
ENGLISH FOR TOURISM AS SITUATED PEDAGOGY: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION, LOCAL HERITAGE, AND INTERCULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NORTHERN ARGENTINA

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SUMMARY

This article examines how English for Tourism I, a first-year course in a Tourism degree program in northern Argentina, connects professional communication with local territory, heritage, sustainability, ecotourism, interculturality, and linguistic diversity. Framed as an exploratory teacher-perspective case study, the research draws on a teacher survey and curricular documents. Closed-ended responses were analysed descriptively, and open-ended responses were examined using software-assisted thematic analysis. Findings indicate that the course integrates professional communication with local landscapes, narratives, cultural practices, and heritage. Interculturality, linguistic diversity, and intelligibility emerged as prominent dimensions, whereas sustainability and ecotourism

were less explicit but were reflected in environmental care, community responsibility, local development, responsible destination promotion, and the Andean worldview. The findings suggest that sustainability-oriented tourism education can be fostered not only through explicit environmental content but also through the communicative and ethical practices involved in representing places, mediating local knowledge, and addressing culturally and linguistically diverse visitors. Although student learning outcomes were not assessed, English for Tourism is shown to extend beyond vocational language training by providing a pedagogical space for developing communicative, intercultural, and ethical capacities relevant to more responsible and sustainable tourism.

Introduction

English has become a key resource in the education of future tourism professionals, particularly in contexts where graduates are expected to interact with international visitors, describe local attractions, provide

information, design itineraries, and mediate service encounters across languages and cultures. Within English for Specific Purposes (henceforth, ESP), English for Tourism has often been approached through specialized terminology and standardized communicative exchanges associated with tourism services and hospitality settings (Dudley-Evans and St John,

1998; Ennis and Petrie, 2019). Yet tourism communication involves more than the transmission of practical information. Future professionals must also interpret local heritage, represent cultural practices, respond appropriately to intercultural encounters, address linguistic diversity, and communicate environmental and sustainability-related concerns in clear,

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respectful, and context-sensitive ways (Byram, 2021; UNESCO, 2020; Rose and Galloway, 2019).

These demands are especially relevant in tourism programs located in regions where natural landscapes, cultural heritage, local narratives, community practices, and sustainability concerns are central to professional education. Previous research has established ESP, tourism education, intercultural communication, Global Englishes, intelligibility, sustainability, ecotourism, and multimodal language pedagogy as important areas of inquiry (Galloway *et al.*, 2021). However, these domains have often been examined separately, and their articulation within specific language courses embedded in tourism curricula remains underexplored, particularly in situated Latin American contexts. This gap is relevant because the transition toward more sustainable and equitable forms of tourism depends not only on disciplinary knowledge but also on the capacity of professionals to explain environmental and cultural meanings, negotiate perspectives, promote respectful visitor conduct, and represent host communities responsibly.

From an Education for Sustainable Development perspective, language education can contribute to the knowledge, values, attitudes, and communicative agency through which sustainability is enacted in professional practice (UNESCO, 2020). In tourism education, this contribution includes decisions about how places are described, whose knowledge is made visible, how tourism impacts are discussed, and how visitors are invited to engage with environments, heritage, and communities. Rather than assuming that a single language course can produce sustainable behaviour, the analysis focuses on how communicative and pedagogical practices may create conditions for more responsible engagement with destinations and host communities. Accordingly, English for Tourism I, a first-year course in a Tourism degree program at a university in northern Argentina, is analysed as a situated curricular space where professional English teaching intersects with territorial, cultural, ecological, intercultural, and linguistic concerns.

The research question and theoretical framework are presented first, followed by the methodological design and descriptive results. The findings are then discussed in relation to ESP, tourism education, sustainability, intercultural communication, linguistic diversity, and multimodal pedagogy, with consideration of the study limitations and pedagogical implications.

Research question

Building on the gap identified in the introduction, English for Tourism I is examined as a situated curricular case in which English teaching intersects with broader professional, territorial, cultural, ecological, and intercultural concerns. The following research question guides the analysis: How does English for Tourism I engage with professional communication, territory, heritage, sustainability, ecotourism, interculturality, and linguistic diversity in the first year of education for future tourism professionals?

Theoretical framework

The teaching of English in tourism degree programs falls within the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as it addresses the communicative needs of a particular professional community. ESP emphasizes language learning shaped by communicative purpose, context, and learners' professional needs rather than by grammar alone (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Accordingly, tourism-oriented ESP seeks to prepare students for authentic professional communication, including assisting visitors, describing destinations, designing itineraries, and promoting tourism services (Bhatia, 2004; Hyland, 2007; Ennis and Petrie, 2019; Chamorro *et al.*, 2021). However, tourism communication extends beyond service encounters to include heritage representation, intercultural interaction, environmental awareness, and the mediation of local knowledge for culturally and linguistically diverse visitors.

