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The Future of Teaching English for Tourism in Saudi Arabia from the 2030 Vision Perspective: A Case of Al-Ulla City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the future of teaching English for tourism in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of the 2030 Vision. The sample included 100 EFL students and 30 instructors from different universities in Saudi Arabia. Future forecasts rely on the functionality and use of English by Saudi learners in the field of tourism at present within the 2030 vision perspective. The research discusses future strategies that may help develop English education at both hotel management sectors and tourist sites around Saudi Arabia, such as Al Ulla City. In addition, the study attempts to give stylish expectancy for the future of English for tourism in Saudi Arabia for future time. This study is based on the Communication Accommodation Theory. The results revealed that most Saudi users of English for tourism are willing to master the English language to flourish in their careers either in Saudi or abroad, particularly for their professions, and this is not promising without understanding both verbal and non-verbal English with a firm level of competence. The research is found useful for teachers, learners, investors/stakeholders, scholars, and decision-makers. It is recommended to the Artificial intelligence applications in courses of English for Specific Purposes in order to attract the learners and engage them in their learning process.

Keywords: English; Saudi; Tourism; Language Policy; Planning

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1. Introduction

Forecasting the future of English for tourism is a confirmed risky activity. This study is an attempt to reflect the manifold concerns related to the future of English in Saudi such as predictable education impairments^[1], explicit and implicit teaching difficulties, and the prospective state of English in Saudi. The research will also handle the sociolinguistic length of the English language depending on the setting in which it is implemented^[2]. This study implements the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT, hereafter) which relates to the social identity model where users show connections concerning the implementation of specific language codes^[3,4].

Saudi Arabia as a nation-state was established with the development of the Al Saud dynasty in central Arabia in 1727 and the succeeding foundation of the Emirate of Diriyah (Pre-Islamic Arabia), the land that set up contemporary Saudi Arabia, was the spot of many ancient civilizations; the prehistory of Saudi Arabia displays some of the most primitive traces of human activity in the world^[5-18]. The crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, successfully wheels the administration. He has been responsible for many legal and social reforms in the country, while also seeking to diversify the economy with Saudi Vision 2030^[2,5-9,19]. English has been taught in all Saudi academic institutions (schools and universities) for many decades at the early age of six years^[1,3,17,18,20-23]. Accordingly, the development of English in academic institutions resulted in an even larger extent at universities. Saudi Arabia had only one English department in 1957 (at King Saud University).

Figure 1 displays the increase in the number of universities and higher education institutes in Saudi Arabia throughout the years 1980–2016^[2,5-10,19,24,25].

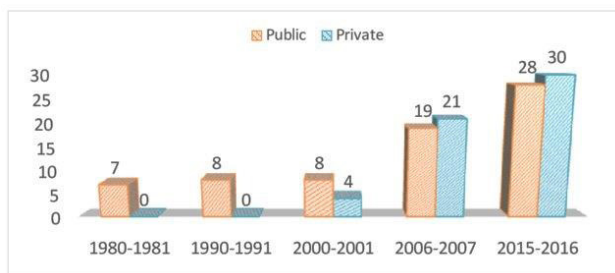


Figure 1. Increase in the Number of Universities in Saudi Arabia through the years 1980-2016^[24].

Later on, the number of universities grew to 65 offi-

cially recognized Saudi Arabian Universities and Colleges in 2024. To spell it in another way, thousands of English language teachers and learners are now employed in Saudi EFL classrooms. The English language is starting to compete with the native language in different fields inside Saudi Arabia including tourism, national and international matters, and commerce. This has provided the English language an exclusive position in Saudi Arabia^[18].

This study intends to examine the predicted learning and teaching obstacles, and then reconsider the suitable approaches desirable to reform the teaching of the English language for tourism in Saudi A greater indulgent of the whole image of teaching and learning English in Saudi is estimated to support improve the future of language policies and employment strategies on the national gauge. The present study hypothesizes that using the English language for tourism is more prospective to adjust to tourist sector development in Saudi Arabia in the coming future because of the possible convenience to learners and teachers which improved learning and teaching methods^[21].

English as the global language used throughout the world either as EFL or ESL has been assisted by many advancements recently, particularly with the development of technologies. This also relates to Saudi Arabia since English is needed for international communication, education, and commerce. In addition, the English language is the channel of communication between nations as the language of delegations. It is the primary medium of communication applied by businessmen, professional people, media and print, medicine, and industry. Further, business sectors, for instance, design English for tourism training for their staff at offices. English for tourism classes is nowadays being tailored and customized for employees in the tourism, filmmaking, and hospitality industries in Saudi Arabia to advance their language competence^[3]. The image is almost similar in Saudi Arabia. English will be the most extensively applied language in the tourism business. Consequently, knowledge of English for specific purposes, mainly English for tourism, is a significant factor of development in basically any area of attempt in contemporary times, as it is applied by the mainstream from varied countries to communicate. In international commerce, the competence to connect in English is compulsory. Awareness of English will be a conclusive benefit in the workstation and

will offer an outstanding chance for distinct national development. Such requirements activated diverse approaches toward the English language for tourism in Saudi. Some approaches are constructive and other opinions are destructive^[1,3,11–18,20].

Using English needs policymakers to begin planning for developing English for tourism; comprising hotel management, entertainment English, and hospitality English industry^[16]. Abdelatif and Halim state that the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia has developed considerably along with its labor force^[26], particularly in the Aseer region, since the introduction of Saudi Vision 2030. They state that English language abilities are important for the tourism industry's improvement. That is, advancing English language resources for work laborers in the field of tourism and hospitality management is essential.

