

An ESP Course for Tourism Students

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Abstract

This study aimed at developing a course based on the level and the needs of second-grade tourism students at a vocational school in Turkey. Two data collection instruments, a needs analysis and an oral interview, were used to reveal students' level of English and their needs. It was found that the average level of English in the classroom is A2 according to Common European Framework standards and listening-speaking skills are perceived as the most needed skills at work. It was also revealed that most of them would like to work as waiters/waitresses or chefs and the restaurant is the most likely setting to use English. In link with their future career, the sub-theme of "food" was chosen as the cultural content of the course. Finally, doing pair-work in the classroom was marked as useful by most students. Considering these findings, a fifteen-week one-term course, each unit of which was developed around different sub-themes of culture was developed and one of the lessons developed around the sub-theme of food was presented with the related lesson plan and materials at the end of the study.

Key words: English for Specific Purposes, Tourism.

Introduction

This curriculum study adopted an integrated skills, multi-dimensional approach and was designed to meet the English needs of second-grade tourism students in an EFL classroom at a vocational school in Turkey. The class comes together five times each week and each lesson takes 60 minutes. It is also important to note that there is not one textbook planned for the course and a number of different sources such as websites, authentic materials and course books were used in the development of materials.

This ESP course took the multi-dimensional philosophy of curriculum development as a model as there seems to be no justification for the selection of only one of the syllabus types to organize the course. A theme-based approach was integrated within this multi-dimensional syllabus model. This approach provided continuity across the skill areas and school curriculum. For this curriculum project, "culture" was been selected as the main theme as it is very important for a group of tourism students to understand the importance of the cultural values of different countries and use these values as topics to talk about with foreign tourists. CEFR (2001: 103-104) focuses on "intercultural awareness" as an important aspect of

learning foreign languages and suggests the following abilities that are also taken into account in the selection of sub-themes for this study:

- the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships,
- the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other
- cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures.

The cultural themes in the course are sequenced from the most frequently selected to the least by the students in the needs analysis questionnaire. For example, the first five lessons of the first week starts with the sub-theme of culture, “food”, which was the most frequently chosen when asked which cultural themes they would like to see in the course.

It is also important to note that the theme of culture is presented in an integrated-skills approach which exposes learners to realistic situations that encourage them to interact naturally using the language (Oxford, 2001). This approach draws our attention to the fact that English is not only an object of academic interest but also a real means of interaction and sharing among people. Another syllabus design integrated into the current one is the functional/notional syllabus as whose main emphasis is on communicative purpose that is performed on using the language (e.g. inviting, requesting, agreeing, and apologizing).

Data Collection Instruments and Findings

In this study, a needs analysis and an oral interview were used to reveal students’ level of English and their needs. In order to investigate students’ needs before the preparation of this course, students were given a needs analysis questionnaire (Appendix A) including two parts, the first of which sought to answer to information about students’ age, gender, their English learning background, future career wishes and their motivation to learn English. Before the actual administration of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 10 students in order for the purposes of content and linguistic validity. Two teachers, one of whom is a specialist in curriculum development were consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire and the interview were clear and the scales were appropriate. Based on the feedback obtained, several modifications were done.

Data collected in the first part of the questionnaire revealed that among 22 students in the class, 14 were male while the rest (8) were female and their age range was found to be 19-20 years of age. It was also found that all the students have been studying English for about 10 years and when asked what job they wish to have in the future, the majority of learners have indicated that they would like to work as either waiters/waitresses or chefs. While five students want be receptionists, three students would like to work as tour operators and two

students are planning to run their own businesses that have nothing to do with tourism. In terms of students' motivation, it would be fair to suggest that all students seem to be motivated as they all responded "yes" when asked whether they try to improve their English or not. Their ways of improving their English ranges from attending a private language school to watching English channels, films, reading storybooks, surfing on the internet and listening to English songs.

The second part of the questionnaire, on the other hand, addresses the following issues:

1. Perceived strengths and weaknesses in four basic skills and sub-skills (knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) and the most necessary skills when they start work
2. The situations in which they will use English most
3. The cultural content they want to see in the course
4. The useful learning activities for students.

Firstly, as for the perceived strengths and weaknesses in four basic skills and sub-skills, students were asked to comment on their strengths and weaknesses in certain skills by putting a tick under comments like "very weak, weak, OK, good, very good". The majority of students (14) marked their speaking as either very weak or weak, which proves my observation mentioned in the previous section. Their listening skill was the second weakest marked as either very weak or weak by 13 students and half of the students perceived their pronunciation as weak or very weak. When asked which of these skill/s they will need most when they start work, most students gave the answer "listening and speaking".