Contemporary tourism education has similarly moved beyond preparing graduates solely for industry needs. Current approaches emphasize ethical responsibility, sustainability, and critical engagement with the social, cultural, economic, and environmental consequences of tourism (Boluk *et al.*, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). In parallel, Education for Sustainable Development promotes the knowledge, skills, and values required to support more sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2020), while ecotourism reinforces environmental conservation, visitor education, and community participation (Fennell, 2015). Within tourism language education, these perspectives encourage the responsible communication of heritage, reflection on tourism impacts, and the integration of language learning with environmental and community concerns.

These developments also intersect with emerging biocultural and ecocultural perspectives, which challenge

conventional separations between nature and culture. Whereas biocultural approaches emphasize biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and heritage, ecocultural perspectives foreground discourse, communication, identity, education, and values (Lazzaro-Salazar *et al.*, 2026). For tourism language education, the ecocultural perspective is especially relevant because it focuses on how language mediates ecological knowledge, heritage, identity, and responsible professional communication. Consequently, local stories, myths, landscapes, and cultural practices constitute valuable pedagogical resources that require intercultural mediation rather than simple translation (Bavikatte and Bennett, 2015; Burke *et al.*, 2023; Díaz-Reviriego *et al.*, 2024; Jin, 2024).

Intercultural communicative competence is likewise central to tourism education. Effective communication with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds requires openness, critical cultural awareness, interpretive skills, and mediation across perspectives (Byram, 1997, 2021; Deardorff, 2020). Recent sociolinguistic research further emphasizes that intercultural communication is a situated social practice shaped by professional and institutional contexts rather than by fixed national cultures (Lazzaro-Salazar and Pujol-Cols, 2019; Lazzaro-Salazar *et al.*, 2024). Recent work in Argentina similarly highlights the need to integrate ESP with intercultural communication, sustainability, intelligibility, and discipline-specific learning through pedagogical models such as the GLOBE framework (Luchini, 2024; Borgia and Luchini, 2025; Luchini and Borgia, 2026).

Another important dimension concerns linguistic diversity and English as an international language. Since English frequently functions as a lingua franca in tourism, communicative effectiveness depends less on native-speaker norms than on intelligibility, communicative flexibility, and the negotiation of meaning (Jenkins, 2000, 2015; Mauranen, 2012). Similarly, pronunciation research emphasizes intelligibility rather than accent imitation as the principal instructional goal (Derwing and Munro, 2015; Isaacs and Trofimovich, 2012). Tourism-oriented ESP should therefore promote effective communication with linguistically diverse interlocutors through adaptive, context-sensitive interaction.

Finally, tourism communication increasingly requires multimodal literacy. Meaning is constructed not only through language but also through images, sound, design, movement, and digital resources (Jewitt *et al.*, 2016). Multimodal

and multiliteracies approaches therefore support the integration of language, visual communication, digital technologies, and local narratives, enabling participation in the complex communicative practices characteristic of contemporary tourism (New London Group, 1996; Cope and Kalantzis, 2015; Luchini, 2025).

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that tourism-oriented ESP can integrate professional communication with sustainability, ecocultural mediation, intercultural communication, linguistic diversity, intelligibility, and multimodal meaning-making. However, little research has examined how these dimensions are articulated within tourism-related English teaching in Latin American higher education. To address this gap, the ways in which these dimensions are understood and integrated within a first-year university tourism English course are explored.

Materials and Methods

Study design

A qualitative, exploratory case study design was adopted to examine English for Tourism I, a first-year course in a tourism degree program at a public university in northern Argentina. A case study is appropriate because it enables an in-depth examination of an educational phenomenon within its real-life institutional, curricular, and pedagogical context (Stake, 1995; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the analysis provides a contextualized understanding of how this course integrates professional English communication with broader dimensions of territory, local heritage, sustainability, ecotourism, interculturality, and linguistic diversity. The exploratory design is justified by the limited research on how tourism-oriented ESP courses articulate these professional, cultural, ecological, and intercultural perspectives within higher education.

Context and participant

The case analysed corresponds to the course English for Tourism I, taught during the first year of the Technical Degree and Bachelor's Degree in Tourism at a university in the northern province of Jujuy, Argentina. According to the degree curriculum, it is a required annual course with 120 contact hours and the first component of a three-course sequence: English for Tourism II is offered in the second year and English for Tourism III in the third year, each with 120 contact hours. The course covers

English communication in basic situations in the tourism field, including personal and professional introductions, hotel service encounters, the promotion of destinations in Jujuy, regional myths and legends, transportation, and travel itineraries. It also incorporates digital and multimodal resources, such as videos, websites, digital presentations, and artificial intelligence tools.

The participant was the teacher responsible for English for Tourism I, who has taught the course since 2023. The teacher was selected as a key informant based on direct involvement in the teaching and development of the course and knowledge of the syllabus, classroom activities, teaching materials, and the educational needs of Tourism students. Given the inclusion of a single key informant, the data are analysed descriptively and contextually, without attempting to represent the full complexity and variability of teaching practices in English for tourism.

