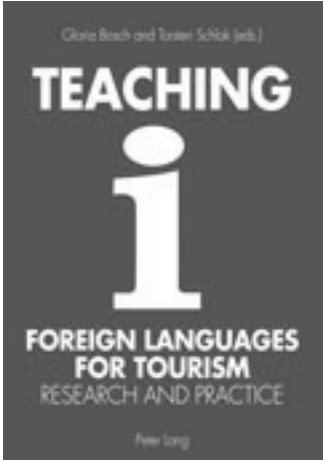


## Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism: Research and Practice

August 2014 - Volume 18, Number 2

Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism: Research and Practice		
<b>Author:</b>	Gloria Bosch and Torsten Schlak (Eds.) (2013)	
<b>Publisher:</b>	Peter Lang	
<b>Pages</b>	<b>ISBN</b>	<b>Price</b>
340 pages	9783034312806	\$105.95 USD



*Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism* is framed and marketed as an appeal for the foundation of a new academic discipline which aims to bridge the gap between foreign language teaching and the specific language learning needs of current and future professionals in the field of tourism. The editors contend that although tourism and languages are “intrinsically intertwined” (p. 13), and although universities, government authorities, and industry leaders have long recognized the importance of languages for tourism, languages continue to be treated as “instrument[s] of little emphasis” (p. 13) in tertiary education that “are still being taught...without focusing on their discursive specificity and cross cultural features” (p. 22), while very little is known of the specific language skills required for tourism. Tourism is both globally and, in many cases, domestically among the most important economic sectors, but sustaining a robust tourism sector, according to the editors, is contingent upon a “professional client oriented attitude and personalized service, which necessarily involves addressing clients in their own language [as well as] identifying needs and training future tourism professionals in communicative and cross-cultural skills” (p. 16). (Though I would remind the editors that not all tourists desire to be addressed in their native language, for instance cultural tourists

or students engaged in study abroad. Many tourists also often *expect* to have to learn a bit of the language of the destination when they travel to certain destinations.) For this reason, the editors call for the establishment of a new field that studies and teaches Languages for Tourism (LfT) as a branch of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), and they present this collection of essays as an initial contribution.

While the editors recognize English as the global lingua franca of tourism, they rightfully emphasize the need for multilingual and intercultural competent professionals, given that tourism occurs in a global marketplace in which languages such as Chinese and Spanish are (re)emerging as lingua franca in their own right and in which there is a growing demand for proficiency in foreign languages other than English at particular tourist destinations. Thus the volume contains sixteen essays – most of which stemming from the *First International Congress on Tourism and Foreign Languages* held in Palma de Mallorca in 2011 – written in four languages (English, German, French and Spanish) and offering a sample of perspectives on current trends in research and classroom practice across the United States, Spain, Italy, Germany and Poland, all of which are informative for teachers of English for Tourism (EfT), as well as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in general.

Renowned applied linguist Michael Long initiates the discussion by rearticulating his case for the application of a task-based approach informed by language audits and needs analyses, whereby the language features, discourse patterns and communicative and cross-cultural skills taught in any LSP course, or any language course for that matter, should be based on empirical data that triangulates the needs of learners. Subsequent contributions describe: the potential of ICTs and VLEs for the teaching of LfT (Sáez, pp. 71-88; Laborda, pp. 89-106; Rodríguez & Gil, pp. 257-274); ways of incorporating cultural and intercultural learning into the teaching of LfT (Pastor, pp. 107-126; Albano & Sábato, pp. 127-146; Vicens-Pujol, pp. 275-286); the methodological foundation and examples of needs analyses for LfT (Bosch & Schlak, pp. 165-184; Kiefer, pp. 237-256; Borrull-Cubo & Bosch, pp. 315-340); a course proposal based on current theory and research (Dohrn, pp. 209-236); a linguistic analysis of the language of tourism (Hoghton, pp. 287-296); and an review of teaching material available in print and online (González & Menéndez, pp. 297-314). Some of the perspectives that will be new to readers already well versed in LSP include: an analysis of the system of signs for tourists in the Bay of Palma, Mallorca as an example of a linguistic landscape enriched by multilingualism and English as lingua franca and the potential application of this linguistic landscape as a pedagogical tool for students of EfT (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, pp. 49-70); an argument that the growing importance of Spanish can be exploited to attract language tourists to cities such as Cordova, thereby diversifying the tourism sector and bolstering the local economy (Ortiz, Ruiz & Molina, pp. 147-164); and an outline of how (especially history) museums can facilitate intercultural learning when tourists are invited to actively engage the exhibits as subjects who are free to interpret from their own perspectives, as opposed to consumers of cultural products or information (Rohmann, pp. 185-208).

