

Development of Students’ ESP Competence in Tertiary Studies

Dr. paed. Ineta Luka, assoc. professor

School of Business Administration Turība

Ineta@turiba.lv

Abstract

The topicality of the present evaluation research is determined by the development of tourism industry in Latvia whose labour market requires creative, decisive, educated, competitive specialists with a good command of English and excellent cooperation skills. The object of the research is the development of tourism students’ *English for Special Purposes* (ESP) competence. Theoretical (study of theoretical literature and sources) and empirical methods of the research – data obtaining methods (students and teachers’ interviews, students and tourism employers’ surveys, students’ assessment and self-assessment, students’ tests) and qualitative and quantitative data processing methods were used. This report deals with the results of the research conducted in Latvia from 2003 to 2007 – the designed ESP curriculum for tourism students, the created definition of *ESP competence*, the components of ESP competence, its criteria, indicators, ESP competence levels and the created model for the development of tourism students’ ESP competence.

Key words: ESP competence, language use, intercultural communication, cooperation, creativity

Introduction

Political, socio-economic and cultural changes that have taken place in the world during the last fifteen years have influenced all the spheres, including education. The twenty-first century is characterized for many individuals by mobility and ever growing flow of information. Specialists’ professional competence is becoming more and more important. Its development sets new requirements for education whose goal is to show the proper course for the changes (Fulans 1999).

Recently the tourism business has become one of the most flourishing businesses in Latvia and is still continuing to grow. The number of incoming tourists in Latvia has increased from 3.03 million people in 2004 to 5.24 million people in 2007. Most tourists come from Ireland, the UK, Scandinavian countries, and Germany (Galvenie Latvijas tūrisma nozari raksturojošie rādītāji 2004. – 2007.

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

gadā). The growing tourism labour market requires creative, decisive, educated, competitive specialists with a good command of English and excellent cooperation skills, who are able to work in different cultural settings and cater the needs of all tourists.

Higher educational institutions in Latvia have reacted to the requirements of the labour market. All the largest higher educational establishments of the country offer tourism related curricula – the University of Latvia, Latvia University of Agriculture, Liepaja University, the Vidzeme University College and the School of Business Administration Turība (BAT), each of them specializing in a definite tourism field – hotel industry, catering industry, rural tourism, guiding, tourism business, etc. BAT was one of the first higher educational institutions, which offered such a curriculum (a tourism and hospitality management curriculum). However its history is not long – the first students were enrolled only in 1993. Although at present in Latvia there are standards for definite tourism occupations (e.g., waiters, guides, tour conductors, etc), there is not a unified concept about what professional competencies tourism specialists must possess. However, all the existing tourism standards in Latvia stress a foreign language competence as an important component of tourism specialist’s professionalism (*Profesionālās izglītības centrs. Profesiju standarti*). Therefore an essential role in tourism specialists’ education should be paid to the development of their **ESP competence** (English for Special Purposes competence), which in a knowledge society could simultaneously foster the development of employees’ **professional competence**. The content of studies should be student-centred, i.e., orientated towards students’ learning. In the study process students, based on their experience and cooperating with a teacher, construct their knowledge and perform self-assessment.

The teacher’s professionalism is described by wide strategic and creative knowledge, creativity, organizing of pair work, group work, teamwork, as well as the ability to integrate knowledge in continuous professional development (Žogla 2006). Therefore the model of learning foreign languages in tourism curricula is changing in order to offer possibilities to the students to reach this quality.

Objectives of the work

The goal of the paper is to present the results of the evaluation research conducted in the field of development of tourism students’ ESP competence in BAT, in Latvia,

paying special attention to the final stage of the research – final evaluation. Its aim was to measure the target group’s ESP competence level according to the created ESP competence criteria, analyze the changes and summarize the results of the study.

The following tasks specify the goal: to study theoretical literature and sources on curriculum and syllabus design and needs analysis; study competence theories and language competence theories in order to define ESP competence for tourism specialists, determine its components, criteria, indicators and ESP competence levels; based on theoretical analysis and conducted empirical needs analysis create an ESP curriculum for tourism students, design a model for the development of students’ ESP competence and test its efficiency in tertiary level studies.

Theoretical Framework

1. ESP Curriculum design

Any course design starts with needs analysis (Nunan 1991, Yalden 1996, Elliott 1998, More 2001, Gillet 1989, Richards 2001), which is conducted on several levels: on the level of a students’ group, on institutional, educational, administrative, political and cultural level (Kennedy 1988) and it includes the study of students’ abilities, needs, interests and learning styles (Katz 2000).

Curriculum and syllabus theories were analyzed in order to create the content of an ESP course for tourism students. The analysis of the theories revealed that there are different approaches to the understanding of those terms. In this study an approach in which **curriculum** implies educational philosophy, aims of the course, the selected teaching methods and teaching aids but **syllabus** includes the course content (what is to be taught and in what sequence) was adopted. Different syllabi types were analyzed in order to choose the most appropriate syllabi that can be used for teaching ESP to tourism students. A conclusion was drawn that the most useful type of ESP syllabus for tourism students is the integrated one which includes content, process and results, stressing the process aspect of an activity, which means learning by doing, and observing socio-cultural aspect as students will use the language in different situations and various cultural contexts. Topical syllabus was chosen as the leading syllabus, and situational, task-based and process syllabi – as the supplementary ones (a more detailed analysis in Lūka 2004, Luka 2007a, 2007c).

2. ESP competence for tourism specialists

2.1. Professional activity competence for tourism specialists

The analysis of theoretical literature (Maslo, I. & Tiïlla 2005, Maslo, I. 2006, Tiïlla 2003, 2005, Henschel 2001) reveals different approaches to competence theories – competences as **skills** that had to be acquired when finishing some stage of education (characteristic for the seventies-eighties of the 20th century), competence as **qualification** (typical for the eighties-nineties of the 20th century). Nowadays the term **ability** is often replaced by the term *competence*. It is justified by social and cultural progress, which sets high requirements for an individual to evaluate, analyze, select and accordingly react in unknown situations (Maslo, E. 2003). This approach regards competence as an **ideal of education** and an **analytical category** (Maslo, I. & Tiïlla 2005, Maslo, I. 2006, Tiïlla 2003, 2005), although it has to be remarked that the term competence as an analytical category first appeared in N. Chomsky’s linguistic theory (cf. Chomsky 1969).