Data sources

Three main data sources were used: the 2026 syllabus of English for Tourism I, the curriculum of the Technical Degree and Bachelor's Degree in Tourism, and a teacher survey specifically designed for the research. The combination of these sources allowed the course to be contextualized within the broader degree program, its curricular orientations to be identified, and the teacher's perspective on the relationships between English for tourism, sustainability, ecotourism, interculturality, linguistic diversity, local heritage, and pedagogical practices to be documented.

Instrument and validation

The primary data collection instrument was an ad hoc semi-structured teacher survey developed based on the literature reviewed in the theoretical framework. The survey explored the teacher's perceptions of how English for Tourism I addresses professional English for tourism, local territory and heritage, sustainability, ecotourism, intercultural communication, linguistic diversity, multimodal production, and future pedagogical development. Examples of classroom practices, materials, and learning activities related to these dimensions were also collected.

The instrument comprised 31 questions organized into eight sections: (1) course information; (2) professional English for tourism; (3) local heritage, territory, sustainability, and

ecotourism; (4) intercultural communication with international tourists; (5) linguistic diversity and English as an international language; (6) tasks, materials, and technologies; (7) pedagogical development; and (8) availability of teaching materials for subsequent analysis. It combined 21 open-ended questions with 10 structured items, including Likert-scale rating items, checklists, and multiple-choice questions.

Content validity was established through a three-stage qualitative validation process. First, an alignment matrix was developed to ensure coherence between the research objectives, the analytical dimensions, the survey questions, and the expected data. Second, the instrument underwent expert review by specialists in ESP, English for tourism, intercultural communication, sustainability, ecotourism, and educational research methodology, who evaluated its clarity, relevance, and coherence (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Third, a cognitive pilot review with a teacher with a similar profile allowed ambiguities and areas requiring refinement to be identified, leading to revisions in wording and the inclusion of questions addressing ecotourism, the territory of Jujuy, and tensions between tourism promotion and heritage preservation. Given the use of a single key informant and the absence of a psychometric purpose, statistical validation procedures were not applied. Validation therefore focused on the contextual relevance, clarity, and conceptual alignment of the survey with the exploratory qualitative design.

Data collection and analysis procedures

Data collection was conducted in two stages. First, curricular documents, including the English for Tourism I syllabus and the Tourism degree curriculum, were collected and reviewed. Second, the teacher completed the semi-structured survey through a digital form after being informed of the study's academic purpose, the confidential treatment of her responses, and the exclusive use of the data for research purposes.

Data analysis combined descriptive and qualitative approaches. Closed-ended responses were organized in Excel and summarized using descriptive scores (1–5) to provide an overview of the case across the dimensions examined; these scores were used solely for descriptive purposes. Open-ended responses were analysed through software-assisted thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2021). Excel facilitated data organization, while Taguette was used to code textual segments, assign thematic labels, and retrieve coded excerpts (Rampin and

Rampin, 2021). The analysis combined deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes were derived from the survey dimensions, whereas inductive coding allowed themes to be identified from the teacher's responses. Finally, findings were triangulated with the course syllabus and the Tourism curriculum to compare the teacher's perspectives with the formal curricular framework, thereby strengthening the contextual interpretation of the case (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained from the teacher. The information collected was used exclusively for academic purposes and was treated confidentially. The responses were not used to evaluate either the teacher's performance or the course syllabus. The results were reported without including information that could unnecessarily identify the participant, and the data were interpreted in a respectful and contextualized manner.

Results

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the inclusion of a

single key informant, the results are presented descriptively according to the dimensions of the instrument. Closed-ended responses are summarized through simple frequencies and 1–5 descriptive scores, while open-ended responses are organized according to deductive categories and emerging codes. Table I presents a general profile of the case.

English for tourism and initial professional education

According to the teacher's response, the main purpose of English for Tourism I is to enable students to deal with basic communicative situations in English in multicultural environments related to local tourism. Regarding professional capacities, all dimensions were rated as "moderately" present. Table II presents the teacher's rating of the professional capacities included in the survey.

In response to the open-ended question regarding priority communicative situations, customer service in a hotel, giving directions to different places, describing tourist sites, narrating historical events or regional personalities, and designing travel itineraries were identified as priorities.

Local territory, culture, and heritage

Regarding the role of destinations, landscapes, stories, cultural practices, and heritage in the course, these elements were described as constituting the cultural background needed to promote and share local idiosyncrasy with tourists from different backgrounds. It was also reported that each thematic unit of the syllabus is connected with destinations, landscapes, stories, cultural practices, or heritage from the local territory.

Sustainability, ecotourism, and territory

In the closed-ended items related to heritage, sustainability, ecotourism, and territory, the highest ratings corresponded to local natural heritage, local cultural heritage, history, myths or regional legends, responsible promotion of tourist destinations, respect for local communities, and local development. Environmental care and ecotourism were rated as "much." Sustainable tourism and reflection on the impact of tourism on the territory were rated as "moderately" present. Table III summarizes the presence of these aspects in the course activities according to the teacher's rating.

