

Book Reviews

Teaching English for Tourism: Bridging research and praxis (a review)

Original work by Michael J. Ennis and Gina M. Petrie (Eds.) published by Routledge, 2019

Reviewed by Wei Xu and Angelina Maria Ferreira Martins Cheang

Wei Xu City University of Macau, Macau, China weixu@cityu.mo

Angelina Maria Ferreira Martins Cheang King's College London, UK anjuchegang@gmail.com

Article history Received October 6, 2022 | Revised December 25, 2022 | Accepted March 6, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-1-131-133

For citation Xu, W., & Ferreira Martins Cheang, A. M. (2023). Teaching English for Tourism: Bridging research and praxis (a review). *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(1), 131-133.



This is an open access article distributed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) (CC BY-NC 4.0), which allows its unrestricted use for non-commercial purposes, subject to attribution. The material can be shared/adapted for non-commercial purposes if you give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

It is universally recognised that international tourism is an important economic sector of the global economy as well as most national economies. The less developed countries have focused on tapping into the international tourism market as a key economic development strategy. More developed countries, such as those with strong tourism industries for decades, have also sought to attract international tourists. It is no secret that English has emerged as the language of worldwide travel. Most forms of international tourism involve interactions in English, and many of those interactions take place between people who speak other languages as their first language.

Consequently, this means that the practice of teaching and learning English for Tourism (Eft) – i.e., the practice of teaching English to current and future professionals involved in the tourism industry – constitutes a form of English for specific purposes (ESP). In Eft, English is taught and learned to current and future tourism professionals with the aim of developing a specific form of English for tourism-related purposes. International tourism occupies a significant position in both the global and national economies. For those who wish to work in the service industry or international

tourism as a second language speaker, as well as those who wish to learn Eft, it is imperative that they consider the language they use and the context in which they are located carefully.

As a result, a comprehensive and complete curriculum of practical courses should be beneficial and helpful to them. There is a need for careful design and creation of a curriculum related to English for the international tourism and service industry. The curriculum should adapt to the interests and needs of learners. In these courses, learners are provided with a specific and definite level or situation in which the language will be utilised. Methods and contents must be tailored to suit the specific needs of learners.

The authors have compiled this collection of recent findings in Eft contexts to provide practitioners and scholars with support in their pedagogical endeavours. There are nine chapters in this book which are divided into two parts: theories and concepts and from theory to practice. The first part of the book has three chapters, and Eft is defined at a semantic, conceptual, theoretical, and methodological level in Chapter 1. Two broad categories of textbooks are defined in the article, those that are geared toward the domestic market

'It appears that less research and scholarship has been conducted on the teaching and learning of Eft, despite the fact that a growing body of research has been disseminated via academic journals and major publishing houses. According to the authors, the research and scholarship that exists do not seem to be consolidated into one place and appear to be scattered across the vast field of English language teaching'

and those that are geared for the global market. Additionally, there are two broad areas of research and scholarship in this paper. These areas are devoted to the study of English in tourism and the study of English teaching and learning. Chapter 2 discusses the language preferences of stakeholders in EFT, while Chapter 3 discusses the politics behind it. As a whole, the first three chapters provide a critical overview of current issues within Eft research and teaching, particularly in relation to the existing research tradition, the role of needs analysis, and the status of Englishes around the globe.

On the other hand, the other part of this book contains six chapters that discuss Eft classrooms and identify approaches and methods for preparing students with the necessary English language skills for employment in tourism. Throughout these chapters, there has been a focus on the importance of emerging technologies, efforts to deepen students' cultural understandings, and pedagogies that support the development of writing skills in Eft instruction as well. A major concern discussed in Chapter 4 concerns the impact of changing communication channels for sharing information regarding tourism destinations on the discourse that students of Eft must learn. As discussed in Chapter 5 of the book, new technologies are becoming increasingly useful in translation and concordance, and this has implications for students who are learning to translate tourism texts into English as a foreign language. Chapter 6 examines the potential of using cultural language in the classroom to help prepare students for the realities of communication in tourism, and Chapter 7 looks at activities outside the traditional classroom environment, analyses the impact of international experiences on Eft students' cultural development. In the last two chapters, the results of an international telecollaboration project

are presented, culminating in a reflection on the perpetual pursuit of best practices in teaching writing skills to students in tourism studies. Both studies draw attention to sociocultural barriers that can emerge and that may require instructor intervention in Eft classrooms. These six chapters highlight the importance of emerging new technologies, approaches to deepening students' cultural understanding, and strategies to support writing development in Eft instruction.

