

# NEEDS OF ENGLISH FOR TOUR GUIDING FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF TOUR-GUIDE PROFESSIONALS

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**Abstract:** While practicing as tour guides, many students of English for Tour Guiding (ETG) at Hue University of Foreign Languages (HUFL) encountered many difficulties in their internships. The main reason may come from the designing of the current ETG syllabus neglecting the needs required by Tour Guiding Companies. The study analyzed the ETG needs raised by 25 tour-guide professionals (TGPs) from their companies in Hue City, clarified students' difficulties and presented measures to overcome these difficulties from the perspectives of TGPs. The qualitative and quantitative analyses were based on written feedbacks to 15 items in the questionnaire for TGPs and on 15 ETG students' feedbacks to 10 questions in the interview for ETG students. The results of the analysis can help HUFL to modify its syllabus content relating to language-supported knowledge, balance between General English and ETG, aspects of linguistic knowledge especially pronunciation and specialized vocabulary, 4 skills and sub-skills especially listening and speaking skills and their sub-skills.

**Key words:** English for Tour Guiding, ETG needs, ETG syllabus, tour guide professionals

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Rationale

Needs of Vietnamese and foreigners for cultural understanding, international exchange through tourism and tour guides are growing day-by-day and are realized by means of foreign languages, especially English in Vietnam. However, in the internships as tour guides in Vietnam, many students of English for Tourism (ET) specializing in Tour Guides (ETG) who were trained to become tour guides from Hue University of Foreign Languages (HUFL) and some young tour guides have encountered several difficulties. The main reason may come from the procedure of designing the syllabus of ETG at HUFL without referencing real needs from labor market, especially Travel Agencies and Tour Guiding Companies.

### 1.2. Previous studies

Many Asian researchers, including Vietnamese ones, conducted studies to find out the tentative solutions for some aspects of these difficulties. In East Java, Sujana (2003) proposed the establishment of English competencies for students of tourism department at the University of Mataram based on learners' needs. In Jordan, Al-Khatib (2005) analyzed English communication needs of tourism and banking personnel in their workplace; Albakrawi (2013) presented the result of needs analysis of the English Language secondary hotel students based on the survey of 1370 secondary school students. In addition, in Thailand, Sri-Sumang (2007) pointed out English skills for inbound tour guides and found out listening skills as the most needed among 4 skills of English. Prachanant (2012) focused needs analysis on *English language Use in Tourism Industry* based on 5 tour companies located in Thailand to find out

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language skills problems and tourism employees problems. In Croatia, Kostic-Bobanovic and Grzinic (2011) compared students' and employees' perceptions on the importance of English language skills in the tourism sector and found out the similarities and differences in difficulties of skills. In Romania, Simion (2012) reported the importance of teaching English in the field of tourism in universities based on general knowledge of tourism. In India, Satghare (2014) clarified the importance of foreign language skills in tourism industry on the survey of 30 tourism students. In addition, Chaudhary and Kaur (2016) presented the significance of English language in the field of tourism and suggested a careful needs analysis for teaching materials. In Greece, Tziora et al. (2016) did a survey on 92 five star hotels to find out their ideas on the important and decisive role of foreign languages in hospitality management. In Malaysia, Zahedpisheh et al, (2017) presented characteristics and features of ESP and ETP courses on which basis organizing course, including selecting materials, should be made more effectively. In Indonesia, Ekayati and Saniaty (2018) analyzed communication strategies used by tour guides and classified into types of communication strategies. Khoirunnisa et al. (2018) also focused the study chiefly on ESP teacher's and student's perceptions on teaching speaking for a tourism program; and Ratminingsih et al. (2018) presented the result of a need analysis of a contextual-based language teaching *English for Tour Guide* based on a descriptive qualitative research on 56 tour guides and found out the levels of their education related to tourism. In Ecuador, Erazo et al. (2019) discussed *English Language Skills required by the Hospitality and Tourism Sector*, based on surveying and interviewing 15 participants working in tourism, 5 tour guide professionals and 5 professors to seek for their agreement. In general, the previous studies abroad focused chiefly on the participants who were really working in tourism sector but not concentrating on their perspectives of academic difficulties encountered by the ETG students who took part in doing internships in tourism. In Vietnam, Vietnam Tourism (2012) opened a training course on tourism profession and English communication skills and focused on preparing skills for tour guides. Saigon Tourist (2015) issued a curriculum, *Tour Guiding*, aiming to provide students with an understanding of tourism related marketing and give students the skills for successful careers as tourism marketers, tour operators, local tour guides, professional tour guides, and beyond. Bach Thi Thuy Trang (2015) implemented a MA thesis on needs analysis of *English Language Use in Tourism* based on a case study of International Travel Companies in Vietnam. The result of the thesis clarified significant differences in employees' needs of skills by gender, significant differences in employees' faced problems of skills by gender, correlation between duration of work and needs of English, and correlation between duration of work and problems of English. The thesis presented valuable pedagogical implications on the significance of reading speed improvement, the necessity of balancing reading speed and comprehension and the need of pairing skimming and scanning off with paced reading. Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016), in their article discussing on teaching English for Specific Purposes at some Vietnam Universities, presented some difficulties related to students such as grammar, vocabulary due to differences between English and Vietnamese language, such as their use of 4 skills among which listening skill was the most difficult; related to teachers such as lack of qualifications and lack of specialized vocabulary; related to environment and other factors such as equipment, technology, class size, etc.