TABLE I
GENERAL PROFILE OF THE CASE ANALYZED

Aspect	Description
Course	English for Tourism I
Degree program	Technical Degree and Bachelor's Degree in Tourism
Curricular location	First year
Teacher's participation in the course	Since 2023
Type of study	Exploratory and situated case study
Informant	Course teacher
Main data source	Teacher survey with closed-ended and open-ended items
Focus of analysis	English for tourism, local territory, sustainability, ecotourism, interculturality, and linguistic diversity.

TABLE II
CONTRIBUTION OF THE COURSE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CAPACITIES

Professional capacity	Teacher rating	Descriptive score
Assisting foreign tourists in basic situations.	Moderately	3
Providing information about tourist destinations.	Moderately	3
Describing natural and cultural attractions.	Moderately	3
Dealing with communicative situations typical of the tourism field.	Moderately	3
Producing digital or multimodal materials to promote destinations.	Moderately	3
Adapting discourse according to the interlocutor, context, and professional situation.	Moderately	3

TABLE III
PRESENCE OF HERITAGE, SUSTAINABILITY, ECOTOURISM, AND TERRITORY IN THE COURSE

Aspect	Teacher rating	Descriptive score
Local natural heritage	To a great extent	5
Local cultural heritage	To a great extent	5
History, myths, or regional legends	To a great extent	5
Responsible promotion of tourist destinations	To a great extent	5
Respect for local communities	To a great extent	5
Environmental care	Much	4
Sustainable tourism	Moderately	3
Ecotourism	Much	4
Local development	To a great extent	5
Reflection on the impact of tourism on the territory	Moderately	3

In the open-ended response about sustainability, ecotourism, and responsible appreciation of the territory, the activities were described as seeking to integrate and internalize concepts related to environmental care, community, and local development. Reference was also made to the Andean worldview and the communion between nature and community.

Tourism promotion and heritage preservation

When asked about possible tensions between the promotion of tourist destinations and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as the ways of life of local communities, an affirmative response was provided. Examples included the care of historical buildings, respect for access limits in chapels and churches, and the recommendation not to use flash in certain spaces. Situations related to carnival were also mentioned, particularly the behaviour of some visitors during ceremonies held at the “mojones” and associated with giving thanks to “Pachamama”. Figure 1 presents the category map developed from the open-ended responses and the thematic organization of the analysis.

The map brings together the categories developed in the analysis: professional communication, local territory and heritage, sustainability and ecotourism, interculturality, linguistic diversity, multimodality and technologies, and responsible promotion.

Intercultural communication

In the closed-ended items on intercultural communication, six of the seven capacities included in the

survey were rated as present to a great extent. The ability to deal with possible communicative or cultural misunderstandings was rated as much. Table IV presents the corresponding ratings for the intercultural capacities.

In the open-ended response about activities addressing cultural diversity, the use of audio materials, videos, and texts featuring people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds was reported. These materials were drawn from different ESP textbooks for tourism. Regarding the challenges observed when communicating in English with potential international tourists, pronunciation,

fluency, specific vocabulary, the use of simple sentences, and non-verbal communication were identified.

Linguistic diversity, intelligibility, and English as an international language

English was defined as a linguistic link that enables tourism professionals to communicate with visitors from other countries who do not speak Spanish. In the closed-ended items on linguistic diversity and English as an international language, strong agreement was reported for all the statements included in the survey. The closed-ended responses related to

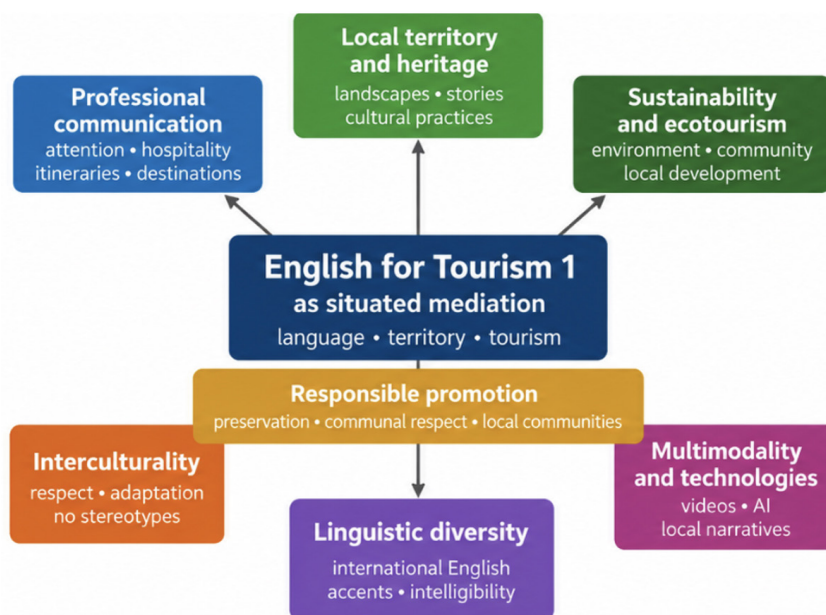


Figure 1. Map of emerging categories from the analysis.