Secondly, regarding the situations in which they will use English, students were asked to check any given situations in which they would use English most. It was found that the restaurant and the reception desk were the most frequently chosen situations. While the restaurant was checked by 16 students, the reception desk was checked by 14 students. The remaining situations are travel agency, information office, car-hire place and tourist information centre which were chosen by only few students.

Thirdly, as the main theme to include in the course was culture and as the sequencing of the 15 culture-related topics for 15 weeks of language instruction depended on learners' needs at work, students' opinions about which sub-themes of culture they would like to see in the course were asked. In parallel with most students' future career plans as waiters/waitresses or chefs, the majority of students indicated that they wanted to see cultural content about food in the course, which made me focus on the sub-theme of "food" as the main theme of the 5 consecutive lessons in the first week of the course. One of these lessons is also discussed at

the end of this study. The themes are ordered from the most frequently selected to the least: food(19 students), lifestyles(16), culture shock(15), clothing(15), famous people(13), music and dance(12), festivals(11), linguistic specifications, such initiating a conversation(10), ways of addressing people(8),non-linguistic specifications like body language(6), stereotypes(6), history and heritage(5) geography(3), wedding(1), art(1) and architecture (no one).

Fourthly, useful learning activities were provided to students so that they can choose which appeal to them. Doing pair-work was chosen as useful by 14 students while role-plays and watching videos were chosen by 10 students. Individual work was considered as useful by 8 students while on-line spoken practice was thought as useful by 6 students. Group-work was perceived as useful by 5 students whereas whole-class work was checked by only 3 students. No one thought that out-of-class projects were useful.

The second type of assessment instrument in addition to the needs analysis questionnaire was an oral interview (Appendix B). There is a need for this second data collection instrument as questionnaires can only provide the curriculum designer with superficial data regarding learners' needs. Witkin and Asltschuld (1995) suggest we should use more than one data collection method to have a more reliable understanding of students' needs to develop a course. Richards (2001) proposes that an in-depth analysis of students' levels and needs can be made by means of interviews. For the current study, a semi-structured interview was developed. The main purpose of using a semi-structured interview was to add to, revise or expand on previous questions depending on the participants' response so that I can have a more in-depth understanding of students' level of speaking skill and their language needs.

With the needs analysis, students' subjective needs (their wants and expectations) were addressed and in order to assess their observable needs (level of their spoken language), the interview was conducted with 6 selected students. The selection is based on an earlier oral conducted to choose two students who will represent our university by attending a life-long-learning project meeting in Romania in September this year. While two of these six selected students were the top scorers, two others got the medium scores and the rest two students could only get the poorest scores in this oral exam. For this study, each of these students was interviewed for about 10 minutes individually. The interview includes information questions (questions 1-5), such as students' names, birth of place, work experience and their future goal in addition to questions (5-10) about why the interviewees learn English, their needs in terms of skills, expectations from the program, the cultural content they would like to see in the course and their best ways of learning English. To collect more reliable data during the

interview, interrater reliability that expresses degree of agreement among raters was focused. To maintain interrater reliability and to standardize testing speaking proficiency, two observers, one of whom was the researcher himself and the other was an experienced EFL teacher, ranked each participating student on the speaking rubric adapted from the CEF. In a general sense, it was observed by both interviewers that the first five questions were successfully answered by all students while they had some difficulty in responding to the remaining questions regarding the intended ESP program.

After careful ranking of each student by two interviewers, both raters rated the two students who got the poorest scores in the oral exam conducted earlier as A1. Except for these two and one of the top-achievers (in the oral exam for the Romanian visit) who was considered as B1 by both raters, the other three students were put into the category of A2. Considering my observations and the findings of the interviews, it would be fair to suggest that the average speaking proficiency level in the classroom is A2.

Goals of the Overall Instructional Program:

By the end of this course, the students will be able to ...

1. Listen, read, write and speak at an intermediate level (B1) to enable them to fulfil the requirements of tourism and hotel management communications with foreign guests.
2. Carry on face-to-face and phone conversations on work-related topics, such as taking reservations, dealing with room complaints and taking an order.
3. Develop cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures by getting exposed to themes such as lifestyles and culture shock.

