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LSP CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE. A CASE STUDY

Abstract

A *Language for Specific Purposes* (LSP) course is one in which the methodology, content, objectives, materials, teaching and assessment practices all derive from the *specific* use of a target language based on a *specified* set of professional needs. Developing an LSP curriculum involves a very similar process to any other language course, because it should be systematic and defensible, and should start by understanding the needs of the students taking the course. Furthermore, the current trend seems to be moving towards a process of internationalization in most regions, whereby ‘internationalization’ is often understood by stakeholders as ‘English’. By providing practical examples, and based on a self-ethnomethodological approach, this paper tries to describe the process we used to create an LSP syllabus as a curriculum for an MA in tourism planning and management, where English is the language of instruction. While the theoretical approach to curriculum development is linear, the reality is much more complex: though curriculum development and syllabus creation are intrinsically linked to needs analysis to such an extent that without a needs analysis they cannot be planned, there are cases where a needs analysis cannot be done because similar curricula or syllabi do not exist. Then, the LSP teacher must resort to what has been defined as a needs analysis *on the run* while adopting an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to curriculum development. In this process students play an active role and promote their interest with the teacher who could thus adjust and implement the envisaged educational goals. The hope is to provide teachers and curriculum developers with the information and tools they may need to design and create their own LSP courses.

Keywords: LSP, curriculum development, syllabus, LSP teachers’ needs, genre analysis, needs analysis on the run

1 Introduction

Back in 2003, I was asked to teach a module on English for Tourism to 1st year students taking the MA in Planning and Management of Tourism Systems (University of Bergamo, Italy). I was just beginning my academic career and so I was happy to seize this opportunity, but I had had no teaching training. Between 1999 and 2000 I attended the national Specialized School for Secondary High School Teacher Training (Ca' Foscari, University of Venice), which, in my case, included 60 hours of fieldwork in a high school (English language and literature); one module of language teaching; and one module of LSP teaching. Both modules were essentially theoretical with little practical application. I had little teaching experience and no experience at all in LSP teaching. As claimed by Hall (2013, p. 5537):

The well-trained language teacher knows how to introduce new language structures, to get his or her learners to practise language items, to focus on accuracy, to exploit language points as they arise, to use language within fairly controlled parameters and all the other things that language teachers routinely do. LSP teaching, however, forces teachers to go beyond their own levels of expertise and, in effect, to become researchers as well as teachers.

As I was not a well-trained teacher, I had to do research in order to teach: I became both a researcher and a teacher to do my job.

In this paper, drawing on a self-ethnomethodological approach,¹ I will describe the process I adopted to create an LSP syllabus as a curriculum characterized by English-medium instruction. Although I am aware of the accepted difference between the notions of curriculum and syllabus (a syllabus is only one unit of a course or subject curriculum and comprises the topics and concepts that will be covered in the entire educational programme; whereas a curriculum can be a combination of a syllabus, course design and class timetable, as well as lesson plans for the subject, and helps to plan how a particular subject or course will be taught; see Nation and Macalister 2010), in this paper, I will consider a syllabus as both the teaching course and the curriculum: as correctly indicated by Rocha (2020), when a syllabus is newly created and there are no previous syllabus templates, this syllabus, while becoming the very first template, evolves into a complex educational unit that dovetails with the curriculum itself.

The hope is to help other teachers, facing the same problem, to build a research network on LSP curriculum development. To achieve this, the paper is structured as follows. After this Introduction, Section 2 presents a theoretical approach to curriculum development and LSP. Section 3 presents a personal case study and Section 4 draws conclusions.

1 The ethnomethodological approach is grounded in the work of Garfinkel (1967) and focuses on the resources, procedures and practices via which members of a society interpret their everyday life and how these social interactions, when mutually recognized within particular contexts, create orderliness (Williams, 2001). Self- or auto-ethnomethodology is a reflexive analysis in which the creative and analytical process and products are deeply intertwined, offering an opportunity for insights into and nuances in creative practice through a necessarily subjective record (Richardson & St. Pierre 2008).

