

FROM CLASSROOM TO WORKPLACE: ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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Abstract: The article presents the methods, materials and guidelines used to progress the ability of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners to use English effectively in tourism and hospitality sectors. An ESP course helps learners master English for the particular field in which they need it. ESP works on learners' needs and reveals their abilities and interests (John & Dudley-Evans). English is necessary in tourism and hospitality, as a person who works in this industry frequently communicates with international guests in English. In order to understand foreign guests' needs, present accurate information, provide high-quality service, work with travel agencies and tour operators, overall, in cooperation and business deals, specialists need to know English.

Keywords: Tourism, English for Specific Purposes, assessment, materials, methods, needs analysis, intercultural relations, context, authentic

INTRODUCTION

There are several reasons for teaching English for tourism and business areas since they are closely connected. In both sectors cultural awareness is a priority tool, because intercultural relations are based on respect, trust and cooperation (Harkison, 2018). Moreover, integrating tourism and business in education helps learners put new ideas into practice in the future. Through these fields learners can learn about a country, its development path and share achievements in technology and science. Additionally, English is language of global communication. That is why, teaching tourism and business English together is not only about language proficiency, but also it improves learners' experience, creates more opportunities and supports sustainable development in a globalized world. The aim of this article is to explore how an ESP course for tourism and hospitality learners can be planned according to their needs, and which methods, types of assessment and handouts can be used in it.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The objective of ESP is focusing on the needs of learners and on the language they use in their profession (John & Dudley-Evans, 1991). Belcher (2006) also writes that using effective and practical methods is the best way to improve the quality of learners' education. Working on learners' needs and creating lesson plans according to them greatly increases learners' interest and help them reach good learning outcomes.

Participants

The ESP class consists of 12 stakeholders who want to improve their English for tourism and hospitality: 5 boys and 7 girls. They are 18-20 years old and have worked for several years as tour guides, hotel managers, chefs and travel agents. They plan to work at an international level next year and there is a high demand for their field in the areas where they live. Their levels of English are different. Although most of them already work in this field, they still need to learn the specific language of their profession: travel arrangements, hospitality management, customer service vocabulary, cultural awareness and communication with guests from different backgrounds.

Needs analysis tools

The following four tools were used to identify the learners' needs:

–Questionnaire survey. A special questionnaire helps to find out what learners expect from tourism and business language training. Questions cover their job responsibilities, communication difficulties and the language skills they need at work. This method shows how important it is to collect data directly from learners to understand their specific needs and preferences (Viana et al., 2019).

–Interview. Following Woodrow's (2018) advice, the interview is one of the best ways to gather data about learners' needs. Asking stakeholders questions related to their field shows how fluent and confident they are when they communicate.

–Observation. Observation helps the teacher understand the learning process and identify learners' different learning styles. By observing learners in their workplace, ESP teachers can see how the language is used in real situations and find difficulties more easily (Woodrow, 2018).

–Document analysis. Working with documents is important in every profession. Tasks such as writing emails, reports, letters and presentations show which of the learners' professional needs should come first (Serafani et al., 2015).

RESULTS

Identified skill needs

The needs analysis showed that the learners need to develop all four language skills, both productive and receptive. Each skill is linked to specific work situations (Table 1).

Table 1

Language skills and related work situations

Skill	Work situations where the skill is needed
Writing	professional documents and clear written communication
Listening	understanding guests' needs, cultural sensitivity, building trust
Reading	marketing and promotion, problem-solving, training and development, understanding guests' reviews, feedback and surveys

Speaking	conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, personalized service, interaction with guests
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Approaches to course design

To make sure that the course meets the learners' needs and the requirements of their profession, three main approaches were chosen:

–Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT brings learners closer to the real context of learning and helps them understand it better (Savignon, 1991). It helps learners become more fluent in the speaking and writing they need for professional relationships in tourism and business.

–Task-Based Learning (TBL). TBL is based on meaningful tasks in which learners must use the target language. It keeps learners interested and supports language learning through practical use in context (Woodrow, 2018). In this course, learners receive tasks that match their work, such as designing a map and writing reports, advertisements, contracts and complaint letters.

–Case studies. Case studies are based on real-life situations, so they are directly related to learners' future work. They show problem-solving strategies typical of their field and develop learners' attention, critical thinking and ability to see different points of view. As Woodrow (2018) mentioned, the case-study approach is essential for business and tourism learners because it presents realistic situations they may face in their careers. It connects theory with real-world practice.

Assessment

–Formative assessment. Formative assessment gives learners the feedback they need to understand their strengths and the areas they should keep improving (Woodrow, 2018). It prepares them for summative assessment by strengthening all the required skills and knowledge. It is therefore an essential part of an ESP course in tourism, hospitality and business, as it prepares learners for practical work, professional communication and industry standards.

–Summative assessment. Summative assessment is a final exam that shows how far learners have reached the course objectives and outcomes (Woodrow, 2018). It cannot be avoided in an ESP context, because it checks the knowledge learners have gained during the course.

Course materials

–ESP textbooks. According to Woodrow (2018), textbooks offer professionally developed activities and serve as useful models for course design. ESP textbooks also develop skills that are relevant to a specific context. The textbook used in this course is Walker, R., & Harding, K. (2009). *Oxford English for Careers: Tourism 3: Student's Book*. Oxford University Press.

–Authentic materials. Authentic materials are the best way to give learners knowledge about real contexts. According to Woodrow (2018), ESP courses often use

authentic texts written for professionals rather than for language learners. In tourism, hospitality and business, such materials include hotel websites, tourism brochures, business reports, emails, customer feedback forms, travel blogs, annual reports, airline booking pages and real-life case studies. They give learners language and content they can use directly in their future jobs. However, the authenticity of the task is even more important than the authenticity of the text: the task must be realistic and reflect the real communicative situation (Woodrow, 2018).

–In-house materials. Developing in-house materials can take a lot of time and money, but well-structured materials can be the most effective (Woodrow, 2018). They can be created from scratch or adapted from existing learning resources and authentic texts (Bocanegra-Valle, 2010).

DISCUSSION

The results show that a successful ESP course starts with a clear understanding of learners' needs. This agrees with Serafani et al. (2015), who state that identifying learners' needs is the basis for designing successful language programs. In the present course, the four needs analysis tools gave a full picture of the learners' professional tasks and language difficulties.

Woodrow (2018) suggested that when course frameworks are adapted to different contexts, learners receive more relevant and effective instruction that fits their specific needs. The combination of CLT, TBL and case studies supports this idea: it helps learners understand and apply their knowledge in practical, real-world situations and improves their overall learning experience and results.

The choice of materials is also important. Bocanegra-Valle (2010) wrote that well-chosen materials are very valuable in an ESP course, because they show learners the real language used in a particular field and give them authentic linguistic contexts. In addition, Arno - Marcià (2012) noted that helping learners develop intercultural communication, critical thinking and independent learning skills is essential to meet the demands of global workplaces and educational settings. These skills are especially important in tourism and hospitality, where workers deal with guests from many cultures.

At the same time, the course was designed for a small group of 10 learners, so its results cannot be generalized to all ESP learners in tourism. Future studies could test this course design with larger groups and measure learners' progress more precisely.

CONCLUSION

The ESP course showed once again how wide and practical English can be. To make learning more effective, learners' needs, errors and weak points must be taken into account. A needs-based course that integrates communicative, task-based and case-study approaches, uses both formative and summative assessment and relies on

textbooks, authentic and in-house materials can prepare tourism and hospitality workers for successful communication with international guests and partners.

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