In this study the latest approach to competence theory was adopted. Following I. Tiïlla’s approach to competence definition (Tiïlla 2003:55) a definition of professional competence suitable for the situation in Latvia was created. **Professional competence** is an individual combination of gained experience, attitude and abilities developed on the basis of learning which allows a specialist to think strategically, untraditionally implement knowledge, responsibly develop their industry, and creatively work in the chosen profession observing traditions and peculiarities of different cultures.

Many sources describe activity competence or professional activity competence as an integrative competence, which contains all those sub-competences that prevail in each sphere (Tiïlla 2005:23). **Professional activity competence** is characterized by the social nature of the activity and its development, which is based on experience and acquired knowledge. Professional activity competence for tourism specialists consists of cognitive competence (theoretical and practical knowledge of the industry), personal competence (communication abilities and social skills) and technologically-professional competence (creative and constructive problem solving, communication skills, cooperation) (Wilson 2001, Print, Ørnstrøm & Lielsen 2002, Renard 2001). It is one of the components of tourism specialists’ ESP competence.

2.2. Communicative competence for tourism specialists

As people’s interaction in tourism occurs between members of different nationalities and ethnic groups in order to promote a mutually understood cultural context, it is essential to develop intercultural communicative competence.

The term *communicative competence* has been used for more than 30 years. It was introduced by D. Hymes in the seventies of the 20th century (Hymes 1972). Since that time the term *communicative competence* has extended, as well as pedagogical literature has mentioned different other types of competences. Nevertheless, the basic idea of communicative competence is an ability to use language both on a *receptive* and *productive* level (Kitao, S. K. & Kitao, K. 1996). Interpretation of N. Chomsky’s term *linguistic competence* (Chomsky 1969) has also changed. The term *competence* includes not only knowledge about language structures but also knowledge about social rules that determine the use of appropriate *linguistic elements*. This means that *communicative competence* includes *linguistic competence* (Widdowson 1983) and the term *communicative competence* is wider than the term *linguistic competence*. As the development of *communicative competence* has been the primary goal of language learning for more than twenty years, many classifications of *communicative competence* have been created. The most popular ones (Canale & Swain 1980, Bachman & Palmer 1982, Richards & Rogers 1986, Tarone & Yule 1989, Byram 1998) include the following competences: *grammatical competence*, *strategic competence*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *pragmatic competence*, *discourse competence*, *linguistic competence*.

The analysis of these competences (Yalden 1996, Richards & Schmidt, 1983, McKay 2002, Widdowson 1986, Tarone & Yule 1989, Spolsky 1998, Lund 1996, etc.) allows differentiating among them and selecting those competences that form *communicative competence*. Tourism specialist’s *communicative competence* includes *grammatical competence* (*lexis, semantics, morphology, syntax, phonology* and *orthography*), *pragmatic competence* (contextual *lexis*, language *functionality, unity* and constructions for *turn turning* and *continuity of communication*), *discourse competence* (*language exposure* and the *unity of text and situation*), *sociolinguistic competence* (understanding of other cultures, *register, accent, dialects* and *interaction skills*) and *strategic competence* (*verbal* and *non-verbal communication strategies* and *compensation strategies*). All these sub-competences are important for

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

language learning and they are interconnected as a result forming a *communicative competence*, which is a component of *ESP competence*.

2.3. Intercultural competence for tourism specialists

Many scholars stress the cultural aspect of language learning and use, suggesting that knowledge about other cultures helps to learn a language and assess cultural values and peculiarities of the language learner’s nation (for an exhaustive analysis refer to Luka 2007b). The author understands **intercultural competence** as an ability to see and understand differences in one’s own and other people’s cultures and countries, accept them and accordingly react, in conversation and behaviour, treating people in a way which is not offensive, scornful or insulting to the members of other cultures. At the same time it includes the knowledge of one’s own nation and culture, and an awareness of their value, their preservation and development.

Intercultural competence is a component of tourism specialists’ *ESP competence*. It consists of attitude (inquisitiveness and openness, tolerance), declarative knowledge of cultural aspects (facts, concepts) (Dirba, 2004:25) and an ability to operate in different cultural contexts.

2.4. The components of tourism specialists’ ESP competence

The analysis of competence theories, communicative competence and intercultural competence theories and the analysis of international ESP exam requirements and the EU and LR documents enabled the researcher to create a definition of ESP competence for tourism specialists. **ESP competence** is an individual combination of gained experience, attitude and abilities developed on the basis of learning, which allows a specialist, observing different cultural traditions and peculiarities, to creatively implement the English language both receptively and productively in communication and professional work, responsibly develop tourism industry and offer the client a product in an understandable and acceptable way.

ESP competence consists of communicative competence, intercultural competence and professional activity competence. Each of them consists of several sub-competences that interact. The development of ESP competence takes place in action (process) and it is based on students’ experiences, and consequently students form new experiences (see Figure 1).