TABLE IV
INTERCULTURAL CAPACITIES FOSTERED BY THE COURSE

Intercultural capacity	Teacher rating	Descriptive score
Recognizing cultural differences in tourism communication.	To a great extent	5
Interacting respectfully with visitors from different backgrounds.	To a great extent	5
Explaining aspects of local culture to foreign tourists.	To a great extent	5
Avoiding stereotypes when describing local communities, practices, or traditions.	To a great extent	5
Adapting explanations according to the tourist's prior knowledge.	To a great extent	5
Dealing with possible communicative or cultural misunderstandings.	Much	4
Valuing cultural diversity as part of professional education.	To a great extent	5

linguistic diversity, intelligibility, and international English are summarized in Table V.

In the open-ended response on exposure to different accents, varieties of English, and forms of international communication, the use of audio materials representing different varieties of English drawn from the textbooks used in the course was reported.

With regard to pronunciation, intelligibility, and communicative clarity, these were identified as fundamental aspects of providing satisfactory hospitality services. It was also indicated that the aim is not to achieve pronunciation identical to that of native speakers, since tourists may come from a wide range of countries, including France, Brazil, Portugal, and countries in Asia. To complement the reading of the closed-ended responses, Figure 2 illustrates the descriptive profile by closed-ended dimension.

The figure presents the average descriptive scores for four dimensions: professional capacities, heritage/sustainability, interculturality, and linguistic diversity/English as a lingua franca.

Materials, technologies, and multimodal production

Regarding the materials most frequently used in the course, the teacher selected English for tourism

textbooks, authentic texts from tourism websites, videos, audio materials, official websites, tourism brochures, digital resources, materials designed by the teaching team, student productions, and artificial intelligence tools. As for the digital or multimodal tools used by students, she mentioned Canva, Padlet, Genially,

videos, digital presentations, generative artificial intelligence for images or texts, Mural.ly, and Venngage.

As a representative course activity, the teacher described a task from the unit “History Reflected in the Present.” In this activity, students produce a narrative text in video format

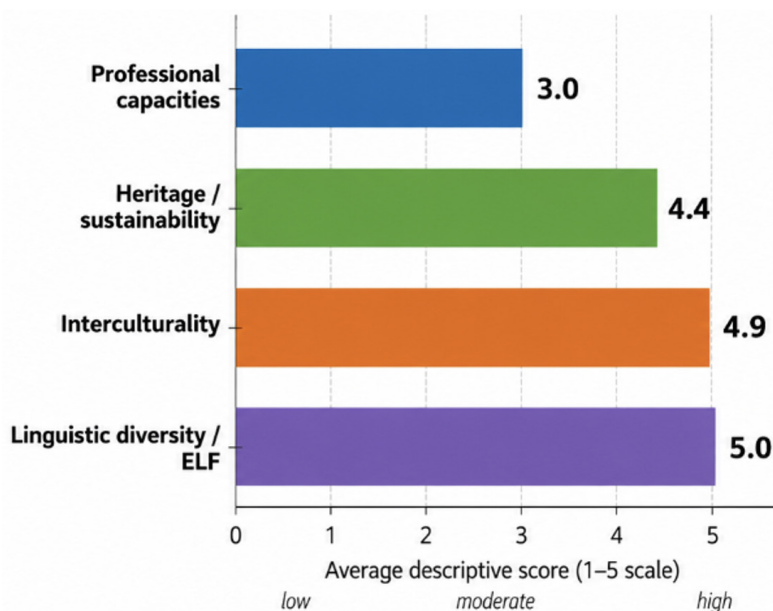


Figure 2. Descriptive intensity profile by closed-ended dimension.

TABLE V
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY, INTELLIGIBILITY, AND INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH

Statement	Teacher rating	Descriptive score
English functions as a communication tool among people from different languages and cultures.	Strongly agree	5
Students need to be prepared to communicate with both native and non-native speakers.	Strongly agree	5
Clarity and intelligibility are more important than imitating a native accent.	Strongly agree	5
Exposure to different accents and varieties of English is important.	Strongly agree	5

about a characteristic myth from the region. To do so, they write a text using the simple past, present perfect, and specific vocabulary; then, they generate images with artificial intelligence and edit a video using an audio recording of the text. The final production is submitted for assessment. The teacher indicated that this activity integrates English, local culture, and heritage. She also stated that it allows students to work with regional myths and digital tools.

Pedagogical projection

Regarding aspects that could be strengthened in future versions of the syllabus or classroom activities, the teacher mentioned two main points: explicitly including sustainable tourism and strengthening listening and oral skills through more examples of real situations from the tourism field. When asked about the feasibility of integrating sustainability, ecotourism, linguistic diversity, and interculturality more explicitly into English for Tourism I, the teacher answered, “Yes, fully.” As possible activities for this integration, she mentioned the inclusion of activities related to sustainable tourism and the use of real situations from the tourism field.