In general, previous studies abroad mainly focused on the particular contexts of each

country based on samples of tour guides or high school, university students although English language needs generally shared some common characteristics. The survey on tour guide professionals was not considered carefully. In the context of Vietnam, previous studies also concentrated on reading skill or problems related to employees by gender. A study of English language needs from the perspectives of tour guide professionals in Hue City has not been done until now. This is the reason behind the present study: *Needs of English for Tour Guiding from the Perspectives of Tour Guide Professionals*.

### **1.3. Aims of the research**

The research aimed to understand English language needs for tour guiding from the perspectives of tour guiding professionals and ETG students and find out possible measures to overcome the students' and young tour guides' difficulties due to the mismatch between the ETG syllabus and the expectations from the labor market.

### **1.4. Research questions**

1. What are the English language needs for tour guiding from the perspectives of tour guide professionals?
2. What difficulties did ETG students encounter in internships?
3. How should these difficulties be overcome to satisfy English language needs for tour guiding from the perspectives of tour guide professionals and ETG students from HUFL, Hue University?

### **1.5. Definitions of key terms**

*Perspective*: a particular perspective is a particular way of thinking about something, especially one that is influenced by your beliefs or experiences (COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary, 2017).

*English language needs in tour guiding*: What knowledge outside English but supporting tourism, tour guiding, what aspects of language knowledge and what communication skills ETG learners/students will be required to do, to perform with ETG (GE integrated into ETG) in the target situation (in their working place) and how they might best master ETG during the period of training.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

ESP refers to learning or instructing English to prepare for a special occupation. Robinson (1991) considers ESP as a type of English Language Teaching (ELT) and is a kind of goal-oriented language learning, which the learners are required to obtain a definite purpose in the learning process. According to the classification by Dudley-Evans and Maggie (1998), there are 2 main branches of ESP, namely, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The English for Tourism (ET) belongs to the latter in this regard.

## **2.2. ET specializing in English for Tour Guiding (ETG)**

ETG is considered as an integration between English for Business Purposes and EAP by linking workplace with classroom practice and creates career opportunities in the tourism industry (Cho, 2005). ET makes use of special vocabulary and conveys messages through a conventional system of symbols and codes (Dann, 2001). The special vocabulary used for checking into a hotel, giving information about hotel facilities, meal times, giving directions, requesting and giving tourist information, and other communicative activities can take place in any hospitality setting. Grammar in ET is used as a means of general English structure but all the examples are used within the tourism context (Brieger & Sweeney, 1994).

## **2.3. Needs analysis in English for Tourism specializing in Tour Guiding**

As cited in West (1994), language needs is what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training. Therefore, needs analysis in ETG can be called a target situation analysis (TSA) which concentrates on communication purposes, communication settings, the means of communication, language skills, functions, and the structure.

The content of English language needs in Vietnamese context can be shared to some extent with the needs for English for Tourism specializing in Tour Guiding being discussed and clarified in different contexts in the previous studies abroad and in Vietnam. The present research inherits this viewpoint to analyze the needs of English language aspects and skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary; listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the needs of shared and tourism knowledge based on job needs.

## **2.4. Teaching ETG**

In preparing a syllabus for ET students, Barancic (1998, pp.211-217) used an integrated approach consisting of 8 components: knowing the class and their knowledge, determining the goals to achieve, the way we measure the success, making decisions with students involved, creating syllabus, deciding on the real teaching techniques and method and getting feedback during the course. According to Dudley-Evans and Maggie (1998), ESP should teach 4 skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) within an appropriate context of their workplace. Additionally, Al-Khatib (2005) in his research analyzed the perceptions on the communication needs of tourism and banking personnel in Jordan and provided some information relevant to preparing for teaching ETG. The results of the study show that travel agency workers offered destination guides, writing and sending email and faxes, making on-line ticketing, browsing the internet, and making online hotel booking. Travel agency users made more uses of English than their banking counterparts or writing is really the most important skill for tourism personnel.

## **3. Methods**

### **3.1. Research approach and participants**

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in the present study to obtain data to thoroughly solve the raised research questions.

Twenty five tour guiding professionals (shortly, tour guides) professionally experiencing

from 5 to above 10 years of using ETG and fifteen out of thirty one ETG students from HUFL.

