

Tourism English programmes: Do they mirror the reality and the contents of the tourism industry?

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Abstract | The purpose of this research is to identify the English language contents in the tourism educational setting to understand if they address the different aspects of the tourism industry. The study was conducted with information collected from Portuguese public higher education institutions - both universities and polytechnic colleges - which was analysed according to the main economic activities identified at the core of the tourism activity. With this insight of the Portuguese educational setting, the research highlights the importance of the role of English language subjects for the tourism industry.

Keywords | Education in tourism, English for tourism, Portugal, Public higher education, Undergraduate studies.

Resumo | O objetivo deste estudo é identificar os conteúdos leccionados nas unidades curriculares de língua inglesa em cursos da área de turismo para se compreender se os mesmos abordam os diferentes aspectos que constituem a indústria do turismo. O estudo foi realizado com dados relativos a instituições de ensino superior público – do sector universitário e politécnico que foram analisados de acordo com as principais atividades económicas identificadas na indústria do turismo. A percepção da configuração educativa portuguesa apresentada destaca a importância das unidades curriculares de língua inglesa para a indústria do turismo.

Palavras-chave | Educação em turismo; Inglês para turismo; Portugal; Ensino superior público; Licenciatura.

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1 Objectives

Tourism is the largest industry in the world. The World Tourism Organisation foresees a growth in international arrivals from 700 million in 2000 to 1.6 billion by 2020. The rapid growth in tourism dates back to the 1950's and 1980's, when the explosion of mass tourism took place. At the time, the world's international arrivals grew from 25 million to 165 million and tourism-related turnover grew from US\$2 billion to US\$ 18 billion (Costa, 2006). Nowadays, the increasing trend in tourism continues, which makes it a major driver of national economies and a significant employer as well (European Commission, 2013). In 2010, the World Travel and Tourism Council estimated that more than 235.8 million people were employed worldwide due to tourism demand (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012).

In order to gain competitive edge, enterprises need to invest in their services especially because technology has boosted competitiveness to a world scale which will lead to important changes at the personal and professional levels (Salgado, 2007). In order to attract tourists and attain competitiveness, it is important to offer quality services to meet the demands of tourists who have numerous services at their disposal and whose information is accessible anytime, anywhere through technological devices.

One of the factors that helps gain competitiveness is the expertise of professional human resources who work in the industry (Cooper, Gilbert, Fletcher, Wanhill & Shepherd, 1998; Grönroos, 1983). The performance of professionals depends upon their skills, qualities and knowledge to make the tourists' experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) as memorable as possible. Where tourism professionals' knowledge and skills are concerned, these are developed, primarily, during their educational training. Therefore, to train professionals who can cope with the ever growing demands of the industry is of extreme importance. Tourism education needs to grant high levels of access to knowledge and to concepts and techniques related to tourism which are adapted to

the competitive market. According to Cooper et al. (1998) it is the educators' role to facilitate innovation, encourage empowerment, motivate the workforce and, together with industry, to work in order to overcome the problems of tourism.

The goal of this paper is to map the educational setting in Portuguese public higher education institutions where English language contents are concerned (both in universities and in polytechnic colleges). Another goal is to verify whether, in terms of language-use themes, the programmes deal with the same tourism related contents; if contents differ according to the main area of the course (hotel management; tourism information; tourism; tourism management; and other tourism related courses) or according to the region they are taught in. The analysis also intends to identify if new trends in tourism, such as technology enhanced experiences, are being approached and given relevance in the English language programmes.

2 Literature review

Studies on tourism are still in their infancy, therefore, there is little consensus about what Tourism is. Tourism is a worldwide industry studied from different angles, from Sociology to Geography and Economics, among many others, as identified by Jafari and Ritchie (1981). Therefore, tourism courses are a combination of different subjects. In the following paragraphs we will attempt to show how diverse the area is and how different disciplines provide contributions to tourism.

In order to understand the categorisation of contents made in the analysis below, it is important to focus on the components that make up the tourism industry. Therefore, a brief overview of tourism and of its constituents is presented here.

Tourism and leisure are two interconnected concepts. From a holistic point of view, leisure may be defined as a time free from the obligation of work.

For Torkildsen (2005), leisure is divided into four constituent parts: time; expenditure; a state of being. It is the “time left over after work, sleep, and personal and household chores have been completed” (Boniface & Cooper, 1994, p. 1). This time is restorative (Edginton, Coles, & McClelland, 2003), and it is a right that the individuals have which is recognised by the United Nations (1948). Leisure time can be used in a personal and creative way (Edginton et al., 2003). Individuals and groups interpret leisure differently. For some, leisure can occur when watching TV or running the marathon (Ali-Knight, & Robertson, 2004). Therefore, leisure may be seen both as an attitude of mind and a measure of time.

When leisure time is used by people to temporarily move to destinations outside the normal place of work and residence and undertake activities during their stay in those destinations, as well as use the facilities created to cater to their needs, then people engage in tourism (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Murphy defines tourism as “the sum of [...] the travel of non-residents (tourists, including excursionists) to destination areas, as long as their sojourn does not become a permanent residence. It is a combination of recreation and business” (Murphy, 1985, p. 9). Leiper (1979, pp. 403-404), defines tourism as

the system involving the discretionary travel and temporary stay of persons away from their usual place of residence for one or more nights, excepting tours made for the primary purpose of earning remuneration from points en route. The elements of the system are tourists, generating regions, transit routes, destination regions and a tourist industry. These five elements are arranged in spatial and functional connections. Having the characteristics of an open system, the organization of five elements operates within broader environments: physical, cultural, social, economic, political, technological with which it interacts.