Regarding institutional, curricular, or pedagogical challenges, the teacher mentioned the need to deepen knowledge of sustainable tourism through internal training. She also referred to the possibility of articulating the course with subjects such as Sustainable Tourism and Local Development and Management of Sustainable Tourist Destinations. As a difficulty, she noted that these subjects are offered in the fourth year, whereas English for Tourism I belongs to the first

year of the program. Table VI integrates the deductive categories used to organize the open-ended responses, the emerging codes identified, and the corresponding thematic evidence.

This table brings together the categories and codes used to organize the open-ended survey responses. The data show the presence of dimensions related to professional communication, local territory, sustainability, interculturality, linguistic diversity, multimodality, and pedagogical projection.

Descriptive synthesis of the results

Overall, the results show that English for Tourism I combines introductory professional English for tourism with dimensions related to local territory, heritage, interculturality, linguistic diversity, and multimodal production. The strongest areas in the closed-ended responses were intercultural communication and linguistic diversity, while professional capacities appeared at a moderate introductory level. Sustainability and ecotourism were present through environmental care, community, local development, responsible promotion, and the Andean worldview, although sustainable tourism and reflection on tourism impact received lower descriptive scores. The open-ended responses further suggest that regional narratives, local heritage, and digital tools play an important role in connecting English learning with situated tourism communication.

Discussion

The findings position English for Tourism I as an introductory

ESP course that connects professional English with the situated demands of tourism education. Rather than representing a limitation, its moderate emphasis on professional competencies reflects its role within the first year of the curriculum, providing students with an initial foundation for later professional communication. This orientation is consistent with ESP principles that emphasize the relationship between language learning, communicative purpose, disciplinary needs, and future professional participation (Paltridge and Starfield, 2013).

At the same time, the course extends beyond a purely functional view of English for tourism. The integration of local territory, landscapes, stories, myths, cultural practices, and heritage suggests that English functions not only as a means of providing services but also as a tool for mediating local meanings for visitors. This finding supports critical perspectives on tourism education, which argue that professional preparation should encompass the social, cultural, environmental, and ethical dimensions of tourism rather than focusing exclusively on industry needs (Boluk *et al.*, 2019). In this case, local heritage becomes a pedagogical resource through which students may be invited to approach territory as a culturally and historically meaningful space rather than simply a destination to be promoted.

Sustainability and ecotourism emerged as implicit rather than explicit dimensions of the course. These concerns were embedded in communicative practices involving heritage interpretation, environmental care, community responsibility, responsible destination

TABLE VI
DEDUCTIVE CATEGORIES, EMERGING CODES, AND THEMATIC EVIDENCE FROM OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Deductive dimension	Emerging codes	Thematic evidence from the teacher’s response
Professional English for tourism	Tourist assistance, hospitality, directions, itineraries, destination description	Hotel service encounters, directions, description of tourist sites, and itinerary design
Local territory and heritage	Local idiosyncrasy, landscapes, stories, heritage, cultural practices	Local destinations, stories, and heritage present in the thematic units
Sustainability and ecotourism	Environmental care, community, local development, Andean worldview	Environment, community, local development, and the relationship between nature and community
Responsible promotion	Preservation, access limits, no use of flash, ceremonial respect	Churches, chapels, carnival, <i>mojones</i> , and Pachamama
Interculturality	Respect, cultural diversity, avoidance of stereotypes, adaptation to the tourist	Materials featuring people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds
Linguistic diversity	International English, native and non-native speakers, accents, intelligibility	Clarity and intelligibility over the imitation of a native accent
Multimodality and technologies	Videos, AI, regional narratives, digital production	Production of videos about regional myths using AI-generated images
Pedagogical projection	Curricular explicitness, internal training, inter-course articulation	Explicit inclusion of sustainable tourism and articulation with fourth-year subjects

promotion, and respect for local practices. From an Education for Sustainable Development perspective, such practices position sustainability as a form of professional judgment and communicative mediation (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Describing territories, interpreting heritage, explaining appropriate visitor behaviour, and adapting messages for culturally diverse audiences require students to consider environmental responsibility, cultural respect, and community interests. Although the study does not demonstrate the development of sustainability competencies, it identifies pedagogical conditions through which these competencies may be fostered. Making sustainability more explicit within the curriculum could further strengthen the relationship between tourism communication, environmental awareness, and ethical destination promotion.

The findings also highlight the relevance of ecocultural perspectives for understanding tourism language education. Examples involving historical buildings, churches, carnival practices, "mojones", and "Pachamama" illustrate that tourism communication requires more than linguistic accuracy; it also involves explaining local meanings, contextualizing cultural practices, and representing communities responsibly. As Lazzaro-Salazar *et al.* (2026) argue, ecocultural approaches foreground discourse, communication, identity, education, and values, making them particularly appropriate for interpreting how language education mediates relationships among territory, heritage, identity, and professional communication.

Intercultural communication and linguistic diversity emerged as two of the strongest dimensions of the course. Rather than treating interculturality as knowledge about other cultures, the course frames it as a situated professional competence involving mediation, adaptation, and the explanation of local practices to visitors from diverse backgrounds. This interpretation aligns with models of intercultural communicative competence emphasizing openness, interpretation, critical awareness, and mediation across perspectives (Byram, 1997, 2021; Deardorff, 2020), as well as research showing that intercultural encounters are shaped by professional and discursive contexts rather than fixed cultural differences (Lazzaro-Salazar and Pujol-Cols, 2019; Lazzaro-Salazar *et al.*, 2024).

