

TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE FIELDS OF TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

As English is considered the lingua franca of the twenty-first century, everyone needs to have a good command of English today and the importance of teaching English for professional uses and particularly in the field of tourism is undeniable. English proficiency is required in all professional areas but it becomes essential in the tourist industry because of its specific characteristics.

Keywords: tourism, field, interest, community, attractive.

English Language has played an important role in the development of tourism and in this field, English is used widely for travel as well as in client contact and is of outmost interest at the tertiary level. But its interest should not be restricted to tourism students: English for tourism is one of the most attractive areas of English for Specific Purposes(ESP) because, after all, all of us are tourists on various occasions nowadays. Teaching English for Tourism initiates a sustained academic discussion on the teaching and learning of English to tourism professionals, or to students who aspire to build a career in the tourism industry. Responding to a gap in the field, this is the first book of its kind to explore the implications of research in English for tourism (EfT) within the field of English for specific purposes. This edited volume brings together teachers and researchers of EfT from diverse national and institutional contexts, focusing on connecting current research in EfT contexts to classroom implications. It considers a wide range of themes related to the teaching of EfT, including theoretical concepts, methodological frameworks, and specific teaching methods. The book explores topics relating to the impact of changing technologies, the need for cultural understanding, and support for writing development, among others.

Teaching English for Tourism explores this growing area of English for specific purposes and allows for researchers and practitioners to share their findings in an academic context. This unique book is ideal reading for researchers, post-graduate students, and professionals working in the fields of English language teaching and learning. Most of the time we hear the terms like English for civil engineering, English for computing, English for music, English for medicine, English

for business and so forth. English for tourism and hospitality is used for international tourism and service industry which is considered under the category of English for specific purposes and its practical application needs to be understood (Cravotta, 1990). English has been dominated in many different fields such as education, business, technology, media, research, tourism, and medicine. According to Tsao and Xu (2008), there is a fast rise and demand for English for specific purposes to achieve people with instrumental purposes. English for specific purposes is recommended to the learners who are required to meet the essential, specific and precise needs to respond to the considerable demands in vocational or academic situations in English (Chang, 2009; Tsao, 2011). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) agree that one approach to the language teaching is ESP. They believe that all decisions as to the different methods and content are constructed based on the learners' intention and purpose for learning. According to Strevens (1988), ESP is designed and aimed to see the definite needs of the learners. Simion (2012) states that, with the development of business management and communication technologies in the recent years, some changes have been made in the field of English language teaching. One of these changes is that the attention of course designers from teaching English for academic purposes has been altered and improved to teaching English for more specific purposes (ESP). In fact, differences between the ESP learners and ELT learners is that ESP learners are the ones who are nearly aware and familiar with English, however, they are still required to learn the language to perform particular job-related functions and to be able to communicate a set of professional skills (Lorenzo, 2005). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), three important reasons for the emergence of ESP are the new focus on its learners, request, and demand in the new world, and revolution in the field of linguistics. ESP features and characteristics were defined by Dudley-Evans (1998). English for specific purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for a particular career (like law and medicine) or for business in general (International Teacher Training Organization, 2005). Robinson (1989) believes that ESP is considered as a type of English Language Teaching, ELT and it is a kind of goal-oriented language learning. In goal-oriented language learning the learners are required to obtain a definite purpose in the learning process. In fact, ESP is considered as a main subject or topic that can promulgate competence into the hospitality and tourism preparation and training programs (Hsu, 2011). To make it clear, in the language learning process, English is not considered as the main purpose; it is only seen as a vehicle for its acquirement. According to Robinson, Pauline C.,

ed. Hywel Coleman (1989), students learn and study English because they are required to perform and complete a task in English not because of their interest in the English language. This edict of English language has to help them to attain a good and satisfactory level in their individual and professional subject studies. There are numerous of sub-divisions under the umbrella term of ESP. For example (EBP) which is called English for Business Purposes, (EAP) which is employed for English for Academic Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and English for Medical Purposes (EMP), and many others with new ones being added yearly to the list. In fact, EOP which is known as English for Occupational Purposes is more general and common in comparison with ESP. Simion (2012) states that, all of the main and fundamental English skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking in EOP are exactly the same as ESP. In other words, its concentration is not in the particular profession disciplines; however, it is basically based on general skills that are essential for the learners to be prepared for their future workforce. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), “the teaching process of any kind of language for occupational purposes (EOP) need to be considered as a starting point and the analysis of the four traditional skills within an appropriate context, that being, as far as possible, the conditions given in the workplace”. Hortas (2008) believes that EOP programs are needed to more focus on developing communicative competence in a specific field, such as aviation, business, or tourism. Accordingly, the command of ESP and EOP must be such that the learners can reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject matters and career. Prof. Huang (2008) constructed a complete and comprehensive model for the English for Specific Purposes curriculum which is applicable for hospitality and tourism English.

According to Leslie & Russell (2006), being skillful in foreign language skills is necessary for people working in the tourism and hospitality sector. The reason is that it is the means for having communication with foreign tourists and understanding cultural differences. In fact, for those who are seeking employment in the tourism, hospitality and service industry, it is essential to stay highly motivated in order to be accurately fluent in a high level of professional service language. In fact, they are required to become proficient in English for Tourism Purposes (Cravotta, 1990). Moreover, Cho (2005) believes that English for tourism is viewed as an area of business English and incorporate business English and English for academic purposes by bridging workplace communication and classroom use. This can help to increase the job opportunities in the international industry. English for tourism is known as

one of the attractive subjects since many of the people will be a tourist at least once in their lifetime. Moreover, learning English for tourism purposes is crucial for those who are working in guest-host relation section such as hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, information centres and tourist attractions. In industrial sectors, English has recently become a core subject, and hospitality training programs help the employees achieve English proficiency to fulfil the job responsibilities (Hsu, 2010; Chen, Chiu, & Lin, 2011; Kuppan, 2008). According to Buhler (1990), English for tourism is comparable to other languages and can be examined by principal properties such as functions, structures, and tenses. In fact, English for tourism is a structured language and follows definite grammar rules. Dann (2001) states that the vocabulary used in the English for tourism is special and conveys messages through a conventional system of symbols and codes. For instance, the language used for checking into a hotel, giving information about hotel facilities, meal times, giving directions, requesting and giving tourist information, and other communicative activities that can take place in any hospitality setting. Strutt (2003) in his introduction, describes his textbook (English for International Tourism) as needing no specialized knowledge 'it is not technical or over-specialized in nature.' In fact, ESP textbooks are significantly similar to any general English textbook. For instance, grammar in these books is used as a means of structure. However, all the examples are used within the tourism, medicine, or business context make a distinction from a usual ELT textbook (Brieger & Sweeney, 1994).

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