2 Theoretical approach and literature review

Teaching LSP is not simply a matter of ‘teaching’, for such an activity requires the LSP teacher to play various roles. As aptly described by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), an LSP practitioner must be not only a teacher, but also a course developer, materials supplier, collaborator (with subject specialists), researcher and evaluator of courses, materials and student learning. More recently, other roles of the LSP teacher have been identified, namely, an advisor on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes in university teaching contexts that use English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) (Taillefer, 2013); and an intercultural mediator and mentor/ broker for lifelong learning to aid the implementation of the European Space for Higher Education reform (Bocanegra-Valle, 2012; Bocanegra-Valle & Perea-Barberá, 2023). Such roles identified for LSP teachers and specialists require a type of multidisciplinary knowledge that must be accompanied by competences realized as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to LSP curriculum development. Clearly, all this must be adopted and adapted to our LSP syllabi.

2.1 How to approach curriculum development?

The International Bureau of Education (IBE, at: <https://www.ibe.unesco.org/en>) sets the standards and guidelines for what constitutes a quality curriculum, as there is little or no normative guidance on what constitutes a balanced, engaging curriculum at the different levels of education. Its mandate is to strengthen the capacity of member states to design, develop and implement curricula that ensure equity, quality, developmental relevance and resource efficiency in education and learning systems.

In supporting Member States in curriculum design, development and implementation, IBE also pays attention to the *curriculum integration* process, i.e. the combination of learning content and subjects to promote holistic and comprehensive learning. Such a process can be approached in different ways. There can be:

- a multidisciplinary approach;
- an interdisciplinary approach; and
- a transdisciplinary approach.

The multidisciplinary approach to curriculum integration primarily focuses on different disciplines and the perspectives they bring to illustrate a theme, topic or issue (International Bureau of Education, 2016c).

The interdisciplinary approach to curriculum integration creates an understanding of themes and ideas that cut across disciplines. It also creates an understanding of the connections between different disciplines and their relationship to the real world, emphasizing process and meaning rather than product and content, thanks to the combination of content, theories, methods and perspectives from multiple disciplines (International Bureau of Education, 2016b).

The transdisciplinary approach to curriculum integration erases the boundaries between traditional disciplines and organizes teaching and learning around the construction of meaning in the context of real-world problems or issues (International Bureau of Education, 2016a).

The fact that LSP teachers and specialists need to have multidisciplinary knowledge, and at the same time inter- and transdisciplinary teaching approaches to LSP, mirrors the idea that knowledge production can benefit from a dialogue with society, actively involving citizens and non-academic partners such as business, non-governmental organisations, public authorities and others who share the same objectives as academia (European University Association, 2021, p. 5). This vision (which was anticipated by Goldschmid, 1976, p. 437) points to universities that:

...are open and engaged in society while retaining their core values. All of Europe's universities will be responsible, autonomous and free, with different institutional profiles, but united in their missions of learning and teaching, research, innovation and culture in service to society [...]. They will provide an open, transformative space for common knowledge production through research, education, innovation and culture. Together with other societal stakeholders, they will shape the future of a knowledge-driven society [...] they continue to build bridges between countries, cultures and sectors. (European University Association, 2021, p. 5)

2.2 LSP – The origins and beyond

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) refers to the teaching and learning of languages for specific purposes or professional contexts, such as medicine, law, engineering, tourism and business (Gotti 2003). Before the introduction of LSP, language teaching often focused on general language skills and was not geared towards a specific field or profession. Even though Latin may be considered as the first LSP, which even became a *lingua franca* in the Middle Ages (Luka, 2014, pp. 3–4), it was only in the 1920s that contemporary LSP originated, thanks to the recognition (aided by the Prague linguistic circle) of the communicative role of languages and their functional styles (Branan, 1998). An important milestone for LSP was the year 1946, when the American Institute for Foreign Trade (later known as the Thunderbird School of Global Management) became the first US institution to introduce an integrated curriculum in which students combined the study of languages with business content and cultural/ regional studies (Branan, 1998), while in the 1950s, Savory laid the foundations for the theory of LSP in his *Language of Science* (1953). In the UK, LSP took hold in the 1960s, in response to the growing demand for language teaching tailored to the specific needs of learners, which provided the impetus for the development of materials and pedagogical approaches for a wider range of professional fields (Sánchez-López, 2013, p. x). Since then, interest in the field has expanded worldwide to encompass several languages and professions. Over the years, the complexity and diversity of courses and programmes have deepened to include an ever-growing number of research areas (Long, 2017). In the 1970s, for instance, linguists agreed that LSP served the needs of individual fields of science, for example, business, law, medicine etc., and in the 1980s, LSP (or more often, English for Special Purposes – ESP) became an institutional reality within higher education (Sánchez-López, 2013). LSP developed in response to a gap existing in language learning, recognising that learners have different needs and goals when learning a language depending on their specific field or profession. Indeed, LSP study is uniquely positioned to have an impact on the global education of students in a variety of disciplines, because at the heart of the subject is the goal of:

