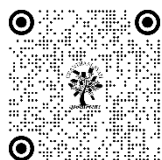


# THE NEED FOR ESP IN TOURISM ENGLISH IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Hutchinson & Waters, Swales, Selinker and Tarone, are identified as the most prominent pioneers of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters consider ESP to be a revolution in linguistics. Traditional linguists focused on the features of language, but the modern revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real situations. Communicative Language differs in different situations; therefore, ESP courses must be tailored to our specific needs and specific contexts so that the learners benefit further and acquire what they need than just learn General English (20)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hutchinson & Waters, Swales, Selinker and Tarone, are identified as the most prominent pioneers of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters consider ESP to be a revolution in linguistics. Traditional linguists focused on the features of language, but the modern revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real situations. Communicative Language differs in different situations; therefore, ESP courses must be tailored to our specific needs and specific contexts so that the learners benefit further and acquire what they need than just learn General English (20).

English has been taught as just general English with more focus on literature, in India. The need for a more specific course according to the profession has become the demanding urgency. English has been taught without systematically doing a survey of needs says Nawamin Prachanant in his article “Needs Analysis on English Language Use in Tourism Industry.” He continues to remark that there is a need to investigate the needs, functions and problems faced by the people employed in the industry of tourism and hospitality (117 -125).

Annette Pritchard and Adam Jaworski in their book, *Discourse, Communication and Tourism: Concepts, Strategies and Cases*, are of the strong opinion that there is an inordinate need to “explore how tourism and travel create their own systems of signification, providing keys for the construction of self and others”. They consider tourism as the “literal embodiment of travelling theory” (2). Tourism English is fast becoming an important ESP agenda for students who are

specialising in the field of tourism and hotel management in universities in India. Research in this field has shown, as mentioned in the first chapter, that there is a great need for specific courses in English language communication skills for people employed in this field. India has been facing a strong driving force within to equip its youth, especially the professionals, with adequate communication skills in English due to the technological development and globalization to a large extent. The need to empower the youth by improving their communication competence in the English language is expressed everywhere. It is significantly necessary to examine how far linguists, research scholars and professionals have practically tackled this problem and succeeded.

Therefore, a set of ambitious targets are required which define a clear, cohesive, sustainable and equitable approach in developing the communicative competence of the professionals in the English language, and to deliver performance in line with the opportunities that are available for growth and diversification in the tourist industry. Usha Albuquerque in her web article, "Today's Education Must Sync with Tomorrow's Jobs" rightly clarifies that Indian education should move beyond the examination system and equip students with skills that bridge the disconnect with the job market. She further notes that since technology is transforming the workplace, there is a dire need to reorient the academic programmes to help students develop necessary skills and expertise to function effectively. "India's demographic advantage in terms of a large young population can be converted into a dynamic economic advantage" (np).

### **The Need for ESP in Tourism Management courses in Universities and Management Institutions in Karnataka**

Bosky Khanna in his article, "Tourism Industry Hit in Karnataka, Business Drops by 90 Percent", in *The New India Express* online newspaper, quotes Gubaxish Singh Kohli, vice-president of the Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Associations of India, who said that occupancy has dropped by 90 per cent in hotels and 70 per cent at restaurants. Revenue loss across the country is \$1.3- 1.5 billion. Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation Managing Director Kumar Pushkar mentions that:

Around 18 lakh people directly or indirectly dependent on tourism are affected. Bengaluru, which saw 60 per cent hotel bookings this time last year, now has about 5 per cent. Hotel bookings in Madikeri, Mysuru and Srirangapatna are also around 5 per cent (np).

This meaningfully reveals the magnitude of the tourism industry in Karnataka and its potential in the near future, as the pandemic is slowly losing its grip over the world. The need for management experts in this field will only keep increasing.

Tourism has fast become a way of life. The economic growth of our country has developed tremendously due to globalization. Millions of tourists visit India yearning for exceptional travelling experiences, domestically, regionally, or even internationally. This trend will continue with a sustained momentum, outpacing global economic growth. The National Tourism Policy quotes the words of The Planning Commission in its 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year plan document that has made the following observation:

the tourism sector has a major role to play to promote a faster, sustainable and more inclusive economic growth – the goal of the Twelfth Five Year Plan, It has better prospects for promoting pro-poor growth than many other sectors (8).

The former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and former Member of the Union Public Service Commission, Mr. S.K. Misra has emphatically spoken about the development of the tourism industry in India and the need for bringing it up to an international standard of excellence. He says that:

The new business and leisure travellers who are flooding into India are sophisticated and cosmopolitan, with wide international experience. They take it for granted that facilities and services will be of highest standards. It is, thus, imperative that a professional tourism corps be trained to meet the exacting requirements of the new international traveller (np).

Furthermore, Adam Wilson in his research article, "Adapting English for the Specific Purpose of Tourism: A study of Communication Strategies in Face-to-face Encounters in a French Tourist Office." adds that tourism is an ever-diversifying international service industry and drives in the importance of intercultural communication skills. He is of the definite opinion that the English language holds a unique position as a global language and is of vital importance for the elaboration, promotion, delivery and consumption of tourist services, experiences and products. Therefore, it will be a prime destination for users of ESP. Adam also quotes Jenkins et.al. to reinforce his point and emphasize the importance of research in English as ESP in the field of tourism. He writes that:

Research from various domains of study that focus on the English language – English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to name but a few – has consistently shown that English is often a key resource in comparable intercultural, or multicultural, industries, often taking on the role of a lingua franca to allow communication between diverse linguistic groups (53 - 73).

The above statements greatly prove and warrant the need for extensive research and formulation of a core paper in ESP for Tourism English in the business and tourism management undergraduate and postgraduate courses. A theoretical business communication paper as we further reveal, will not be able to equip the students in their linguistic and communicative competence and shape them for their jobs in the tourism industry.

It is necessary to make a study of the Target Situation Analysis as John Munby has done in his book, *Communicative Syllabus Design* which provides a model of a detailed profile of the learner's needs in terms of communication purposes, communicative setting, means of communication, language skills, functions and structures.

ESP is a needs-based approach. The preparation of the syllabus must fill in the gap between the learner's current and target competencies. ESP specialists must, therefore, accept the responsibility for discovering what the learners need to achieve in their specific goals. Accordingly, the course designers have to collect the data from the target group through interviews, sample tests and audio and video recordings. Needs analysis is an ongoing process. There should be a regular needs assessment also (Smith 145 – 163; Belcher np). ESP has three worthy benefits – speed, efficiency and effectiveness in learning. The learners receive specific, pre-identified linguistic items and skills (Wright np).

The syllabus of various universities like the L.A.D. & Smt R.P. College of Women in Nagpur has also introduced a specific course in ESP for English as Language of Travel and Tourism. Their syllabus also highlights the need for this as the tourism industry has vast employment opportunities and mobilizes foreign exchange, brings about social integration, cultural transformation and the development of commerce. They also include a comprehensive knowledge of history, geography and culture and the tourism industry.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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