

# THE TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND LANGUAGE COMPETENCES FOR PROMOTING TOURISTIC RESOURCES

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## Abstract

Even though Stip is rich in natural and historical touristic resources, at its fullest, the capacities are left unused as well as unknown and non-affirmed as touristic attractions. The first part of the paper gives an introduction to the town profile with a particular aspect on the natural and historical wealth of the region and its landmarks. The second part of the paper gives a pedagogical approach towards reforms in the education and building of transversal skills of the tourists workers in terms of language competences. It stresses the importance of knowing a foreign language, and it presents the English for specific purposes in the field of tourism.

## Introduction

Stip is a town with a rich historical tradition. At the Stip region events took place with profound implications, not only for the residents of the town, but also for the region and neighbouring countries.

From today's roads which were getting through Stip are: Veles Stip which builds the highway E-75, with its own branch to St. Nicole, then St. Nikole- Kumanovo and further towards the border with Serbia, Stip - Kocani, which separates at the village Krupiste to Probitip and Kratovo and further which connects with Berovo Delchevo to the border to the Republic of Bulgaria, Stip-Radovis-Strumica to Novo Selo which borders Bulgaria, and through Valandovo to Greece, and Stip-Negotino Lakavica, through which it connects the highway to Gevgelija and north western part of Macedonia. There is a railway line to Kocani and Veles. Stip locally is associated with a number of villages along the mountain Plachkovica.

Through Stip flows the Bregalnica River which is the second largest river in Macedonia, as well as smaller rivers Kriva Lakavica, Kozjak and Otinja, as well as there are natural sources of mineral and hot springs. The Bregalnica with its course of 225 km, springs in the Malesevski mountains and is part of the Aegean basin. It represents a major artery which supplies Stip with water. Lakavica is the second important river which flows into Bregalnica from its left side. It is of economic importance primarily due to the use of its waters for irrigation of the Lakavicka valley. The river Kozjak except for the irrigation is also interesting for its small yet picturesque canyon waterfall. From hydrographic aspect the most important are the thermal springs of Kezhovica Bath - L'dji.

The Kezhovica spa is located 2 km from Stip on the road to Strumica and has a long and venerable tradition. The water temperature is 64°C which means it belongs to a group of hyper waters. Waters Spa "Kezhovica" are known for their radioactivity. They are among the most radioactive thermal waters not only in Macedonia but also in the world (Taskov, 2004). But although in its characteristics it is the same as that of Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic it is underused. A comprehensive project is missing which will provide for its full utilization. The town is directed towards a complete renovation of the existing infrastructure, complemented with new content which

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will allow full animation of those who use it not only for physiotherapy reasons but also for visit and recreation.

Plackovica mountains stretches east, southeast, northwest and north, and Mount Serta are rich in flora and fauna. On the slopes of Plackovica there are several caves of which the most famous is the Great cave with a length of 600 m. Plackovica offers favorable conditions for cycling cruise since its paths are long and wide and suitable for the use of cyclists of all ages. The so-called "bicycle tourism" in particular can be expressed in one part of the municipality in typical steppe vegetation. In this part of Stip one can use 27 km long path that the cyclist will ride through the steppe and rocky, to the exotic scenery like a tropical forest along the river Bregalnica that really no one can leave indifferent.

When we talk about Plackovica it is interesting to mention the existence of the so-called Juruks, livestock population which migrated from Anatolia during the Ottoman period. They still have retained their traditions, customs and have a specific authenticity. In this context, the community continues to successfully oppose globalization thus presenting a particular challenge for the tourists. Visiting these villages, how they live, how they practiced their customs, specific diet, manufacture of clothing is only part of that which can be experienced during a visit to these villages.

In the bed of the Plackovica mountain the archeological town of Bargala (former Astibo) is found which presents the history of the region in terms of civilization and culture. In the V century AD city is deeply Christianized, and the bishop was named Dardanius participant from Macedonia Prima and was enrolled in the acts of the ecumenical council which was held at Chalcedon (Халкедон) in 451. The unstable situation in the late Roman Empire IV and V century, that caused flurries of barbarian tribes from the north, forced the city residents to withdraw 4 km to the south, at the foot of Mount Plackovica and the area "Kozji Grad", where they had continued the urban lifestyle.

