

An Analysis of Curriculum and Materials Design in ESP for Tourism Courses in Japan and Thailand

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Abstract

Inbound tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Japan, with the number of foreign visitors to Japan increasing rapidly in the last few years. As the industry and the revenue it creates grows, it follows that more students graduating from universities in Japan will find employment in tourism related industries. As a faculty that attracts students looking to work in fields in which they can utilise their English ability and intercultural understanding, the tourism industry will be a career path for a significant number of students graduating from the Faculty of International Studies and Liberal Arts of Momoyama Gakuin University. In order to better prepare students to find employment in this field, it is worth considering the viability of incorporating English for specific purposes (ESP) classes focusing on tourism to our current English language curriculum. However, deciding on suitable materials and educational approaches for ESP classes is not a simple matter. There are many factors to consider such as the ability and interests of the students, the needs of the industry, and the scope of the course. In this research paper, various examples of ESP for tourism materials and curriculum design from both Japan, and Thailand, a country with a thriving tourism industry, will be analysed, with the hope

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that they will be valid points of reference if such classes are to be offered at Momoyama Gakuin University in the future

The Increase of International Tourism in Japan

In 2003, the government of Japan launched the “Visit Japan Campaign” to promote Japan as a tourist destination and attract more foreign visitors to Japan. The launch of this campaign was accompanied by a reorganisation of the ministries responsible for tourism and a substantial budget allocation. Written near the launch of the Campaign in 2003, a Japan Times article stated that, “In 2001, according to the World Tourism Organization, the world’s top tourist destination was France, followed by Spain and the United States. Japan meanwhile came in a lowly 35th — putting it behind such countries as Poland and Croatia. In 2002, 16.52 million Japanese traveled abroad, but only 5.24 million foreigners visited Japan, creating an international tourism deficit of 4 trillion yen (Kajimoto, 2003). At the time, there was some concern about Japan’s ability to accommodate growing numbers of foreign tourists, with some concerns being related to language, such as information at many train stations etc. only being available in Japanese.

Since that time, a lot has changed. Prior to the decimation of the international tourist industry by the COVID-19 pandemic, there truly was a boom in international visitors to Japan. Up until 2016, the goal of attracting 20 million foreign visitors to Japan by the Olympic year, 2020, was seen as ambitious. However, the Japan National Tourism Organization announced that in 2015 a total of 19.73 million tourists visited Japan, leading the goal of 20 million visitors in 2020 to be doubled to 40 million, with a long term goal of 60 million visitors and spending of 15 trillion yen by those visitors in 2030 (Mu-

rai, 2016). In *International Tourism Highlights*, data published in 2019 by the UNWTO, while Japan was not yet in the top ten countries in the world for number of visitors, Japan was cited as the 9th highest earning country in the world, with an overall increase of 19% in tourism revenue compared to the previous year, meaning the total revenue generated from inbound international tourism in 2018 was 41 billion US Dollars (UNWTO, 2019). Despite some negative influence caused by typhoon Hagibis and worsened relations with South Korea, 31.9 million visits were recorded in 2019. Even though international tourism is currently almost completely stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the long-term trend over the last 20 years or so, it is a relatively safe hypothesis that tourism will continue to be a growing industry in Japan.

Implications for English Language Education in Japan

As tourist numbers continue to grow into the future, for businesses and individuals to receive a share of the massive revenue being generated, foreign language ability will become more and more integral for employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study of Kurihara & Okamoto (2010) sought to quantitatively investigate the perceptions of foreign visitors to Japan regarding the tourism environment and related accommodating areas. They ranked the perceived importance of, and satisfaction with the following areas: Safety, Cleanliness, Barrier-free, Multi-lingual Written Instructions/Guides, Communication / Oral Communication, Price, Transportation, Electronic Service.

The researchers defined the language related factors as follows. Multi-lingual Written Instructions/Guides meant, “Road traffic signs, railway station

signs, maps, leaflets, and restaurant menus are written in different languages” and Communication / Oral communication referred to, “Ease of Communication in English and other languages / People are kind and friendly at railway stations, airports, tourism information centers, hotels as well as the local people” (Kurihara & Okamoto, 2010, p. 914). With a sample of 102 questionnaires, taken from visitors from Asia, Europe and North America, the study found that while language related factors were not given as much relative importance as factors such as safety and transportation, they were considered important. In regards to the respondents’ overall satisfaction with these sections, the researchers observed that, “Japan’s relative strengths include safety, cleanliness and transportation and its weakness include, Multilingual written instruction, Price and Communication” (Kurihara & Okamoto, 2010, p. 918). Compared directly to Singapore, a country highly rated all round for the environment it provides to visitors, Japan’s language related factors were scored at 6 out of 10, compared to Singapore which scored 9 out of 10. This is not surprising considering Singapore’s multiethnic population and history as a British Colony.