By applying a broad range of current trends in LSP research and practice to this specific context, *Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism* offers an excellent introduction to LfT. Yet the underlying premise, that the book delves into a new field, must be qualified, at the very least with respect to English. As the editors and contributors are surely aware, Eft has existed in praxis for over 40 years, considering that teachers of Eft have been publishing learning material for niche markets since at least the mid 1970s (e.g., Wallace, 1974; Worsdall, 1974; Balboni, 1980; Kruse & Kruse, 1982; Balboni, Coonan & Voltolina, 1986; Deutsches Seminar für Fremdenverkehr, 1986; Utawanit, 1986; Reichenauer, Rofe & Strutt, 1988; Richards & Long, M.N. 1988; Balpinar, 1996). (One could even argue that the history of languages for tourism dates back to the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, when tourism began to emerge as a middle class activity. For instance, in the early 1900s, companies like Berlitz began to expand their operations to meet the increasing demand of the tourism market, and universities soon began to offer the first degree programs in Hospitality Management, for which the study of languages, albeit for general purposes, has always been important.) Although the teaching methods have changed markedly since the 1970s, teaching material for Eft has always been informed by formal and informal analyses of student needs, by student feedback, by classroom observation, and/or by trial and error, in short, by invaluable teaching experience.

Since the 1990s some of the more seasoned teachers of Eft have published course books with major publishers for international markets (e.g., Stott, Holt & Duckworth, 1991; Harding & Henderson, 1994; McBurney, 1996; Jacob & Strutt, 1997; Harding, 1998; Jones, 1998; Dubicka & O’Keeffe, 2003; Strutt, 2003; Walker & Harding, 2006; Walker & Harding, 2007; Mol, 2008; Walker & Harding, 2009; Cowper, 2013). In addition, graduate students and seasoned researchers alike have in recent years published studies on various elements of Eft, including classroom methods, assessment practices, the use of information technology, surveys of learning material, and the application of discourse analysis, genre studies and corpus linguistics to understand how English is used for tourism (e.g., Satzinger, 1979; Péchenart & Tangy, 1993; Dann, 1996; Henry & Roseberry, 1996; Hsu, 1999; Global TESOL College, 2002; Magennis, 2002; Fuentes, 2004; Esteban, 2005; Fuentes, 2005; Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005; Mendéz, 2005; Mocini, 2005; Lam, 2007; Wilailak, 2008; Pierini, 2009; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010; Kang & Qiaofeng, 2011). Especially in Asia and Oceania Eft seems to have already emerged as an established academic discipline, given the number of publications in the Eastern Hemisphere. To announce a volume on LfT as the foundation of a new field in 2013, or even 2011, is to ignore the endeavors of countless teachers of Eft (not to mention teachers of other languages for tourism) and the occasional contributions of applied linguists from around the world. The editors of *Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism*, as well as the individual contributors, are certainly aware of the long history of Eft, but the volume fails to make reference to that tradition.

Without a review of the existing literature on LfT, the editors also fail to adequately define the term, beyond the core idea that it is the branch of LSP which caters to the specific needs of the tourism sector. For instance, with respect to English, how does

“English for Tourism” relate to the “English of Tourism”, “English for the Travel Industry”, “English for the Hospitality Industry”, “English for Travelers”, or the several other terms employed in studies and learning material? As an introduction to the field, the volume remains incomplete without a literature review and semantic clarification of “Languages for Tourism”.