Similarly, the teacher's conception of English as a communicative bridge reflects Global Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca perspectives, according to which effective communication among speakers from diverse

linguistic backgrounds depends more on intelligibility, communicative flexibility, and the negotiation of meaning than on adherence to native-speaker norms (Jenkins, 2000, 2015; Rose and Galloway, 2019). This orientation is particularly appropriate for tourism, where multilingual interactions depend on cooperation and mutual understanding (Vida-Mannl, 2024). Consistent with this perspective, pronunciation is understood in terms of intelligibility rather than native-like accuracy. Although pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and non-verbal communication were identified as student challenges, communicative success is ultimately framed as the ability to communicate clearly, flexibly, and responsively across diverse sociolinguistic contexts (Derwing and Munro, 2015; Isaacs and Trofimovich, 2012; Luchini, 2024).

The findings also point to the pedagogical value of multimodal production. The representative task centred on a regional myth combines English writing, oral production, AI-generated images, and video editing, requiring students to construct meaning through multiple semiotic resources (Jewitt *et al.*, 2016). At the same time, narrating local heritage in English involves more than translating information; it requires selecting, adapting, and representing cultural meanings for audiences who may not share the same local background. Jin's (2024) concept of transcultural storytelling is particularly useful here, as it conceptualizes narrative as a space where cultural meanings are negotiated across contexts. Consequently, multimodal production functions simultaneously as digital literacy, professional communication, and responsible heritage representation.

Overall, the case shows an emerging but uneven integration of ESP, local heritage, sustainability-oriented concerns, interculturality, linguistic diversity, intelligibility, and multimodal meaning-making. It should not be read as a consolidated model, but as a situated example of how these dimensions can intersect within a first-year tourism English course.

Limitations and pedagogical implications

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on a single exploratory case and the perspective of one key teacher informant. The findings should therefore be understood as a situated account rather than as evidence that can be generalized to all English for tourism courses. Second, although teacher perceptions were triangulated with curricular documents, the study did not include

student perspectives, classroom observations, or systematic analyses of student work. Future research could extend the case to other teachers, English for Tourism II and III, comparable courses at other Argentine universities, and the perspectives of students and tourism-sector employers. Finally, the closed-ended responses were used solely for descriptive purposes, and the survey, although qualitatively validated through alignment, expert review, and cognitive piloting, was designed as a context-sensitive research instrument rather than a psychometric scale.

Despite these limitations, the findings offer several pedagogical implications. First, English for tourism courses could make sustainability and ecotourism more explicit within syllabi and classroom activities. In the case analysed, these themes were already embedded in heritage, environmental care, community responsibility, and responsible destination promotion, but they could be further developed through tasks involving tourism impact analysis, responsible itineraries, visitor guidelines, and culturally and environmentally informed destination materials.

Second, the findings reinforce the value of intercultural and linguistically diverse approaches to English for tourism. Preparing students for professional communication requires not only specialized vocabulary but also the ability to negotiate meaning, adapt explanations, respond to misunderstandings, and communicate intelligibly with speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Accordingly, teaching should incorporate diverse English varieties, realistic tourism scenarios, and pronunciation work centred on intelligibility rather than native-speaker norms. Third, local heritage and regional narratives can support situated language learning through tasks that connect English with territorial knowledge, audience awareness, cultural sensitivity, and responsible representation.

Finally, multimodal and digital production represents a promising direction for tourism-oriented ESP. Videos, digital presentations, AI-assisted resources, and other multimodal tasks can integrate linguistic, visual, and technological communication while fostering professional and intercultural meaning-making. Their use, however, should be accompanied by critical reflection on issues such as accuracy, authorship, cultural representation, and the responsible use of digital technologies.

The study identifies the curricular presence and pedagogical potential of sustainability-related dimensions rather than their impact on student learning. Because the evidence is based

primarily on teacher perceptions and curricular documents, it cannot determine whether students developed sustainability competencies or transferred these principles to professional practice. Future research should therefore examine how these pedagogical orientations influence learning processes and professional development.

Conclusions

This exploratory teacher-perspective case study examined English for Tourism I as a situated curricular space where professional communication intersects with local heritage, sustainability, interculturality, linguistic diversity, and multimodal meaning-making. The findings do not present the course as a fully consolidated sustainability model. Instead, they reveal an emerging but uneven integration of these dimensions: interculturality, linguistic diversity, intelligibility, local narratives, and heritage were strongly visible, while sustainability and ecotourism appeared less explicitly through environmental care, community, local development, responsible promotion, and the Andean worldview.

This pattern suggests that sustainability-oriented education may enter an ESP course not only through explicit environmental content, but also through the communicative and ethical work of representing places. By asking students to describe landscapes, narrate regional stories, interpret cultural practices, adapt messages for diverse visitors, and produce multimodal tourism materials, the course connects language learning with questions of cultural respect, community responsibility, and destination stewardship. English is thus treated not merely as a tool for service encounters, but as a medium through which students may practise mediating local meanings and considering the relationship among tourism, territory, culture, and environment.