As part of the Japan National Tourism Organization’s initiatives it seems very likely that Japan has improved greatly in the area of Multilingual written instruction. Personally, I have noticed an increase in the quality, quantity and comprehensibility of written English guidance in various places in Japan. The research of Fukushima (福島, 2010 and 2016) analyses the English found on signs at historical tourist destinations. For example, his research about English signage at Matsumoto Castle, despite finding numerous inconsistencies and grammatical errors, showed written English language guidance for visitors had certainly increased and improved a lot since 2005. His

research conducted at Hakone, Shizuoka, Hamamatsu, while finding numerous areas that could be improved, indeed showed that there is a significant amount of detailed information available in English. Seemingly, Japan has made improvements in this area over recent years. Of course, this kind of signage does not represent interaction between people.

The study of Fujita et al. (2017) sought to, “identify the English communication needs of people at rural destinations in Japan, who are involved in tourism business or promotion” (p. 54). For their research, they gathered information through questionnaires in rural areas in Kanagawa Prefecture that were beginning to show interest in receiving international tourists to revitalise the local economies. In general, it could be overserved that while most respondents had limited experience of interaction with foreigners up to that time, they had major concerns about their lack of ability to communicate with foreign visitors in English. When asked about their anxieties regarding an increase in foreign tourists, the two most often mentioned concerns were “Can’t communicate” and “Can’t explain necessary matters” with “Japanese manners not observed,” ranking third. In 4th place was another communication-related anxiety, “Can’t understand each other.” Over 75% of the respondents claimed that they could not speak English (Fujita et al., p. 55). If the 138 respondents from these two localities are representative of rural Japan overall, it would seem that low English ability will be a big hurdle when dealing with an influx of foreign tourists.

Overall, Japan is often ranked lowly compared to Asian countries when it comes to English ability. Although, their data gathering methods may not be entirely reliable, the EF English Proficiency Index attempts to rank countries by their English ability. In the 2019 report, Japan’s English ability was

ranked as “low” with 51.51 points. The average of Asia was 53 points. The highest scoring country in Asia was Singapore with 66.82 points and the lowest was Kyrgyzstan with 41.51 points (English First, 2019).

While the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is seeking to improve the overall English ability of Japanese by making English a compulsory subject in elementary schools (as opposed to from junior high school), time will tell if this is successful in improving the English ability of the population overall. What is clear though, is that English ability will be a desirable trait for employees seeking to work in the industries related to travel.

As the industry grows, it follows that more people are likely to be employed in industries directly or indirectly related to providing services for foreign visitors. Although I have not conducted any formal enquiry, and have no solid data at hand, it seems a significant proportion of students of the Faculty of International Studies and Liberal Arts are indeed interested in gaining employment in these industries. Over the last four years, I have conducted interviews with second year students specialising in English studies in the *Course Kiso Enshu* classes. When asked about future career ambitions, many students express a desire to work in companies or locations related to tourism such as airlines, airports, hotels and travel agencies. This led me to conjecture whether it would be beneficial to our students if the faculty of International Studies and Liberal Arts were to provide more classes that would help our students to transition into these careers and if so, what kind of classes would be attractive to our students, and make our students more attractive to prospective employers.

English for Specific Purposes: Tourism

As the name suggests, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a field in second language education that is contrasted to standard English language teaching (ELT) by its narrower focus:

In ESP the learner is seen as a language learner engaged in either academic, professional, or occupational pursuits and who uses English as a means to carry out those pursuits. External goals suggest an instrumental view of language learning and language being learnt for non-linguistic goals. In a general ELT situation, goals are generally linguistic (such as development of oral competence, a wide vocabulary, or the ability to use a wide range of grammatical structures). In an ESP situation, it is understood that the learner would want to achieve real world objectives, objectives requiring specific linguistic competencies. (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 8)

Within English for Specific purposes, there are numerous, probably infinite categories, sub-categories and levels of specification. Brown (2013, p. 7) proposes two primary categories of ESP, English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes. In this way of classification English for tourism would fit into the English for occupational purposes category. Of course, these could be divided into smaller and more focused fields depending on how literally one takes the “specific” in ESP to be. For example, within ESP for tourism, we could have English for flight attendants, or hotel staff, and within that, English for hotel reception, or English for hotel room clean-

ers, or English for hotel reservation centre staff, etc. etc.

In terms of ESP curriculum design, Basturkmen (2010) proposes three levels of course specificity. Level 1: Wide-angled courses, “are not based on an analysis of needs of a particular group of learners but on description of language use in a field or discipline” (p. 56). Other advantages are that they can accommodate a variety of learners, such as those with and without experience in the particular field, and in general can be adapted for lower levels of overall language proficiency. Level 2 courses are slightly more specified and can be considered a middle ground. Level 3: Narrow-focused are generally based on detailed needs analysis as ideally, “course content will fit their needs very precisely and thus efficiently prepare them to meet the demands of their target situations” (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 57).