In response to the rise of middle-class tourism during the twentieth century and as one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, ESP's oldest and largest branch responded to the development of middle-class tourism. ESP courses and English for occupational purposes (EOP) courses have been developed by universities, high schools, and private language schools for students, workers, and managers in the tourism industry. The majority of major publishers of English language teaching (ELT) resources also market course books for tourism studies and various tourism careers. It appears that less research and scholarship has been conducted on the teaching and learning of Eft, despite the fact that a growing body of research has been disseminated via academic journals and major publishing houses. According to the authors, the research and scholarship that exists do not seem to be consolidated into one place and appear to be scattered across the vast field of English language teaching.

A large part of the reason for the gap in research and scholarship in ESP is the nature of the field in general. In most cases, Eft pedagogy research is conducted informally and is used to develop and evaluate custom courses and learning materials that are tailored to the specific needs of a specific group of students in an individual learning environment. Although this research is clearly relevant to practitioners in other contexts as well, only a small amount of such research is ever published or shared with a broader community of researchers. Especially in the West, best practice in education for transformation remains the responsibility of individual teachers and small communities of practice that work independently of each other. Teachers of English as a second language lack access to a wealth of information and experience that can serve as a guide for their own teaching approaches if there is no discourse across institutions, regions, and nations. In light of this background, this book aims to share the perspectives of teachers and researchers of Eft from a wide variety of national and institutional contexts, and to initiate a sustained discussion on how English for tourism

can be taught and learned. As a result, it touches upon a wide range of themes related to EfT, including theoretical concepts, needs analyses, teaching methods, teaching approaches, and methodology frameworks.

This book seeks to eliminate the desperation caused by a multitude of circumstances that might lead a person to deny the uniqueness of EfT teaching and learning. Furthermore, the authors hope that this book will serve as a catalyst for other related initiatives in the future. As a whole, it is primarily about the findings and experiences of EfT centres around the world, such as Italy, Jordan, Nicaragua, Poland, Spain, and the United States. However, these are just a small sampling of all the many EfT centers around the world. In addition to these limitations, the sample also reflects that the EfT learning reported in this book is disproportionately associated with contexts of higher education in which students are studying or preparing to study tourism, as compared to those employees who are learning English to be used immediately in their tourism occupations, a situation which is likely to be prevalent around the world. Even with these limitations, however, the purpose of this book is to contribute to the conversation rather than to limit it in regard to EfT teaching. Due to this reason, the authors encourage readers to continue where this book may have left off, to go beyond the

limitations outlined in it, and to demonstrate and explain why teaching English as a foreign language for tourism is an exceptional form of English used for a specific purpose.

There is no doubt that sustainable tourism plays an important part in global communication and cultural exchange, however, with the sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the most heavily affected industries is the tourism industry. At a time like this when things are so turbulent and uncertain, it is rather important to maintain and build people's confidence and to encourage students' interest in learning English for tourism purposes.

It is expected that the findings presented in this book will provide scholars with a comprehensive understanding of the current status and issues related to the EfT field and may provide readers with clues as to how and where to focus our efforts further.

Additionally, the EfT learning reported in this book primarily reflects higher education contexts where students are currently studying or preparing to study tourism, whereas in most countries, employees are more likely to learn English for immediate use in their tourism occupations. The authors' intent with this book is not to limit the conversations surrounding EfT teaching, but rather to add to them.

WEI XU

City University of Macau, Macau, China weixu@cityu.mo

ANGELINA MARIA FERREIRA MARTINS CHEANG
King's College London, UK anjucheang@gmail.com