

TOURISM REGISTER: A SOCIOCULTURAL LINGUISTIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at analyzing form, function and sociocultural meaning of registers used by tourists and tourism service providers in Surakarta Residency, Central Java, Indonesia. This descriptive and qualitative study is presented within the framework of sociocultural linguistics. To achieve the goal, data on utterances expressing tourism registers were collected through observation and field notes, recordings and in-depth interviewing. The data in the form of conversations were obtained from tour related activities from receiving reservations to handling checking out. The research findings show that (1) forms of tourism registers are utterances which have specific meanings expressed by tourists and tourism service providers; (2) the forms of registers are classified into linguistic units, such as word, phrase and acronym; (3) tourism registers play an important role in cross-cultural understanding between foreign tourists and local tourism service providers who employ registers for a variety of purposes, namely effective communication; (4) registers which the tourism service providers use in tour related activities can be both easy and at the same time very difficult to be understood by either the domestic or foreign tourists and vice versa; and (5) through registers which are used as a means of communication, there are also cultural contacts between tourists and tourism service providers.

Keywords: tourism register, tourism service providers, tour related activities, sociocultural linguistics

1. Background of the Study

Register is a variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Registers in tourism industry are used by tourists and tourism service providers during their interaction. In the tourism industry, tourists act as guests and tourism service providers act as hosts. In an interaction tourists and tourism service providers co-operate with each other to ensure that their speech flows well, and so that each speaker can understand what the other wants through their respective utterances. For that purpose, they need a typical expression that in this research project I propose to name it *tourism register* commonly used during host-guest interaction.

Many interesting studies have been done on register up to now. Ngalim (2005) found that a variety of function in specific term of banking discourse seems in a variety of its language source (Indonesian: 14%, English: 59%; and Arabic: 20%) and integrated languages (20%) in terms of the meaning extension with a respective function. Lewandowski (2010) described that the language of soccer players and coaches exhibits the characteristics of a register. The language choice they make are determined largely by the situational context, rather than by the need to identify with their occupational group. Purnomo (2012) investigated the use of politeness expressions in tourism-service register in Central Java. His study shows that the use of politeness in tourism-service register can be affected by three factors: power, intimacy and financial benefit. Tourism service providers will act politely to tourists if they consider that they have lower power than the tourists, have not been intimate and expect to get financial benefit. By contrast, tourism service providers will act impolitely if they consider that they have higher power than the tourists, have been intimate and do not expect to get financial benefit.

Furthermore, tourism register in a new framework of sociocultural linguistics, a subfield of sociolinguistics developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), will be explained in the theoretical review below.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Tourism Register

The concept of register comes under the larger concept of language variation in applied linguistics. According to some applied linguists there are two main types of variation in language: (1) variation based on the user of language and (2) variation based on the use of language (Gregory, 1967). Dialects, idiolects, sociolects and genderlects are examples of the first type while the language of science and technology, legal English, the language of buying and selling, the language of classroom interaction and the language of tourists and tourism service providers belong to the second type.

It can be found some rough equivalents of register in foundational linguistic works: Wardhaugh (1986) refers to *specific vocabularies* (which ones might commonly call jargon), Pike (1967) refers to *the universe of discourse*, Firth (1957) talks of *restricted language* and Holmes (1992) talks of *language style*. However, it was Halliday (1978) who eventually gave currency to the term *register*. Halliday defines register in the following way:

Types of linguistic situation differ from one another, broadly speaking, in three aspects: first, as regards what actually is taking place; secondly, as regards what part the language is playing; and thirdly, as regards who is taking part. These three variables, taken together, determine the range within which meanings are selected and the forms which are used for their expression. In other words, they determine the 'register' (Halliday, 1978:31).

Furthermore, Halliday (1978) states that register describes three elements of the context of situation: field, tenor and mode. *Field* refers to the situational variable that deals with the focus of the activity, *tenor* refers to the social roles played by the interactants and *mode* refers to the role of language in an interaction.

Register is simply a rather special case of a particular kind of language being produced by the social situation. As conceptualized by Trudgill (2003), the linguistic register has been described as linguistic varieties that are linked to occupations, professions or topics have termed *registers*. The register of law, for example, is different from the register of medicine, which in turn is different from the language of engineering, and so on. Registers are usually characterized solely by vocabulary differences; either by the use of particular words, or by the use of words in a particular sense.