Finally, the World Tourism Organisation (1994, p. 5) enacted that “tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places out-

side their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes”. From the previous definitions, contingent factors such as tourist demand and supply are part of the concept of tourism.

Tourist demand is crucial in tourism because its characteristics; needs; perceptions and changes are essential to design tourism supply (Neves, Magalhães & Lourenço, 2007). Tourism demand depends strongly and above all on the economic conditions of tourist generating markets. When economies grow, the levels of disposable income usually rise as well and a relatively large part of discretionary income is spent on tourism.

Nowadays, the interest in travelling to different parts of the globe is influenced by the globalisation of markets and by the unprecedented access to information about world destinations, which technology has provided. However, the demand factors are not dealt with in the scope of this work.

The supply side of tourism, on the other hand, is, according to Smith (1988, p. 183), “the aggregate of all businesses that directly provide goods or services to facilitate business, pleasure, and leisure activities away from the home environment”. Supply, just like demand, is also influenced by globalisation and by technology. Nowadays, tourism services and tourist opinions on these are available anytime, anywhere, either from official business websites or from traveller-generated content websites. Therefore, in a time when interest in different parts of the globe has risen among tourists, the tourism industry needs to provide differentiated and qualified services to attain tourist satisfaction in order to allow companies to succeed and be competitive (Neves et al., 2007) on a worldwide scale. Besides, it is by granting satisfaction that positive feedback is conveyed by tourists in the various online information sources.

Quality and providing memorable experiences is, therefore, essential in tourism because this industry is different from those that sell goods. “Goods are produced, services are performed” (Rathmell, 1974, p. 58), whereas goods are purchased and confer

ownership of an item that can be used or consumed according to the owners' choice of time and place, services are experiential products (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993; Kotler, 1984). Services are purchased through an "exchange transaction that does not confer ownership but permits access to and use of a service usually at a specified time and place" (Middleton et al., 2009, p. 46). Therefore, services are purchased; provided and consumed simultaneously. Due to this simultaneous occurrence, the interaction between supplier and consumer needs to be perfect so that the experience is memorable (Baum, 2006) and competitive edge is attained.

In order to provide memorable experiences human resources play an essential role because it is they who provide access to the services. For example, the travel agent ensures access to the trip by arranging the necessary material; the hotel staff interacts with the tourist on site and may provide information about the places the tourists are visiting. Therefore, the professionals are strategic elements in tourism (Neves et al., 2007) who may be seen as direct mediators between tourism supply and demand. This means that their training needs to be consumer oriented and of high quality. To pledge for quality education, higher education institutions need to be aware of the market trends and needs.

In order to verify whether the English language programmes in Portuguese public higher education institutions follow tourism trends where supply is concerned, it is necessary to find a theoretical framework of analysis which is explained below.

2.1. Theoretical background on tourism supply

Supply in tourism is delivered by numerous service providers (hotels, travel agencies, among others) and in order to assure the quantification of the contribution of tourism to the economies, several organisations (the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat)) developed a coordinated system of 'tourism satellite accounts'¹ (TSA). These use an internationally recognised framework for measuring tourist activity and the importance of tourism to national or regional economies. They have the same concepts, definitions and classifications as common ground.

Regarding supply, the seven main economic activities identified at the core of the tourism activity that serve as background to the TSA are: accommodation; food and beverage; transportation; intermediaries, tour operators, travel agencies and tourist guides; rent-a-car; cultural services and leisure and recreation activities (Costa, 2006).

Some of the aforementioned economic activities serve as major support for clustering the analysis presented here. These activities are the broad themes under which the contents of the programmes we analysed are categorised. Other categories were adapted from Inskeep's tourism plan components (1991). He regards tourism as an inter-related system of demand and supply factors. However, as previously mentioned, only the supply side factors are considered in this work.

In Inskeep's model (Figure 1), the supply factors comprise institutional elements; tourist attractions and related activities; transportation facilities and services; accommodation; other tourist facilities and services; and, finally, infrastructures.

The present work adopts some of the components that make up these two models and uses other authors to support the categorisation made with regard to the language programme contents. Other components, however relevant for the tourism industry, are not included in the categorisation because they are not reflected in the programme contents under analysis.

¹ For the 2013 TSAs report results were submitted by 22 countries (17 Member States, 3 EFTA countries and 2 candidate countries). The 17 Member States account for nearly 90 % of tourism activity in Europe and are thus likely to be representative of the EU as a whole. This worldwide commitment and development of Tourism Satellite Accounts show evidence of how tourism planning is perceived as well as its importance.

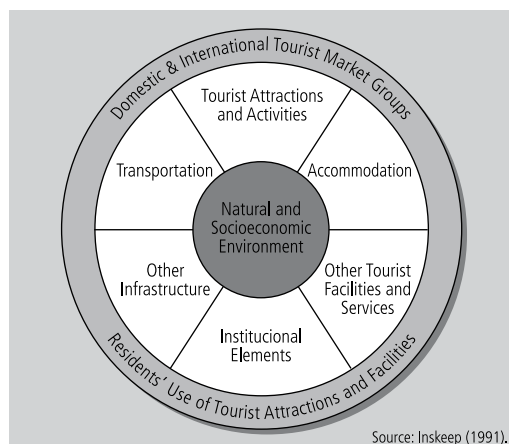


Figure 1 | Components of a Tourism plan.