### 3.2. Data collection methods

#### Instrument 1: Questionnaire

The research made use of the questionnaire to collect the data from tour guiding professionals (tour guides). The questionnaires (15 items) designed for tour guides include three contents to answer three research questions.

#### Instrument 2: Interview

The 10-question interview was conducted with 15 ETG students who were supervised in practice by tour guides to collect additional ideas to clarify the findings from the questionnaire.

### 3.3. Data analysis methods

Collected data from the 15-item questionnaire was analyzed by describing needs and difficulties by means of tables and discussing qualitatively on the theoretical background and previous studies and quantitatively by means of basic statistics. Items 1-9 were described qualitatively and quantitatively and discussed to answer the first research question. Items 10-14 were analyzed to answer the second question and items 15-17 presented some key suggestions raised by the third question.

Collected data from 10-question interview was analyzed qualitatively and quoted to clarify the result given through items 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

## 4. Findings and discussions

### 4.1. Research question 1

*What are the English language needs for tour guiding from the perspectives of tour guide professionals?*

This question was answered through findings and discussions on the items 1-9 from the questionnaire for tour guide professionals realized by Tables 1-9 and on the questions 2, 3, 4, 5 from the interview.

(1) What are the needs of Tour Guides' normal activities?

**Table 1.** Normal activities of tour guides

Activities of tour guides	Tour guides	
	n	%
1. Leading tourists to visit monuments and landscapes according to the prescribed time	20	80.0
2. Guiding tourists in their required languages	18	72.0
3. Explaining the values of cultural and natural heritage that tour guides master with issued degrees	22	88.0
4. Managing a group of tourists to see sights for a tour day	15	60.0
5. Others (if any)		

Table 1 showed that 88% of tour guide professionals (tour guides for short) agreed that the needs of tour guide activities are involved in activity (3) *Explaining the values of cultural and natural heritage that tour guides master with issued degrees*; 80% focused on activity (1)

*Leading tourists to visit monuments and landscapes according to the prescribed time; 72% were interested in activity (2) Guiding tourists in their required languages; and 60% concentrated on activity (4) Managing a group of tourists to see sights for a tour day.*

Although the item was not related directly to ETG needs, the answer to this item could help the researcher understand the scope of tour guide activities and their use of ETG. This finding confirmed the needs of key duties of tour guides operating their work not only in Vietnam but also abroad. This finding was also shared by Commonwealth of Learning (2006, p.222) and Saigon Tourist (2015, p.30).

(2) Which language-supported knowledge is needed to support tour guiding?

**Table 2.** Knowledge supporting Tour guiding

Knowledge supporting Tour guiding	Tour guides	
	n	%
1. Culture	25	100
2. History	25	100
3. Geography	25	100
4. Psychology	25	100
5. Others (if any): religion, population	2	4

Table 2 indicated that 100% of tour guides needed language-supported knowledge such as culture, history, geography and psychology as supporting knowledge for tour guiding although only 4% of tour guides added religion and population to the list. Fifteen ETG students interviewed also agreed that culture and history support knowledge outside language although 10 students considered geography and 7 students regarded psychology as supporting knowledge.

Clearly, tour guiding needs more background knowledge from outside English language and tourism such as culture, history, geography as tour guides and ETG students suggested. In fact, religion can be included in culture and population included in geography. This finding was also shared by Simion (2012), Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016) in their research.

(3) How necessary is ETG in comparison with GE?

**Table 3.** Necessity between ET and GE

Degrees of Necessity between ETG and GE	Tour guides	
	n	%
1. ETG is the most necessary	3	12.0
2. ETG is more necessary	7	28.0
3. ETG is as necessary	13	52.0
4. ETG is less necessary	2	8.0
5. General English is the most necessary	0	0.0
Total	25	100

Table 3 indicated that the need for both ETG and EGP/GE are relatively equal according to 52% of tour guides although 12% confirmed ETG is the most necessary. The interview asserted that 10 out of 15 students agreed that ETG is as necessary as GE although 5 students affirmed the most necessity of ETG.

The finding can explain the reason why GE students without any ETG skills or knowledge found it difficult and lack of confidence in their internship. This finding was supported by Robinson (1991), Brieger and Sweeney (1994) and Cho (2005).

(4) Which aspect of English linguistic knowledge is the most necessary to Tour Guides?

**Table 4.** Necessity among aspects of English linguistic knowledge

Degrees of Necessity among Aspects of English linguistic knowledge	Tour guides	
	n	%
1. Pronunciation is the most necessary	11	44.0
2. Grammar is the most necessary	3	12.0
3. General vocabulary is the most necessary	2	8.0
4. Specialized vocabulary is the most necessary	5	20.0
5. All of the above knowledge is necessary	4	16.0
Total	25	100

Table 4 showed that 44% of tour guides needed pronunciation, 20% required specialized vocabulary, 12%-16% needed grammar and all aspects. The feedback from the interview showed that ten ETG students also agreed that pronunciation is the most necessary, 5 students accepted that specialized vocabulary is the most important.