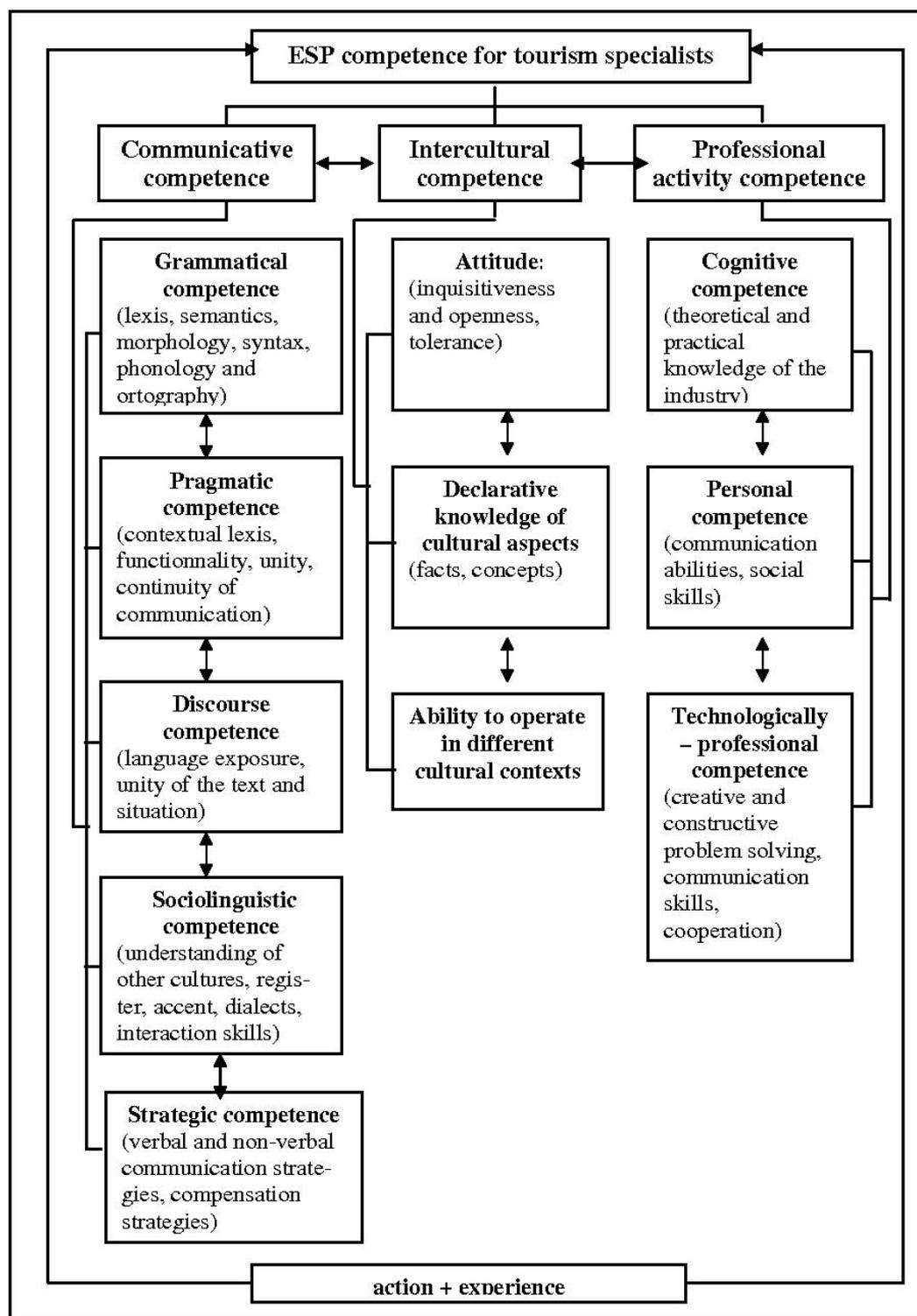


Figure 1. **ESP competence for tourism specialists**

Each component of ESP competence (communicative competence, intercultural competence and professional activity competence) has one criterion:

- **language use for professional duties** (indicators: **mutual oral communication, understanding of a specialized text, business correspondence**) for communicative competence;
- **abilities of intercultural communication** (indicator: **openness and understanding**) for intercultural competence;
- **professional thinking** (indicators: **cooperation and creativity**) for professional activity competence.

Students’ ESP competence can be measured according to three levels: basic, independent and proficient user (see Appendix). In the study process the language (*ESP*) changes its role – from the study course it becomes a means of acquiring one’s profession. Therefore, similar to activity competence, it is an integrative competence which integrates both language aspect and professional activity aspect. English is a component of tourism specialists’ professional competence as tourism specialists use it for professional purposes (for gaining and exchanging of information, interaction, communication, etc.). Professional activity competence, in its turn, is a component of ESP competence as its sub-competences influence the development of language competence (*professional lexis, language use*).

2.5. The model for the development of tourism students’ ESP competence

The development of tourism students’ ESP competence takes place in the study process, which is organized on mutual understanding and cooperation among group mates and students and the teacher. Students themselves construct their knowledge, the teacher only helps if necessary, makes sure that everyone is occupied. Teaching methods and aids are chosen in cooperation with students in order to suit the requirements of the industry and the students’ wishes and learning styles. First, based on the analysis of theoretical literature and empirical needs analysis, ESP curriculum was created (Lūka 2004, Luka 2007a, 2007c). Next, needs analysis on the level of the exact students’ group was conducted in order to adapt syllabus to the group. Syllabus consists of definite themes (usually three themes per term). The ESP competence development model consists of several cycles (see Figure 2).