For an institution like Momoyama Gakuin University, a more wide-angled course in English for tourism would seem a more logical place to start. The teachers and the students themselves might not have enough knowledge of the specific language requirements, and also the number of students interested might not be high enough to justify the creation of a Level 3: narrow-angled course in a single, specialised field. For universities that have tourism faculties, Level 3: Narrow-angled courses are more feasible and common. I visited Bangkok University, which offers a Bachelor’s Degree in *International Tourism and Hospitality Management* with a strong ESP component. For example, students studying to be working in the airline industry practise the language they studied in the classroom while attending to passengers in a full-size model of an airplane cabin installed on campus. Such courses would seemingly be less viable at Momoyama Gakuin University.

Needs analysis is a key component in developing courses for ESP. This

could also be understood as the investigation of specialist discourse. Like any form of investigation, qualitative, quantitative or a mixed methods approaches can be used.

Most representative of qualitative methods in discourse investigation in ESP would be the ethnographic approach. Ethnographic investigations are generally time consuming and in depth. “The researcher often spends a prolonged period of time in the field (setting) to gather rich information about the context, the participants and their understating of events, such as speaking situations in their everyday world” (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 43). An example of this related to ESP for tourism and hospitality could involve a teacher instructed to prepare an ESP course for airport ground staff to spend time at the airport observing and taking notes of their interactions with passengers, other staff etc., then create materials or lessons that would enable learners to recreate the scenarios in the classroom. Ethnographic approaches to ESP for tourism and hospitality are discussed in more detail in examples of ESP Courses for Tourism in Thailand below.

Another method is *Genre Analysis*. In this approach texts produced or used by people in a certain context or profession are analysed for commonalities in style, language etc. “The texts in a genre set have a common function or set of functions are often organised in conventional ways and use similar linguistic functions. This kind of analysis of texts provides the data that inform curriculum design and content” (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 44). A kind of genre analysis of email replies sent by hotel staff (森越 et al., 2013) is discussed further in the section Examples of ESP Courses for Tourism in Japan below.

The third investigative technique, *Corpus Analysis* has the highest poten-

tial for quantitative data gathering. In the context of ESP, digitally archived collections of language texts can be closely investigated. In this way, lists of common occurring words, collocations etc. can be identified and included in teaching materials. Many ESP textbooks for various fields are designed through the use of corpora. A number of studies utilising this big data driven approach are discussed in Examples of ESP Courses for Tourism in Japan below.

Why Compare English for Specific Purposes in Tourism and Hospitality in Japan and Thailand?

The tourism industry is huge business in Thailand. According to the *2019 International Tourism Highlights* (UNWTO, 2019), mentioned above, Thailand is the 9th most visited country in terms of international visitors (approximately 38 million arrivals), and the 4th highest earner in the world with revenue of 63 billion US Dollars (p. 9). Citing statistical data from 2019, The Bangkok Post (2020) states that tourism receipts accounted for almost 14% of Thailand's GDP.

From a linguistic and historical point of view, Thailand could be seen as suffering from similar impediments to Japan in achievement of universal English proficiency. Thailand stands in contrast to other major economic powers in the South East Asian region such as Singapore and Malaysia as it does not have a legacy of British colonialism that has led English use to remain widespread in society at large, and uses a unique written form, unlike countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia who have adopted use of the roman alphabet.

If viewed through the theoretical lens of *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*,

in which errors in the L2, “were assumed to be the result of transfer from the learners’ first language” (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 41), like Japanese, it can also be said that as a non Indo-European language, Thai has significant linguistic distance from English and therefore the potential for difficulties in acquiring English pronunciation, grammar, syntax etc.

While Thailand does share the basic SVO word order with English, there are many major grammatical differences. In Thai, as in most languages in South East Asia, “words do not inflect for tense, number, gender or grammatical role (case)” (Goddard, 2005, p. 5).

Despite *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* falling out of favour as an optimal method to predict L2 errors from the late 1960s, many researchers still believe that the native language does influence the second language acquisition and that:

There is no doubt that learners draw on the patterns of other languages they know as they try to discover the complexity of the new language they are learning. The patterns of those earlier languages are firmly established, and as learners have experience with the new language, there is interplay between the old patterns. (Lightbown and Spada, 2013, p. 57)

Numerous studies have found evidence for negative transfer between Thai L1 and English L2. The study of Benui (2016), analysing errors in writing samples from Thai University students found that:

In addition, the occurrence of word order of Thai structure in the stu-

dents' English sentences was because of insufficient knowledge of similarities and differences between Thai and English grammatical structures. This is also related to some English grammar points mentioned that are not found in Thai. For example, the change of English verbs according to tenses and time as well as the use of articles are the outstanding elements that result in L1 syntactic interference. (p. 89)

In terms of pronunciation, the study of Sahatsathatsana (2017) found that Thai L1 students did not only struggle with many elements of English pronunciation, they were also conscious of the fact that many of their difficulties were caused by elements of native language interference:

... it was found that both segmental and suprasegmental features of English pronunciation affected the students pronunciation problems. The results reported that the highest mean score of students' problems in pronunciation learning were Consonant Cluster Articulation and Linking sounds. The students also revealed that it is very difficult for them to pronounce some English consonant sounds because they are not similar to Thai consonants. (p. 79)

Also, we could point to similarities in the historical development of English language education in Japan and Thailand. Although Thailand was a couple of decades ahead of Japan in making English a compulsory subject from primary education in the 1990s, the education system has not succeeded in producing high school graduates with communicative competence in English

as a norm. Like Japan, communicative language teaching was also to be integrated into the Thai school curriculum in principle. Seemingly, the ideal has not reflected the reality in the classroom. Reflecting on English education policy in Thailand, Kaur et al. (2016) remark that, “many schools have problems implementing communicative methods due to the relatively low level of English proficiency among teachers” (p. 348). This is a concern echoed by many observers in Japan as compulsory English classes begin in elementary schools throughout Japan. Referring to data collected by the Japanese Ministry of Education Science and Technology in 2014, Fukushima (2018) writes that, “83.2% of the 3,181 respondent teachers in charge of Foreign Language Activities did not have any qualifications in English proficiency or English education...” (p. 40). It seems Japan is likely to suffer from a similar problem to Thailand in terms of teachers underprepared to facilitate the large scale improvements that the government bodies hope to achieve. Kaur et al. (2016) claims that despite the Thai Ministry of Education’s large allocation of budget spending towards education, “. . . the level of English among students and citizens has not shown significant improvement” (p. 351).

According to the English First English Proficiency Index (2019, p. 7), Thailand scored considerably lower than Japan (Japan=Rank-53/51.51 points / Low Proficiency) Thailand was ranked 74th, with 47.61 points and an overall assessment of very low proficiency.

Despite their pessimistic view of the success of English language education overall, Kaur et al. (2016) single out the tourism industry in Thailand as a rare example of success:

The fact that over 20 million tourists visited Thailand in 2013 indicates

that some level of English is used among Thais involved in the tourist industry. Indeed, many arrivals are pleasantly surprised by the English skills of taxi drivers, bar workers and shop-keepers, whose English proficiency was developed due to economic necessity rather than through government policies. (p. 352)

So, it is clear that for both countries, not only is tourism an important and growing part of the economy and a major employer, with linguistic backgrounds and educational systems not conducive to comparatively effective acquisition of English as an L2, courses in ESP can stand as a useful tool to fill the gap for both Japanese and Thai students who hope to gain employment in tourism related industries in which foreign language ability is a desirable or necessary trait.

Examples of ESP Courses for Tourism in Japan

As mentioned above, due to the goal of specificity, corpus linguistics offers a potent tool for assessing what should be included in an ESP curriculum, especially in terms of vocabulary. Many examples of research into ESP for Tourism that I could find in Japan were based on analysis and development of corpora.

Following this principle, and drawing inspiration from the earlier work of Chujo, Utiyama & Oghigian (2006), who used tourist information materials to create a Kyoto Tourism Corpus subdivided into categories of sight-seeing, shopping, dining and hands-on-activities, 上野 et al. (2012) sought to create a Hokkaido Tourism Corpus. To inform them in their creation of target English writing educational materials, recognising that the linguistic needs re-

quired to accurately describe Hokkaido were different from Kyoto, compiled data from English websites and pamphlets promoting or relating to the top 20 destinations in Hokkaido for tourist visits and stays in accommodation. To ensure the quality of the data, only materials from reputable sources such as local governments or tourism associations were used. Materials such as travel blogs written by individuals, and website such as Wikitravel were not included. The corpus data was analysed with various software and methods to create a list of most commonly occurring and prominent words. The result was a substantial Hokkaido Tourism Courpus (HTC), drawn from 161 separate sources and containing 6703 unique words.

As the goal of this research was not simply to create a corpus, but to create teaching materials, the 250 most frequently used words were extracted. Also, the words in the HTC were compared to the JACET 8000 (a list of 8000 basic words divided by level of frequency). It was found that 64.25% of the words in the HTC were high frequency words in the level 1 of the JACET 8000. These are vocabulary that students in Japan are expected to have learned by the time they complete high school, but may have forgotten or may not be comfortable using. Looking at the words that occurred in Level 2 or above, these words appeared less frequently but were considered essential to describe the uniqueness of the areas they were describing. Therefore, the researchers determined that teaching the vocabulary that reflected “locality” (上野 et al., 2012, p. 32) would be useful for the students to use and merited being taught separately.

With the goal of equipping their learners with greater skills of self-expression, the researchers were able to create a list of 13 verbs and 20 adjectives that they felt would be extremely useful for students to utilise when introduc-

ing their local area. In order to help students to grasp the meanings and use of these verbs and adjectives, words with collections of example sentences in English with Japanese translations were produced. For example, below is an extract from the entry for “designate”:

designate 指定する, 指名する <be designated as~に指定される>
The Chishima cherry trees in Nemuro are more than 100 years old, and it has been designated as the Trees of Nemuro.
根室の千島桜は(樹齢)100年以上で, 根室の木に指定されている。
There are many kinds of birds that are designated as a natural monument and a rare species. (上野 et al., 2012, p. 35)

It was expected by the researchers that the data and specific word lists etc. generated would be of great help to teachers in planning classroom tasks related to having students prepare materials in English to promote their local areas.