The experienced tour guides and young tour guides or ETG students really were rather concerned with pronunciation and specialized vocabulary in their workplace, perhaps because they used to fail in contact with English-speaking tourists due to unclear pronunciation and lack of tourism vocabulary. This result was also shared by Bach Thi Thuy Trang (2015) and Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016) in their studies.

(5) Which English communication skills are the most necessary to Tour Guides?

**Table 5.** Necessity among English communication skills

Necessity among English communication skills	Tour guides	
	n	%
1. Listening skills are the most necessary	9	36
2. Speaking skills are the most necessary	9	36
3. Reading skills are the most necessary	3	12
4. Writing skills are the most necessary	1	4
5. All of these skills are necessary	3	12
Total	25	100

Table 5 also presented the different perceptions of experienced tour guides on the necessity of 4 skills in the fact that 72% of tour guides considered listening skills and speaking skills as the most necessary skills. 24% needed reading skills and all skills and 4% required writing skills. According to the interview, 10 ETG students agreed listening and speaking skills are the most necessary whereas 5 students asserted that all of 4 skills are necessary.

From the daily working experience, tour guides and ETG students often listen to tourists and speak to them more than read their documents and write something to tourists; therefore, their needs naturally focus on listening and speaking skills. This result was also supported by Ekayati and Saniaty (2018).

(6) Which sub-listening skill is needed for tour guiding, and how much?

**Table 6.** Degrees of Sub-listening skills needed

Degrees of sub-listening skills required	Tour guides (n=25, %)			
	Most	A lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Listening to tourists' needs	20 (80%)	5 (20%)		
2. Listening to face-to-face conversations	18 (72%)	7 (28%)		
3. Listening to reservation details	11 (44%)	10 (40%)	4 (16%)	
4. Listening to telephone conversations	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	
5. Listening to personal details of the tourists	15 (60%)	5 (20%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)
6. Listening to topics tourists are interested in	15 (60%)	8 (32%)	2 (8%)	

Table 6 showed the most and a lot necessity by 100% tour guides for (1) *Listening to tourists' needs*, (2) *Listening to face-to-face conversations*; 92% for (6) *Listening to topics tourists are interested in*, 84% for (3) *Listening to reservation details*, and 80% for (4) *Listening to telephone conversations* and (5) *Listening to personal details of the tourists*.

The result reflected the working experience of tour guides when they performed listening to tourist' requirements. Clearly, their needs for these six sub-listening skills were realistic in the Vietnamese context of tourism. This comment echoed the findings in Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016).

(7) Which sub-speaking skill is needed for tour guiding, and how much?

**Table 7.** Degrees of Sub-speaking skills needed

Degrees of Sub-speaking skills needed	Tour guides (n=25, %)			
	Most	A lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Inquiring tourists' needs	15 (60%)	10 (40%)		
2. Taking reservations	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	
3. Giving tourists directions	17 (68%)	8 (32%)		
4. Suggesting travel information	7 (28%)	18 (72%)		
5. Making small talks to tourists	13 (52%)	9 (36%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
6. Asking for tourists' information	10 (40%)	13 (52%)	2 (8%)	
7. Providing information travel plans	17 (68%)	6 (24%)	2 (8 %)	
8. Giving details about transport...	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	
9. Making presentations about spots	17 (68%)	8 (32%)		

Table 7 showed that above 80% of tour guides agreed the necessity of all mentioned sub-speaking skills. Concretely, 100% needed (1) *Inquiring tourists' needs*, (3) *Giving tourists directions*, (4) *Suggesting travel inform*, (9) *Making presentations about spots*; 92% needed (6) *Asking for tourists' information*, (7) *Providing information travel plans*; 88% required (5) *Making small talks to tourists*; 80% needed (2) *Taking reservations* and (8) *Giving details about transport*.

Although the distribution of nine sub-speaking skill needs were different due to the different working experience of tour guides in their practice, the sub-speaking skills chosen by tour guides are really necessary to tour guiding because clearly they cannot talk to tourists generally but they must concentrate on tourists' needs, directions, travel plans, and even preparations for presentations about tourist attractions. This result was consonant with Bach Thi Thuy Trang (2015).

(8) Which sub-reading skill is needed for tour guiding, and how much?

**Table 8.** Degrees of Sub-reading skills needed

Degrees of Sub-reading skills needed	Tour guides (n=25, %)			
	Most	A lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Reading articles from tourism magazines	10 (40%)	13 (52%)	2 (8%)	
2. Reading news related to tourism	13 (52%)	11 (44%)	1 (4%)	
3. Getting detailed information of tourists' documents	10 (40%)	11 (44%)	4 (16%)	
4. Reading information from emails and internet related to tourism	13 (52%)	7 (28%)	5 (20%)	

Table 8 showed that above 80% of tour guides shared the same perspectives on the necessity of 4 sub-reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4 although there are slight differences in the degrees of necessity. 96% required (2) *Reading news related to tourism*, 92% needed (1) *Reading articles from tourism magazines*, 84% needed (3) *Getting detailed information of tourists' documents* and 80% required (4) *Reading information from emails and internet related to tourism*.

