practical English competence of local youth involved in culinary tourism activities. The program was designed by integrating the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as both approaches emphasize contextual, functional, and learner-centered language use in specific social and professional settings. The program was conducted in Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta, Karanganyar Regency, with local youth members of Karang Taruna serving as the main subjects of the program. This target group was selected because they play an active role in supporting community-based culinary tourism and have the potential to become local agents of service improvement and cultural promotion.

The community service process began with a situation analysis and needs identification. At this stage, the service team and the partner community collaboratively identified the main challenges faced by local youth in tourism service activities, particularly their limited ability to communicate in English when welcoming visitors, explaining local dishes, taking orders, and promoting local culinary products. The results of this initial identification became the basis for determining the focus of the program, the training materials, and the expected outcomes. This stage reflected the principles of community organizing, as the community was actively involved in identifying needs and shaping the direction of the service activities.

Following the needs identification stage, the team conducted collaborative planning with the partner community. This process included determining the participants, scheduling the training sessions, preparing the learning materials, and identifying the facilities required for implementation. The partner community contributed by coordinating youth participation, preparing the venue, and supporting logistical needs. Meanwhile, the service team developed the training design, prepared the module entitled *English for Culinary Tourism*, and organized the learning activities based on participants' communicative needs. This collaborative planning ensured that the program was contextually relevant and feasible to implement.

The main materials used in the program were compiled in the *English for Culinary Tourism* training module. The module consisted of eight learning units: (1) introduction to English for culinary tourism, (2) food and beverage vocabulary, (3) taking orders and serving guests, (4) describing local dishes, (5) storytelling and cultural narratives, (6) handling tourist questions, (7) digital promotion in English, and (8) simulation and showcase. These materials were designed to match the communicative needs of the participants in real culinary tourism contexts. Supporting teaching materials included example dialogues, thematic vocabulary lists, guided speaking tasks, role-play scenarios, flashcards, and digital promotion exercises.

The implementation stage was carried out through interactive and participatory learning activities. The core training session was conducted on Saturday, November 1, 2025, from 08.30 to 14.30 WIB and involved 12 participants out of 27 registered youth members. The limited attendance was influenced by availability and scheduling constraints. During the training, the

facilitators employed various methods, including role-play, guided speaking, restaurant simulation, storytelling workshops, and direct feedback. These methods were selected to encourage active participation and to provide participants with opportunities to practice English expressions in realistic service situations. The learning activities focused on three main competencies: practical expression, speaking confidence, and cultural promotion. Through these activities, participants practiced greeting tourists, explaining menus, taking orders, handling simple requests, and presenting local culinary culture in English.

The data analysis technique applied in this program was descriptive qualitative analysis. Data obtained from observations, participant involvement, speaking performance during the activities, and documentation. In addition, participant feedback was collected using a simple post-training response sheet with a five-point scale to measure participants' perceptions of the training. The data were organized, interpreted, and described to illustrate the development of participants' practical English skills and speaking confidence. The analysis focused on participants' ability to use English in culinary tourism service situations and their awareness of English as a tool for promoting local culinary products and cultural values.

The outcomes of the program were also evaluated based on the production of tangible outputs, including the training module, glossary, and promotional video. Overall, the stages of the community service program can be summarized as follows: situation analysis and needs identification, collaborative planning, preparation of materials and module, implementation of participatory training activities, observation and documentation, and evaluation with follow-up planning. This sequence demonstrates that the program was conducted not only as a training activity but also as a collaborative community empowerment process aimed at strengthening local youth capacity in supporting local wisdom-based tourism services.

To provide a clearer overview of the implementation process, the stages of the program are presented in Figure 1. The flow chart illustrates the sequence of activities carried out collaboratively with the partner community, from needs identification to evaluation and follow-up planning.