...fulfilling the communicative needs of a specific group of people within a specific professional context, such as medicine, law, sciences, social work, business, translation and interpretation, etc. (Sánchez-López, 2013, p. x)

Today, LSP has become an important part of language teaching and learning and is used in a wide range of fields and professions. It is based on the principle that language learning is most effective when tailored to the specific needs and goals of the learner. These goals have led to the development of courses and programmes that focus on:

...the integration of language related competencies through connections to other disciplines, comparisons of native and target languages and culture, and communication with target culture communities. (Lafford, 2012, p. 2)

The three fundamental axes that define each specific purpose focus – (1) language, (2) culture and (3) the history and current state of the professional domain's content and practice – require the collaborative participation of practitioners and researchers from a variety of theoretical and applied disciplinary backgrounds, including approaches that fall under the umbrellas of applied and theoretical linguistics, experiential learning, literary and cultural studies and all the professional fields (Garzone et al., 2016; Jacobs & Seow, 2015; Luka, 2014; Sánchez-López, 2013). Furthermore, Gotti (2003, p. 24) explains that LSP is “the specialist use of language in contexts which are typical of a specialized community stretching across the academic, the professional, the technical and the occupational areas of knowledge and practice”. Nevertheless, not only has LSP often been underappreciated partly due to a reflection of the hierarchies between the literature and second language acquisition programmes pointed to in the MLA's 2007 report (McGinnis, 2018), but also because the field of LSP has frequently been misdefined as lying exclusively towards the instrumentalist rather than the constitutive end of the spectrum of language study. As claimed by O'Dowd (2018, p. 561):

...teaching subjects through English is much more than simply translating class content into a second language and teachers should not be expected to work out the skills of teaching through English intuitively.

2.2.1 LSP, ESP, EAP and EMI: some definitions

In Europe, the similarities between ESP and LSP are so numerous that it is difficult to describe one without mentioning the other, to such an extent that the definitions of ESP tend to resemble the definitions of LSP, making LSP largely synonymous with ESP. This is why most research on LSP has been conducted in the context of English language learning. In addition, further confusion has been caused by the presence of English-medium instruction (EMI), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), intended as a special form of ESP, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Costa & Mastellotto, 2022). Airey (2016) correctly explains that ESP/EAP, EMI and CLIL are different and can be placed and understood on a continuum of language teaching approaches in higher education. At one end of the continuum there are EAP courses that focus exclusively on language learning. The aim of EAP courses is to provide university-level students with academic language skills, such as the reading and speaking skills required to succeed in an English-speaking academic context (Airey, 2016). At the other end of Airey's (2016) continuum are EMI courses with only content learning outcomes

(the kind of courses that focus on content and do not assess students' English language proficiency because no language learning outcomes are recognised). CLIL courses lie somewhere between these two extremes. They have both language and content learning outcomes (the teaching and learning of both language and subject areas (e.g. science, mathematics) in the same classroom, at the same time; cf. Airey, 2016).

The Bologna Declaration (EHEA, 1999) established a set of voluntary provisions to promote a process of harmonisation between European academic institutions. This "initiated a harmonisation process in line with the increased internationalisation of university education" (Costa & Mastellotto, 2022, p. 38) and resulted in an upsurge of EMI courses at university level for the last 15 years. Paradoxically, this phenomenon has had an impact on LSP courses, which have suffered as a result, because in this internationalisation process, LSP courses have been considered 'ancillary'. However, precisely because EMI focuses on subject content while LSP focuses on language, EMI lecturers were not interested in the language structure that, in contrast, students needed to improve their language competence (Costa, 2020; Costa & Mastellotto, 2022). The relevance of LSP (and ESP) courses and programmes is thus obvious, as they:

- provide students with applied knowledge and skills related to professional fields (Richards, 2001); and
- help students to develop critical thinking skills and deep cultural knowledge, which are at the heart of traditional humanities education in language and literature. (Richards, 2001)

ESP experts are now being asked not only to conduct research in support of EMI teacher-training education, but also to become teacher-trainers and educators (Morell, 2020).