Related to tourism industry, tourism service providers usually use typical expressions to communicate with tourists. These expressions that I may name them *tourism register* could be defined as *typical expressions commonly used by tourism service providers as hosts and tourists as guests during host-guest interaction*.

According to Astika (2004), Samiati et. al. (2010) and Purnomo (2011), kinds of tourism registers can be found in conversation between tourists and tourism service providers which are classified into 14 (fourteen) types of activities: (1) receiving reservations, (2) meeting tourists at the airport/railway station, (3) providing information upon arrival on the way to the hotel, (4) handling checking in, (5) handling telephone inquiries, (6) giving directions, (7) giving information about art performances and entertainment, (8) beginning a tour and describing the itinerary, (9) describing points of interest on the tour route, (10) serving meals at restaurants, (11) describing process used in making art objects, (12) bargaining for souvenir prices, (13) describing tourist sites and (14) handling checking out.

2.2 Sociocultural Linguistics

The term sociocultural linguistics is used to encompass a broad range of theories and methods for the study of language in its sociocultural context. It is currently used to highlight an awareness of the necessity for interdisciplinary approaches to language, culture and society. Its growing use is a response to the increasingly narrow association of the term sociolinguistics with specific types of research involving the quantitative analysis of linguistic features and their correlation to sociological variables. As described by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), the scope of

sociocultural linguistics is potentially vast, though often includes work drawing from disciplines such as sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis and sociology of language as well as certain streams of social psychology, folklore studies, media studies, social and literary theory and the philosophy of language.

Sociocultural linguists take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and the social and cultural functions of language use. Sociocultural linguistics is thus the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language, culture and society (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005).

3. Methodology of the Study

This descriptive and qualitative study is presented within the framework of sociocultural linguistics which can be defined as the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language, culture and society (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). To achieve the goal, data on utterances expressing tourism registers were collected through observation and field notes, recordings, and in-depth interviewing.

The data in the form of conversations were obtained from tour related activities, such as in receiving reservations, meeting tourists at the airport/railway station, providing information upon arrival on the way to the hotel, handling checking in, handling telephone inquiries, giving directions, giving information about art performances and entertainment, beginning a tour and describing the itinerary, describing points of interest on the tour route, serving meals at restaurants, describing process used in making art objects, bargaining for souvenir prices, describing tourist sites and handling checking out.

4. Findings and Discussion

Based on data analysis, research findings can be described and discussed as follows.

4.1 Analysis of Forms of Tourism Register

The analysis of tourism registers expressed by tourists and tourism service providers during the tour related activities shows that forms of tourism registers are utterances which have specific meanings. In receiving reservations, the registers often used are available, booking, single room, twin room, double room, reservation, confirm, reconfirm, cancellation, room rate, business class, down payment, bank transfer, deposit, complimentary, arrival date, departure date, initial, check-in time, check-out time, corporate rate, etc. In meeting tourists at the airport/railway station, the registers often used are welcome, on behalf, accompany, enjoy, flight, arrive, on time, delay, tired, jetlag, comfortable, baggage, luggage, ribbon, depart, pick up, shuttle bus, get on, meals, accommodation, tour, etc.

In providing information upon arrival to the way to hotel, the registers often used are safety precautions, destination, vacation, fascinating, travel plans, tour packages, city tour, trips, sit back, pull up, remain on your seats, on behalf, familiarize, baggage, double check, complete stop, take off, get off, etc. In helping tourists with their registration, the registers often used are registration card/form, surname, forename, nationality, address, occupation, place of birth, passport number, types of room, room rate, room number, next destination, payment, deposit, voucher, personal account, company account, company affiliation, credit card, date of leaving, purpose of visit, take up, bellboy, room key, welcome drink, concierge, check in, check out, guest card, identity card, meal voucher, luggage, etc.

In handling telephone inquiries, the registers often used are hold the line, ringing for you, leave a message, message form, I'll put you through, connect, engaged, call, call back, one moment, wake up call, reply, room number, etc. In giving directions, the registers often used are go down, turn right, turn left, go straight on, stay on, T-junction, crossroad, on foot, go east, meters, get there, next to, nearest, across, corner, traffic, blocks, lead, opposite, on your left, etc. In giving information about art performances and entertainment, the registers often used are city sightseeing, city attractions, shopping centers, particular art performance, entertainment, weekend, museums, theaters, recreational facilities, hours of operation, rules and regulations,

fees, rental fees, reservation required, city maps, brochures, restaurants, lounges, night clubs, karaoke places, historical sites, sites of interest, transportation, etc.