The first tourism related area that serves as aggregating theme is the institutional elements involved in tourism (Inskeep, 1991). These are recognised as necessary to develop and manage tourism. Institutional elements include public and private sector tourism organization structures, such as tourist boards; marketing strategies; promotion programmes to inform tourists about the country or region, and induce them to visit it and education and training programs, to prepare persons to work effectively in tourism. Tourist information facilities and services in the destination areas are also important institutional elements on the supply side (World Tourism Organisation, 1994a; Inskeep, 1991).

Other institutions and people that render tourism services and are used as an aggregating theme are intermediaries, tour operators, travel agencies and tourist guides (TSA's model). Each one accounts for the success of travel related issues. In the specific case of guides they have a fundamental role in helping the tourists interpret the places visited (Carvalho-Oliveira & Cymbron, 1994).

² Leiper (1990) identified the tourism industry as a 'system' with three distinct regions which comprise a tourist generating region (tour operators and travel agents); a transit route region (all forms of transportation for moving tourists to and from their destinations); and a tourist destination region (accommodation and all visitor attractions, leisure and entertainment amenities).

Another key element in tourism supply, (TSA's model, Smith, 2013, p. 268; Inskeep, 1991), is accommodation, a "service for which a significant portion of demand comes from visitors". In other words, if tourism did not exist, some accommodation services would not exist either or would exist in less quantity. Although accommodation types are very varied, its stratification is not detectable in the analysed programmes.

Another essential component of the tourism industry, which is approached in the analysis, is transportation. This renders the tourism activity possible within the European Union as well as tourism to and from the EU (Robbins & Dickinson, 2013) and it is responsible for 15-20% of all passenger km in the EU (Peeters, Szimba, & Duijnsveld, 2007). Transportation is divided into surface (either by land, water) and air transportation, following Inskeep's (1991) categories. Rent-a-car, on the other hand, even though it is a mode of transport, accounts for a separate item for TSA's and it is treated as a separate category, as well, in the analysis.

The following key content is destinations which can be a resort or a town, a region, a whole country or even a large area of the globe (Holloway, 1989). Destinations account for the third element in Leiper's (1990) tourism system² but, indeed, it is the most important factor in tourism because it brings together all the elements of tourism, from the demand and supply, to transportation and marketing. It is the destination that attracts tourists; it is the reason for doing tourism and it energises the whole tourism system (Cooper et al., 1998). The supply of destinations is expanding because more remote locations are raising interest among tourists. This trend is also increasing as the "pleasure periphery reaches ever more distant and remote locations" (Cooper et al., 1998, p. 102).

In the case of this analysis, it is not possible to identify whether destination trends are being dealt with or not in the English classes. This happens because in the programmes destinations occur either as a broad content item, without specifying any des-

tionation in particular, or, when specified, it accounts for Portugal only and some of its cities.

Another component of tourism which is mentioned in programmes is attractions (TSA's) (Inskip, 1991). These can be natural or artificial features or even events and it is they that generate the initial motivation to visit a destination (Cooper et al., 1998). They give rise to excursion circuits and create an endemic industry (Boniface & Cooper, 2012). Peters (1969) classifies attractions into cultural attractions (museums, historic buildings); traditions (music, folklore); scenic attractions (wildlife, national parks) and others (health resorts, for example). Peters' classification is added in this category as his classification is adopted in the analysis because some programmes specify the type of attraction dealt with.

In order to allow awareness of attractions, Marketing is a powerful tool (Carneiro, Costa, & Crompton, 2013). It helps destinations gain competitiveness through the image they convey about the places near the potential visitors. Promotion of the tourism services is essential because they are perishable (Riley, 1991) – if the service or product is not sold on any given day, the revenue it could bring in is not recoverable (Middleton et al., 2009). Through marketing, the impact of perishability is reduced to manageable proportions. Besides, product promotion is a prerequisite for satisfying tourists' changing demands and ensuring the long-term profitability of the industry (Smith, 1994).

Tourism marketing, however, is different from marketing in other industries. The tourism industry has its idiosyncrasies since it "is not an 'industry' in the conventional sense as there is no single production process, no homogeneous product, and no locationally confined market" (Tucker & Sundberg, 1988, p. 145). Bearing these characteristics in mind, it is important that undergraduates acquire marketing knowledge and are able to promote the services they will work with.

As tourism services are provided and consumed in immediacy, it is required that the staff can provide as much accurate information as possible to ensure

the best service (Riley, 1991). They are required to tackle considerable information about the destination they work in, both in person or at a distance (via email or on the phone, for example). Therefore, communication skills through these media are required among professionals. The presence or absence of these skills is also to be analysed in the programmes.

The above information which professionals need to provide for tourists is very varied. It ranges from explanations about the services (such as food and beverage; safety and security procedures) to broader information about recreation activities that can be practiced to refresh strength and spirit (Boniface & Cooper, 1994). It can also be about festivals; events (Getz, 2007), and entertainment available (Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004), for example. Therefore, it is necessary that the tourism professionals' training and academic knowledge provides them with the necessary tools to become an added value in this highly complex and highly changing industry.