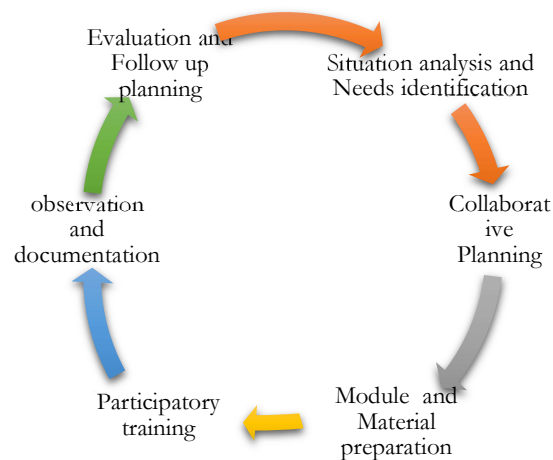


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Community Service Program

Result

The results of this community service program indicate that the intervention contributed to improving the practical English competence of local youth in Kampung Wisata Kuliner

Makladuta and supported the strengthening of local wisdom-based tourism services. These findings were identified through observations of participant engagement, performance during role-play and simulation activities, training documentation, and the outputs produced during the program. The results also reflect the dynamics of the assistance process, the forms of intervention implemented, and the early social changes emerging within the community. The results are presented in three main parts: assistance process data

The program was initiated based on the identified need to improve the practical English competence of local youth involved in culinary tourism services. In response, the service team and the partner community collaboratively designed and implemented an English for Culinary Tourism training program. The training focused on greeting visitors, describing local dishes, taking orders, and promoting local culinary products. This intervention served as the foundation for the learning activities and the outcomes observed during the program.

The assistance process involve 12 youth participants who attended the main training activities. These participants were selected from 27 registered youth members of the local Karang Taruna. The difference between the number registered members and active participants was mainly caused by scheduling constraints, as some youth members had work, study, or family responsibilities during the training schedule.

Table 2 Assistance Process Data

Sessions	Main activity	No. of participants	Attendance Rate	Note
1	Introduction to English for culinary tourism and pre-training assessment	12	100%	All participants joined the initial activity
2	Greeting tourists, introducing local dishes, and guided speaking practice	12	91.67%	One participant was absent due to personal reasons
3	Taking orders, handling tourist questions and role play practice	12	100%	All participants joined simulation activity
4	Culinary storytelling, video practice, post training assessment and reflection	10	83.33%	Two participants were unable to attend the final session fully

As shown in Table 2, participants' attendance was generally high during the program. The highest attendance rate was recorded in Sessions 1 and 3, with all 12 participants present. Overall, 10 out of 12 participants, or 83.33%, completed all training activities and participated in at least one speaking practice or simulation activity. Meanwhile, all participants were involved in the core training activities and participated in at least one speaking practice or simulation activity.

A performance-based assessment was conducted before and after the training to measure participants' practical English competence in culinary tourism service situations. The assessment focused on four indicators: greeting and welcoming tourists, introducing local dishes, taking simple orders, and responding to simple tourist questions. The comparison between pre-training and post-training assessment scores is presented in Table 3. The data in Table 3 reveal that the participants' overall mean score increased from 2.46 in the pre-training to 4.04 in the post-training assessment. This indicates an improvement of 1.58 points on a 5- point scale. Before the training, participants' initial English competence was categorized as low; after the training their performance increased to the good category.

The highest post-training mean score was found in the ability to greet and welcome tourists in English, with a mean score of 4.17. This indicates that participants became more capable of using simple expressions such as welcoming visitors, offering assistance, and introducing themselves in English. The ability to introduce local dishes also improved, with a mean score of 4.08. Participants were able to describe menu items, mention ingredients, and explain simple characteristics of local dishes more clearly.

The ability to take simple orders increased from 2.50 to 4.00. During the simulation activities, participants practiced asking customers what they wanted to order, confirming orders, and using polite service expressions. The ability to respond to simple tourist questions also improved from 2.33 to 3.92. Although this indicator obtained the lowest post-training mean score, the result still indicates improvement in participants' ability to answer basic questions related to menu items, prices, ingredients, and food recommendations.