While the above study was somewhat specific in its goals, in that it sought to identify and eventually teach vocabulary items seen as useful in describing particular localities, it was somewhat wide in focus.

The study of 森越 et al. (2013) focused on a more specific genre of communication, being emails from hotels and potential guests. This would closely equate to what Basturkmen, (2010), would call a Level 3: Narrow Angled approach, in which the course would be tailored to meet the needs of a very specific group of learners, in this case students seeking to work in the reception/reservation sectors of hotels. Through analysing the content of the emails sent by people actually working at hotels, in terms of functions

and specific language used, realistic and relevant educational materials could be created. This approach is not only specific as it focuses on hotels, but particularly on the written genre of “email.”

Discussing the establishment and constituents of genre through a perspective of social constructivism the establishment of genre, Basturkmen (2010) writes, “. . . disciplines and professions are constructed and reproduced through their discursive practices and language is construed not as a general code but as form of situated action” (p. 56). We can view the emails as communication events, expressed as products and can analyse their constituents to help others to reproduce and adapt them to suit their situation. We could also see this as linguistic reverse engineering.

Building upon previous research, which compared the time taken to respond to foreign language enquires at hotels in Korea and Japan, the researchers used various techniques to examine the corpus of emails that they had accumulated. The data was analysed in similar methods to the previously mentioned research such as finding the most frequently occurring vocabulary, comparing these words to the JACET 8000 etc.

Perhaps of most immediate practical interest for teachers planning to exploit this data and the creation of narrow-angled ESP materials was how the researchers divided the content of the mails into 16 distinct categories, such as “Room Availability, Appreciation, Future Communication, E-mail marketing” etc. (森越 et al., 2013, pp. 32-33). Then, within each of these common themes or language functions, recurring vocabulary, collocations and sentence examples for each category were extrapolated.

For example, in response to what the researchers deemed category 1 “availability”, collocations such as “have available” were found to occur 22

times. The verb “offer” used in sentences such as, “We can offer double room for you during Sep 14th~17th and the rate would be \$200” occurred 6 times, and the phrase “fully booked,” was used 8 times. (森越 et al., 2013, p. 43)

It is easy to see how such data would be of interest and use to a classroom teacher and how this could be adapted to make practical learning tasks. For example, students could be given a series of replicated emails from potential guests, and be instructed to use certain vocabulary, collocations and grammatical constructions found in the corpus data to practise composing replies.

Such a course would be quite attractive to students hoping to work in the hotel industry, as Basturkmen, (2010) writes, “We would expect that learners would find highly specific courses very motivating because they are designed to be clearly relevant to the learners needs” (p. 58).

However, such a highly specified and practically aimed course is of course not without drawbacks. For example, “such courses can be argued to present a restricted language and thus only help learners to function in very limited circumstances” (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 59). A course based solely around this material, would be seen as more “language training” that allows students to meet and function within restricted situations, as opposed to “language education” that ideally aims to provide a deeper knowledge, and more versatile capacity in the language as a whole.

In this way, highly specific ESP classes would perhaps be best viewed as an addition to a more standard and generalised English curriculum, either ESP or otherwise and created if there is a sufficient amount of students with genuine ambition and intention to work in that particular field.

While the previous two articles were concerned with collecting language

data with the potential to inform class content and practice, the study of 内山 et al., (2009) focused more on the format and delivery of ESP content at a prefectural university in Nagasaki, Japan. At the university, there are a number of classes that include and combine interpretation and English for tourism. The classes are popular among students, and have the goal of preparing students to qualify to become registered interpreter-guides in the prefecture of Nagasaki.

To enhance their ESP curriculum, specifically for fostering ability in bilingual tour guides, the researchers sort to create an example of blended learning, using a combination of computer assisted language learning (CALL) and paper-based materials.

Their research started with a needs analysis, asking the students themselves which places in Nagasaki, elsewhere in Japan, and outside of Japan that they would like to guide visitors to. It is planned that future materials will be based around these places to meet the interests and needs of students.

The next stage in the curriculum and materials design was creating a list of target vocabulary for use in the materials. To do this, the researchers entered data from the past six years of the interpreter-guide qualification test. The vocabulary extracted from test data were compared to the JACET 4000 Word List with 65% of the words from the exams being included in the list. Although that data was not included in the current study, the remaining 35% of words will be compared to the JACET 8000 Word List with the vocabulary items from the exams that are included in that list being seen as potentially suitable materials for inclusion in the course. The researchers plan to use the data gathered in their investigations to create blended learning materials for use in the course.