After reviewing these major areas, it is the objective of this work to understand which ones are covered in the English language programmes in public higher institutions and to understand, as well, if they occur in a unified manner in the different Statistic Territorial Units in Portugal (NUTS). These Statistic Units group the Portuguese sub-regions. There are three NUTS levels, NUTS II being the chosen level for this work as it accounts for a division of mainland Portugal (North, Center, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve) and the isles (Azores and Madeira).

2.2 Tourism education

Before presenting results it is important to further understand the reality of tourism education in Portugal as well as some of the major theoretical concerns in this regard. A review of this subject is carried out in this part.

The human resources who work in tourism still demonstrate lack of professional qualification in Por-

tugal mainly due to the lack of recognition, among the tourism employers, of the centrality of this need. Many people who work in the industry do not have qualifications in tourism, mainly because qualified staff and stable and long lasting employment is not given importance by employers. Besides, the employers do not invest much in the requalification of their employees either (Neves et al., 2007).

Where academic education in tourism is concerned, it has to be broad enough to tackle the wide range of requirements and skills that the job market demands from professionals yet have enough specific focus to be pertinent and readily applicable. In order to educate professionals for the competitive tourism industry, it is crucial that higher education institutions provide rigorous curricular planning (Salgado, 2007) as well as access to cutting edge knowledge. One of the many areas that cannot be disregarded in education is technological innovation.

Technology has stimulated the emergence of a more sophisticated, more demanding and more knowledgeable tourist. Technology has provided the tourist with more power and control over the different areas that make up the tourism industry. It has helped create the 'prosumer' who is the consumer who designs customised and economical travel experiences by himself (Moutinho, Rate & Ballantyne, 2013). Technology allows 24/7 access to tourism related information – from applications to augmented reality – anytime, anywhere.

Technology also makes the tourist, and potential tourist, accessible to the professional tourism players as well. Therefore, tourism has at its disposal powerful, technology-enhanced tools to reach customers (Buhalis & Matloka, 2013) and it is up to higher education institutions to provide access and foment awareness of these advanced means that are changing the tourism scenario.

As for tourism education, the 1980's was a pivotal decade. At the time, formal attention was being paid to the problems the field of tourism was facing. By then, tourism was still struggling for recognition as a major socio-economic force and very few

organisations or associations existed where tourism education issues could be raised (Ritchie, 1990). The 1990's was a landmark for tourism education and training as it was accorded recognition to ensure that well trained personnel work in the industry. Attention is paid to tourism as a multidimensional industry which requires multidisciplinary programs which integrate both education and training needs, to meet the needs of the industry. Focus was put in the capacity of the individual: the capacity to generalise, 'learn to learn', and to be creative when facing new situations without paralysing when facing the unknown. In order to achieve this, research based educational programmes must be put in place. For these to exist, studies in tourism need to be regarded as multidisciplinary which makes the contribution of a broad range of disciplines of utmost importance to design and deliver educational programmes (Jafari & Ritchie, 1981).

According to Neves et al. (2007) in tourism education it is presupposed that a common reference of education (for example a common database) is essential as well as new educational methodological strategies (pedagogical, didactic, operational, technological and scientific). There is also the need for the definition of programme contents which are innovative and permanently updated, offering training strategies which are relevant for the job market. The relevance for the market is achievable by making the industry identify its training needs (by showing good practices to the market stakeholders, for example) and making them identify its problems (e.g. training needs) and proposing solutions for the problems identified (customised training). In this way, companies get involved in the training/education process as well.

In the case of Portugal, tourism is a major economy driver therefore attention needs to be given to tourism education, taking into consideration the market demands and the government regulations as well. In Portugal, the most functional tourism area regarding training of staff is hospitality (Neves et al., 2007) because training is regarded not as an added

cost but as an investment from which profit will be gained. This is because improved quality service ensures regular clients. This may be the reason why this sector employs mostly qualified workers (from marketing to human resources). However, other stakeholders of the industry, besides hospitality stakeholders, need to be made aware of their importance to the training of professionals and future professionals.

If human resources are encouraged to develop their skills, companies will be able to develop high quality tourism products (Baum, 1993; Go, 1993; Jafari, 1993; Baum & Conlin, 1996; Jafari & Fayos-Sola, 1996; Johns, 1996) and reach service quality and excellence, essential in the current competitive international market. It is by having a skilled workforce that the tourism sector can uphold and improve its competitive advantage. The representatives of the industry are, therefore, important partners in tourism higher education curricular design. However, little interest in cooperation is identified (Salgado, 2007). Thus, Salgado (2007) refers to the importance of an educational network in tourism studies. This network would count on the cooperation of institutions, the government and the industry stakeholders.

In the specific case of language learning in tourism education, the major concern of this work, Ritchie (1990) recognises its importance, while it was originally absent from Jafari's model of 'Disciplines of relevance to tourism studies' (Ritchie, 1990, p. 128).