Although sub-reading skills certainly were much more than 4 sub-skills, these ones tour guides chose as the needed sub-reading skills were very useful and really necessary to tour guiding. They reflected the requirement of reading for the career. Tour guides must be able to read tourists' emails, their tourist document and read to update their knowledge. This comment was also indicated by Saigon Tourist (2015) and Bach Thi Thuy Trang (2015).

(9) Which sub-writing skill is needed for tour guiding, and how much?

**Table 9.** Degrees of Sub-writing skills needed

Degrees of Sub-writing skills needed	Tour guides (n=25, %)			
	Most	A lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Writing emails	8 (32%)	13 (52%)	4 (16%)	
2. Writing travel plans	9 (36%)	11 (44%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)
3. Writing travel tables	11 (44%)	11 (44%)	3 (12%)	
4. Writing reports on tourists	13 (52%)	8 (32%)	4 (16%)	
5. Producing tourism leaflets & brochures,	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	1 (4%)	6 (24%)

Table 9 indicated that most of tour guides (72%-88%) shared relatively similar perspectives in 5 sub-writing skills. 88% needed (3) *Writing travel tables*, 84% required (1) *Writing emails*, (4) *Writing reports on tourists*, 80% needed (2) *Writing travel plans*, and 72% needed (5) *Producing tourism leaflets & brochures...*

Although writing skills were not urgently required by tour guides due to their guiding practice often based on speaking and listening, the five sub-writing skills chosen were really related to tour guiding and supporting their duties. This result was also supported by Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016).

#### 4.2. Research question 2

*What difficulties did ETG students encounter in internships?*

The answer to this research question was found in the responses to questionnaire items 10-14 (as presented in Tables 10 – 14) and the interview questions 10-14.

Table 10 below shows the types and degrees of difficulty ETG students encountered when practicing working with international tourists.

**Table 10.** Degrees of Cultural difficulties

Degrees of Cultural difficulties	Students (n=31, %)			
	Most	A Lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Some misunderstandings existing in the culture of tourists but not in the culture of Vietnamese people..	12 (38.6%)	14 (45.2%)	3 (9.7%)	2 (6.5%)
2. Some misunderstandings when mentioning sensitive issues related to taboo, religion, politics, views of tourists' country	11 (35.5%)	15 (48.3%)	2 (6.5%)	3 (9.7%)
3. Some misunderstandings due to inaccurate or subjective comparisons, explanations on some cultural-related issues by way of speaking or writing	8 (25.8%)	17 (54.8%)	5 (16.2%)	1 (3.2%)
4. Some misunderstandings and misinterpretations when tourists are allowed/are not allowed to visit spiritual places	6 (19.4%)	19 (61.2%)	6 (19.4%)	
5. Some misunderstandings in tourists' wearing clothes, cuisine	9 (29%)	13 (41.9%)	8 (25.8%)	1 (3.2%)

As shown in Table 10, tour guides found some main cultural difficulties ETG students encountered in their practice as follows: 83.8% met (1) *Some misunderstandings existing in the culture of tourists but not in the culture of Vietnamese people* (2) *Some misunderstandings when mentioning sensitive issues related to taboo, religion, politics, views of tourists' country*. 80.6% encountered (3) *Some misunderstandings due to inaccurate or subjective comparisons, explanations on some cultural-related issues by way of speaking or writing*, (4) *Some misunderstandings and misinterpretations when tourists are allowed/are not allowed to visit spiritual places* whereas 70.9% of ETG students faced (5) *Some misunderstandings in tourists' wearing clothes, cuisine*. The result of the interview indicated that 10 ETG students met some cultural difficulties (1), (2), (3) whereas 5 students faced (4) and (5).

Cultural difficulties, especially intercultural misunderstandings in international tour guiding were surely unavoidable. ETG students' five cultural misunderstandings found by their supervisor-tour guides in their practice were rather typical and explainable due to rather different features in Vietnamese culture and English-speaking cultures. This comment agreed with the findings in Bach Thi Thuy Trang (2015).