2.3 LSP syllabus as curriculum

An LSP curriculum is one in which the methodology, content, objectives, materials, teaching and assessment practices all derive from the specific use of a target language based on a particular set of professional needs (Trace, Hudson & Brown 2015). In other words, teaching LSP means designing a module that meets the specific needs of learners, thematically related to particular disciplines, professions or activities, and that focuses on the discourse used in those activities (Stevens, 1988, pp. 1–2), thus encompassing both language and content-related knowledge specific to a particular context, based on learners' needs.

According to Huckin (2003), the main factors of an LSP curriculum can be described as being:

- learner-centred,
- communication-oriented, and
- content-based (and context-based).

As Rocha (2020) emphasizes, if curriculum development is a procedure, it is planned rather than made. It is only when curriculum development is done in the course of fieldwork, and implemented as a syllabus, that it is lived. Looking at curriculum development from this perspective, it becomes clear that curriculum is a concept that is contained in the syllabus. This means that while we are planning and creating the syllabus, we are also implementing the

curriculum. In all of this, the central role of the student is paramount. Indeed, LSP courses must be “tailored to meet the needs of specific students in specific circumstances” (Huckin 2003, p. 8). This indicates that LSP teachers should ideally know their students, including their level of knowledge and skills at the beginning of the educational process and the target level at the end of it. Students should be helped to develop the essential skills of understanding, using and presenting (in written and oral form) authentic information in their subject areas; at the same time, they should be enabled to use the foreign language in a real-life context. Therefore, LSP teachers need to go beyond general language methodology and consider aspects related to different content areas (Richards, 2001).

2.3.1 LSP curriculum development

Developing an LSP curriculum should be systematic and defensible. Brown (1995, p. 20) describes six key steps in curriculum development:

- (1) needs analysis;
- (2) goals and objectives;
- (3) assessment;
- (4) materials selection and development;
- (5) teaching; and
- (6) programme evaluation.

Starting from this model, each component of the curriculum is developed in interaction with every other component, creating a fluid yet systematic design that respects the ever-evolving nature of the curriculum. It is in this context that the different syllabi of the curriculum will be developed.

It is evident that: (a) all the elements necessary for curriculum development form a network of relationships in which each one influences the others; (b) a needs analysis is essential for curriculum design; and (c) the evaluation process serves as feedback for the whole curriculum development. Following Richards (2001), the main steps of curriculum development will be explained in the following sections.

Needs analysis.

The first (and most important) step in the LSP curriculum is a *needs analysis*. The term *needs analysis* is not new. In fact, the expression “analysis of needs” was used as early as the 1920s by Michael P. West (Howatt, 1984; Tickoo, 1988; White, 1988, pp. 12–13), who used it as an umbrella term for two ideas of needs: a) what learners need to do with the foreign language in the target situation; b) how learners can best master the target language during the training period. The main concern was that what learners need is usually not clear and, as claimed by Abbott (1980, p. 123), the notion of teaching often excludes the notion of need but includes that of T.E.N.O.R (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason). The scope of a needs analysis includes a syllabus specification derived from the needs of the target situation (Munby, 1977). A needs analysis requires not only the identification of learners’ communicative needs and

goals and their linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences, but also an analysis of the discourse in learners' professional fields to identify the language functions, genres and registers that are most relevant to them (Richards, 2001; Trace et al., 2015). A needs analysis can be conducted through surveys, interviews, observations and document analysis (Richards, 2001; Trace et al., 2015).

Syllabus design (learning goals and objectives).

Once the needs of the students have been analysed, the LSP practitioner can design the syllabus, i.e. the plan for language learning objectives, content and activities. The syllabus is designed on the basis of a needs analysis, focusing on the development of communicative competences. It may be structured according to themes, functions, genres or skills, depending on the needs and objectives of the learners. It may also include specific language forms and structures, vocabulary and discourse features relevant to the learners' professional contexts (Richards, 2001; Trace et al., 2015).

Materials development.

Materials are the tools and resources used in language teaching and learning. LSP materials are designed based on the syllabus, with a focus on authenticity, relevance and comprehensibility of language input. LSP materials may include texts, videos, audios, simulations, case studies and authentic materials from the learners' professional contexts. LSP materials may also include task-based activities that simulate the communicative demands of learners' professional fields.

Assessment and evaluation.

While assessment focuses on the learning and teaching processes and outcomes, and provides information for improving them (cf. Pereira et al. 2015, p. 1008), evaluation is a structured interpretation and giving of meaning to results (cf. Baker, 1969).