In his study, Holloway (1993) mentions that in Europe, the continental countries place great emphasis on learning foreign languages, unlike in the United Kingdom. In vocational education, for example, most students have a strong foundation in at least one foreign language or even two. The aim of language teaching, in these countries, is to teach language in use with emphasis on everyday speech. An example of how languages are perceived as being important, in continental countries, is that many young people travel or work abroad with the aim of

improving their language skills. Besides, languages in tourism are perceived as being of extreme importance, as language knowledge, along with other skills, is a requirement often demanded by employers of the industry. As far as higher education is concerned, Lavery (1989) highlights that languages form an integral part of undergraduate courses in many countries, whereas in the UK, languages are optional units. In Portugal, the supply of strategic domains for the sector, such as competence in foreign languages for tourism, is perceived as insufficient (Neves et al., 2007). Given this final statement, it is the aim of this work to understand which language learning contents are approached and if this can be a factor towards the insufficiency put forward by Neves et al. (2007).

3 Methodology

The research methodology adopted relies on the analysis of English language programmes of public higher education in order to verify whether these curricula tackle tourism related subjects or if, on the contrary, they focus on non-tourism related themes. The methodology here described also allows us to verify what subjects are dealt with more frequently. Finally, through listing the areas covered by programmes, it is possible to substantiate whether new tourism trends are being dealt with, in order to make the learning experience as enriching and up to date as possible.

In order to analyse the English language programmes for the Tourism courses, the research relies on data gathered in the academic year of 2011-12 at bachelor level. The chosen universe was public higher education institutions. These account for more offer (according to figure 2, which represents the number of s) and more demand (Figure 3) in the national sphere, since the inception of tourism degrees in Portugal, in 1986.

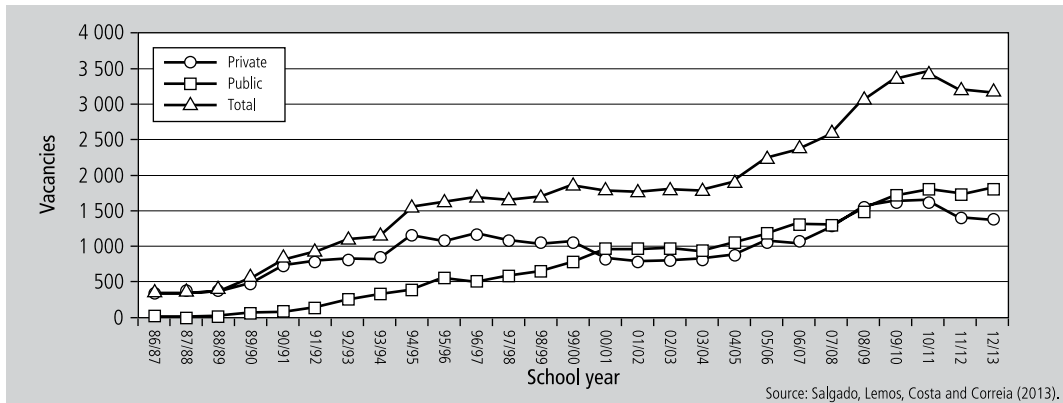


Figure 2 | Vacancies in higher education in tourism in Portugal.

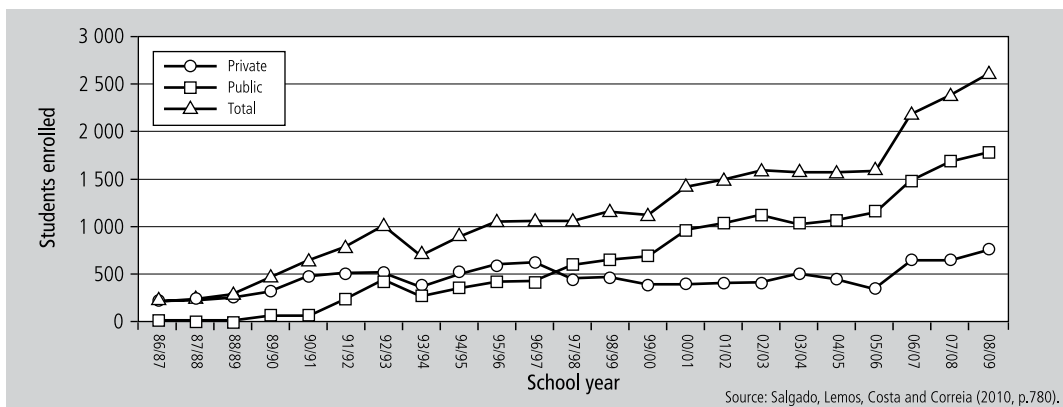


Figure 3 | Students enrolled for the first time in tourism in higher education.

For the initial identification stage, a list of courses that exist in Portugal was compiled, both on the mainland and on the isles, by using the websites of the institutions. From the data gathered, there are 51 tourism related courses. One of the institutions offers the same course in a different city, therefore it will be considered twice for statistical purposes. In other institutions, however, 12 courses are offered in different teaching schedules besides the day schedule (eleven of these are taught as evening courses and one in a distance teaching programme). These 12 courses are omitted from statistical analysis to avoid biased results as they have the same programme as the day courses. In practice, out of the universe of 51 courses, 39 are analysed.

After having considered this information, the institutions were contacted, in order to have access to the programmes of the curricular units. Each item of the content of the programme was, then, inserted in a database under categories which account for the supply elements because these give better insight into the work carried out. This option was made taking into consideration that the main objective of this work is to shed light onto the educational programmes being offered. In this regards, education is part of the supply side.