Goals of the Specific Course for One Semester

Considering that students met 5 times a week and had a total of 10 hours of English, each title presented in the next page covered 5 days of instruction that made up the 10 hours. For instance, in the second week, the first two lessons focused on a listening about lifestyles and the second two hours were about a writing task about the same topic. The following two hours dealt with a reading task while the other two hours on the fourth day emphasized speaking skills. The remaining two hours were integrated skills lessons. The chart below includes the goals for weekly lessons.

Goals for Weekly Lessons	
Week 1	<i>Food:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe food, explain recipes, and take orders by using common expressions and structures.
Week 2	<i>Lifestyles:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to prepare a presentation about differences in lifestyles of different cultures after listening to conversations about lifestyles and reading authentic texts.
Week 3	<i>Culture Shock:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to listen and understand talks about foreign guests' culture shock and speak about similar experiences of tourists they have met.
Week 4	<i>Clothing:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to compare Turkish clothing with that of other countries by writing a compare and contrast paragraph and prepare a dialogue on differences in clothing as a topic of conversation with tourists.
Week 5	<i>Famous people:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask and answer questions about famous people from different countries after reading and listening about their life stories.
Week 6	<i>Music and dance:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to prepare a poster about the differences and similarities among different music and dance cultures by searching on the internet and having interviews with foreigners on-line.
Week 7	<i>Festivals:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain and write a descriptive essay about the importance and the origins of some festivals for some countries by watching related documentaries.
Week 8	<i>Linguistic Specifications (e.g. initiating a conversation):</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to develop cultural sensitivity about issues like speech acts and initiation of conversations by reading and listening to authentic materials in order to respond appropriately to foreign guests with different cultural backgrounds.
Week 9	<i>Ways of addressing people:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to address to foreigners from different cultures appropriately by using appropriate patterns of addressing, such as calling by name or by using a title like "Sir".
Week 10	<i>Non-linguistic Specifications (e.g. body language):</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to perform appropriate non-linguistic specifications in encounters with foreign tourists holding different cultural backgrounds by watching and reading related materials.
Week 11	<i>Stereotypes:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to read and understand examples of unfair judgements about some cultures and write a paragraph about some of the stereotypes attributed to Turks.
Week 12	<i>History and Heritage:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe the historical value, museums, temples and the earlier inhabitants of a place by using certain vocabulary and learned structures.
Week 13	<i>Geography:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to use the learned vocabulary and structures in order to prepare a simple brochure about the location, population, tourist attractions, famous food and drinks of a geographical place within groups of four.
Week 14	<i>Wedding:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to carry out a conversation about weddings in different cultures after watching wedding ceremonies in different cultures.
Week 15	<i>Art:</i> By the end of the lesson, students will be able to listen and understand different types of art in different cultures and prepare a power-point presentation of "fine art in Turkey" by working in pairs.

A Sample Lesson about Food

Jensen's lesson plan template (Celce-Murcia, 2001) was used for the following lesson plan.

Objectives:

General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain recipes to make certain Turkish food dishes using imperatives.

Enable Objectives: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

1. identify and order the steps of a recipe
2. write a paragraph including the ingredients and the recipe of a Turkish dish
3. demonstrate how to make a dish in front of the class.

Skill focus: Integrated skills

Materials: Video and recipe

Seating: In pairs

Time

(60 minutes)

Procedures

Notes

Time	Procedures	Notes
5	Warm-up The teacher asks students to answer some background questions about the "fruit kebab". They are asked to guess the name of the food, discuss its ingredients, equipment used and the steps to follow to make it.	Rationale: As explained earlier, asking students background questions about a topic helps students guess what the language focus and the content of the lesson will be, which I think makes students more relaxed throughout the lesson. Also, the word "discuss" in the instruction gives students the feeling that there is no right or wrong answers. The questions are dealt with in pairs, which reduces the teacher talk and encourages communication. Feedback: The teacher monitors the classroom situation, takes notes of student errors to correct later.
10	Introduction To introduce imperative verbs used to explain a recipe, a matching exercise in which the teacher asks students to match imperative statements (e.g. "pull each apart into segments of the recipe") with related pictures is used. As the recipe is in a mixed order, students are then asked to put the recipe into a logical order. Finally, they are asked to read the recipe, close their books and try to explain the steps to make a Fruit Kebab to their partners as they can remember.	Rationale: I believe that one of the effective ways of reviewing vocabulary is by means of pictures. With this activity, the 6 imperative statements to make a Fruit Kebab is illustrated with 6 pictures so that students can match them. While doing such activities, the teacher encourages students to look up the dictionary when they cannot do the matching. The following activity that is putting the recipe into a logical order and reading it to explain the steps to a pair with the book closed seems to encourage critical thinking and communication skills. Feedback: The teacher walks around the classroom and notes the pronunciation errors to treat after the task.
20	Presentation For the following reading activity that is related	Rationale: To integrate a reading text, an