Assessment and evaluation can be done through tests, portfolios, self-assessment and feedback from learners and stakeholders. Assessment and evaluation are an essential part of the LSP curriculum, as they provide feedback to improve and validate the curriculum.

2.3.2 Potential limitations on LSP curriculum development

Much of the literature on needs analysis since the 1970s has been based on the assumption that:

...it is part of the planning that takes place as part of the development of a course. It assumes that time and resources are available to plan, collect, and analyze relevant information for a planned program of instruction. This "a priori" approach to needs analysis requires long-term planning and assumes adequate time and resources to devote to needs analysis. (Richards, 2001, p. 54)

Given the paramount role of needs analyses in curriculum development, the question arises as to how an LSP practitioner can conduct a needs analysis when asked to describe and create a curriculum *before* knowing who their learners are. In other words, even if, theoretically, one knows that there are needs to be analysed, in practice one cannot perform the analysis in advance and without personally knowing the learners and their specific needs. Indeed, as claimed by Richards (2001), syllabus specification derives from the needs of the target situation.

In addition, there are other practical aspects to consider. For example, nowadays, decisions on the (a) purpose, (b) sequence, (c) modules, (d) credits, (e) mode of examination and (f) timetable of the programme can be made by taking into account the available resources and stakeholders' preferences. In other cases, however, new study programmes have to plan their curricula from scratch. Furthermore, it may be necessary for existing programmes to reform and update the curriculum on a regular basis, for example, to meet the annual review and revision required by law (Tao et al., 2022). In addition, today's curricula are increasingly focusing on broader concepts of student outcomes, such as 'competencies', 'capabilities' and '21st century skills', as we recognise that declarative disciplinary knowledge alone is no longer sufficient to deal with the complex and rapidly changing world that students are now entering (Tytler & van Driel, 2021). This also has an impact on syllabus creation, not only because sometimes national and international benchmarks are not available but also, and above all, there are no books on the topics that the LSP teacher would like to include. Thus it is clear that, in these cases, a needs analysis *on the run* is necessary. As aptly explained:

In some cases, however, long-term planning is not an option. Little may be known in detail about a group of learners apart from the fact that [they] want to work on their language skills. In these circumstances, needs analysis has to be carried out as part of the delivery of the course. Goals, content, and teaching approach are shaped by information collected during the teaching of the course. [...]. At other times, the bulk of the information that constitutes the needs analysis may be collected after the course is finished. The information collected is then analyzed in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the learners' needs as a basis for evaluating and revising the program.

Richards (2001, p. 9), however, does not help the LSP teacher in explaining how to construct a needs analysis *on the run*. As a matter of fact, he describes the procedure for needs analysis as being characterized by the following:

1. Samples of students' writing,
2. Test data on student performance,
3. Reports by teachers on typical problems that students face,
4. Opinions of experts,
5. Information from students via interviews and questionnaires,
6. Analyses of textbooks,
7. Survey of related literature,
8. Examples of writing programmes from other institutions,
9. Examples of writing assignments given to first-year university students.

Yet, in practical terms, even this approach may not be feasible: for instance, in our case, only points 2 and 4 were available. In the next section we will describe the procedure we adopt to create an LSP curriculum (English for tourism).

3 Creating an LSP syllabus as a curriculum: English for Tourism – a self-ethnographic study

The list offered by Richards (2001) for LSP curriculum development with a needs analysis *on the run* as described in 2.3.2. above was not helpful. In 2003, when I was asked to join the MA in Planning and Management of Tourism System (one of the first MA programmes in tourism in Italy) at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Bergamo, (Italy) to teach English for tourism as an ESP course, I did not have any information relevant for the syllabus I would plan, not even the number of students that would enrol. In fact, the MA programme was being planned in the academic year 2002–3 to start, after ministerial accreditation, in the academic year 2003–4. Enrolment opened in Summer 2003 and was open to any European and non-European students who wished to enrol, with no restraints in terms of student numbers.² This means that, of all the elements listed in paragraph 2.3.2, only two pieces of information were available: points 2 and 4. As for point 2 (test data on student performance), we knew that the students admitted had a B2 level of English;³ with regard to point 4 (opinion of experts), we contacted the local tourism board to obtain information in terms of which texts we needed to focus on. As the MA programme was brand new (ours was one of the first MAs in Italy⁴ and no similar MAs existed in Europe), we did not have any information on points 1, 3, 5, 6 (no textbooks about teaching English for tourism at a higher education level existed at the time),⁵ 7, 8 and 9. Given that we could only utilise point 4, the only feasible one, we turned to genre analysis: Swales' (1980, 1985, 1990, 2004) definition of "genre" is based on the 1980s notion of needs analysis. According to Swales (1990; cf. also Bhatia, 1993), a genre is a communicative event with a set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by expert members of the discourse community in which these communicative events take place and form the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains the choice of content and style. Bhatia (1993, pp. 22–34) proposes a seven-step model for genre analysis:

- 1) Reviewing the existing literature on relevant theories of discourse or genre analysis; linguistic analyses of the genre in question; practitioner guides/ manuals; social structure, history, beliefs and goals of the professional or academic community in which the genre is used;
- 2) Defining the situational/ contextual analysis (such as the addresser and addressee, their relationship and goals; the historical and sociocultural location of the discourse

2 The Italian Constitution (articles 33 and 34) grants the Right to Study to any Italian and non-Italian citizen. This means that, usually, all BA and MA programmes have no constraints in terms of student numbers.

3 In Italy, the admission of non-Italian students to MA programmes held in English is possible provided that the students have a B2 level of English, as confirmed by language certification such as that of the Cambridge Examination Board.

4 In Italy, the MA programme in tourism was established following the 1999 and 2004 Italian higher education reforms (Ministerial Decree no. 270/2004 and Ministerial Decree no. 509/1999).

5 Indeed, the English for tourism textbooks available in Europe were for a B2 level of English.

community in which this genre is situated; the network of surrounding genre texts with which it is linked; the subject/ extra-textual reality it seeks to represent, change or exploit);

- 3) Selecting a corpus for detailed analysis, for exploratory study and for specific features;
- 4) Placing the given genre texts in a situational context in order to understand the procedures used in the field where this genre is used;
- 5) Studying the institutional context to identify the rules and conventions (linguistic, social, cultural, academic, professional etc.) that govern the use of language in the institutional context in which that genre is used;
- 6) Carrying out an analysis, choosing the level (lexico-grammar analysis; textual analysis; discourse analysis) which best suits one's motivating issue;
- 7) Obtaining specialist information to double-check linguistic findings.

Drawing on Swales (1990, 2004) and following Bhatia (2004, 1993), we defined the context, selected the corpus necessary for curriculum development and received feedback from specialist informants, as described below.

3.1 Defining the context

To define the context, we proceeded via three steps.

Step 1

The first step was to define the particular academic setting in which we wanted to develop the LSP curriculum. We knew that the addressees of the MA were international students enrolled in the MA in Planning and Management of Tourism System who had as an admission requirement a B2 CEFR level of English. In this MA, the teaching team of the various disciplines required by the Ministry for this MA was composed of professors from all over the world, while the author of this paper was, herself, an English teacher who knew that it was necessary to manage the programme, plan a syllabus and develop relevant teaching materials. The academic context was also shaped by stakeholders from the tourism industry and national/local education actors.

Step 2

The second step was characterised by a personalised methodological approach to curriculum development.

We were aware of the fact that there was no similar MA course in Europe, which meant that there were no students with similar needs and similar syllabus frameworks. As mentioned earlier, these two problems were solved by using a genre analysis approach. A needs analysis was conducted *on the run* and delivered as part of the teaching module.

The genre analysis approach required us to foresee what ideal situations might be of interest to our students in their programme of study. The following potential contexts were selected:

- The tourist perspective: How do tourists plan their holidays? Where do they look for information?
- The industry perspective: What texts are used to attract potential tourists? What discursive strategies are used? What documents are needed?

In this way, the language needs of each situation were imagined and (hopefully) predicted. Three macro areas were chosen as the basis for the programme: a) the professional context; b) the promotional context; c) the digital context.

Step 3

The third step required consultation with the MA coordinator, with whom each professor on the teaching team had to:

- (a) create a curriculum framework – the syllabus as curriculum;
- b) describe the curriculum planning process;
- c) discuss teaching techniques and activities;
- d) identify authentic materials;
- e) discuss the problem areas for students who are non-native speakers of English and who use English as a *lingua franca*.

3.2 Defining genres

By imagining the real-life contexts in which our English for tourism students would work, we brainstormed the types of texts that could help us to develop a syllabus as curriculum. The contexts required the use of text types or genres aimed at potential travellers and visitors for promotional purposes (including electronic communication), namely: tourism advertisements, brochures and leaflets; itineraries; tourist guidebooks; in-flight magazines; promotional websites. The contexts presented also required the use of text types or genres aimed at professionals and used in professional communication by: the European Union; the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO); travel authorities; agencies or tour operator associations. These texts could be identified as contracts, norms and conventions, legal texts, documents dealing with marketing and tourism planning and management. In this way, we were able to select different genres depending on the type of communication.

