English for Tourism Purposes:
A New Approach in the Field
of English for Specific Purposes

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This paper outlines and analyses various elements concerning course development, material development, curriculum planning, and the use of an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theoretical approach and framework. English used for the international tourism and service industry falls into the category of English for Specific Purposes and requires educators to understand the practical applications of this approach. This paper also introduces a new category in the ESP genre, that of English for Tourism Purposes or ETP. In addition, the significance of maintaining and improving learner motivation during their lifelong journey of learning by using a communicate setting and a communicative methodology will be discussed. Learners who seek employment in the tourism and service industry need to remain highly motivated to become truly fluent in a high level of professional service language and must master English for Tourism Purposes (ETP). Various factors must be considered by educators in designing ETP curriculums, individual courses, and classroom materials which will benefit students, increase motivation, and improve language skills.

Educators engaged in using English for Specific Purposes as a theoretical framework have various roles and responsibilities. Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) identify five key roles for the proper practice of ESP. These roles include being a teacher, a course designer and class material developer, a collaborator, a researcher, and an evaluator. Nunan (1987) makes various observations about teachers who develop curriculums and points out that developing the curriculum requires time, skill, and support. Nunan recognized that issues such as these are vital for teachers faced with the daunting task of developing curricula. Important issues in ESP curriculum design are the abilities required for successful communication in occupational settings, content language acquisition versus general language acquisition, heterogeneous versus homogenous learner groups, and materials development. (Nunan, 1987) Further, the acquisition of English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) must take into account these various factors within an international context. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) discuss international historical events and the emergence of English as the international language and the subsequent devel-

opment of ESP. Another factor was a revolution in linguistics. Traditionally, linguists attempted to describe and discuss the features of a language however, the focus began to shift to the ways in which language is used in real communication. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also point out the ways in which spoken English and written English vary. Words, utterances, and discourse, depending on the particular context, may have various meanings and connotations. Knowledge of this and the ability to differentiate between possible meanings is critical in the international tourism and service industry. Second language speakers of English who aspire to work in the international tourism and service industry and those who wish to master English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) need to carefully consider the language they use and the context of the specific situation. Therefore, a comprehensive curriculum of practical courses is beneficial.

There are various types of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which Carver (1983) itemizes as: English as a restricted language, English for academic and occupational purposes, and English with specific topics. Examples in an occupational setting, appropriate and apropos for the international tourism and service industry, is the language used by air traffic controllers or by restaurant service staff. This exemplifies the concept of English as a restricted language. Mackay and Mountford (1978) clearly illustrate the difference between restricted language and communicative language with this statement:

". . . the language of international air–traffic control could be regarded as 'special', in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining–room waiter or air–hostess. However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is not grammar. Knowing a restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situations, or in contexts outside the vocational environment" (pp.4–5).

Another type of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) identified by Carver (1983) is English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Hutchinson & Waters, (1987), further categorize ESP into English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE), and English for Social Studies (ESS). Each of these subject areas are further differentiated into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note that there is no clear–cut distinction between EAP and EOP:

". . . people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job" (p. 16).

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) are, however, different in terms of focus. This particularly insightful idea is pointed out by Cummins (1979). Notions of cognitive academic proficiency versus basic interpersonal skills, though often intermingled, need to remain separate in terms of focus. Due to this fact, a curriculum concerning English for the international tourism and service industry must be carefully created to suit specific learners' needs. Indeed, English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) courses must be specifically designed. The third and final type of ESP identified by Carver (1983) is English with specific topics. Carver contends that emphasis shifts from purpose to topic. This category is uniquely concerned with anticipated future English needs of, for example, tourism professionals in the workplace. There should be an integral component of such courses or programs which focus on situational language. This situational language has been determined based on the interpretation of results from needs analysis of authentic language used in target workplace settings. Base vocabulary, situational expressions, and formulaic expressions for various tourism related professions must be taught at an early stage of the learning process. English for Tourism Purposes courses should take all of this into account.

The three features common to ESP courses identified by Carver (1983) are authentic material, purpose–related orientation, and self–direction. If we also consider Dudley–Evans' (1987) claim that ESP should be offered at an intermediate or advanced level, use of authentic learning materials is advisable. The use of authentic content materials may be a crucial feature of ESP, particularly in self–directed study and research tasks. This holds especially true for learners of English for Tourism Purposes (ETP). Purpose–related orientation refers to the simulation of communicative tasks required of the target setting. Self–direction is also characteristic of ESP courses in that the ". . . point of including self–direction. . . . . . is that ESP is concerned with turning learners into users" (Carver, 1983, p.134). In order for self–direction to occur, the pupils must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what, and how they will study. Empowering learners with such flexibility will stimulate motivation. English for Specific Purposes requires a comprehensive needs analysis. This is particularly true for students who are studying English for the international tourism and service industry and students who are studying in an English for Tourism Purposes program. As there are various places of potential employment, the educator must center focus on a particular learner's future occupational

desires.