	Activities	to the recipe of another Turkish dish, leeks and carrots, students are given a paragraph of its recipe and asked both vocabulary and information questions. As for vocabulary, some words that have similar meaning with the words underlined in the paragraph are given and the teacher asks students to find which of these can be used for which underlined word. Finally, the teacher asks students to ask two more questions about the text to their partners.	authentic material about “leeks and carrots” has been used. The text taken from Binnur's Turkish Cookbook is added some vocabulary and information questions. I think authentic materials bring the real world in the classroom to develop skills that they will use in real life. Providing students similar words to the underlined ones in the given text also helps them make connections between two word/s and learn two things at one time. I believe in the merits of memorizing words with some other related ones. The final activity in this part is asking two more questions about the paragraph, which is as important as answering the questions. I believe that questioning and answering are the most common communication tools we use in real life. Feedback: The teacher asks students to check their answers with other students.
20	Communicative activities	To encourage communication about how to explain a recipe, the teacher asks why we call the mixed salad as the shepherd's salad and shows a video recorded by the teacher. While watching the video, students are asked to note the ingredients only. The teacher plays the video one more time so that students can put the given steps in the order as mentioned in the video. Then, students are asked to close their books and try to remember the ingredients and steps with their partners. One of them speaks about the ingredients and the other explains the steps. Finally, the teacher asks students to write the ingredients and the recipe of a Turkish dish and read it to the whole class loudly. While a student is reading, others will try to guess what food he/she is talking about.	Rationale: The inclusion of a video prepared by the teacher himself in a real kitchen is believed to motivate students. The video is played twice first to enable students to catch specific words and second to listen for a more global understanding of the order of steps. The listening activities are generally arranged in such a bottom-up approach (from specific to more global). To integrate a writing activity, students are given time to think about a recipe and write it following the earlier formats. Reading loudly what is written is a good way of diagnosing students' pronunciation errors. Feedback: The teacher asks students to check their answers with others for peer-correction.
5	Homework/ Questions	As homework, the teacher asks students to bring whose recipe they would like to demonstrate in they were famous chefs on a TV program.	to the classroom the ingredients of the food front of the class and explain the steps as if

Explaining a Recipe(Integrated Skills)

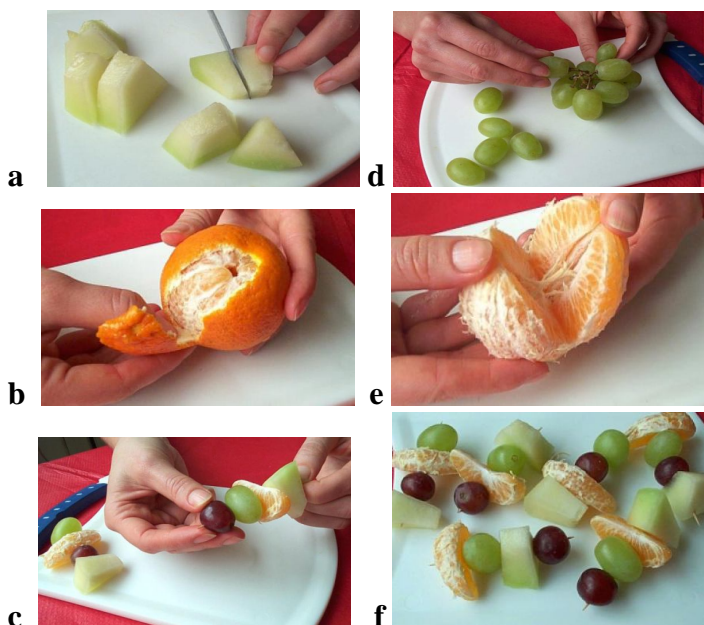
1. Discuss these questions with your partner.