The study of Friedman (2018) also uses the corpus-based approach but incorporates learner autonomy by placing much of the responsibility of compiling the raw language data on the students themselves. As part of the course, "... students searched for and collected examples of professional language from the web to create a class database of key lexis and colligational information" (Friedman, 2018, p. 60).

In what could be seen as a kind of genre analysis, students were first guided by the teacher to become more conscious of certain linguistic elements used in three good example of tourism promotion websites selected by the teacher.

The elements selected were, "The use of verbs to describe concrete actions and experiences of visitors", "The frequent use of imperatives" and "The use of sentence-initial participle clauses" (Friedman, 2018, p. 60).

Using Webcorp and Google Advanced Search Tools, students were instructed to search the web for similar tourism promotion websites featuring use of the target language to create a shared database of these examples. Also, students discovered other salient and commonly used phrases and constructions for themselves such as constructions featuring the verb "offer" (Friedman, 2018, p. 70).

The next part of the course converted to project based learning, in which students were given the task of creating English language websites to promote lesser-known regions of Japan to foreign tourists. Using the database of language samples they created, students proceeded to produce original texts intended for tourist promotion websites. In an attempt to assess the quality of the websites with their intended audiences, frequent travelers from the USA without experience of travelling to Japan, were shown extracts from

an official page promoting Inuyama and extracts of text produced by the students. 75% of the respondents claimed to prefer the student produced texts citing reasons for their choices such as ease of understanding, not too much detail, more interesting and more vivid descriptions as reasons for their preference (Friedman, 2018, p. 75).

This research demonstrates an excellent balance of focused textual analysis and project based learning, resulting in a tangible final product, which was validated through highly positive evaluation by the intended audience. Furthermore, it was executed without any special software or equipment and the course design could be imitated and replicated.

However, aside from the excellent course design, and clearly defined goals of the course, it is also worth considering that some part of the success of this course could be attributed to the fact that students were already at the upper-intermediate (CEFR B2 level) which means that adaption of the course would be necessary for less competent users of English.

The study of Hardy (2015) also took a practical, project based learning approach to ESP. Over the two semester course, students produced 4 projects, producing a brochure and package tour for a destination outside of Japan, creating and presenting a Powerpoint presentation to promote a region in Japan, creating an imaginary accommodation including marketing (also presented with Powerpoint) and finally role-plays set at an airport which were recorded on smartphones and submitted for grading.

The projects were based around the content of the textbook *Oxford English for Careers: Tourism 1*, (Walker & Harding, 2006) used for the course. The course utilised a wide-angled approach as the research states, “for undergraduate university students a ‘wide-angled’ approach is desired since in

most cases future employment is still undecided, thus specific content, is unknown (Hardy, 2015, p. 73).

At the conclusion of the course, students were asked their feelings about the usefulness of the course, particularly the project learning element with 20% claiming the project work was very useful for the learning and 68% claiming it was mostly useful (Hardy, 2015, p. 76). This research shows how project work can be used to supplement a more standard, textbook based ESP Course.

Examples of ESP Courses for Tourism in Thailand

In Thailand, the examples found illustrate far fewer examples of corpus-based curriculum development and more examples of ethnography and direct community engagement. An exemplary study, incorporating an ethnographic approach is the study of Yordchim et al., (2015). There is an old adage, “The best way to learn something is to teach it.” This concept was taken quite literally in this study. Students enrolled in a business English course at a university in Bangkok became both ESP researchers and students.

The research took place in the Khao San Road and Sam-Sen Road areas in central Bangkok, a popular area for international tourists. After receiving some training in research techniques, students approached the operators of small and medium businesses in the area to survey them about their use of English and their willingness to participate in the English training program. The businesses approached were restaurants, shops, hairdressers etc. Of the business operators, the majority had not received a university education and felt that they needed to use English for their business (84.8%) and had

problems with using English (73.9%). 76.1% of the business operators agreed to join the training program (Yordchim et al., 2015, p. 858).

Having gained the consent from the business operators, the students/teachers returned at an agreed upon time to observe the operators conducting their business, paying close attention to transactions and interactions in English and identifying the language needs of each individual. Then the students provided language instruction and practice during times without customers/clients. Practical language functions such as greetings, explanation of prices, details of products and services, and giving directions were focused on.

Finally, the students conducted a satisfaction questionnaire and took video of the operators conducting their business in English to gauge the success of their language instruction. Overall, the business operators expressed satisfaction with the training and an overall improvement in their use of English was observed. Each student in the class became the teacher of an extremely narrow-angled short ESP course.

Continuing the theme of ethnography and community involvement, the research of Wimontham (2018) investigated the success of an English course for tour guides in the Sung Noen District of Thailand. In recent years, tourism has been increasing in this area, accompanied by an increase in local businesses such as guest houses and restaurants catering to tourists who come to enjoy such attractions as the traditional lifestyles and architecture of the villages, and the nature in the area.