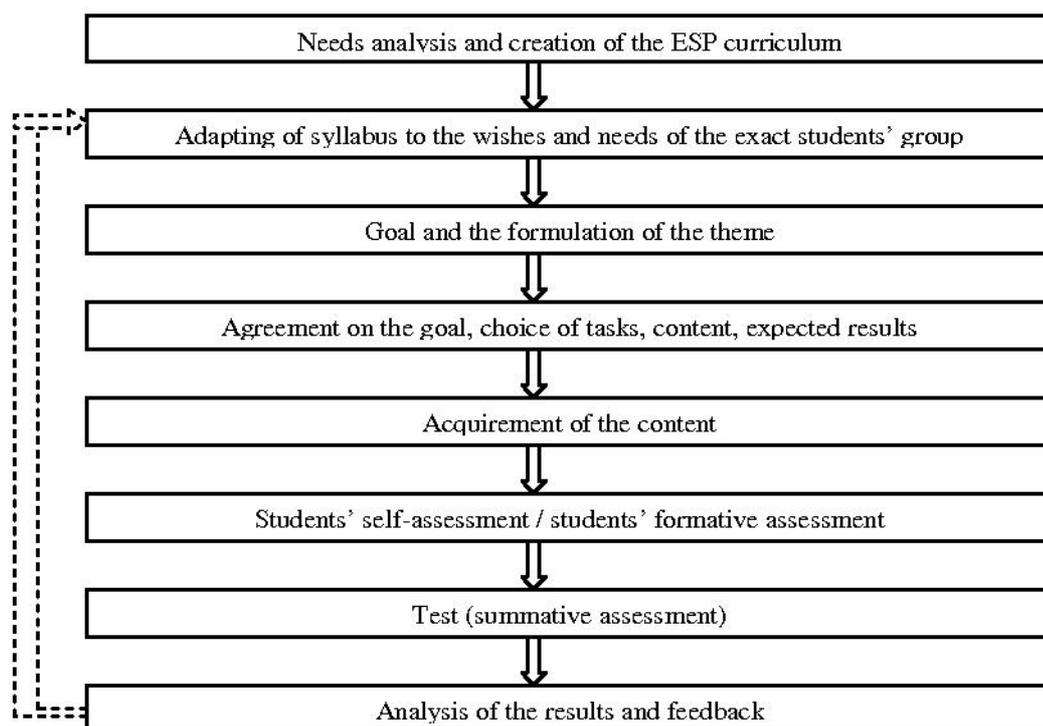


Figure 2. **The model for the development of tourism students' ESP competence**

Each theme forms one cycle. In order to attain the goal of language learning – an ability to communicate in different socio-cultural contexts and be active partners in communication process, students have to develop the skill to cooperate. Taking into account Latvian students' mentality who are usually very reserved and not willing to communicate, the educator faces a difficult task “to break the ice” and get the students involved in communication. The author's experience shows that for successful further cooperation “the ice should be broken” on the first lesson.

When starting to study a new theme the teacher involves students in a discussion in order to find out students' experiences in relation with the topic. After the discussion, done in pairs or groups, each pair/group reflects upon the results of their discussion. Next, the teacher and the group agree on the aim of the theme, the possible tasks, expected results, the form of the test (written test, oral test, report, presentation, etc.). Acquirement of the content consists of three phases: pre-task, task phase and post-task. Pre-task is a short task that has to lead students into the situation/theme. It may be brainstorming, mind-map, dialogue, sharing of experiences, etc. Task phase includes reading/listening tasks, analysis of professional lexis. Students may work in pairs, groups or individually depending on the task. Post-task takes the longest time in the task phase. First there are simpler tasks (e.g.,

questions and answers, substitution exercises, exercises of insertion, true/false tasks, etc.), later the tasks become more complicated and promote not only students' communicative competence but also students' professional thinking (creativity and cooperation) and intercultural communication abilities. For example, dialogues and pair discussion, analysis of professionally related problems, role plays in professional setting, case studies, project work, etc. Home task includes extensive home reading connected with the topic or some creative/formal written work based on the material studied during the lesson. Having studied all the sub-topics of the theme, students fill in self-assessment forms (adapted from Nunan 1991) where they express their opinion on the content, teaching aids, methods, their own success and failure. The teacher fills in similar forms about each student performing formative assessment. After the test (summative assessment) students and the teacher reflect on the previous topic in order to make necessary changes and improvements and start a discussion connected with the next theme. Thus students and the teacher cooperate; they are partners who work for the same aim. The teacher helps the students to develop their language competence whereas the students explain the teacher specific information, which is connected with their profession. Thus the teacher learns together with the students. This cooperation between the students and the teacher forms the basis of creative study process and mutual understanding.

Methods and Results

An interpretive scientific paradigm that corresponds to the humanistic pedagogy was chosen for the research as it creates conditions for the development of each person and helps to develop their potential. The choice of interpretive paradigm was also determined by the researcher's practical interests – the creation of holistic ESP curriculum, and the use of action theory (Vigotskis 2002, Špona & Čehlova 2004, Students 1998a, 1998b, Wilson 2001) social constructivism (Bruner 1973, Vygotsky 1978, Vigotskis 2002, Williams & Burden 1999, Kim 2001, Klafki 1992, Spolsky 1998, Flick 2004a) and symbolic interactionism (Mead 1999, Denzin 2004, Cohen & Manion 2003, Williams & Burden 1999, Flick & von Kardoff 2004, Sandstrom & Kleinman 2004, Gudjons 2007, Каппапа & Сервои 2003) theories in the research and their correspondence to interpretive paradigm.

Having analyzed possible research designs (Cohen & Manion et al. 2003, Denzin & Lincoln 2003, Flick 2004b, 2005, Kardorff 2004, Kelle & Erzberger 2004,

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

Kemmis & McTaggart 2000, Kroplijs & Raščevska 2004, Mayring 2002), evaluation research applying mixed methods of the research was chosen, as it best suits to the research question and the goal of the research (see Figure 3).