Another aspect of the touristic capacities in Stip are the numerous monasteries and churches in the town, the oldest go back from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Seen from the fortress Isar, four of these monasteries mark a cross over the town. One of them was a former mosque turned into a church. The municipality invested a lot in the infrastructure of the town, building sport and recreation paths, thus providing for conditions for extra outdoor activities as well as building a zoo park and reconstructing the existing parks and making them more attractive for all the visitors.

Very typical for Stip is its Stipska pastrmajlija, a typical food served and prepared only in this town for which a separate festival Pastrmalijada is held every year in September, which is an event visited by many people. The pastrmajlija is a kind of food consisting of distinct corn bread and pork meat (some newer version with chicken), and is served with a typical Macedonian wine. The traditional food of Macedonia is as well served in Stip and all the visitors can enjoy it.

Besides the wide spectrum of potential, Stip is still an unknown destination for the tourist and its rich past is unused and left to the natural causes. In order for this to change, the first thing is to change the approach in the work of attracting tourists. The Kezovica spa as its core provider is a good opportunity to attract tourists to use the curing waters of Kezovica spring and in the same time to enjoy in the Stip surrounding and its other attractions and food. This paper continues with an aspect of building transversal skills for the tourist workers, among which the most important, the learning of foreign, i.e. English language.

The effective communication is the core of our social existence. It can lead to a plenty of successfully completed actions and relations, but it can also be a reason for plenty of misunderstandings, disapprovals and restlessness. The successful communication at an international level, upon some unwritten rule, relies on the appropriate and sufficient knowledge of English language. Therefore the learning of a foreign language, in particular English language, and the fluency of speech are exceptionally important priorities for a guaranteed success for every professional. The EFL teachers have always strived to find effective ways in the teaching of a

foreign language. As a result of the search for the best and the most effective teaching methods, a significant number of sub-methodologies in teaching a foreign language have arose.

The teachers are the key figures in the transmission and the upgrade of the human experience and knowledge. Considering the very high technical- technological development and the globalization, the teaching profession is becoming even more complicated. It is no longer linked only to the ability for teaching, but it is also viewed through the active participation in the educational development. The professional teaching engagement refers to planning, organizing, leading, mentoring, evaluating, analyzing, collecting and processing the data- all these working activities imply on establishing interaction within the core institution, but also with the outside similar subjects for an effective application, dissemination and processing of information, as well as analytical- research activities which are directly linked with the realization of the educational functions.

Consequently to this, in regards to the teaching and the teachers of English, various sub-field of teaching English for specific purposes emerged to the field of general English teaching. In that context, on the following pages we first refer to the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives on the second language learning and teaching for specific purposes with a reference to the field of tourism. The paper also encompasses the issue of the everyday non-formal communication of the tourism workers, including the modern forms of e-communication today. In that sense, part of this paper is focused towards the discourse analysis from a social point of view, and the influence of the social and cultural factors over the understanding and interpreting the message between people from various backgrounds. Furthermore, within the paper an empirical research on the profile of the 21<sup>st</sup> century tourist worker is presented. Eventually, the aim of the paper is to present the results which point to the necessity of supplementation of the study programs for tourism students by stressing the importance of introducing language courses and well-adjusted syllabus so as to contribute to the efficient formal and informal usage of EFL.

In context to the social discourse analyses in regards with English for tourism purposes, the central role upon the understanding (misunderstanding) of any type of a message is put upon the ethnocentrism. In other words, this is about the difficulties in accepting the foreign (opinion/culture) and over-estimating the individual; this superior “element” is often the reason for cruel arguing, in toleration and impatience. On the other side, this is a very present element in every tourism experience abroad. The cultural differences between people impact on the proper understanding of the message, or its misunderstanding.

A very useful model of preparing to understand the foreign culture and getting ready for a life in a multi-cultural environment is made by Quing (2007) who worked on a teaching module for the influences of the cultural factors over the communication and the understanding. In that sense he says that the key relations between the culture and the communication, the cultural dimensions and barriers, as well as some basic skills for cross-cultural communication, like the mindfulness are the basic ones in studying the interpersonal understanding. His teaching module consists of lessons with duration of fifty minutes each, which should contribute to the efficiency in the understanding of the message. Thorough those, the students get acquainted with the power of the interpersonal relations, the human communication, the concept of the “global village” but also with the concept of hegemony, or the moment when the mediums influence the people opinion and way of thinking. This is a very important segment to be considered when adjusting the curricula according to the needs of the specific target group, as emphasized in this paper.