Experienced instructors and authors of EFT courses, however, should not be overly critical. This apparent oversight is likely because the book is really in response to the lack of institutional support for an academic discourse on languages for tourism (and not just English!) in Europe and North America. For example, although most university degree programs in Tourism Studies have language requirements, most European and North American universities neither offer LSP courses for tourism nor employ teachers qualified to teach LfT, and there are very few tenure-track teaching or research posts for LfT in these regions of the world. Like LSP in general, most LfT research is conducted for the purpose of teaching a specific group of students within a unique learning environment and, though obviously relevant to practitioners in other contexts, will likely never be published or shared with a professional or academic community without institutional support. As a result, there have indeed been relatively few conference presentations and academic publications on the subject in the West, where best practice in LfT remains the province of individuals and small communities of practice largely working independently of one another. What *Teaching Foreign Languages for Tourism* is really calling for, then, is the recognition of LfT as an academic discipline on the part of market leaders, university administrators and policy makers in the EU.

While the volume is neither the first nor the last word on Languages for Tourism, it is – as only the second recent volume to focus solely on this subfield of LSP published (in part) in English (the other being Raaa, Petroman, & Petroman, 2012) – arguably the most significant contribution to the field to-date. Hopefully the *Second International Congress on Tourism and Foreign Languages* will attract an even more diverse sample of perspectives representing an even wider spectrum of institutions, nationalities and languages, hopefully such efforts will enlighten stakeholders in tourism on the need for more LfT, and hopefully the many gaps in research and practice in LfT will continue to be filled. (For instance, I would personally like to see more research and scholarship on teaching Languages for Specific Academic Purposes at universities where, for example, learners of EFL/ESL are studying Tourism Studies entirely or partly in English, i.e. ESAP for Tourism Studies or Hospitality Management.)