Table 3 Pre-Training and Post- Training Assessment Scores

No.	Main activity	Pre- Training Mean	Post- Training Mean	Improvement	Category after Training
1	Ability to greet and welcome tourists	2.58	4.17	1.59	Good
2	Ability to introduce local dishes	2.42	4.08	1.66	Good
3	Ability to take simple orders	2.50	4.00	1.50	Good
4	Ability to respond to simple tourist questions	2.33	3.92	1.59	Good

The intervention resulted in improvements in three main aspects: practical expression, speaking confidence, and cultural promotion. In terms of practical expression, participants were able to use simple but functional English expressions in simulated tourism service situations. They demonstrated the ability to greet visitors, introduce menu items, explain basic information about local dishes, and respond to simple service-related questions. In terms of speaking confidence, participants gradually became more willing to speak during role-play and guided speaking activities. They showed reduced dependence on written prompts and demonstrated greater readiness to communicate orally in front of peers and facilitators. At the beginning of the program, several participants needed direct prompting before speaking. However, during the later sessions, more participants were willing to initiate short conversations and participate in restaurant simulation activities.

In terms of cultural promotion, participants developed increased awareness of English as a medium for introducing local culinary identity. They were able to explain ingredients, describe taste characteristics, outline preparation processes, and communicate the cultural meaning of local dishes more effectively. This improvement was also reflected in the English-based promotional video produced during the program.

One important output of the program was the development of the *English for Culinary Tourism* training module (Figure 2). The module consisted of eight learning units, including greeting and welcoming tourists, food and beverage vocabulary, taking orders and serving guests, describing local dishes, storytelling and cultural narratives, handling tourist questions, digital promotion in English, and integrated simulation and showcase. The module functioned as the main instructional material during the training and as a sustainable learning resource for future use by the partner community.

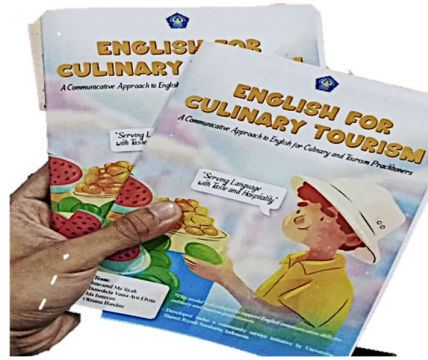


Figure 2. English for Culinary Tourism Training Module

In addition to these material outputs, the implementation of the training activities and the handover of the module to the partner community further confirmed the collaborative nature of the service process. The documentation showed active participant engagement throughout the learning sessions and illustrated the practical application of the training design. The implementation of the training activities and the module handover are presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Training Activities

Another practical output of the program was the development of a glossary for culinary tourism English. The glossary contained essential vocabulary and expressions related to greeting visitors, describing dishes, explaining ingredients, taking orders, and promoting culinary products. It complemented the main module by providing a simpler and more accessible language support tool for participants. This glossary was particularly useful in helping participants recall field-specific expressions during speaking practice and simulation activities. A sample of the glossary developed during the program is presented in Figure 4.

GLOSARIUM KULINER: KAMPUNG KULINER KLATAK KARANGPANDAN

(CULINARY GLOSSARY: KLATAK KARANGPANDAN CULINARY VILLAGE)