The study also identifies a productive curricular challenge. Making sustainability and ecotourism more explicit would allow existing work on heritage, intercultural mediation, environmental care, and responsible promotion to be organized around clearer learning objectives and professional tasks. Such development should preserve the course's situated character rather than reduce sustainability to decontextualized terminology. Activities involving responsible itineraries, visitor guidelines, tourism-impact analysis, heritage interpretation, and ethically designed promotional materials could connect language learning more systematically with sustainability-oriented professional judgment and action.

Although the evidence derives from one key teacher informant and curricular documents, the case offers a useful perspective for framing sustainability in ESP: not only as content to be taught, but also as a communicative and ethical concern. This concern is visible in how places are described, whose voices and knowledge are represented, how environmental and cultural impacts are framed, and how visitors are encouraged to relate to host communities. When grounded in local territory and joined to intercultural and linguistic awareness, English for tourism may provide opportunities to practise responsible destination representation alongside effective communication and to engage with questions of cultural respect, environmental responsibility, and community interests.

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INGLÉS PARA EL TURISMO COMO PEDAGOGÍA SITUADA: COMUNICACIÓN PROFESIONAL, PATRIMONIO LOCAL Y SOSTENIBILIDAD INTERCULTURAL EN EL NORTE DE ARGENTINA

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RESUMEN

Este artículo examina cómo Inglés para el Turismo I, una asignatura de primer año de una carrera de Turismo en el norte de Argentina, articula la comunicación profesional con el territorio local, el patrimonio, la sostenibilidad, el ecoturismo, la interculturalidad y la diversidad lingüística. El estudio, planteado como un caso exploratorio desde la perspectiva docente, se basa en una encuesta a la profesora y en documentos curriculares. Las respuestas cerradas se analizaron descriptivamente y las abiertas mediante análisis temático asistido por software. Los resultados indican que la asignatura integra la comunicación profesional con paisajes, narrativas, prácticas culturales y patrimonio locales. La interculturalidad, la diversidad lingüística y la inteligibilidad aparecen como dimensiones destacadas, mientras que la sostenibilidad y el ecoturismo son menos ex-

plicitos y se reflejan en el cuidado ambiental, la responsabilidad comunitaria, el desarrollo local, la promoción responsable de destinos y la cosmovisión andina. Los resultados sugieren que la formación turística orientada a la sostenibilidad puede promoverse no solo mediante contenidos ambientales explícitos, sino también a través de prácticas comunicativas y éticas vinculadas con la representación de los lugares, la mediación del conocimiento local y la atención a visitantes cultural y lingüísticamente diversos. Aunque no se evaluaron los resultados de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, se evidencia que el inglés para el turismo trasciende la enseñanza instrumental al constituirse en un espacio pedagógico para desarrollar capacidades comunicativas, interculturales y éticas relacionadas con un turismo más responsable y sostenible.

INGLÊS PARA O TURISMO COMO PEDAGOGIA SITUADA: COMUNICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL, PATRIMÔNIO LOCAL E SUSTENTABILIDADE INTERCULTURAL NO NORTE DA ARGENTINA

Pedro Luis Luchini, Claudia Borgnia, Patricia del Carmen Meriles, Mariana Lazzaro-Salazar e Enrique A. Mundaca

RESUMO

Este artigo examina como Inglês para o Turismo I, disciplina do primeiro ano de um curso de Turismo no norte da Argentina, articula a comunicação profissional com o território local, o patrimônio, a sustentabilidade, o ecoturismo, a interculturalidade e a diversidade linguística. O estudo, concebido como um caso exploratório sob a perspectiva da docente, baseia-se em um questionário aplicado à professora e em documentos curriculares. As respostas fechadas foram analisadas descritivamente, e as abertas, por meio de análise temática assistida por software. Os resultados indicam que a disciplina integra a comunicação profissional a paisagens, narrativas, práticas culturais e ao patrimônio local. A interculturalidade, a diversidade linguística e a inteligibilidade aparecem como dimensões de destaque, enquanto a sustentabilidade e o ecoturismo são me-

nos explícitos e se refletem no cuidado ambiental, na responsabilidade comunitária, no desenvolvimento local, na promoção responsável dos destinos e na cosmovisão andina. Os resultados sugerem que a formação turística orientada para a sustentabilidade pode ser promovida não apenas por meio de conteúdos ambientais explícitos, mas também por práticas comunicativas e éticas ligadas à representação dos lugares, à mediação do conhecimento local e ao atendimento a visitantes cultural e linguisticamente diversos. Embora os resultados de aprendizagem dos estudantes não tenham sido avaliados, evidencia-se que o inglês para o turismo transcende o ensino instrumental ao constituir um espaço pedagógico para desenvolver capacidades comunicativas, interculturais e éticas relacionadas a um turismo mais responsável e sustentável.

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