In beginning a tour and describing the itinerary, the registers often used are good sleep, tourism objects, tourism map, look at, next stop, first destination, next destination, last destination, on tour, carriage, driver, programs, arrangement, itinerary, half/full day tour, observe, scenery, worth seeing, approximately, destinations, points of interest, etc. In describing points of interest on the tour route, the registers often used are trek up/down, wildlife, flora, fauna, shelter forest, recreational facilities, recreational activities, take a photograph, local food, trips, point out, come up, sightseeing, impression, etc. In serving meals at restaurant, the registers often used are menu, a la carte, table d'hote, chef suggestion, today's special, breakfast, lunch dinner, meal, meal orders, amounts, aperitif, appetizer, drink, salad, soup, main course, entrée, dessert, buffet, book a table, boiled, rare, medium, well done, ommellette, beef, sirloine steak, tenderloine steak, pizza, hamburgers, water goblet, sauce, roasted, toasted, grilled, rolls, beverages, juice, soft drinks, alcoholic drinks, wine, beer, cocktail, mixed fruits, mixed vegetables, bill, balance, etc.

In describing processes used in making art objects, the registers often used are batik, chanting, copper bowl, spout, wax, pour, white rayon, printed, stamped, fabric, fade, shrink, bleed, charcoal, dye, pinch, waste, etc. In bargaining for souvenir prices, the registers often used are initial price, bargain, good bargain, best price, cut the price, deal, worth, offer, last offer, cheap, expensive, too expensive, on sale, discount, cash, credit card, balance, change, banknote, wrap, stop by again, etc. In describing people, places, objects, animals or things, the registers often used are sites, sightseeing tour, culture, cultural displays, collections, artefacts, museum, temple, palace, traditional market, antiques, entertainment, attractions, cuisine tourism, panorama view, nature, slope, hill, ladderstep, waterfall, gazebos, destinations, fascinating, art gallery, exhibitions, royal heirlooms, ancient weapons, daggers, fabulous, magnificent, etc.

The following is an example of dialog between a hotel reservation clerk (C) and a tourist (T) through telephone.

C: Good morning, *reservation*. Can I help you?

T: Excuse me, can I *book* a *twin room* for tonight, please?

C: I'm sorry, sir. We're *fully booked*.

In the above conversation, the clerk uses tourism registers *reservation* and *fully booked*. *Reservation (section)* means a section in front office department of a hotel that has duty to handle room reservations. *Fully booked* means it has no rooms left for a particular time or date. On the other hand, the guest uses tourism registers *book* and *twin room*. *Book* means to reserve a hotel room. *Twin room* means a guestroom with two single beds.

4.2 Analysis of Linguistic Units of Tourism Register

The analysis of linguistic units of tourism register shows that the forms of tourism registers are classified into word, phrase and acronym. The following is an example of dialog between a hotel receptionist (R) and a tour leader (L).

R: Good morning Miss Lee. Welcome to Hotel Sahid Jaya Solo.

T: Good morning. Can I have the *rooming list*?

R: Here you are. And can I have the *travel agent voucher*?

T: OK, this is the *TAV*.

R: And...can you *sign* the *group registration card*...here?

T: OK.

R: And these are the *room keys* and the *meal vouchers*. We have also provided the *welcome drink* in *Sukoharjo meeting room*.

T: Thank you.

R: You're welcome. We hope you will enjoy staying with us.

T: Sure. ... Well, everyone. Let's go to *Sukoharjo meeting room* over there to enjoy your *welcome drink* and let the *conciierge* delivers your *baggage* to your rooms.

In the above conversation, the receptionist uses a word of tourism register, i.e. *sign* and the tour leader uses words of tourism registers, i.e. *conciierge* and *baggage*. Either the receptionist or the tour leader uses phrases of tourism registers, i.e. *rooming list*, *travel agent voucher*, *group reservation card*, *room keys*, *meal vouchers*, *welcome drink* and *meeting room*. Moreover, the tour leader uses an acronym of tourism register, i.e. *TAV*.

4.3 Analysis of Sociocultural Meanings of Tourism Register

The analysis of sociocultural meanings of tourism register shows that tourism registers play an important role in cross-cultural understanding between foreign tourists and tourism service providers who employ registers for a variety of purposes concerned with the intersection of language, culture and society. The following is an example of dialog between a tourist (T) and a souvenir seller (S).