In order aid this categorisation, data was clustered in either one, two or mixed levels of analysis. In either case a broad theme was identified, following the TSA, Inskeep's (1991) models with some adapta-

tions. There are some contents that are categorised under the theme of 'General English' because they refer to general language items which do not fit into the themes of any particular tourism category, as can be seen in, for example 'Question words'. Besides, there is a final category named 'Non tourism/non general English' because they cannot be framed under any of the previous, like for example 'Recording vocabulary' or 'Revision' which are teaching strategies or activities rather than contents. Finally, the results obtained from the categorisation were submitted to sequencing, in order and frequency of occurrence to understand which contents were given more relevance.

4. Discussion and main results

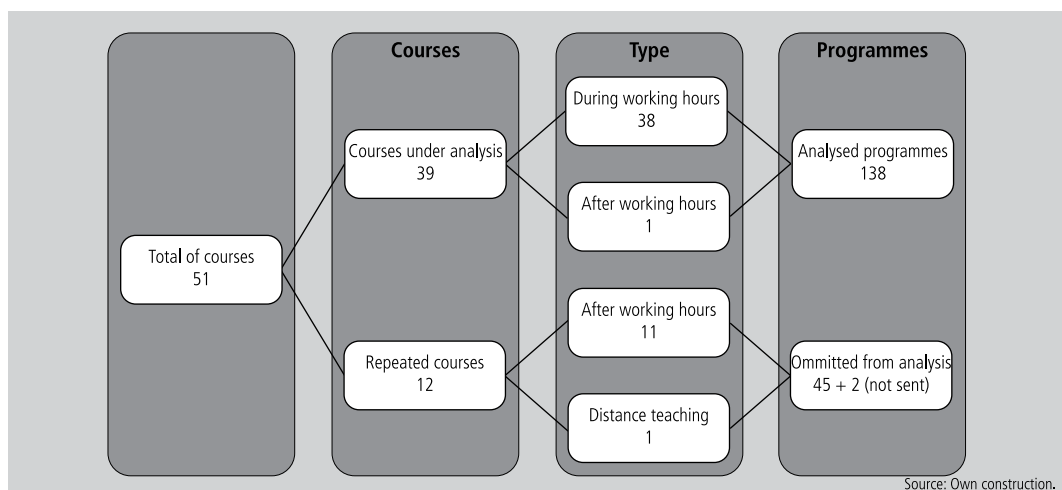
From the data collected, it is verified that there are 185 English curricular units (Figure 4). In practice, for the above mentioned reasons, only 140 were analysed. From the universe of 140 programmes only 2 were not sent to the researcher for analysis. Despite this, the data gathered allows for sustained analysis and conclusions to be drawn, as these two only represent around 1% of the universe.

The number of English curricular units varies in the different tourism related courses. As there are very different course designations, a division has been made, taking into consideration the first term of the courses. The result of the categorisation was the following: Tourism (15 courses); Tourist Information (3 courses); Tourism Management (9 courses); Hotel management (5 courses) and other tourism related courses (7 courses).

In each of these categories, the number of curricular units was analysed. They range from the first to the third year of studies which, in some cases, totalise six semesters. The results are presented from figure 5 to figure 10.

From the analysis some conclusions can be drawn. First, the number of English curricular units is not homogenous within the same course area or among the different course areas. Second, 'Tourism', 'Tourist Information' and 'Tourism Management' courses are the ones which comprise a longer contact with the language (2-6 curricular units). However, 'Hotel Management' scores less contact (2-5) followed by other Tourism related courses (1-4). Third, most courses comprise four curricular units.

In the second part of the analysis, which refers to the contents taught in the English language curricular units, several denominations were found.



Source: Own construction.

Figure 4 | Summary of courses and programmes.

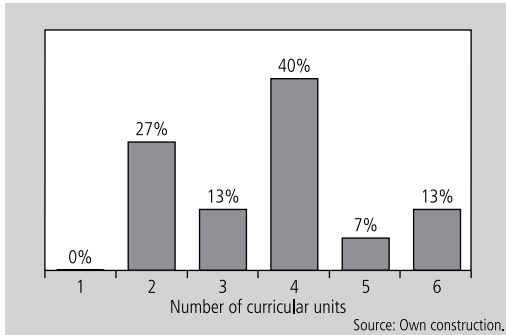


Figure 5 | Number of courses with English curricular units in tourism courses.

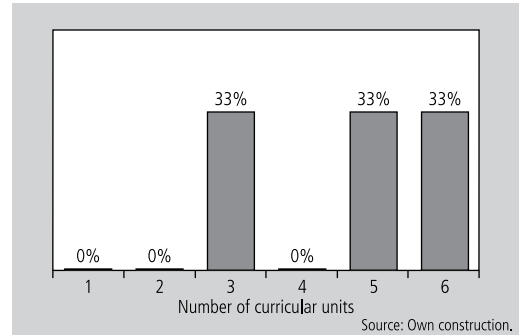


Figure 6 | Number of courses with English curricular units in tourist information courses.

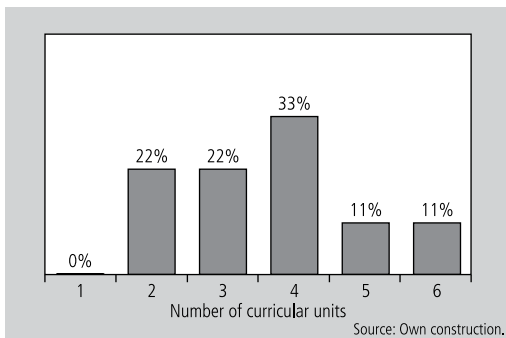


Figure 7 | Number of courses with English curricular units in tourism management courses.