- **"Monggo Pinarak"**
Silakan mampir dan duduk. Ungkapan keramahan khas Jawa.
(Please, come in and have a seat. A traditional Javanese expression of hospitality).
- **Asam-asem**
Masakan berkuah segar dengan rasa asam dari sayuran dan daging, dimasak menggunakan asam jawa.
(A refreshing sour soup made from vegetables and meat, flavored with tamarind).
- **Ayam Geprek**
Ayam goreng tepung yang dihancurkan lalu disajikan dengan sambal pedas dan nasi.
(Crispy fried chicken smashed and topped with spicy chili sambal, served with rice).
- **Ayam Tim**
Hidangan ayam yang dimasak dengan cara dikukus (tim) agar bumbu meresap dan empuk, kemudian digoreng sebelum disajikan.
(Chicken dish that is first steamed to make it tender and flavorful, then deep-fried before serving).
- **Bakso**
Bola daging kenyal yang disajikan dengan kuah kaldu sapi hangat, mi, bihun, dan pangsit.
(Savory meatball soup served with hot beef broth, noodles, rice vermicelli, and dumplings).
- **Beras Kencur**
Minuman jamu tradisional dari beras dan kencur untuk menambah stamina dan kesehatan.
(Traditional herbal drink made from rice and aromatic ginger to boost health).
- **Bir Plethok**
Minuman tradisional non-alkohol berbahan jahe dan rempah-rempah. Memiliki perpaduan rasa manis dan pedas.
(A traditional non-alkoholic herbal drink made from ginger and spices. It has a sweet and spicy flavor profile).
- **Botlok**
Parutan kelapa berbumbu yang dicampur aneka bahan, dibungkus daun pisang, lalu dikukus.
(Seasoned grated coconut mixed with ingredients, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed).
- **Bubur**
Hidangan dari beras yang dimasak hingga lembut, disajikan dengan aneka sambal atau sayur sebagai pendamping.
(Rice porridge cooked until soft, served with various sambals or vegetables as side dishes).
- **Buntit**
Parutan kelapa berbumbu yang dibungkus daun pepaya atau singkong, dimasak dengan santan.
(Seasoned coconut wrapped in papaya or cassava leaves, cooked in coconut milk).
- **Dawet Tahu**
Minuman manis dari cendol, tahu, santan, dan gula aren.
(A sweet drink made from cendol, soft tofu, coconut milk, and palm sugar).
- **Dawet Telasih**
Minuman dari cendol, biji telasih, santan, dan gula aren.
(A traditional drink with cendol, basil seeds, coconut milk, and palm sugar).
- **Garang Asem**
Masakan ayam berkuah asam segar (belimbing wuluh), dibungkus daun pisang dan dikukus.
(Tangy chicken soup with sour fruits, steamed in banana leaves).
- **Gendar**
Olahan nasi yang dibumbui dan dikukus hingga kenyal.
(A traditional seasoned and steamed rice cake with a chewy texture).
- **Gethuk**
Singkong rebus yang dihaluskan dan dicampur gula, disajikan dengan kelapa parut.
(Mashed boiled cassava mixed with sugar, served with grated coconut).
- **Gudeg**
Nangka muda yang dimasak lama dengan santan dan gula aren hingga manis dan gurih.
(Young jackfruit slow-cooked in coconut milk and palm sugar until sweet and savory).
- **Jadah Blondho**
Jadah (ketan tumbuk) yang disajikan dengan blondho (ampas santan kelapa gurih).
(Pounded glutinous rice served with savory caramelized coconut solids).
- **Leker**
Pancake tipis garing yang dimasak di wajan datar dengan berbagai isian manis.
(A traditional thin crispy pancake with various sweet fillings).
- **Lodeh**
Masakan berkuah santan berisi aneka sayuran, disajikan hangat dengan nasi.
(A traditional vegetable soup cooked in a savory coconut milk broth, served warm with steamed rice).
- **Molen**
Pisang yang dibungkus adonan tepung lalu digoreng hingga renyah.
(Bananas wrapped in thin pastry dough and deep-fried).
- **Onde-onde**
Jajanan pasar berbentuk bulat berbahan tepung ketan dengan taburan wijen, berisi kacang hijau manis.
(Traditional round-shaped snack made from sticky rice flour coated with sesame seeds, filled with sweet mung bean paste).
- **Opor**
Masakan ayam berkuah santan dengan bumbu rempah lembut, disajikan dengan nasi/lontong.
(Chicken braised in a mild, aromatic coconut milk sauce, served with steamed rice or compressed rice cakes).
- **Pangsit**
Kulit tepung berisi daging yang digoreng atau direbus.
(Meat-filled dumplings, served fried or boiled).
- **Pepes**
Ikan atau tahu berbumbu yang dibungkus daun pisang, lalu dikukus atau dibakar.
(Seasoned fish or tofu wrapped in banana leaves and steamed or grilled).
- **Petis**
Bumbu kental berwarna hitam dengan aroma kuat, memberikan rasa gurih dan manis pada masakan atau sebagai cocolan gorengan.
(A thick, black fermented paste with a strong aroma, used to add a savory-sweet flavor to dishes or as a dipping sauce).
- **Pondoh**
Nasi putih yang dimasak lalu ditumbuk hingga kenyal, disajikan dengan sayur dan bumbu kacang.
(Pounded rice dish served with boiled vegetables and peanut sauce).
- **Roti Bakar**
Roti tawar yang dipanggang dan diisi dengan berbagai pilihan manis seperti cokelat, keju, atau selai.
(Toasted bread filled with various sweet options like chocolate, cheese, or jam).
- **Sambal Pecel**
Saus kacang tanah yang dihaluskan dengan kencur, daun jeruk, dan cabai.
(A traditional spicy peanut sauce dressing for vegetables).