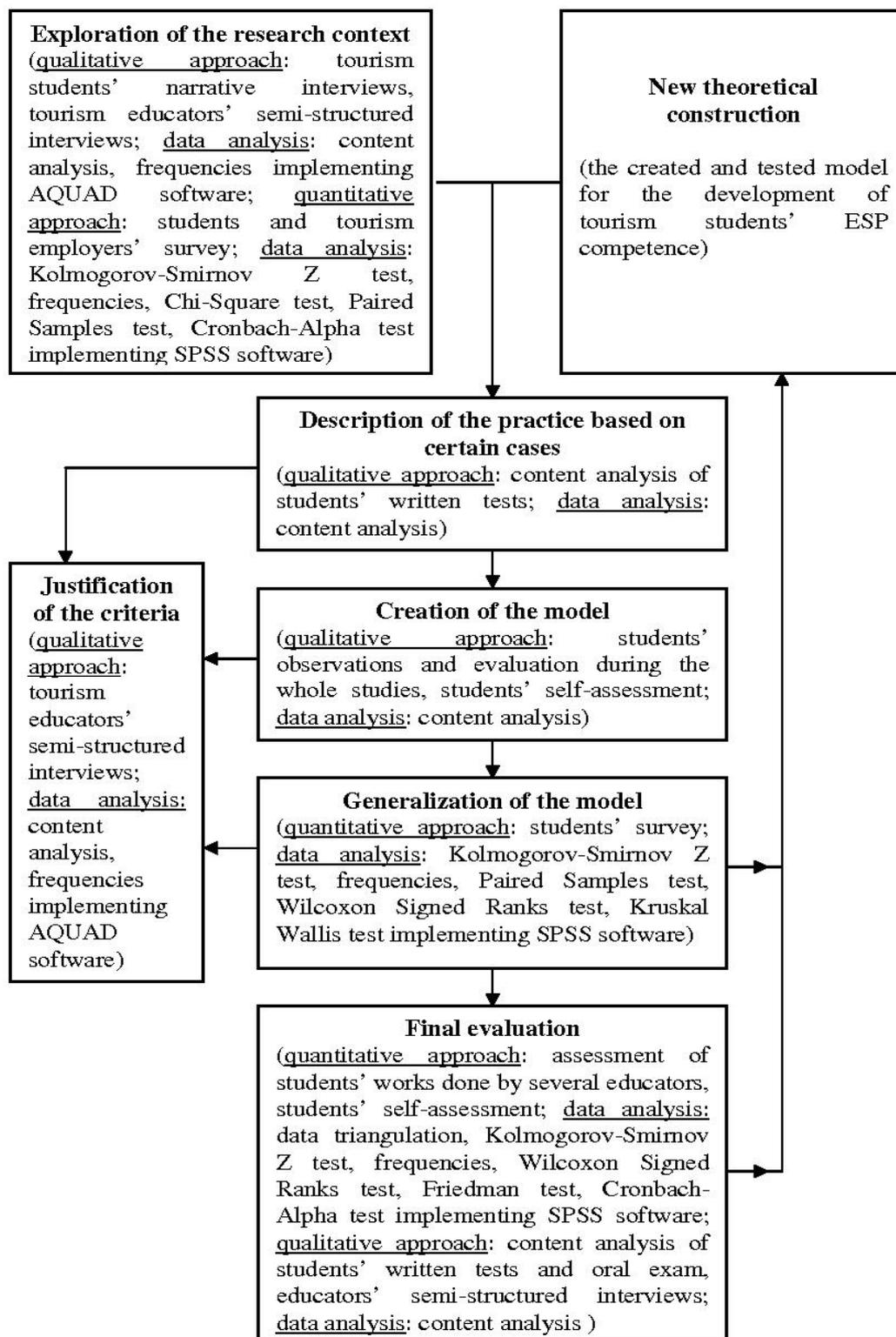


Figure 3. **The research design**

Created based on Mayring, P. *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung*. Beltz, Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2002. p.64.

Exploration of the research context included the analysis of curriculum and syllabus theories, theories of needs analysis and competence theories as well as an empirical needs analysis conducted from September 2003 to September 2004. 137 respondents took part in this stage of the research – 99 students, 12 tourism educators and 26 tourism employers. During the next stage of the research (in autumn of 2004) 156 students took an international exam *English for Tourism Industry* using the sample paper 2043/3/04/F. Three ESP educators according to common criteria (*content, layout, the choice of lexis, grammar and spelling*) marked students’ works (Written English for Tourism 2004). A target group of 9 first year students who studied ESP using the created curriculum and model was chosen. Creation and testing of the model lasted from October 2004 to December 2006. In December 2006 generalization of the results was done. 187 students who had studied ESP using the designed ESP curriculum were questioned.

Justification of the criteria was done by interviewing four tourism educators in whose courses the students’ professional activity and intercultural competences were developed. The semi-structured interview included 12 questions which concerned the educators’ professional background, the course description and evaluation, their opinion about intercultural communication and its development, their understanding of the levels of intercultural and professional activity competence and the assessment of the students’ intercultural and professional activity competence. All educators stressed the importance of intercultural communication, admitted the role of languages and knowledge of psychology and theoretical knowledge of other cultures in intercultural competence. The educator KPTD01 who teaches the subjects connected with hotel business admitted that

“intercultural communication abilities are very important in hotel business as tourism specialists serve the clients who represent different cultures, religions, countries with different hospitality traditions and understanding”.

The educator considers that tourism specialists have to be able to speak the major languages and they have to be aware of the most typical features of different cultures. She explains that a high level of intercultural competence may be described by

“theoretical knowledge of the possible communication, people’s tolerance and openness. The person is not afraid of changes in himself/herself”.

The educator KPTD02 who teaches the subjects connected with restaurant business and business etiquette is certain that

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

“the attitude and manners developed in the childhood form the basis of people’s culture of behaviour”.

She also stressed the necessity of developing students’ professional activity competence by using different role-plays from professional setting thus helping the students to develop their problem solving skills.

A high level of intercultural and professional activity competence is described by “the ability to professionally work in any setting and any cultural context” (from the interview of KPTD03). A low competence level is described not only by unwillingness to make contacts and communicate but it may also be associated with “self-contentment and indifference to others” (from the interview of KPTD04).

The educators told that the courses were orientated to acquire intercultural competence to cooperate with Europeans and admitted that students may have communication problems encountering with Oriental and American cultures.

The data analysis done by applying AQUAD 6 software showed that the educators had mentioned 23 codes connected with professional thinking and 15 codes – with intercultural communication abilities. Most frequently were mentioned such codes: interaction (14 times), communication (10 times), tolerance (9 times), other cultural setting (9 times), culture (8 times). As all the interviewed educators pointed to the fact that the students had acquired the theory but they lack experience, this aspect is included in the description of competence levels, i.e., how independently and creatively students can implement the specific professional knowledge in their work – in communication, cooperation, problem solving. Therefore cooperation and creativity were selected as the indicators of professional activity competence.

During the final evaluation (December 2006 – April 2007) the students’ ESP competence was measured to determine to what extent it had improved implementing the created model. To obtain valid results, data triangulation was used (see Table 1).

First the students filled in self-assessment forms, created based on the competence description (see Appendix), to evaluate their ESP competence. They had to choose the corresponding option to each question. A six-point scale was applied:

- 1(a very low level) and 2 (a low level) – a basic user (low competence level),
- 3 (a medium level) and 4 (a fairly high level) – an independent user (a medium competence level),
- 5 (a high level) and 6 (a very high level) – a proficient user (a high competence level).

Table 1

Final evaluation of the research

Criterion	Participants	Method
language use for professional duties	the target group of students	self-assessment forms
	the students' ESP educator	assessment of students' performance (oral presentation and written work)
	an independent ESP educator	assessment of students' performance (oral presentation and written work)
abilities of intercultural communication	the target group of students	self-assessment forms
	the students' ESP educator	students' observation
	4 tourism educators	students' observation
professional thinking	the target group of students	self-assessment forms
	the students' ESP educator	students' observation (cooperation) and written work (creativity)
	an independent ESP educator (for creativity)	students' written work
	4 tourism educators (for cooperation)	students' observation

The statistical analysis applying SPSS 15.0 software validated the students' ESP competence increase (Student's t test p-value=0.000, Chronbach's Alpha test $\alpha=0.978$).