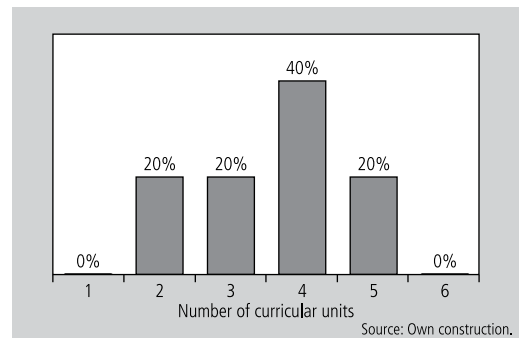


Figure 8 | Number of courses with English curricular units in hotel management courses.

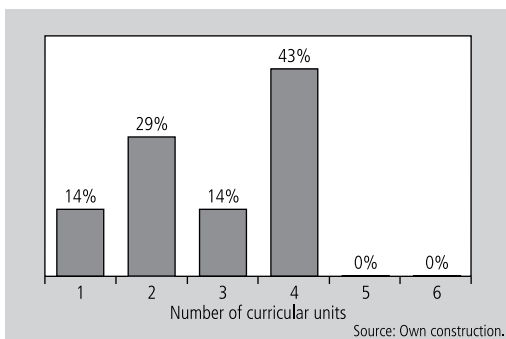


Figure 9 | Number of courses with English curricular units in other tourism related courses.

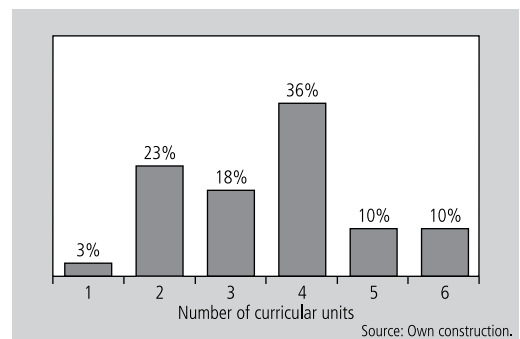


Figure 10 | Total English curricular units in the tourism area courses.

For this reason it was found necessary to group them. These groups were established according to the broad themes identified through tourism supply elements, as previously mentioned (Inskip and TSA's). During the data collection process the classifications were adapted by adding themes to include language specific contents and contents that did not

fit in the language or in the tourism classifications. Table 11, below, provides a list of the theme groupings used for the analysis.

From the data gathered and the literature review, some conclusions can be drawn. First, the programmes contain a wide variety of contents; the subjects in the area of tourism are also varied. Besides,

contents are not consistent in terms of wording for, as was to be expected, people designate similar or comparable contents differently which made it necessary to find common superordinate terminology to classify items collectively. From the analysis we can also conclude that several areas (22) are covered, from accommodation (the most recurrent) to rent-a-car (the least recurrent). Although the 22 broad themes appear as separate units of analysis, they are, indeed, permeable among themselves because they all contribute to energising the tourism industry and without which tourism would certainly be less appealing, less competitive or even jeopardised.

After identifying the major themes at national level, an analysis by territorial statistic units (NUTS II) was conducted (Table 1).

From the data gathered, a final analysis was made in order to understand which themes were the most frequent at national level (Figure 11).

It can be said that tourism involves a number of activities and some of those activities appear in the list of contents that are taught. However, in spite of

the fact that tourism comprehends an amalgam of activities, English language curricular units prove unable to address them all.

From the previous analysis it is hoped to have shed light firstly, how language curricular units are distributed and, secondly, on how the English language contents are organised. In both cases, we can conclude that there is no balance. Furthermore, in some cases, there is no clear mention to what the presented subjects refer to, which makes it difficult to categorise the contents of the programmes. There should be enough description in the programmes so that each of the content items mentioned them would clearly refer to a specific tourism or language topic.

Finally, due to great difference in the choice of possible contents it would be advisable that broad themes be established as well as sub-themes to ensure a more homogenous framework from which the higher education institutions would choose the most appropriate ones for their students. These would take into consideration geographical location and

Table 1 | English contents in public tourism related higher education courses in NUTS II