Figure 4. Sample of the Glossary Developed during the Program

Another significant result of the program was the production of an English-based promotional video uploaded to YouTube. The video demonstrated participants' ability to apply English expressions in a contextual culinary tourism setting, including greeting visitors, introducing local dishes, explaining menu items, and promoting the cultural value of local cuisine. A screenshot from the video is presented in Figure 5 as visual evidence of participants' performance and the practical implementation of the training outcomes. This result is consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as participants used English in a meaningful, context-based, and purpose-oriented manner rather than as isolated classroom practice.

The quantitative responses also indicated positive participant perceptions of the program. Feedback showed that the training materials were relevant to participants' needs, while the module and glossary functioned as useful learning resources. In addition, role-play, simulation, and video-based activities contributed to increased confidence in using English.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Indicators	n	Mean	Category
The training materials are relevant to my needs	12	4.58	Very Good
The module was easy to understand and useful	12	4.50	Very Good
The glossary helped me understand English expressions for culinary tourism	12	4.42	Very Good
Role-play and simulation helped me practice English	12	4.67	Very Good
The training increased my confidence in speaking English	12	4.42	Very Good
The YouTube video activity helped me apply English in context	12	4.50	Very Good
The training is useful for tourism services in Makladuta	12	4.75	Very Good

As shown in Table 2, all indicators obtained mean scores above 4.21, which fall into the “Very Good” category. The highest mean score was recorded for the usefulness of the training in supporting tourism services in Makladuta ($M = 4.75$), followed by the usefulness of role-play and simulation activities for English practice ($M = 4.67$). These findings indicate that participants perceived the program as relevant, practical, and beneficial in supporting culinary tourism services. The positive perceptions are also reflected in the social changes observed among participants. These changes can be seen in participants’ behavioral shifts and increased awareness throughout the program. During the activities, participants became more active in speaking tasks, more confident in simulated service interactions, and more aware of the importance of English in improving tourism services and promoting local culinary identity. Although the program did not lead to the establishment of a new formal institution, it strengthened the capacity of local youth as contributors to tourism services and emerging actors in local culinary promotion. These changes indicate an early stage of social transformation, reflected in increased confidence, more active participation, and stronger community awareness of service improvement and cultural communication.

Overall, the findings indicate that the intervention generated meaningful outcomes in both process and product dimensions. Process-based outcomes were reflected in participants’ improved communication skills, confidence, and awareness, while product-based outcomes included the training module, glossary, YouTube promotional video, and activity documentation. These results confirm that the community service program contributed to strengthening local youth capacity in supporting local wisdom-based tourism services.



Figure 5 Participants’ Performance

Discussion

The findings of this community service program demonstrate that English for Culinary Tourism training can function not only as a language learning activity, but also as a community empowerment strategy for strengthening local wisdom-based tourism services. The improvement shown by the participants in practical expression, speaking confidence, and cultural promotion indicates that contextual English training is effective when it is directly connected to the real communicative needs of the learners. This finding is consistent with the principle of CLT, which emphasize the use of language for meaningful communication rather than the memorization of isolated grammatical forms (Doer, 2022; Richards, 2022; Savignon & Wang, 2003). In this program, the participants did not merely learn English as an academic subject, but as practical tool to support service interactions, introduce local dishes, and communicate the cultural identity embedded in culinary practices. This confirms further that language learning becomes more meaningful when it is positioned within authentic social functions and community realities.