As far as the types and degrees of difficulty ETG students encountered in listening skills are concerned, they are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Degrees of Listening difficulties

Degrees of Listening difficulties	Students (n=31, %)			
	Most	A Lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1. Listening to reservation details incorrectly	12 (38.7%)	10 (32.2%)	6 (19.4%)	3 (9.7%)
2. Listening to tourists' phone calls unclearly	7 (22.6%)	10 (32.2%)	13 (42%)	1 (3.2%)
3. Listening to tourists' needs incompletely	7 (22.6%)	11 (35.4%)	13 (42%)	
4. Listening to tourists' non-standard pronunciation, regional dialects, unfamiliar accents	16 (51.6%)	14 (45.2%)	1 (3.2%)	

Table 11 showed some listening difficulties ETG students encountered frequently in their practice. 96.8% of ETG students encountered (4) *Listening to tourists' non-standard pronunciation, regional dialects, unfamiliar accents*, 70.9% met (1) *Listening to reservation details incorrectly*, 58% faced (3) *Listening to tourists' needs incompletely* and 54.8% encountered (2) *Listening to tourists' telephone calls unclearly*. According to the interview, 9 ETG students encountered listening difficulties (2), (3) whereas 6 students faced (4).

Young tour guides and ETG students in their practice surely met more listening difficulties than 4 ones found by tour guides; however, these 4 listening difficulties were rather typical due to their lack of experience and careful training from the university. Nguyen Thi To Hoa and Pham Thi Tuyet Mai (2016) also supported this comment in their research.

As for speaking skills, the types and degrees of difficulty ETG students encountered are displayed in the Table 12:

**Table 12.** Degrees of Speaking difficulties

Degrees of Speaking difficulties	Students (n=31, %)			
	Most	A lot	Moderate	Least / At least
1. Talking about reservations unclearly	6 (19.4%)	8 (25.8%)	15 (48.4%)	2 (6.5%)
2. Explaining about prices inexactly	7 (22.6%)	7 (22.6%)	14 (45.2%)	3 (9.7%)
3. Explaining transportation unclearly	3 (9.7%)	12 (38.7%)	11 (35.5%)	5 (16.1%)
4. Explaining travel information incompletely	5 (16.1%)	16 (51.6%)	7 (22.6%)	3 (9.7%)
5. Explaining tourists' needs vaguely	6 (19.4%)	14 (45.2%)	8 (25.8%)	3 (9.7%)
6. Talking about tourist attractions incompletely	11 (35.5%)	14 (45.2%)	5 (16.1%)	1 (3.2%)

Table 12 indicated that 80.7% of ETG students encountered (6) *Talking about tourist attractions incompletely*, 67.7% met (4) *Explaining travel information incompletely* and 64.6% faced (5) *Explaining tourists' needs vaguely* whereas 48.4% encountered (3) *Explaining transportation unclearly* and 45.2% found (1) *Talking about reservations unclearly*, (2) *Explaining about prices inexactly*. 10 ETG students being interviewed faced speaking difficulties (5), (6) whereas 5 students encountered (1), (2), (3) and (4).

Due to a lack of experience and limited practice from the university, ETG met 6 typical speaking difficulties in their practice. These difficulties were often related to topics such as reservations, prices, transportation, attractions, tourists' needs rather different from topics taught at the university. Khoirunnisa et al (2018) raised the same problems in Indonesia in their studies.

The types and degrees of difficulty ETG students encountered in reading skills are as follows:

**Table 13.** Degrees of reading difficulties

Degrees of Reading difficulties	Students (n=31, %)			
	Most	A Lot	Moderate	Least / At least
1. Reading and understanding unclearly travel contracts, business letters, emails	4 (12.9%)	10 (32.3%)	13 (41.9%)	4 (12.9%)
2. Reading and understanding vaguely information about tourists' full name patterns, religious titles	1 (3.2%)	7 (22.6%)	16 (51.6%)	7 (22.6%)

3. Reading and understanding minimally tourism news & documents	6 (19.4%)	12 (38.7%)	9 (29%)	4 (12.9%)
4. Reading and understanding inexactly information about tourist destinations, tourist attractions	9 (29%)	15 (48.4%)	5 (16.1%)	2 (6.4%)

Table 13 showed that 77.4% of ETG students encountered (4) *Reading and understanding inexactly information about tourist destinations, tourist attractions*, 58.1% faced (3) *Reading and understanding minimally tourism news & documents*, 45.2% met (1) *Reading and understanding unclearly travel contracts, business letters, emails*, whereas 51.6% found moderate difficulty in (2) *Reading and understanding vaguely information about tourists' full name patterns, religious titles*. The interview showed that 12 ETG students faced reading difficulties (1) and (2) whereas 3 students encountered (4).

Due to students' chief focus on listening and speaking skills and lack of general knowledge on culture, tourism, geography, they were inevitable to meet reading difficulties, especially in tourism news, information and tourist attractions and destinations. Working experience also was partly responsible for these difficulties. This comment was supported by Kostic-Bobanovic and Grzinic (2011).