In order to determine the improvement in the students' ESP competence with regards to the indicators of the criterion **language use for professional duties** students took *English for International Tourism* exam using the sample paper 2043/1/01 of the year 2001. The exam works were marked by two ESP educators according to internationally accepted criteria: *content*, *layout*, the choice of *lexis*, *grammar* and *spelling* (Written English for Tourism 2001, 2004). The maximum possible points to be given were 100 (35 points for the first task, 20 – for the second task, 20 – for the third task, 25 – for the fourth task). The following assessment scale was used: 0 – 59 points – a basic user; 60 – 80 points – an independent user; 81 – 100 points – a proficient user. Content analysis of the works showed that the students' professional language competence had improved. However, the seemingly easiest work – filling in the form, had caused the most difficulties for the students, which may be explained by the fact that they had not carefully read the tasks and had not answered all the questions. The students had improved the knowledge of professional *lexis*, as they had understood the subtle nuances of the given professional texts and they had used specific tourism *lexis* and more creative language in their written works. They had learnt the peculiarities of the formal language style, as they made fewer mistakes in the layout. However, some students

had not improved their writing skill and had not learnt how to write a memorandum. The students had improved professional activity competence as they could offer a more professional solution to the given problems. There was less verbosity in the works; the required information was expressed more precisely. The main grammar mistakes were still connected with the use of the tenses and sentence construction. Spelling corresponded to a proficient user’s level.

Next, the students’ *ESP competence* in the indicator **mutual oral communication** was measured at the oral exam-conference in April 2007. The students had to write a report and make a presentation about tourism in some country. The report had to include tourism development of the country from ancient times to nowadays, including historic, cultural, economic, communication aspects. The student had to analyze the country’s tourism product and give suggestions for its improvement, describe nation’s traditions, habits and lifestyle, mode of behaviour, business customs, explain the country’s tourism tendencies and give the reasons. The students’ ESP educator and an independent ESP educator, based on the created description of competence levels (see Appendix), assessed their ability to present a previously written *speech*, presentation skills, spontaneous answers to the questions, ability to express an opinion, explain, justify, maintain a *conversation*, use appropriate tourism *lexis*, ask questions to other students, keep the contact with the audience. The students showed good knowledge of professional *lexis*, an ability to maintain a *conversation* and good presentation skills. The students could ask questions to their group mates and give justified answers to their questions. Not all of them had a good contact with the audience, which means those students had not developed interaction skills. Majority of the students had fluent *speech* and good *pronunciation* but there were mistakes in pronouncing of economic terms.

In order to measure the students’ ESP competence in the criteria **abilities of intercultural communication** and **professional thinking** four tourism educators were interviewed who also assessed the students’ ESP competence in these criteria. They made their assessment based on the students’ observations during their lessons. The teachers filled in assessment forms, which were created based on the descriptions of ESP competence levels (see Appendix). Then the average assessment was calculated. An independent ESP educator marking the students’ written works and listening to their presentations during the exam measured their **creativity**.

As a result a conclusion can be drawn that at the end of the research 5 students’ ESP competence had reached the level of independent user (medium level) and 4 students’ ESP competence – the level of proficient user (the highest level). The students’ ESP competence levels according to ESP indicators can be seen in Table 2.

The conducted qualitative evaluation research in the field of students’ ESP competence resulted with the definition of ESP competence, determining of its components, criteria, indicators and descriptions of competence levels, the created ESP curriculum for tourism students and the designed model for the development of tourism students’ ESP competence which was tested in tertiary level studies with the students of the Faculty of International Tourism of the School of Business Administration Turiba. The created ESP curriculum was introduced into tourism curriculum of the institution. The designed model for the development of tourism students’ ESP competence is used in further pedagogical practice.

Table 2

The target group’s ESP competence (April 2006)

students	language use for professional duties			professional thinking		abilities of intercultural communication	ESP competence level
	mutual oral communication	understanding of a specialized text	business correspondence	cooperation	creativity	openness and understanding	
1.	high	medium	medium	high	medium	medium	medium
2.	medium	medium	high	medium	low	low	medium
3.	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium
4.	high	high	high	high	high	high	high
5.	high	high	medium	high	high	high	high
6.	high	high	high	high	medium	high	high
7.	high	high	medium	medium	high	high	high
8.	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium
9.	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium

Conclusions

ESP competence is an individual combination of gained experience, attitude and abilities developed on the basis of learning, which allows a specialist, observing different cultural traditions and peculiarities, to creatively implement the English language both receptively and productively in communication and professional work, responsibly develop tourism industry and offer the client a product in an understandable and acceptable way.

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

ESP competence consists of communicative competence (grammatical, pragmatic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence), intercultural competence (attitude, declarative knowledge of cultural aspects and an ability to operate in different cultural contexts) and professional activity competence (cognitive, personal and technologically-professional competence), which are interacting. Its development takes place in action (process) and it is based on students' experiences, and consequently students form new experiences.

References

- Bachman, L. F., Palmer, A. S. 1982. The construct validation of some components of communicative proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly* 16 (4), 451.
- Bruner, J. 1973. Constructivist Theory. In: *Going Beyond the Information Given*. <http://carbon.cudenver.edu> visited on May 1, 2006.
- Byram, M. 1998. Intercultural Communicative Competence – the Challenge for Language Teacher Training. In: *Teaching Towards Intercultural Competence: Conference Proceedings*. Sofia: British Council, 92-103.
- Canale, M., Swain, M. 1980. Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied linguistics* 1 (1), 1-47.
- Chomsky, N. 1969. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., et al. 2003. *Research Methods in Education*. London and New York: Routledge/Falmer Taylor & Francis Group, 3-45.
- Denzin, N.K. 2004. Symbolic Interactionism. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. (ed. Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., Steinke, I.) London: Sage Publications, 81-87.
- Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. 2003. Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. (ed. Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S.) London: Sage Publications, 1-46.
- Dirba, M. 2004. Intercultural learning and language teacher education. In: *European added value in teacher education*. Tartu: University of Tartu, 23-28.
- Elliott, J. 1998. *The Curriculum Experiment. Meeting the Challenge of Social Change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Fulans, M. 1999. *Pārmaiņu spēki: izglītības reformu virzieni*. Rīga: Zvaigzne, ABC.
- Flick, U. 2004a. Constructivism. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. (ed. Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., Steinke, I.) London: Sage Publications, 88-94.
- Flick, U. 2004b. Design and Process in Qualitative Research. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. (ed. Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., Steinke, I.) London: Sage Publications, 146-152.

