

English and its Role in the Development of Tourism in Albania and in the World



Linguistics

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Abstract

This paper analyses the use of English in the field of tourism. Considering that tourism is one of the main pillars of the economic development of a certain country, special attention has been paid to the language being used. The use of English in the tourism sector has created many facilities for all those who wish to visit different countries. The economic, cultural, tourism development of England and the United States of America made English gain international use in the field of tourism. Tour operators, travel agencies, tourist guides, receptionists, etc, must have very good knowledge of English. Selective promotional strategies are of great importance in the tourism development sector and the language used is essential in this regard. Also, the use of English during various trips has a number of advantages. This paper also includes a study conducted in Albania involving some employees of the field of tourism. Finally, it was noted the importance of using English for tourism development in Albania.

1. Introduction

English was made an important language for the development of international markets, particularly in the field of tourism and advertising as a result of American domination and influence all over the globe. Human history has shown that the development of tourism, travel, entertainment made it necessary for different nations to communicate with each other. Consequently, a global language that could help to ease communication between people was an emergency.

Many changes over the past two centuries have helped English to achieve its global status. Positively, the British industrialization and the economic power of the United States of America in the 20th century brought about this phenomenon⁸.

Today's tourism is becoming one of the areas that generates more revenue in some countries economy, but also wider. The growth of the tourism industry is also closely related to the favorable conditions of its development and the creation of an appropriate language environment, suitable to welcome tourists who wish to visit these places. English plays a key role in deciding the success or failure of certain trends and destinations of the tourism industry in the world⁹.

⁸Boonyawattana, P. *Needs analysis on English in tourism business*. Chaingmai: Chaingmai University; 1999.

⁹Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pg 32

2. The importance of English in the field of tourism

Language plays a very important role in creating a "tourism viewpoint"¹⁰ and every professional in the tourism industry needs to improve the "language of tourism"¹¹.

English, with its special status as a lingua franca in the field of tourism, has a very large and visible impact on the travel area, including: road signage, various announcements at airports, menus in various restaurants, important information regarding the use and security of credit cards, etc.

After the 1960s tourism reached an international dimension and became a mass phenomenon. Tour operators, travel agencies, tourist guides, receptionists etc. should be very prepared to meet all their clients' requirements. That is why communication in English in the field of tourism is of a great importance. Selective promotional strategies play a key role in the tourism development sector and the language used is essential in this regard.

The language is of great importance in communication and understanding between tourists and tour operators. English is now an international language and most tourism businesses require their employees to speak this language. As tour operators have to work directly with foreigners, the importance of English use as a global language takes on another dimension.

So English has become an international language and it is widely used to exchange and understand ideas among people all over the world. Nowadays, the role of this language in the tourism industry is extremely important as a way to communicate, negotiate and perfect transactions between tourists and employees in the tourism industry.

Considering the fact that tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, its role in the world economy is crucial.

The importance of English in the development of tourism management consists of several key points:

1. The ability to increase customers' satisfaction.
2. The opportunity to expand and improve the language competencies of tour operators.
3. The possibility to motivate tourists from different countries.
4. The possibility of understanding different cultures.
5. The ability to create effective internal and external communication.

¹⁰ The impact of tourism

¹¹ Culture as a determinant of the attractiveness of a tourist region, Ritchie, J. and Zins, M. (1978). *Annals of Tourism*, pg 151

The use of English during different travels has a number of advantages:

1. It provides advantages in making reservations. In this regard, English knowledge as an international language helps to accomplish some goals before and during a trip including ticket purchase, hotel reservation, food ordering, accommodation etc.
2. It provides communication opportunities. If you speak and communicate in this international language you can better explain your preferences during a trip.
3. It enables cooperation with locals. English acquisition enables you to interact with locals, to get acquainted with their lives and culture.
4. It provides the opportunity to communicate with other travelers. English is an international language that facilitates communication between people of different nationalities, it also allows different travelers to share their experiences.
5. It gives you the opportunity to be independent during your trip. As the knowledge of different tourists for the places they visit is insufficient, it is necessary for them to have a tour guide. But English enables travelers to explore these foreign countries even without the help of a tour guide. So this allows them a certain level of independence during travel.

As a result of the above mentioned advantages it turns out that English is an extremely important and useful language when people travel in different countries.

3. The role of English in the development of tourism in Albania

Tourism has become the main pillar of the Albanian economy and it represents 15% of GDP¹². For decades Albania was the most isolated country in Europe but it is now rapidly turning into one of the most attractive, newest destinations in Europe. Albania has now been recognized as a tourist destination on the Mediterranean coast and has a competitive position in the international tourism market¹³. The tourism sector in Albania still has many challenges to face but the first steps have already been made to promote our country in the world. International fairs use slogans and distribute leaflets in English in order to attract a large number of tourists from different parts of the world. By using English as a global language to address as many people all over the world, Albanians as well as citizens of other countries are reaffirming once again the key role this language has in global communication.

As the purpose of this paper is to point out the importance of English use in the field of tourism, 20 employees of tourism businesses in Tirana, 3 tourist businesses in Elbasan and 15 employees of Rogner Hotel in Tirana have been interviewed.

¹²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Albania

¹³ Quirk R. The English language in a global context. In Quirk R, Widdowson HG, editors. English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985. p.1-6.

All of them were asked to complete a questionnaire on the importance and use of English in their workplace. The first part of this questionnaire included some general questions on the use of English in their work, about the importance of this language and their knowledge.

In the second part of the questionnaire, employees were asked to give details of some of the most frequent jobs and activities they needed to use the English language skills.

Employees were given a list of the work and activities they did and were asked to list how frequent they did these things, ranking like: 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Rarely, 1-Never. Then all the data obtained from this questionnaire was presented graphically:

Nr.	Situation	always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
1	When you provide information about the accommodation	5	4	3	2	1
2	Conversation in restaurant with customers	5	4	3	2	1
3	Procedures for registering a client to the hotel.	5	4	3	2	1
4	Description of a hotel room.	5	4	3	2	1
5	Receive an order for meals at the restaurant.	5	4	3	2	1

Tab.1. The use of English in these situations

In the second part of the questionnaire, these employees were asked about the English knowledge in all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and how often they used English.

Skills	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Writing	10%	20%	45%	25%
Reading	20 %	15%	25%	40%
Speaking	45%	35%	10%	10%
Listening	55%	20%	15%	15%

Tab.2. The use of English by employees in the field of tourism

Despite their level of education, they had good knowledge of English and they often used it in the workplace. All the employees stated that English was very useful for their success at work. The respondents, even though they may have little knowledge of English, stated that this language was very essential to communicate with customers at their restaurant and in their hotel.

When the respondents were asked whether they used standard English or professional English, they claimed that 70% of them used standard English and the rest of 30% stated that they used professional English.

4. Conclusions

Human history has shown that the development of tourism, travel, entertainment made it necessary for different nations to communicate with each other. Consequently, a global language that could help to ease communication between people was an emergency.

English, with its special status as a lingua franca in the field of tourism, has a very large and visible impact on the travel area.

Tour operators, travel agencies, tourist guides, receptionists, etc. should be very prepared to meet all their clients' requirements. That is why communication in English in the field of tourism is of great importance.

English is used as a global language although tourists may not have English as their first language, it is used as a communication tool between tourists and hotel staff.

It is absolutely necessary to increase the students' awareness, particularly those in the field of tourism, concerning English language skills, as well as relevant institutions to improve curricula and teaching policies, in order to reach a high level of the acquisition of this language, as a guarantee for a welcoming and attractive tourism.

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