### **Reviewed by**

Michael Ennis

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

<michaeljoseph.ennis@unibz.it>

## References

- Balboni, P. (1980). *The English of tourism*. Bergamo, Italy: Minerva Italica.
- Balboni, P., Coonan, C.M., & Voltolina M. (1986). *Passengers of the world. English for tourism*. Bergamo, Italy: Minerva Italica.
- Balpınar, Z. (1996). *English for Tourism*. Eskişehir, Turkey: Anadolu University.
- Bruno, D. (1992). *International English for the Travel Industry*. Harlow: Prentice Hall Europe/Phoenix ELT.
- Dann, G. (1996). *The language of tourism: A sociolinguistic perspective*. Oxon: CAB International.
- Deutsches Seminar für Fremdenverkehr. (1986). *Englisch für Touristiker*. Berlin: DSF.
- Dubicka, Y. & O'Keeffe, M. (2003). *English for international tourism. Pre-intermediate*. Harlow, U.K.: Pearson Education/Longman.
- Esteban, A.A. (2005). Developing needs. *English Teaching Professional* 36, 35-50.
- Fuentes, A.C. (2004). The Use of Corpora and IT in Evaluating Oral Task Competence for Tourism English. *CALICO Journal* 22(1), 5-24.
- Cowper, A. (2013). *English for international tourism. Upper-intermediate*. Harlow, U.K.: Pearson Longman.
- Fuentes, A.C. (2007). A corpus-based assessment of reading comprehension in English for Tourism studies. In E. Hidalgo, L. Quereda, & J. Santana (Eds.) *Corpora in the Foreign Language Classroom* (pp. 309-328). Amsterdam/New York: Rudolphi.
- Global TESOL College (2002). *Teaching tourism English: A study and resource guide for TESOL, TESL, and TEFL teachers*. Edmonton: Global TESOL College.
- Harding, K. (1998). *Going international: English for tourism*. Oxford: OUP.
- Harding, K. & Henderson, P. (1994). *High Season: English for the hotel and tourist industry*. Oxford: OUP.
- Henry, A., & Roseberry, R.L. (1996). A Corpus-based investigation of the language and linguistic patterns of one genre and the implications for language teaching. *Research in the Teaching of English* 30(4), 472-489.
- Hsu, S.Y. (1999). *Learning strategies and materials selection in the English for tourism classroom: A study of learning strategies employed by learners in the British context, with consideration of implications for published materials selection*. (Doctoral dissertation), Institute of Education, University of London.
- Jacob, M, & Strutt, P. (1997). *English for international tourism*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Jaworski, A., & Pritchard, A. (Eds.) (2005). *Discourse, communication and tourism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Jones, L. (1998). *Welcome! English for the travel and tourism industry*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Kang, N., & Qiaofeng Y. (2011). Corpus-based stylistic analysis of tourism English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 2(1) 129-136.
- Kruse, B., & Kruse, B. (1982). *English for the travel industry*. New York: McGraw-Hill College.
- Lam, P.Y.W. (2007). A corpus-driven lexico-grammatical analysis of English tourism industry texts and the study of its pedagogic implications in English for Specific Purposes. In E. Hidalgo, L. Quereda, & J. Santana (Eds.) *Corpora in the Foreign Language Classroom*(pp. 71-90). Amsterdam/New York: Rudolphi.
- Magennis, S. (2002). An ESP program for students of tourism. In T. Orr (Ed.), *English for Specific Purposes* (pp. 57-70). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- McBurney, N. (1996). *Tourism*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Mendéz R.V. (2005). English for tourism and the European Common Framework aided by technological support. In S.P. Gomez, M.J. Esteve, M.L.G. Valor, S.D. Insa & M.L.R. Renau (Eds.), *Language @t work: Language learning, discourse and translation studies in Internet* (pp. 83-94). Castellón de la Plana, Spain: Universitat Jaume I.
- Mocini, R. (2005). The verbal discourse of tourist brochures. *Annals* 5, 153-162.
- Mol, H. (2008). *English for tourism and hospitality in higher education studies*. Reading: Garnet Publishing.
- Péchenart P., & Tangy, A. (1993). Gifts of tongues: Foreign languages and tourism policy in Ireland. In M. Cronin & B. O'Connor (Eds.), *Tourism in Ireland: A critical analysis* (pp. 162-180). Cork: Cork University Press.
- Pierini, P. (2009). Adjectives in tourism English on the web: A corpus-based study. *CÍRCULO de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación* 40, 93-116.
- Raaa, G., Petroman, J., & Petroman, C. (Eds.) (2012). *The English of tourism*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Reichenauer, C., Rofe, L. & Strutt, P. (1988). *English for tourism*. Paris: Editions Belin.
- Richards, J.C., & Long, M.N. (1988). *Communicative English for the travel industry*. Oxford: JEC Oxford.
- Satzinger, F. (1979). English for tourism. In Council of Europe (Ed.), *A European unit/credit system for modern language learning by adults: Report of a symposium held at Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein, Germany 7 – 14 September 1977*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Stott, T., Holt, R., & Duckworth, M. (1991). *First class for tourism*. Oxford: OUP.
- Strutt, P. (2003). *English for international tourism. Intermediate*. Harlow: Pearson Education/Longman.

Thurlow C., & Jaworski, A. (2010). *Tourism discourse language and global mobility*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Utawanit, K. (1986). *Communicative English for hotel personnel*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.

Wallace, B.M. (1974). *English for tourism*. Inglés para turismo. Buenos Aires: Editorial Escolar.

Walker, R., & Harding, K. (2006). *Oxford English for careers: Tourism 1*. Oxford: OUP.

Walker, R., & Harding, K. (2007). *Oxford English for careers: Tourism 2*. Oxford: OUP.

Walker, R., & Harding, K. (2009). *Oxford English for careers: Tourism 3*. Oxford: OUP.

Wilailak, R. (2008). *Using industry-based needs analysis to inform the English for tourism curriculum at Udon Thani Rajabhat University*. (Doctoral dissertation.) La Trobe University.

Worsdall, V. (1974). *Special English for tourism*. New York: Collier Macmillan International.

Copyright © 1994 - 2014 TESL-EJ, ISSN 1072-4303  
Copyright rests with the authors.