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

- Flick, U. 2005. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., et al. 2004. Introduction. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 65-66.
- Galvenie Latvijas tūrisma nozari raksturojošie rādītāji 2004.– 2007.gadā. s.a. <http://www.em.gov.lv/em> visited on July 31, 2008.
- Gillet, A. J. 1989. Designing an EAP Syllabus: English Language Support for Further and Higher Education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 13 (1), 92-104.
- Gudjons, H. 2007. *Pedagoģijas pamatziņas*. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.
- Henschel, T. R. s.a. *Dialogische Handlungs- und Entscheidungskompetenzen, Welche Bildung brauchen wir für das Wissenszeitalter?* <http://www.euseg.de/admin/upload/artikel1.pdf> visited on December 13, 2005.
- Hymes, D. H. 1972. On communicative competence. In: Pride, J. B. & Holmes, J. (eds.). *Sociolinguistics. Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 269-293.
- Каправа, Д.В., Сервон, Д. 2003. *Психология личности*. Санкт-Петербург: Питер.
- Kardorff, E. 2004. Qualitative Evaluation Research. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. (ed. Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., Steinke, I.) London: Sage Publications, 137-142.
- Katz, S. 2000. Competency, epistemology and pedagogy: curriculum's holy trinity. *The Curriculum Journal* 11 (2), 133-144.
- Kelle, U., Erzberger, C. 2004. Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Not in Opposition. In: *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. (ed. Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., Steinke, I.) London: Sage Publications, 172-177.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. 2000. Participatory Action Research. In: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (ed. Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S.) London: Sage Publications, 567-605.
- Kennedy, C. 1988. Evaluation of the management of change in ELT projects. *Applied Linguistics* 9 (4), 332.
- Kim, B. 2001. *Social Constructivism*. <http://www.coe.uga.edu/epltt/SocialConstructivism.htm> visited on May 1, 2006.
- Kitao, S. K., Kitao, K. 1996. Testing Communicative Competence. *The Internet TESL Journal* 2 (5), <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-Testing.html> visited on May 12, 2004.
- Klafki, V. 1992. Mācību plānošanas perspektīvā shēma. 1992. In: Gudjons, H. *Pedagoģijas pamatziņas*. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 2007. 258.-262.
- Kropļijs, A., Raščevska, M. 2004. *Kvalitatīvās pētniecības metodes sociālajās zinātnēs*. Rīga: Izdevniecība RaKa.
- Luka, I. 2007a. Development of Students' ESP Competence at the Tertiary Level. In: *Innovations in Language Teaching and Learning in the Multicultural Context. Research papers of International Nordic-Baltic conference of FIPLV*. Riga: SIA „Izglitības soli”, 329-339.

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

Luka, I. 2007b. Development of Students’ Intercultural Competence at the Tertiary Level. *Polish Journal of Applied Psychology* 5 (1), 97-111.

Luka, I. 2007c. Some Aspects of the ESP Curriculum Design for Tertiary Institutions. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic. *The New Educational Review* 11 (1), 63-74.

Lūka, I. 2004. ESP Syllabus Design for Tourism Students. In: *European added value in teacher education*. Tartu: University of Tartu, 151-156.

Lund, K. 1996. Communicative competence – where do we stand? *Sprogforum* 4, 7-19.

Maslo, E. 2003. *Mācīšanās spēju pilnveide*. Rīga: Izdevniecība RaKa.

Maslo, I., Tiļļa, I. 2005. Kompetence kā audzināšanas ideāls un analītiska kategorija. *Skolotājs* 3 (51), 4.-9.

Mayring, P. 2002. *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung*. Beltz, Basel: Beltz Verlag.

McKay, L. S. 2002. *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mead, G. H. 1999. *Play, school and society*. New York: Peter Lang, corp.

More, J. G. 2001. Lifelong Learning Policies in Spanish Universities. *European Journal of Education* 36 (3), 317-327.

No zināšanām uz kompetentu darbību. 2006. Maslo, I. (ed.). Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds.

Nunan, D. 1991. *The Learner – Centred Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Print, M., Ørnstrøm, S., Lielsen, H. S. 2002. Education for Democratic Process in Schools and Classrooms. *European Journal of Education* 37 (2), 193-210.

Profesionālās izglītības centrs. Profesiju standarti. s.a. www.izmpic.gov.lv visited on June 5, 2004.

Renard, P. 2001. The speech during the closing ceremony of the Forty-sixth Session of the International Conference on Education. *Educational Innovation and Information* 109, 1-7.

Richards, J. C. 2001. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., Rogers, T. S. 1986. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C, Schmidt, R. W. 1983. *Language and Communication*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

Sandstrom, K., Kleinman, S. 2004. Symbolic Interaction. In: *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*. Vol. II. ed. Ritzer, G. California: Sage Publications Inc., 821-826.

Spolsky, B. 1998. *Conditions for Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The paper presented at the international bilingual conference “Assessing language and (inter-)cultural competences in Higher Education” in Finland, the University of Turku, 30.-31 August, 2007

Students, J.A. 1998a. *Vispārīgā pedagogija. I daļa*. Rīga: RaKa.

Students, J.A. 1998b. *Vispārīgā pedagogija. II daļa*. Rīga: RaKa.

Špona, A., Čehlova, Z. 2004. *Pētniecība pedagogijā*. Rīga: Izdevniecība RaKa.

Tarone, E., Yule, G. 1989. *Focus on the Language Learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tiļļa, I. 2003. *Pusaudžu sociokultūras kompetences pilnveide otrās svešvalodas mācību procesā*. Ph. D. Thesis (unpublished). University of Latvia.

Tiļļa, I. 2005. *Sociokultūras mācīšanās organizācijas sistēma*. Rīga: Izdevniecība RaKa.

Vygotskis, Ļ. 2002. *Domāšana un runa*. Rīga: Izdevniecība “EVE”.

Vygotsky, L. 1978. Social Constructivism. In: *Mind in Society*. <http://carbon.cudenver.edu> visited on May 1, 2006.