Contents	North	Center	Lisbon	Alentejo	Algarve	Azores	Madeira
Accommodation and reservations	2,84%	6,58%	0,45%	1,05%	1,79%	0,15%	N/A
Conceptualisation	3,29%	5,23%	0,60%	0,45%	1,35%	0,60%	N/A
Marketing	3,74%	4,04%	0,60%	0,45%	1,35%	0,45%	N/A
Intermediaries, tour operators, travel agencies and tourist guides	2,24%	3,29%	0,15%	0,45%	1,79%	0,60%	N/A
Food and beverage	1,64%	4,33%	0,90%	0,45%	0,60%	0,15%	N/A
Tourist attractions	2,54%	0,75%	0,90%	0,60%	1,05%	0,30%	N/A
Human resources	1,35%	1,49%	0,60%	0,30%	1,49%	0,90%	N/A
General English	0,30%	3,14%	0,00%	1,49%	0,75%	0,45%	N/A
Business and products	0,90%	1,64%	0,45%	0,90%	1,35%	0,30%	N/A
Billing	1,05%	2,24%	0,00%	0,00%	0,15%	0,30%	N/A
Destinations and regions	0,60%	0,30%	1,64%	0,30%	0,45%	0,15%	N/A
Transportation	0,75%	1,64%	0,00%	0,15%	0,45%	0,15%	N/A
Communication	0,90%	1,20%	0,30%	0,15%	0,00%	0,30%	N/A
Institutional elements	0,45%	0,60%	0,00%	0,30%	0,90%	0,00%	N/A
Future/ Trends	0,30%	0,30%	0,75%	0,00%	0,60%	0,15%	N/A
Festivals and events	0,45%	0,30%	0,00%	0,45%	0,60%	0,00%	N/A
Non General English/ Non Tourism	0,00%	1,49%	0,00%	0,15%	0,00%	0,00%	N/A
Safety and security	0,30%	0,90%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	N/A
Food and health care	0,15%	0,60%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	N/A
Leisure and Recreation	0,00%	0,15%	0,30%	0,00%	0,30%	0,00%	N/A
Arts and entertainment	0,15%	0,30%	0,15%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	N/A
Rent-a-car	0,00%	0,30%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	N/A

Source: Own construction.

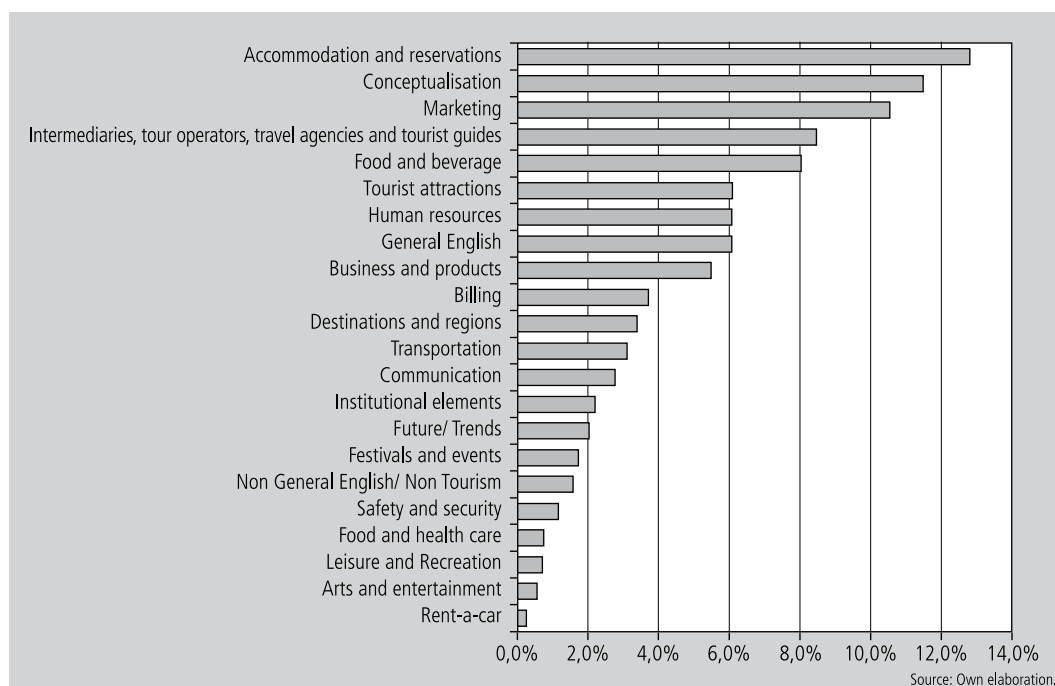


Figure 11 | English contents in public tourism related higher education courses.

regional singularities but most importantly, these themes could be updated and adjusted in order that they could be in accordance with shifting job market demands.

English language curricular units would benefit from arising from a community network of teachers where ideas and contents could be shared and structured, to ensure more quality and competitiveness in tourism higher education.

5 Limitations

It is our aim to develop an analysis methodology of the English language programmes taught on tourism courses. In order to achieve this, the research option was made to include only programmes from public higher education institutions, to set the groundwork for what can be done with regard to

the universe of public and private institutions in future research. The methodology described above was used with this aim in mind. However, other methodologies can be used to reach other and more results at national level, depending on future research objectives.

6 Conclusions

Tourism is expanding rapidly and becoming increasingly competitive. Countries worldwide have, therefore, invested in the area. As a result, Europe is a breeding ground of knowledge and know-how, with well-established tourism graduation courses, from bachelor to post-PhD, and research but professionals who are already active need to be prepared professionally, in order to become competitive as well.

In this scenario, tourism courses need to be planned and organised to ensure a high level of quality in education, in first cycle courses, post-graduate studies and in life-long learning. Besides, courses also need to establish an interface between the job market demands and the various organisations that make up the tourism industry.

It is by establishing high standards of education and preparation for the ever evolving and demanding labour market that the future professionals, in this competitive area, will become successful and will bring in an added value for their employers.

Tourism includes a wide diversity of disciplines, as was previously mentioned. However, evidence shows that English language programmes fail to address that diversity of subject matter although this language has the potential to harness specific subjects and contribute richly to constructing a solid communicative platform that will further the interests of Tourism.

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