The curriculum to foster local youths to be tour guides capable of providing English language guidance to foreign visitors was developed with the cooperation of a university and local administrative leaders with the goal of cre-

ating activities for teenagers to support their English improvement that could create more jobs and sustainably develop quality of life in the future. It was decided that providing English education to local youth would help them academically, as well as promote sustainable economic benefits for the local area.

To develop the curriculum, the researcher conducted field work and consultation with the inhabitants of the villages. Eight local sites often visited by tourists, including historical, cultural and natural attractions were selected to inform the content of the curriculum. Although the detailed content of the curriculum was not made clear in the published research, course content was based around the following themes. 1. English for tourism in general, 2. English for conservative tourism, 3. English for hotel business, 4. English for reception and public relations, 5. English for cultural attraction recommendation, 6. English for restaurant workers. (Wimontham 2018, p. 73). It seems that the course began with a wide-angled approach, before moving to more narrow-angled content. The sections 5. And 6. of the course, were likely to have included specific vocabulary that the guides would need to explain the local attractions and cuisine in English. After working through the curriculum, the youth participants were able to put what they had learned into practice by actually guiding visitors to the district.

To assess the success of the learning outcomes, the three major groups of stakeholders, being the participating local youth, local administrative leaders and foreign visitors who were guided by the course participants, were asked to answer questionnaires about their perception of the course and its outcomes.

The participating youth were generally satisfied with the course. Firstly,

in reply to the statement, I can integrate the acquired knowledge of English into learning in common classrooms, 60% claimed an excellent level of satisfaction and 38% expressed moderate satisfaction, implying that they thought the training was useful to their general English education. In reply to the statement, “I can apply skills and knowledge acquired from participating in curriculum and procedures to the job, which is a tour guide, in the future. It can be a job that can provide me and my family an income” (Wimontham, 2018, p. 74), 58% claimed an excellent level of satisfaction and 34% expressed moderate satisfaction. The overwhelming majority of participants expressed a desire for the course to continue permanently. The overall satisfaction of the local administrative leaders was similar to, but slightly higher than the participants themselves.

As for the foreign tourists who experienced the service of the junior guides, when asked about the overall English ability of the junior guides 62% claimed an excellent level of satisfaction and 20% expressed moderate satisfaction. However, 18% expressed a poor level of satisfaction. As for overall satisfaction with the performance of the junior guides, The responses of excellent, moderate and poor were 66%, 17%, 17% respectively (Wimontham, 2018, p. 75). Although the results were not perfect, they were overall very good and will hopefully lead to the continuation and development of the program.

The study of Sanguangarm et al. (2011) investigates the development and implementation on a task-based curriculum for a course in English for Tourism at a university in northern Thailand. Citing numerous studies that indicate Thai university students often graduate without sufficient English ability to effectively function as members of the workforce in today's global-

ised world, and discovering through their own needs analysis that currently, “... the teaching and learning practices have been conducted in a way that fails to meet the demand for English in the workplace” (Sanguanngarm et al., 2011, p. 2), the researchers set to reform their curriculum.

As part of the needs analysis, the researchers interviewed people employed as tour guides in the Chiang Mai area, university alumni who had begun working in the tourism industry, and teachers responsible for conducting the English for Tourism courses. From this they found that oral communication skills were most needed and that other tools for communication and communication strategies such as non-verbal communication and negotiation of meaning were found to be crucial for a tourist guide to enhance their work performance, especially when dealing with non-native speakers of English. (Sanguanngarm et al. 2011, p. 4).

Keeping the demands of the industry, as well as the generally low communicative ability in English of their students in mind, a new curriculum based around a balance of comprehensible input and output and incorporation of task-based learning was developed.

A significant amount of authentic materials specific to the context of tourism including audio-visual inputs, printed materials such as real tour itineraries, and relevant websites were incorporated. Furthermore, the needs analysis interviews conducted with people working in the field revealed that over 50% of the interactions of tour guides were with non-native speakers of English, so a variety of audiovisual materials featuring English spoken in various accents were included in the class materials to increase students' exposure to non-native English and to raise their consciousness of English as a lingua franca.

The course was divided into two modules. The first module included two pedagogical tasks, each divided into three stages. The first stage, called the “pre-task” was input-based: Students were introduced to the target language and communication skills through the various materials mentioned above. Then, they did traditional learning activities such as gap-fills and some practice activities to recycle the learned content. The second stage was concerned with the main tasks, which were designed to approximate real world situations they would encounter working in tourism. In the first module of the course, the final tasks were role-play simulations, the first based around Thai cooking and the second on guiding tourists at an attraction. It seems these were recorded to be reviewed in the final stage.

After the completion of each task was the language focus stage in which students were able to evaluate their own performance in the task, assess their learning outcomes and focus on linguistic elements that were deemed to be problematic.