Yalden, J. 1996. *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. 1986. *Explorations in Applied Linguistics 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. 1983. *Learning Purpose and Language Use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, M., Burden, R.L. 1999. *Psychology for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, D. 2001. Reform of TVET for the Changing World of Work. *Prospects. Quarterly review of comparative education* XXXI (1), 21-37.

Written English for Tourism. Level 2. 2001. Information Pack. Code No.: 2043. London: LCCI CET.

Written English for Tourism. Level 2. 2004. Information Pack. Code No.: 2043. London: LCCI CET.

Žogla, I. 2006. *Curriculum jēdziens definīcijās un salīdzinājumā*. In: *Pedagoģija un skolotāju izglītība. Latvijas Universitātes Raksti* 700, 32-42.

Appendix

ESP competence criteria, indicators and levels

	Criterion: language use for professional duties
	Indicator: <i>mutual oral communication</i>
Proficient user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands a long and complicated speech about general and occupational topics 2. Can professionally communicate in English about occupational topics making a clear, well-structured speech and using lexis and grammar appropriate to the situation 3. Can deliver a speech concerning any tourism sphere, can justify their opinion, and maintain a conversation by asking and answering specific questions connected with the tourism industry
Independent user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands the main ideas of a long and complicated speech about general and occupational topics

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Can communicate in English about previously studied occupational topics making a clear, well-structured speech and using professional lexis 3. Can deliver a speech about a previously prepared professional topic, can maintain a conversation by asking and answering questions connected with their professional duties
Basic user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands the main ideas of a simple, slow speech about general and occupational topics 2. Can communicate in English about previously studied occupational topics with a partner’s help 3. Delivering a speech about a previously prepared professional topic can briefly answer the questions connected with their everyday professional duties
<i>Indicator: understanding of a specialized professional text</i>	
Proficient user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can in detail understand long, complicated professional texts 2. Can identify different language styles, can understand the slightest nuances of a professional text, directly and indirectly expressed opinions, and explain them 3. Can scan and skim long, complicated professional texts and find the required information in a little time
Independent user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can understand professional texts connected with their everyday duties 2. Can find the main idea of a professional text and explain it using a sample text 3. Can scan and skim professional texts and find the required information using a dictionary to check the meaning of the terms
Basic user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can understand the main idea of the text, but is not able to convey detailed information 2. Poorly understands professional lexis in specific professional texts 3. Using a dictionary can scan and skim short professional texts in order to find the required information
<i>Indicator: business correspondence</i>	
Proficient user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can write clear, correctly structured business documents that correspond to the layout requirements 2. Can give accurate written answers to clients’ questions using appropriate professional lexis and without inclusion of irrelevant information 3. Spelling is accurate
Independent user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using samples of standard documents of the tourism industry can write similar business documents containing standard phrases and expressions 2. Can give written answers to clients’ questions using basic professional lexis and simple sentence constructions 3. Spelling contains slight mistakes; a student mixes British and American spelling
Basic user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using a dictionary can write a short business document according to the pattern substituting the given information by the required one 2. Can give written answers to clients’ questions imitating the pattern and using elementary sentence constructions 3. Spelling is inaccurate
Criterion: professional thinking	
<i>Indicator: cooperation</i>	
Proficient user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willingly works in pairs, listens to their partner, cheering them and maintaining the conversation 2. Is eager to communicate with group mates, expressing and proving their opinion and listening to others 3. Cooperates with a teacher by giving additional information and improving the teacher’s knowledge 4. Willingly participates in group work involving other students as well
Independent user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willingly works in pairs, takes the leading role in pair work sometimes even not allowing the partner to express their opinion 2. Expresses their opinion but does not show interest in other students’ opinions 3. Asks questions to the teacher about the themes that they do not understand but does not help with additional information 4. Participates in group work being encouraged by the teacher or group mates
Basic user	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does not wish to do pair work, pretends being occupied by other work 2. Is not willing to express their opinion, gives answers only after repeated direct

	questioning 3. Does not ask any questions to the teacher but puts down the teacher’s answers to other students’ questions 4. While doing group work takes the observer’s position
	Indicator: <i>creativity</i>
Proficient user	1. While performing creative tasks in language lessons uses original, untraditional solutions 2. The written text contains rich, creative language and original means of expressing their opinion and ideas 3. While performing problem solving tasks expresses untraditional, creative ways of problem solving 4. Creatively uses knowledge for occupational purposes
Independent user	1. While performing creative tasks in language lessons uses previously learnt and/or implemented solutions 2. The written text contains creative language and previously used ideas that have been adapted according to the situation 3. While performing problem solving tasks uses previously acquired means of problem solving 4. Uses knowledge for occupational purposes, acting according to previously acquired patterns
Basic user	1. Is not willing to perform creative tasks in language lessons 2. The written text consists of basic lexis and some creative means of expressing themselves and contains previously used ideas 3. Can perform a problem-solving task using others’ help and support 4. Uses knowledge for occupational purposes, with support and help received from colleagues and/or the employer
	Criterion: <i>abilities of intercultural communication</i>
	Indicator: <i>openness and understanding</i>
Proficient user	1. Creatively implements intercultural communication and cooperation skills in practice 2. Shows interest in cultural values of other nations, assesses and compares them with the cultural values of their own culture 3. Has learnt different thinking styles and behaviour of other cultures, in practice creatively implements the acquired knowledge 4. Willingly accepts challenge, creatively uses new possibilities, is open to changes, is ready to work in different cultural contexts
Independent user	1. Can use theoretically acquired communication and cooperation skills in similar situations 2. Has theoretically acquired cultural values of other nations but faces difficulties to compare them with the cultural values of their own culture 3. Has learnt different thinking styles and behaviour of other cultures, in practice implements the gained knowledge in similar situations 4. Accepts changes and uses new possibilities when being urged by somebody, is ready to work in different cultural contexts providing he/she receives others’ help
Basic user	1. Can implement theoretically acquired communication and cooperation skills using somebody’s help 2. Has gained information about cultural values of other nations but does not express interest in them and/or evaluates their culture higher than other cultures 3. Has poorly learnt different thinking styles and behaviour of other cultures, can implement the acquired knowledge in practice using support of others 4. Rejects the use of new possibilities, gives priority to well known values, it is difficult to put themselves and work in different cultural contexts, using others’ support can work in a similar cultural context