The types and degrees of difficulty ETG students encountered in writing skills can be found in the table below:

**Table 14.** Degrees of Writing difficulties

Degree of Writing difficulties	Students (n=31, %)			
	Most	A Lot	Moderate	Least/ At least
1 Writing e-mail in wrong formats	3 (9.7%)	6 (19.4%)	9 (29%)	13 (41.9%)
2 Writing advertisements about tourism, travel contracts uneasily	4 (12.9%)	11 (35.5%)	5 (16.1%)	11 (35.5%)
3 Writing travel itinerary, travel plans vaguely	5 (16.1%)	10 (32.3%)	10 (32.3%)	6 (19.4%)
4 Writing reports about tourists incoherently	5 (16.1%)	13 (41.9%)	6 (19.4%)	7 (22.6%)

Table 14 clarified writing difficulties ETG students encountered in practice. 58% of ETG students faced (4) *Writing reports about tourists incoherently*, 48.4% met (2) *Writing adverts about tourism, travel contracts uneasily* and (3) *Writing travel itinerary, travel plans vaguely* whereas 41.9% found (1) *Writing e-mail in wrong formats* as least difficulty. The result of the interview showed that 10 ETG students faced (2) whereas 5 students encountered (4).

Like reading difficulties, lack of practice in writing reports, adverts, travel plans from the university and lack of working experience can explain writing difficulties met by ETG students in tour guiding practice. This comment was supported by Kostic-Bobanovic and Grzinic (2011).

**4.3. Research question 3**

*How should these difficulties be overcome to satisfy English language needs for tour guiding from the perspectives of tour guide professionals and ETG students from HUFL, Hue University?*

This question was answered through the findings and discussions of the items 15, 16, 17 related to open questions from the questionnaire for the tour guides and question 10 from the

interview.

Item 15 from the questionnaire and question 10 from the interview clarified suggestions to Faculty of English, University of Foreign Languages, Hue University in terms of (1) *the selection of students for ETG programs*: HUFL should balance genders in their selection of students for ETG programs so that all of students can become future tour guides instead of hotel receptionists, restaurant managers...; (2) *the qualifications, working experience and teaching methods of ETG teachers/lecturers*: HUFL should recruit their ETG staffs with BA or MA qualifications but Tourism or Tour guiding or ET/ETG certificates issued by Tourism schools or colleges in Vietnam or in English-speaking countries. Most of difficulties in knowledge outside language and in communication skills and sub-skills can be covered, solved by their qualified staffs' training, tutoring and practicing activities in the context of classroom. Additionally, ETG lecturers or visiting lecturers from Tour guiding companies should be fluent in General English communication skills and ETG functional skills and sub-skills. ETG lecturers should accompany with ETG students while their students implement internships in order to foster and update ETG staffs' knowledge and skills in the workplace.; (3) *HUFL's ET/ETG syllabus, teaching and supporting materials*: HUFL should do regular or yearly researches on all or part of needs analysis, TSA in Hue City and neighboring regions on which they design their ETG syllabus more applicably and practically than the present syllabus, they choose English functional skills with pronunciation, grammar and specialized vocabulary more properly. They also raised the ideas of adding more periods for training and practicing ETG instead of ET in terms of knowledge outside language such as culture, religion, history, geography, population, psychology and English functional skills. Moreover, HUFL should design their ETG teaching materials by themselves because the choice of foreign ETG materials really did not support Vietnamese students in their future career in the context of Vietnam. Moreover, HUFL should use technology supporting their training and (4) *ETG internships, practicing in the workplace, attending to seminars sharing working experience in tour guiding by tour guide professionals*: HUFL should prolong internships in the tour guiding workplace with the guidance of senior experienced tour guides and invite senior tour guides to share experiences in tour guiding before attending practice in the workplace.

Item 16 from the questionnaire and question 10 from the interview showed suggestions to (international) travel agencies, companies in terms of (1) *recruiting tour guides for tour/travel programs*: Travel agencies, Tour guiding companies should recruit qualified tour guides from accredited universities or colleges locally or abroad where ETG students or Tour guides were trained in long-term programs in English or in bilingual programs or blended programs. Additionally, these companies should prioritize recruiting tour guides who had experienced practicing at the companies before; (2) *fostering professional skills and ETG to tour guides and training ETG students in internship programs*: Travel or Tour guiding companies or agencies should invest more funding for fostering professional skills and tourism knowledge and updating knowledge about tourist attractions in Vietnam. Moreover, Travel or Tour guiding companies or agencies should give more opportunities to send their tour guides to HUFL or any institution in Vietnam or abroad to take some short-term courses in English language including GE and ETG linguistic knowledge and communication, functional skills.