The participants’ improved ability to greet tourists, take orders, describe dishes and respond to simple questions supports the view that communicative competence develops through

repeated practice in meaningful and realistic situations. CLT argues that learners need opportunities to use language for purposeful interaction, especially through activities that resemble real-life communication. This is in line with [Berezenko et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Hymes \(1972\)](#), who emphasize that communicative language learning should provide learners with opportunities to use language for meaningful interaction in authentic or simulated contexts. Therefore, the use of role-play, guided speaking, restaurant simulations, and storytelling workshops in this program provided participants with contextual opportunities to practice English in ways that were relevant to their daily tourism-related roles. This also explains why participants became more willing to speak and showed reduced dependence on written prompts during the training process.

The findings also strengthen the relevance of ESP in community-based tourism development. ESP emphasizes that language teaching should be designed based on learners' specific needs, target situations, and social or occupational contexts ([Hyland & Jiang, 2021](#); [Woodrow, 2018](#)). In the context of Makladuta, general English instruction was not sufficient because the participants needed English expressions related to culinary tourism services, such as explaining ingredients, describing taste, taking orders, and promoting local dishes. Previous studies on ESP in tourism contexts also highlight the importance of needs-based English materials for tourism actors, particularly because tourism communication requires practical vocabulary, speaking confidence, and context-specific interactional skills ([Mella Narolita & Aulia Restu Ariyanto Putri, 2025](#); [Sankar, SS., & Aravind, B.R, 2026](#)). Thus, the training module and glossary developed in this program addressed the specific communicative needs of local youth as tourism service actors.

The improvement in participants' speaking confidence can also be understood through the perspective of experiential and participatory learning. The participants learned more effectively when they were actively involved in practice-based activities rather than positioned as passive recipients of knowledge. This corresponds with Freire's view that education should empower learners to participate actively in their social realities ([Blair Hilty & Freire, 2019](#); [Freire, 2000](#)). In this program, participants were encouraged to practice, perform, reflect, and produce tourism-related communication outputs. Their increased confidence during role-play and simulation activities indicates that language training can contribute to personal empowerment when learners are given space to use language in authentic and socially meaningful contexts.

Another important finding concerns the role of youth empowerment in supporting sustainable local tourism services. The participants were members of Karang Taruna who already had a social role in the community, but their capacity to support tourism promotion had not yet been fully strengthened through contextual English training. Community-based tourism studies emphasize that local community participation is essential for sustainable tourism development because community members are not only beneficiaries but also active actors in managing, promoting, and preserving local tourism resources ([Zuhri et al., 2025](#)). In this program, the increased confidence and active participation of local youth indicate that English training helped strengthen their capacity as emerging tourism communicators and cultural promoters.

The findings also show that English can function as a medium of cultural mediation in local wisdom-based tourism. The participants did not only learn to serve tourists in English, but also to present the local culinary heritage of Makladuta to a broader audience. This is important because culinary tourism is not limited to food consumption; it also involves cultural interpretation, local identity, and visitors' appreciation of the meaning behind food traditions. Recent studies on culinary and gastronomy tourism highlight that local food experiences are closely related to cultural value, destination branding, and tourist satisfaction ([Ainiya & Zahri, 2025](#); [Andih et al., 2025](#)). Therefore, the participants' ability to describe local dishes, explain ingredients, and present culinary stories in English shows that language training can help transform local knowledge into communicable tourism content.

The production of the training module, glossary, and English-based promotional video further shows that the program generated both process-based and product-based outcomes. Process-based outcomes were visible in participants' behavioural changes, such as more active engagement, stronger confidence, and higher awareness of the role of English in tourism services. Product-based outcomes were reflected in the tangible learning resources created during the program, which may support sustainability beyond the training period. These outputs are important because community service programs often face limitations when their impact depends solely on one-time intervention. By producing reusable materials, the program extended its value into a longer-term capacity-building effort for the partner community.