T: Excuse me, how much are you asking for that *set of glasses*?

S: Those? \$5.00 for the set of six.

T: Really? Isn't that a *little expensive*?

S: What would you say they're *worth*?

T: I'll give you \$2.50 for the set.

S: No, they're *worth* more than that.

T: OK. \$3.00

S: OK. OK. \$3.00

T: OK. Here you go. (*T hands S a \$5.00 bill*).

S: And here's your *change*: \$2.00.

T: Do you have have a *box* to put them in?

S: I'm sorry, I don't. It only goes with this bag.

T: That's OK.

S: What don't you *look around* some more?

T: Thank you. I thin I will.

In the above conversation, either the tourist and the souvenir seller uses tourism registers, i.e. *set of glasses*, *little expensive*, *worth*, *change*, *box* and *look around*. Related to cross-cultural perspectives, differences between Indonesia and Western ways of doing business often confuse tourists and make buying souvenirs in Indonesia. A foreign tourist for example, wants to know the price immediately. They tends to have fixed price and are usually not accustomed to bargaining; so bargaining is something of novelty for them. The Indonesian tourist, on the other hand, likes to arrive at price after a deal of bargaining, and giving it a deal of thought.

4.4 Analysis of Understandability Levels of Tourism Register

The analysis of understandability levels of tourism registers shows that registers which the tourism service providers as speakers use in tour related activities can be both easy and at the same time very difficult to be understood by either the domestic or foreign tourists as hearers and vice verse.

The following is an example of dialog between a tourist (T) and a waitress (W).

T: *Menu istimewa hari ini apa, Mbak?* 'What is your today's special menu, sister?'

W: *Setahu kami menu favorit Bapak ikan goreng dengan sambal kecap. Kebetulan sambal kecapnya lagi habis. Jadi kami siapkan sambal terasi yang justru lebih enak.* 'As I know your favorite menu is fried fish with soy sauce spices. Just by chance, the soy sauce spices are exhausted. So, I prepare sauce made with shrimp paste which is exactly more delicious.'

T: *Bagus. Pesan dua porsi sekalian ya.* 'Good, I order two portions, please.'

In the above conversation, the use of tourism registers *sambal kecap* and *sambal terasi* is easily understood by the tourist. It leads the speech flows well, and so that each speaker can understand what the other wants through their respective utterances.

One more example of dialog between a domestic tourist (T) and a tour guide (G) is as follows.

T: *Kapan museum ini dibangun, Pak?* ‘When was this museum built, sir?’

G: *Dibangun kala pemerintahan PB XII ... Lihat, yang di depan Ibu ini namanya Rajamala, dulunya berfungsi sebagai kepala perahu untuk berlayar menyusuri Bengawan Solo menuju Madura.* ‘It’s built in the reign of King Pakubuwono XII ... Look, in front of you is Rajamala, the head of a boat which sailed from Surakarta to Madura through Bengawan Solo River.’

T: *Kok banyak sesajian di depannya, Pak?* ‘Why are there many offerings in front of it, sir?’

G: *Ya, sesajian untuk caos dhahar.* ‘Yes, the offerings are for giving meals.’

T: *Caos dhahar itu apa sih, Pak?* ‘What is the meaning of *caos dhahar*, sir?’

In the above conversation, the use of *chaos dhahar* makes the tourist who comes from another ethnic of Java finds difficulty to understand Javanese language, especially *the krama*. On the other hand, the register expressed by the tour guide is one of politeness and respect to the king’s belongings. So, it needs further explanation from the tour guide in the language that is understood by the tourist.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis results of register as a sociocultural linguistic study in the above data, I draw conclusions as follows.

1. Forms of tourism registers are utterances which have specific meanings expressed by tourists and tourism service providers.
2. Forms of registers are classified into linguistic units, such as word, phrase and acronym.
3. Tourism registers play an important role in cross-cultural understanding between foreign tourists and local tourism service providers who employ registers for a variety of purposes, namely effective communication.
4. Registers which the tourism service providers as speakers use in tour related activities can be both easy and at the same time very difficult to be understood by either the domestic or foreign tourists as hearers and vice versa.
5. Through registers which are used as a means of communication, there are also cultural contacts between tourists and tourism service providers.

The research findings imply strongly that tourism registers can be used as materials in teaching English for Tourism for students at tourism schools to improve their competence in cross-cultural communication.

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