Item 17 from the questionnaire and question 10 from the interview raised some suggestions to ETG students in terms of (1) *overcoming cultural difficulties in tour guiding*: self-study was one of useful measures to overcome cultural difficulties. Some other measures are mastering the cultural and ETG content presented in ETG textbooks taught at HUFL, collecting and reading official (text) books or materials about Vietnamese culture, history, geography, translated into English or some necessary materials about some Asian or Western countries where there are many tourists visiting Vietnam; (2) *overcoming English linguistic knowledge in tour guiding*: ETG students should regularly practice pronouncing confused sounds, words, review grammar structures and note specialized vocabulary used often in tour guiding. Additionally, they should review English grammar more; improve specialized vocabulary through textbooks; and (3) *overcoming English communication skills in tour guiding*: the students should listen to VOA, BBC or watch CNN, BBC TV programs, take advantages of speaking to foreigners whenever meeting them, contact partners or tourists by emails in English. Besides, they should practice skills and sub-skills combining with using pronunciation, grammar or specialized vocabulary, for example, review English grammar more often by speaking to classmates or any foreigners and writing in all genres related to tourism; listening and watching English speaking TV programs regularly, writing emails or business letters to pen friends.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1. For Faculty of English at HUFL, Hue University**

The results of the research imply that the Faculty of English, HUFL should devote more efforts and finance to prepare for ET/ETG students as much as English and Vietnamese language-supporting knowledge such as culture, history, geography, psychology, economics, etc., including the ETG textbooks and supplementary materials. Linking training activities to the needs of learners and of the workplace of tour guiding should also be implemented as much as possible through ETG syllabus design based on needs analysis including TSA, choice of updated ETG textbooks or designing supplementary or CALL or on-line supporting ETG materials, organizing many real-life tasks in classroom context, and giving more opportunities for ETG students to practice in real working place, inviting more experienced tour guides or tour agencies to share experiences in their workplace with ETG students.

### **5.2. For ETG students**

The perspectives from tour guide professionals on English language needs and difficulties faced by ETG students in actual situation are very precious to ETG students who have experienced time of practice for a rather short time. Learning from successes and failures of the on-the-site tour guides is precious to ETG students. From the findings, ETG students should think over before moving from BA in English language program to BA in English language specializing in ET and ETG program because the former focuses chiefly on English linguistic knowledge and communication skills and translation developed by British literature and culture knowledge whereas the latter concentrates partly on basic knowledge of English linguistics such as Phonology, Grammar and Semantics, communication skills and British literature and culture, part of the program is devoted to courses related to English for Tourism, English for Tour

Guiding and short-term internship. Knowledge of ETG is the limited integration of fields of tourism and hospitality into English use in the chosen textbooks by HUFL, Hue University; therefore, ETG students, who will become tour guides in Vietnam, should read and update more about Vietnamese culture, history, geography, psychology, politics, population from official sources published by monolingual or bilingual format. English communication skills will be more accurate, fluent and meaningful if ETG students are patient to review basic rules of pronunciation, grammar structure and heap up more and more general vocabulary and idioms, expressions or terms related to tourism, tourist attractions... to meet the requirement of English language needs.

## 6. Conclusion

The research collected and discussed preliminarily the data related to English language needs for tour guiding such as needs of tour guiding activities, knowledge about culture, history geography, psychology, ETG linguistic aspects and skills supporting tour guiding, from the 25 tour guiding professionals in Hue city. Three groups of measures were also suggested to HUFL, Travel agencies and ETG students to help overcome ETG students' cultural, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills found by their tour guiding professionals' supervision in their practice. Some findings and comments were also supported by previous researchers in Vietnam and even abroad in spite of their different contexts of studies such as Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia,... Due to the limitations of narrow location, small number of participants and two instruments, questionnaire and interview, the contribution of the research was not very significant; however, the researcher hopes to raise some prompts to further studies by any researchers who are willing to improve the quality of training future tour guides in Vietnam.

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## NHU CẦU TIẾNG ANH HƯỚNG DẪN DU LỊCH THEO QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA HƯỚNG DẪN VIÊN CHUYÊN NGHIỆP

**Tóm tắt:** Nhiều sinh viên Tiếng Anh hướng dẫn du lịch (TAHDDL) của Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Huế gặp khó khăn khi thực tập. Đây có thể do thiết kế chương trình TAHDDL không cập nhật nhu cầu của các công ty du lịch. Bài viết trình bày phân tích định tính và định lượng nhu cầu TAHDDL theo quan điểm của hướng dẫn viên du lịch chuyên nghiệp (HDVDLCN) tại Huế, những khó khăn của sinh viên và những biện pháp giải quyết khó khăn thu thập từ những phản hồi của 25 HDVDLCN về 15 câu hỏi điều tra và trả lời của 15/31 sinh viên về 10 câu hỏi phỏng vấn. Kết quả phân tích giúp trường điều chỉnh nội dung chương trình liên quan đến kiến thức ngoài ngôn ngữ, kiến thức ngôn ngữ nhất là phát âm và từ vựng chuyên ngành, 4 kỹ năng đặc biệt là kỹ năng nói, nghe, chung và cụ thể.

**Từ khóa:** Tiếng Anh chuyên ngành hướng dẫn du lịch, nhu cầu tiếng Anh hướng dẫn du lịch, chương trình tiếng Anh hướng dẫn du lịch, hướng dẫn viên du lịch chuyên nghiệp