Learner centered approaches to lessons; materials and syllabus design advocate the involvement of pupils. Student fronted language learning must allow learners to express their views on their educational needs and desires for learning the language, their preferred learning styles (Willing, 1988), their philosophy and beliefs about language learning, and or their preferred activity types (Barkhuisen, 1998). In keeping with a learner–centered or communicative approach, goals are focused on students and their success. Jones (1990) addresses one of the core conundrums, however, in that "ESP teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time" (Jones, 1990, p. 91). In reality, many instructors are not provided with ample time for needs analysis, materials research and materials development. There are many textbooks which claim to meet the needs of ESP courses, however, Jones (1990) comments that no one ESP text can live up to its name. He suggests that the only real solution is that a resource bank of pooled materials be made available to all ESP instructors (Jones, 1990). This approach may provide benefits if it is done on a small scale. In this way, course co–ordination and curriculum planning is best achieved by comprehensive planning among educators. Providing learners with beneficial courses and a straightforward curriculum will achieve not only educational goals, it will also increase motivation at various levels.

Motivation is a key issue in teaching a foreign language as well as other subjects. One crucial difference is that teaching a foreign language has a significant impact on the social nature of learners since it requires learners to adopt new social and cultural behaviors (Gardner, 1979; Williams, 1994). Considering the fact that motivation is a complex, multi–dimensional construct whose influence is both internal and external, Williams and Burden (1997) divide motivational components into two categories: internal and external influences with a number of subcomponents. Dörnyei (1994, 2000, 2001 a, b), focusing on motivation from a classroom perspective, conceptualizes language learning motivation, and describes a model based on a process–oriented approach. Motivation may be significantly increased by exposing students to a target culture as well as a target language outside of the classroom perspective. Indeed, people who work in the international tourism and service industry must not only be multi–lingual, they must also be multi–cultural. Exposing the learners to various cultures and increasing awareness about other cultures will aid in allowing for acceptance and respect of others. Communication competence is defined as behaviors perceived to be appropriate and effective in particular contexts (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Collier & Thomas, 1988). Especially in intercultural communication, it is important for participants to share discursive meanings (Collier & Tho-

mas, 1988). The first step toward achieving communication competence is to understand the cultural implications of one another's words and actions. Fink (2003) notes that we make meaning based on our experiences and on the information and ideas we encounter. In order to interact effectively with other people, we first should recognize other people's differing viewpoints and interpretations. In that sense, this is quite meaningful because it clarifies how people may interpret incidents differently depending on their cultural backgrounds. Recognizing each other's viewpoints and interpretations will prevent us from imposing our own views on others and contribute to reforming each other's social identities. Language education should aim not only at helping students learn the language itself but also understand its cultural background. Therefore, it is important to learn what the real expectations in another culture are in particular situations. By understanding each other's differing cultures and viewpoints, learners will gradually be able to acquire shared meanings indispensable for effective communication. It is the responsibility of the instructor to create opportunities so that useful language education can be realized and students' motivation to learn can be maintained. It could be argued that English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) necessitates a detailed study of other cultures. ETP users must be familiar with and have detailed knowledge of the various cultures in which they work or from where their guests, clients, or customers hail. This will lead to significantly more effective and much better service. Learners who become fluent in ETP will be able to give proper and effective service to people from around the world in every workplace setting.

People who use English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) must make effort to maintain their fluency, accuracy, and communicative communication ability. People who work in the international tourism and service industry have the opportunity to use the target language on a daily basis. That said the fossilization of incorrect forms must be avoided. Naturally, professional, polite, service language must be mastered and maintained. Reilly (1988) points out how learners have the ability to lose their language just like everyone has the ability to acquire language. Reilly contends that an individual's characteristics or personality, cultural factors, and the way that they learned the language in the first place are significant. Clearly, the learning of other subjects is quite different from language learning. Thanasoulas (2002) makes this very clear and substantiates much of what Reilly brings to light. The risk of losing language skills is quite high and individuals outside of school must make great effort to continue to improve. In a professional setting, such as in the international tourism and service industry, this is essential.

As tourism is a journey to see new places, experience different cultures, and obtain knowledge about the world, 'Learning as a Journey' corresponds closely to this. The 'Life as a Journey' meta-

phor pointed out in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contends that learners seemed to view learning as a kind of Pilgrim's Progress. The learner's progress involves a journey where a series of difficulties had to be overcome to achieve a final goal. This metaphor is used to refer to progress overall and to progress in particular lessons, allowing learners to consider their sense of success and failure. Interestingly, this journey also enables them to express both their affective and cognitive feelings about the learning process and their target language (Ellis, 2002). Tourism is an eye opening experience and mastering English allows any individual to enjoy and explore the world at their own pace and in their own way. Mastering English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) provides any individual with the linguistic tools needed to travel or to work in various chosen occupations. The most important responsibility that any educator has is to provide learners with the opportunity to achieve their goals. Further research about effectively designing English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) curriculums, individual courses, and classroom materials which will benefit students, increase motivation, and improve language skills needs to continue.

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