### **An aspect on English for specific purposes**

The need of a good knowledge of English language for every profession and in every segment of life is simply undisputable. But, the methodologists envisioned the need of introducing English language

for specific purposes so as to make the whole learning process more effective and more beneficiary for the end user- the learner. This comes out from the fact that an accountant and a doctor have different perspectives and needs in the learning of language, for which they need distinct methodological approaches.

Going back to history, the first published document of English for specific purposes dates back from 1576 which consists phrases from the field of tourism. This shows that the importance of implementing the English for specific purposes for tourism dates centuries ago. Anyhow, the ESP is resurgent after the Second World War, and by the end of the 1980s some universities in England introduced Master programs in ESP.

ESP is in fact a sub-section of General English language which focuses on real-life outcomes of an ESP course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). In general, it refers to a particular group of students learning English for specific fields of a professional career. The difference between the General English language and the English for specific purposes is in that the latter focuses on specific topics and skills that the ESP learners need in particular subject area. At the general English curriculum only the general English language needs are considered, but within the ESP curriculum an emphasis is put upon both the general and the specific needs. Thus, an ESP syllabus in tourism, in particular, needs to focus more on the specific terminology and forms of communication, for example.

Anyhow, this sub-field of the General English is intended to help those who are already fluent learners as well as the immigrants in order to deal properly and appropriately at their workplace and to use English in their engineering, science and nursing careers. Although ESP is generally designed for intermediate and advanced students, it can also be taught to beginners as well but with a careful attention as to the needs analyses and an appropriate selection of the teaching materials.

Because the discourse diversity could be confusing for the designers of an ESP course, a particular aspect should be placed upon the needs analyses for it can yield a large number of needs, purposes, and discourses in order for the ESP course to be properly tailor-made and goal-oriented. The ESP is never taught in terms of predetermined methodology, but a specific teaching technique which mainly focuses on the communication skills is to be adopted in some teaching and learning contexts. During the learning of the second language it is supposed that all the learners have various learning styles, strategies, needs and motivations. Therefore, the discourse analyses needs to assign certain grammatical and lexical characteristics for every learner, so as the ESP materials will be relevant with the authentic working environment of the learner. For this to be accomplished, the needs analyses are of particular importance because through it the necessities and needs of the learner for a certain field are ensured. It is important for providing information linked to the linguistics and the discourse. It can be concluded that the essential characteristic in designing an ESP course is the effective analyses of the communication needs and aspirations of the learner for which the language is being learned; therefore the ESP teaching needs to be strongly learners-centered.

The English for tourism purposes (ETP) is considered to be a specific sub-field of ESP. It differs from it particularly in its own set of tourism discourse. A very effective approach in designing the ETP course is when the need analyses is based on interviews with tourism workers, but also academic staff and students in this field, questionnaires of the students as well as observations of different ETP classes. These ETP courses need to focus on enhancing students' communicative skills and appropriate ETP materials. The two most important questions to bear in mind when designing the ETP course refer on how compatible and effective the materials are, and, if the needs analyses would clearly identify the course objectives.

Among the specific objectives in the designing of the ETP course are the improvement of the students' ability to recognize and to produce written and oral ETP and the expectations of the course should range around the following:

- adaptation of the basics of ETP thorough a systematic approach of application of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing);
- providing knowledge of basic ETP terminology and lexical phrases for the potential communication and interactive practice at the professional environment;
- enabling the students for communication within ETP for expressing their attitudes and opinions, proficiently guiding touristic tours and desk managers communication;
- enabling the students for application of the knowledge of ETP terminology at the professional environment and confident expression, as well as opportunities for short speeches and presentations related to tourism cases, professional tourism e-mail and report writings.

### Conclusion

Besides its natural and historical wealth, the economy in Stip and its region still depends on the textile industry, thus leaving its touristic resource unused and unknown to the world. On the other side a proper approach in promotion, commercialization and advertisement will provide for efficient usage of the touristic potential. For these reforms to take place the investment in human resources is primarily needed. The knowledge of English language is among the first priorities in building the adequate staff for promoting, working and maintaining the touristic wealth. The introduction of the specific English language for tourism purposes at the faculties and high schools for tourism is a must and a necessity in the curriculum building. On the other side, the importance of the ESP course is unimpeachable for it equips the students with the necessary language skills that they need to cope with the linguistic requirements of their specialization and to use English properly and fluently in the professional environment they are expected to join. The course should be more oriented towards communication rather than knowledge acquisition in the field of tourism, and it gradually trains the students to interpret and to use words appropriately and to formulate grammatically correct statements.

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