Participant feedback also supports the effectiveness of the intervention. The consistently high mean scores across all indicators indicate that the participants perceived the program as relevant, useful, and applicable to their tourism service context. The highest score on the indicator concerning the usefulness of the training for tourism services in Makladuta suggests that the participants clearly recognized the practical benefits of the program. Likewise, the high score for role-play and simulation activities confirms that experiential and participatory learning strategies are particularly suitable for developing speaking competence in community-based training settings. These quantitative responses strengthen the qualitative observations and suggest that the training was well aligned with participant expectations and needs.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should also be acknowledged. First, the number of participants involved in the main training session was relatively limited, as out of 23 registered youth members attended the core activity. This means that the reach of the intervention was still partial and further follow-up is needed to involve a wider section of the local youth community. Second, the evaluation was primarily based on descriptive observation, participant performance, documentation, and feedback rather than on a more systematic pre-test and post-test measurement of language gains. As a result, the findings provide strong practical indications of improvement, but not yet a controlled measure of language development. Third, the program focused mainly on basic spoken interaction in culinary tourism settings, so advanced aspects such as complaint handling, intercultural pragmatics, and digital marketing communication still remain open for further development.

Overall, the discussion shows that this community service program contributed to the strengthening of local youth capacity through a contextual, participatory, and function-oriented English training model. The program confirms that language training in tourism communities is most effective when it is grounded in real service needs, integrated with local cultural content, and designed as a collaborative empowerment process. In theoretical terms, the findings support the relevance of CLT and ESP for community-based language intervention, while in practical terms they show that local youth can be prepared to become more confident tourism communicators and cultural promoters. The program therefore offers an applicable model for similar local wisdom-based tourism communities seeking to enhance service quality and cultural promotion through English training.

Conclusion

This community service program aimed to enhance the practical English competence of local youth in Kampung Wisata Kuliner Makladuta to support local wisdom-based tourism services. The findings indicate that the implementation of English for Culinary Tourism training successfully improved participants' ability to use functional English expressions in real service contexts, including greeting tourists, describing local dishes, taking orders, and responding to simple requests. In addition, the program contributed to increased speaking confidence and greater awareness of English as a strategic tool for promoting local culinary identity and cultural values.

The achievement of the program was also reflected in participants' positive feedback. All evaluation indicators obtained mean scores above 4.42, which fall into the very good category. The highest score was found in the usefulness of the training for supporting tourism services, while role-play and simulation activities were also rated highly as effective learning strategies. This results indicate that the training was perceived as relevant, practical, and beneficial for participants' role in culinary tourism services.

From a theoretical perspective, the results confirm the relevance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in community-based language training. The integration of these approaches enabled participants to engage in meaningful, context-based communication that reflects real-life tourism interactions. The findings also highlight that contextualized learning, when combined with participatory methods such as role-play, simulation, and storytelling, can effectively bridge the gap between language knowledge and practical communication needs in local tourism settings.

In terms of community service contribution, this program demonstrates that language training can serve as a form of empowerment that strengthens local youth capacity as active agents in tourism development. The improvement in communication skills, confidence, and cultural awareness represents an early stage of social change, where participants become more prepared to engage with international visitors and promote their local culinary heritage. The production of the training module, glossary, and English-based promotional video further supports the sustainability of the program by providing tangible learning resources that can be reused by the partner community.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed. First, future community service programs should expand participant involvement to reach a wider group of local youth and community members. Second, follow-up training should include more advanced communication skills, such as handling complaints, intercultural communication, and digital marketing strategies for tourism promotion. Third, collaboration with local government or tourism stakeholders is recommended to ensure program continuity and broader impact.

For future research, more systematic evaluation methods, such as pre-test and post-test designs or longitudinal studies, are needed to measure the long-term impact of contextual English training on tourism service quality and community development. Further studies may also explore the integration of digital platforms and social media in promoting local wisdom-based culinary tourism through English communication.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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