The second module of the course was based on Real-world tasks. The first task was creating and launching a tour package, while the second was conducting a real tour. To measure the improvement in language ability, a pre-course and post-course oral communication test was administered. Although the style and the content of the tests were not clearly disclosed, the scores indicated that, “. . . the participants in the study had, on average, oral English communication ability in their post-test significantly higher than that of in their pre-test” (Sanguanngarm et al., 2011, p. 8). Study logs and questionnaires given to the students showed a high level of engagement with the course, indicating high motivation and satisfaction.

Overall, the researchers concluded that ESP courses for tourism could

better meet the needs of students by taking a narrower approach in general, focusing more on oral communication, and including elements of non-verbal communication and communication strategies for negotiation of meaning and repair strategies, which are particularly useful when interacting with non-native speakers of English.

The study of Siriphanich, & Tasanameelarp (2017) claims to have significantly increased the ability and confidence of the participants to talk about tourist attractions through the use of a web-application. The participants in the study were licensed tour guides in and around the Songkhla province. The course design had quite a narrow angle as it focused on improving the ability of local guides to introduce and answer questions regarding specific sites and activities in a specific region.

The web-application used for the course was called the *Songkhla Travel Guide*. Details about the concepts, needs analysis etc. that went into the creation of the web-application are not detailed in the cited study, but it seems to have been designed as a practical learning resource for local tourism industry workers. The web-application has a functional menu, with practical scenarios and language functions of, “self-introduction/meeting tourists, welcoming and saying goodbye at the airport/bus or train station, describing hotel’s facilities, coping with emergencies, dealing with complaints, and talking about illness and first aid” (Siriphanich, & Tasanameelarp 2017, p. 2). Each topic contains example dialogues, phrases and vocabulary pertinent to the situation. Also included in the web-application are individual menus for various districts in the region. Each region has sections divided by the main tourist attractions in the district. For each attraction, there is various information and simulated dialogues between tourists and guides taking place at the

attraction. These dialogues include common questions etc. asked by tourists with model answers.

The main content of this research though, is not the development or the content of the web-application itself, but the use of this web-application as a learning tool in the classroom context. For the course itself 13 topics (presumably attractions) were chosen based on their popularity and including a variety of sites such as natural attractions, religious sites, museums and markets.

Lesson plans were divided into three parts: pre-teaching, reading comprehension and role plays. In the pre-teaching stage, students were showed pictures of an attraction or place and asked questions about it. This made students aware of their own gaps in knowledge, or English ability (mainly vocabulary) that were obstacles to them being able to sufficiently talk in detail and with confidence about the site. In the second stage, the students were instructed to use the web-application to read about the site, learn information and necessary vocabulary, practice pronunciation etc. Finally, students were to use the contents of the web-application to create and perform situational role-plays of interactions between tourists and guides at the site.

A pre-test and post-test were conducted to measure the improvement of the participants. While the details and content of the test were not made clear, they were based on the format of the Cambridge PET exam. The tests were rated by one native speaker of English and one Thai lecturer with the final score determined as an average of the two raters' scores. Regarding the improvement of the participants, the researchers concluded that:

The results from the study revealed that before attending the training course, the participants showed a level of knowledge in local tourist attrac-

tions at 4.30. After the course their knowledge in local tourist attraction was raised to 14.37 (total score=30). The oral English proficiency of the participants increased from 1.00 to 2.08. (Siriphanich & Tasanameelarp 2017, p. 3)

An interesting aspect of this research showed that not only language ability, such as lack of confidence in pronunciation or lack of necessary specific vocabulary was an impediment, but a lack of knowledge in general. It seems that the course was effective in rectifying both of these issues. In this way it could be seen as a kind of content-based learning exercise, in which language acquisition occurs in conjunction with the acquisition of information. While the course described in this study used a purpose-built web-application, which certainly increased the convenience, it is possible to envisage how the course and lesson structure could be adapted to use other English language Internet resources if such an application were unavailable.

Conclusion

In recent years, the number of inbound tourists to Japan has continued to grow and will most likely continue to be a major part of the Japanese economy in the future. As such, this industry will provide employment opportunities for university graduates with English ability being if not a prerequisite, a definite advantage for employability and a smooth transition into the workforce. ESP classes are a good addition to more generalised English curriculum, as if they are designed to meet the needs of the industry, and are seen as practical by the students, should motivate students who want to work in tourism to improve their English ability as it relates to the field, and overall communicative competence in general.

The research papers discussed in this survey showed how wider principals of ESP relate to tourism. In terms of needs analysis, practical examples of use of corpora, genre analysis and ethnography can all be used to good effect and give teachers valuable knowledge to employ in the creation of learning materials. Furthermore, these examples also show how to deliver these materials in a practical sense and adapt them for use in the classroom. Use of authentic materials, specifically designed materials and technology can be rich sources of focused input. Next, community engagement, project and task-based learning combined with instruction and consciousness raising activities are effective elements in teaching ESP for tourism.

In the future, if ESP classes are expanded at Momoyama Gakuin University, the various practical examples discussed in this paper will hopefully provide a good point of reference as we seek to develop courses to suit our students' needs, ability levels and ambitions.

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