For the genres used for tourism advertising, we collected:

- 30 advertisements from the official tourist office;
- 27 brochures and 33 catalogues;
- 13 itineraries;
- 20 in-flight magazines;
- 6 guidebooks;
- 12 tourism websites (for digital communication);

which ideally indicate the holiday decision-making process.

Among the genres used for professional discourse in tourism, the texts collected in relation to tourism were:

- tourism planning and management (EU): 67 documents
- tourism law (Eurolex): 39 documents.

These genres allowed us to have authentic material to use in our syllabus. The collected texts from the different genres were also used to create a glossary of professional tourism terms (378 terms) and a glossary of applied linguistics (48 terms).⁶

3.3 Needs analysis on the run

The total lack of any kind of information about the students we would cater for in the English for Tourism course before the start of the academic year under consideration forced us to do a need analysis *on the run*. The MA students starting a novel MA programme were presented with an initial questionnaire (Fig. 1) in the first few days of the English for Tourism teaching module where they were asked to tick the topics they preferred. The questionnaire, which was about the language skills they thought they would need, had purpose no other than to understand what language points should be considered.

Figure 1

Initial questionnaire

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Lecture notetaking.</i> 2. <i>Giving formal speeches/presentations.</i> 3. <i>Participating effectively in discussions.</i> 4. <i>Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, collaborative projects, or out-of-class study groups.</i> 5. <i>Communicating effectively with staff in or out of class.</i> 6. <i>Essay writing.</i> 7. <i>Writing introductions and conclusions.</i> 8. <i>Writing references and quotations.</i> 9. <i>Formulating coherent arguments.</i> 10. <i>Summarising factual information.</i> 11. <i>Synthesizing information from more than one source.</i> 12. <i>Analysing written materials.</i> 13. <i>Knowledge of vocabulary.</i> 14. <i>Reading quickly.</i> 15. <i>Reading critically.</i> 16. <i>Reading for author's viewpoint,</i> 17. <i>Other (please specify and rate): _____</i>

6 As indicated by Velardi et al. (2006, pp. 311-312), "a general method for constructing a glossary is: collect a vocabulary, collect definitions, establish format rules, establish rules for writing definitions, examine definitions for multiple meanings, write basic definitions, review and compare for consistency of meaning, classify, select preferred words, group words, review and finalize the glossary". To check if words and terms needed to be inserted in the glossary, we used Corpus Linguistics and elaborated the list of keywords (the terms that in our collected texts, i.e. our corpus, are statistically more frequent than others when compared with a reference corpus) with Wordsmith Tools version 3 (Scott 1999).

As students were using English as a medium of instruction, they felt they needed better communicative strategies than mere grammatical correctness. In other words, they focused on the ability to give formal presentations, analyse written texts, summarise and synthesise information and discuss effectively among peers and with others, including using technical terminology (questions 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). This was confirmed by a subsequent group interview and by individual discussions with the students. The students' profiles were thus created thanks to the information gathered in class. The resulting class profiles documented any previous learning experiences, each student's strengths and weaknesses, common areas of interest, individual and group needs and any areas to focus on in class. This information was then incorporated into the course content for the following year.

Meeting with the MA teaching team and coordinator along with ongoing classroom observation allowed us to develop a syllabus framework (syllabus as curriculum) that would:

- provide ample opportunities for practice, activities and tasks that arouse students' interest and develop their linguistic-communicative skills to fulfil study and work functions;
- pave the way for communication in tourism, giving priority to oral communication strategies;
- address study functions (summarising, reporting, giving oral presentations, doing projects, solving problems or tasks, acting out real-life roles in tourism, describing and practising with classmates);
- address work functions, especially those of tour guides and working in travel agencies and museums (such as: talking to tourists, describing local culture, planning tours, forming itineraries, conducting tours, producing brochures);
- introduce the local tourism industry and cultural heritage to others through the use of English; refrain from extensive use of grammar rules unless they serve specific communicative functions and particular tourism-related situations;
- incorporate other topics from the MA to include various activities and tasks that facilitate practice of the language in different tourism contexts;
- emphasise communication skills with a strong focus on clients to address professional activities and functions that a graduate in *Planning and Management of Tourism Systems* should be able to perform in English.