1. What is the name of the food with ingredients in the picture?
2. Which of the below equipment is not used to make this food?
a. wooden cocktail sticks b. chopping board c. sharp knife d. spoon
3. What are its ingredients?
4. How do you think it is made?



2. Match the steps to make a Fruit Kebab with the pictures.

1. Thread pieces of fruit on the cocktail sticks
2. Peel the Satsuma
3. Pull each apart into segments
4. Serve
5. Remove the grapes from their stalks
6. Cut the melon into cubes



Adapted from www.nutrition.org.uk

3. Put the recipe above into a logical order.

4. Listen to the chef explaining how to make Fruit Kebab and check your order.

5. Close your books and try to remember the steps to tell the recipe to your partner in the correct order.



6. Read the paragraph about the steps to make Leeks and Carrots and answer the questions below.

Cut off the tough green leaves, wash thoroughly and cut into sections about 4 finger' width long. Peel carrot and slice thinly. Set aside. Chop the onions and saute in the oil until glassy. Add the garlic if using and the carrots. Saute gently for another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the rest of the ingredients plus about 150 ml. water and the leeks. Stir, cover and gently simmer for about 20 to 25 minutes. This will depend on the leeks so do check for doneness. Allow to cool and garnish with lemon slices. There is a variation of this food that uses no rice or carrots, but 2-3 T. finely chopped parsley and dill plus 1 T. of tomatoes paste. Add this after the onions and garlic are sauteed and proceed.

Adapted from www.turkishcookbook.com

1. Which words below can be used for which words underlined in the paragraph.

1. remaining _____
2. completely _____
3. let _____
4. cooked in hot oil or fat _____
5. as well as _____
6. cut into thin pieces _____

2. What are the ingredients of Leeks and Carrots?
3. How do you peel and slice the carrot?
4. How long do the onions wait in oil?
5. How much water do you add?
6. How can you cool and garnish the food?
7. What is the difference between the standard Leeks and Carrots and its variation?

6. Ask two more questions to your partner about the paragraph.

1. _____
2. _____



7. Why do you think we call the mixed salad in the picture as "Shepherd's salad"? Discuss it with your partner.

8. Watch a video about how to make a Shepherd's salad. Take notes of the ingredients.

Appendix A

Needs Analysis Questionnaire

This needs analysis questionnaire is intended to reveal learners' needs in order to develop a 15-week course for first-year tourism students at the Vocational High School of Abant Izzet Baysal University. Your careful responses to these questions will help us plan the program to meet your needs. *Your answers will be kept confidential.*

Part I:

1. Name of the learner: _____
2. Gender: M: F:
3. Age: _____
4. How long have you been studying English? _____
5. What job do you wish to have in the future?

6. Do you try to improve your English? If yes, what do you do?

Part II:

7. Please comment on your current strengths and weaknesses in the following areas by putting a tick.

	Very weak	Weak	O.K.	Good	Very Good
Knowledge of grammar					
Knowledge of vocabulary					
Pronunciation					
Speaking					
Listening					
Reading					
Writing					

8. Which of the above skill/s you will need most when you start work?

9. Which of the below situations do you think you will use English most? Check any that apply to you:
 - At the reception desk
 - In a restaurant
 - In a bar
 - In a travel agency
 - Car hire place
 - Tourist information centre
 - Other(s) (please specify): _____

10. I would like this course to include “culture” as the main theme for a tourism-based English curriculum. Which of the below would you like to see in the course? Check any applying to you.

- Linguistic specifications (e.g. leave-taking, initiating a conversation)
- Non-linguistic specifications (e.g. body Language and gestures)
- Wedding
- Food
- Music and dance
- Famous people
- Culture shock
- Ways of addressing people
- Clothing
- Festivals
- Lifestyles
- Stereotypes
- History and heritage
- Geography
- Art
- Other(s) (please specify): _____

11. Which of the activities do you think are useful for your learning English? Check any applying to you.

- doing individual work
- doing pair work
- doing group work
- doing whole class work
- doing role-plays
- doing out-of-class projects
- watching related videos
- doing on-line spoken practice
- Other/s(indicate): _____

Appendix B

The general outline of questions for the semi-structured interview:

1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born?
3. Where have you worked so far?
4. What kind of work do you do?
5. What are your goals for the future?
6. Why do you want to study English?
7. What do you need the most help in: listening, speaking, reading or writing? Why?
8. What do you expect of this course?
9. Which aspects of culture would you like to see in the course?
10. How do you think you learn English best?

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