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DEVELOPING INTEGRATED LINGUISTIC AND DISCOURSE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM: PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND PROFESSIONAL APPLICATIONS

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Abstract. The preparation of tourism professionals requires language education that reflects the communicative demands of real occupational environments. This paper investigates pedagogical approaches to developing linguistic and discourse competence in English for tourism. The study draws on communicative competence theory, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and research on professional language use in hospitality. A conceptual analysis is conducted to identify teaching strategies that combine grammatical accuracy, specialized vocabulary, textual organization, interactional skills, and pragmatic appropriateness. The discussion focuses on task-based learning, role-play, genre-based instruction, and performance-oriented assessment. The paper proposes an integrated pedagogical framework that connects language knowledge with occupational performance and recommends further empirical investigation into its effectiveness.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, tourism education, linguistic competence, discourse competence, task-based learning, professional communication.

Introduction

English language proficiency is an important professional resource in tourism, where employees interact with visitors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The ability to communicate clearly influences the delivery of services, the exchange of information, and the management of guest expectations. Tourism education must therefore prepare learners for the communicative situations they are likely to encounter in their future employment.

General language courses often concentrate on grammatical exercises, vocabulary lists, and isolated speaking activities. Although these components contribute to language development, professional tourism communication requires learners to apply linguistic knowledge within coherent and socially appropriate interactions.

The concept of communicative competence provides a theoretical basis for addressing this requirement. Canale and Swain [1] emphasize that communicative ability involves more than grammatical knowledge, while Canale [2] identifies discourse competence as an important component of effective language use. In the field of hospitality, Blue and Harun [3] also demonstrate the professional relevance of language patterns associated with interactions between guests and service providers.

The purpose of this paper is to identify pedagogical approaches that can integrate linguistic and discourse competence in English for tourism and to propose a framework for their practical application.

The Need for Integrated Language Instruction. Linguistic competence enables learners to use grammatical structures, specialized vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns accurately. Discourse competence enables them to organize these resources into connected explanations, coherent written texts, and purposeful conversations.

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In tourism education, the distinction becomes particularly evident when learners perform occupational tasks. A student may know the vocabulary for hotel reservations but struggle to conduct a complete booking conversation. Similarly, a learner may understand descriptive adjectives but find it difficult to organize a guided-tour presentation into a logical sequence.

These difficulties suggest that language education should connect linguistic forms with the communicative purposes for which they are used. Hutchinson and Waters [4], in their discussion of English for Specific Purposes, emphasize the importance of relating language learning to learners' particular needs and purposes. In tourism, this principle supports the use of occupational situations as the basis for instructional planning.

An integrated approach should consequently develop grammatical accuracy, lexical appropriateness, cohesion, coherence, pragmatic awareness, and interactional competence together.

Pedagogical Approaches to Competence Development. Task-Based Language Learning. Task-based learning provides opportunities for students to use English to achieve a meaningful communicative outcome. Instead of practising language structures independently, learners complete activities resembling actual workplace responsibilities.

For example, students can organize a travel itinerary, explain accommodation options, conduct a reservation interview, or respond to a guest's request. Such tasks require the use of specialized vocabulary and accurate grammar while also demanding logical sequencing, clarification, and appropriate responses.

A hotel-booking activity might involve greeting a customer, identifying travel dates, explaining available rooms, confirming the price, and summarizing the reservation. The linguistic elements are practised as part of a coherent professional exchange.

Role-Play and Professional Simulation. Role-play allows learners to experience different communicative roles and practise language in realistic situations. One student may act as a tour guide while others play international tourists; alternatively, students may simulate a hotel receptionist assisting a guest with a complaint.

These activities can develop turn-taking, polite requests, clarification strategies, and the ability to respond spontaneously. They also encourage learners to connect individual sentences into a complete interaction.

Blue and Harun [3] discuss the importance of exposure to actual hospitality practices in professional language education. In a classroom context, carefully designed simulations can provide structured opportunities to practise similar communicative functions.

Genre-Based Instruction. Genre-based instruction focuses on the characteristic organization and linguistic features of texts produced for particular purposes. In tourism, relevant genres include promotional brochures, travel itineraries, hotel emails, guided-tour scripts, and customer-service dialogues.

Students can examine authentic or appropriately adapted examples, identify their organizational patterns, and then produce their own texts. For instance, a destination description may begin with a general introduction, present the principal attractions, provide practical information, and conclude with a persuasive recommendation.

This approach develops awareness of how vocabulary, grammar, and discourse organization work together to create effective professional communication.

A Proposed Framework for Integrated Instruction. Based on the conceptual analysis, an integrated framework can be organized into four interconnected stages.

Stage 1: Linguistic preparation. Students learn the vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation patterns, and functional expressions associated with a particular tourism task.

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Stage 2: Discourse organization. Learners examine how information should be sequenced, connected, and adapted to the communicative purpose. They practise transitions, reference devices, openings, explanations, and conclusions.

Stage 3: Professional performance. Students complete a realistic task, such as presenting a destination, handling a reservation, or explaining a cultural attraction. Both language accuracy and communicative effectiveness are emphasized.

Stage 4: Feedback and assessment. Teachers evaluate grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, cohesion, coherence, pragmatic appropriateness, and the successful completion of the task. Learners receive feedback and revise their performance where necessary.

This framework is a conceptual pedagogical proposal rather than a model whose effectiveness has already been experimentally established. Its value lies in providing a structured way to connect language knowledge with professional communication.

Implications for Tourism Education. The proposed approach is relevant to tourism programmes in Uzbekistan, where graduates may need to communicate information about historical monuments, cultural traditions, accommodation services, and regional travel opportunities to international visitors.

For example, a lesson about a historical destination can combine specialized vocabulary with the preparation and delivery of a coherent guided-tour presentation. Students can practise describing architectural features, explaining historical significance, answering visitors' questions, and adapting explanations to different audiences.

Assessment should similarly move beyond grammar-focused testing. An integrated assessment rubric can consider language accuracy, the logical organization of information, the use of cohesive devices, audience awareness, interactional effectiveness, and successful completion of the professional task.

Future empirical research could compare learners receiving integrated instruction with those following conventional language-focused instruction. Performance-based assessments, recorded role-plays, and learner feedback could help establish which approaches contribute most effectively to professional communicative development.

Conclusion

Developing linguistic and discourse competence together is an important objective of English for tourism education. Linguistic knowledge provides the resources needed for accurate expression, whereas discourse competence enables learners to organize these resources into coherent and professionally appropriate communication.

Task-based learning, role-play, genre-based instruction, and integrated assessment offer practical ways to connect language learning with occupational requirements. By combining these approaches, tourism education can better prepare learners for the communicative demands of hospitality services, tour guiding, travel consultation, and destination promotion.

Further empirical research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework across different learner groups and educational contexts. Nevertheless, the integration of linguistic knowledge and discourse-level performance provides a theoretically grounded direction for designing more professionally relevant tourism language programmes.

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