In addition, as part of their assessment, students were required to organise a mock conference on tourism discourse (including coffee- and lunch-breaks) where they presented their topics and refined their communicative strategies during question/answer time. This led to the creation of a syllabus framework as a work-in-progress curriculum, as seen in Maci's (2020) textbook.

4 Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to describe, based on a self-ethnomethodological approach, the process we used to create an LSP syllabus as a curriculum for an MA in tourism planning and management, where English is the language of instruction. We explained that newly created

syllabi can be considered as both the teaching course and the curriculum itself (Rocha, 2020). To this end, we defined LSP, ESP, EAP and EMI and discussed the LSP teacher's characteristics (Bocanegra-Valle, 2012; Bocanegra-Valle & Perea-Barberá, 2023; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Taillefer, 2013). As we have seen, the theoretical approach to curriculum development is linear. However, the reality is much more complex: though curriculum development and syllabus creation are intrinsically linked to needs analysis to such an extent that without a needs analysis they cannot be planned, there are cases where a needs analysis cannot be done because similar curricula or syllabi do not exist.

Then, the LSP teacher must resort to what Richards (2001) defines as a needs analysis *on the run*. The examples Richards (2001) offers for a needs analysis *on the run* do not help in a case where no information at all can be gathered for curriculum and syllabus development. We therefore explained the steps we followed in creating a novel syllabus: thanks to genre studies (Bhatia, 2004, 1993; Swales, 1990, 2004), we were able to identify real domain-specific contexts and thus the material to be collected, in order to elaborate a potential syllabus. Thus, we created a questionnaire hypothesizing what types of linguistic skills students would be interested in. The students' answers to the questionnaire underlined the kinds of linguistic skills they wished to improve, which were further confirmed through group and individual discussions, and then implemented in the course content for the following year.

In this process students participated in curriculum and syllabus development: they played an active role and promoted their interest with the teacher who could thus adjust and implement the envisaged educational goals. Existing resources (such as theoretical studies, teaching-learning experience, practical activities) were reformulated in a creative way. As indicated in this paper, the LSP teacher needs to adopt an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to curriculum development. On this point, we can say that the LSP teacher must have the correct dose of creativity, that is, in Sternberg and Lubart's (1998, p. 47) words, "the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. adaptive concerning task constraints)".

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Izveček

Razvoj učnega načrta pri tujem jeziku stroke: od teorije k praksi. Študija primera

Pri *tujem jeziku stroke* (TJS) so tako metodologija, vsebina in cilji predmeta, kot tudi gradiva ter način poučevanja in ocenjevanja prilagojeni *specifični* uporabi ciljnega jezika, ki temelji na *specifičnih* poklicnih potrebah. Trenutno se večina italijanskih regij usmerja v proces internacionalizacije, pri čemer zainteresirane strani »internationalizacijo« pogosto enačijo z »angleščino«. Z etnometodološkim pristopom želimo v prispevku s pomočjo praktičnih primerov ponazoriti, kako smo na magistrskem študijskem programu Načrtovanje in management v turizmu oblikovali učni načrt pri predmetu Angleščina kot tuji jezik stroke. Čeprav je teoretični pristop k razvoju učnih načrtov linearen, je ta proces veliko bolj kompleksen. Razvoj in izdelava učnih načrtov sta neločljivo povezana z analizo potreb in ju brez analize ni mogoče načrtovati. Kljub temu so primeri, ko analize potreb ni mogoče izvesti, ker podobni učni načrti ali učni načrti ne obstajajo. Učitelj tujega jezika stroke se mora pri tem opreti na analizo potreb, ki jo opravi v sklopu poučevanja in razvijanja učnega načrta predmeta. Pri tem upošteva interdisciplinarni in multidisciplinarni pristop k razvoju učnega načrta. V tem procesu igrajo aktivno vlogo tudi študenti, saj učitelju, ki lahko nato prilagodi in uresniči predvidene izobraževalne cilje, sporočijo svoje interese. Cilj prispevka je, da učiteljem in razvijalcem učnih načrtov predstavimo informacije in orodja, s katerimi bodo lahko oblikovali svoj predmet tujega jezika kot jezika stroke.

Ključne besede: tuji jezik stroke, razvoj učnega načrta, učni načrt, potrebe učiteljev tujih jezikov stroke, žanrska analiza, analiza potreb