Al-Malki et al. analyzed the English language communicative wants of the Saudi tourism staff and then intended an ESP model for teaching English in reliance on their demands and requirements^[7]. The findings stated that listening and speaking skills are very significant to their profession, specifically maintaining awareness and providing particulars about touristic sites. In addition, reading and vocabulary are also necessary than writing and syntactic accuracy^[26]. This concludes that curriculum designers should design a model that deals with needs analysis in the field of tourism and hospitality management sector in Saudi Arabia. Alyoubi identified the chances and challenges that Saudi Arabia faces to be a global tourism site^[12]. The study examined the factors that are responsible for progressively emerging Saudi Arabia into interaction tourism and classifying the variations and policies that are necessary.

Al-Malki analyzed the level of English language proficiency for tourism by Saudi learners in varied sectors^[8]. The study evaluated the teaching resources implemented at academic institutions in Saudi Arabia. The results showed that students are weak in speaking and listening skills charted by writing and reading skills respectively; then followed by grammar, tourism-related vocabulary, and several language skills. Much research has been conducted to examine the use of English for tourism but none of them analyzed the topic of the existing paper^[9,10,13–15,17,23,27]. Thus, this study is an attempt to investigate the future of teaching English for tourism in Saudi Arabia from the per-

spective of the 2030 Vision, the case of Al-Ulla City.

2. Methods

This study emphasizes the manifold dimensions such as learning impairments, teaching difficulties, the future situation of English for tourism in Saudi Arabia, and language partiality and assertiveness; a qualitative method was used. The sample of the study included 100 EFL Saudi students and 30 lecturers from different universities in Saudi that would be the source of this study data using stratified sampling. The researcher used interviews as the main research instrument for this study. The time of the interview was extended to 40 minutes. The interview or checklist included 6 items for students and 4 items for lectures. The researcher elicited data using semi-structured interviews to be flexible in producing thorough answers. The analysis of the study was based on the communication accommodation theory (CAT) by Giles (1980)^[3], which is concerned with the relationship between language, context, and social identity. The respondents were assisted to show their willingness to provide deep contribution.

3. Results and Discussion

Giles indicated that language users would adjust their accents to each other in exchange for keeping it more pleasant and smooth and officially suggested the theory of interpersonal accommodation concerning everyday occurrences^[3]. Succeeding studies have extended this theory and have exposed that this common accommodation between individuals happens in speech, pronunciation, postures, and related behaviors.

CAT relates very much to the language proficiency level of the participants in the study. They possessed an appropriate level of English language proficiency that can help them adapt accordingly. Most of the participants were aware of the benefits of studying English for tourism in Saudi Arabia and could be accommodated and interact virtually in the online environment or through face-to-face interaction. That is, the use of CAT in this study can fit well to represent textual interactions (e.g., tourist posts and tourists' feedback) between firms and users in tourist sites, which can also be illustrated in the findings of the study.

Having interviewed the participants, the lectures

showed that implementing English helps support their students to read and communicate with outsiders. For them, English is helpful as it facilitates them to conduct analysis and investigations. It helps them travel abroad and get better professions and future careers. They state that there has been an intensifying consciousness, as teachers established, in learning English for tourism during the last few years. There is a necessity to recognize the development of English language education in Saudi, which is reliant on many axes in the next few years. They appreciated being confident in English language communication which is essential for success and development in Saudi, mainly in both professional and academic sites. English is extensively implemented in a diversity of fields, including finance, tourism, arts, medicine, news reports, and policy-making. The analysis of the findings shows an increase in the number of universities and English teachers in Saudi Arabia from 1957 until 2024 based on the data published on academic websites; the expected growth is until 2030. Even though there has been a clear and natural growth in the numbers of academic institutions and EFL teachers of English for tourism for the last few decades, the main issue facing English teaching in Saudi Arabia is that learners face many difficulties that include:

(1) The core problem is that learning English for tourism in Saudi Arabia concentrated on the traditional approach/ teaching grammar as stated by the learners, which is not found to be developing.

(2) Learners of the English language for tourism have problems in writing and speaking skills, which is shown by many scholars.

(3) Learners stated that there are many factors behind the rise of the English language for tourism learning issues that involve teaching and learning resources, shortage of authentic learning settings, lack of motivation, and experience.

EFL emphasizes teaching language skills in correspondence with mother tongue production. Currently, English is not delivered applying detailed instructions for every skill required by specific spectators. English language teaching in Saudi Arabia is still a comprehensive use that is teacher-centered. There is a restricted national assessment of the English language for tourism teaching/learning accomplishment. There are limited considerable motivations

that can heighten the course of learning English for tourism effectively. Furthermore, learners' motivations to learn the English language are concerned with emphasis only on gaining some careers such as training, transformation, and in-house tourism. Most Saudi learners stated that they were and are given classes by non-native English language teachers who themselves display many difficulties in learning the English language.

Previously, the only technique to study English was formally at public stations (academic institutions) where EFL language instructors were non-native speakers of English. In the last few years, though, there have been few occasions to master and use the language in genuine situations by interacting with people who possess good language skills or are sent abroad for English language courses and training. In addition, the development of technologies and online English classes helped learners to learn the language at ease with native language speakers. To handle English for tourism requirements, Saudi academic institutions should upgrade and modernize the teaching methods they implement in classrooms. They should work on adjusting their English language for tourism with the national requirements for English.

Additionally, more training should be provided for English language teachers, particularly at lower levels schools in remote areas where tourism is flourishing to deal with the gap in these academic institutions that are commonly delivered with low amount competent English teachers. If Jordan scholars, schools, and universities have the skills to treat such instructive anxieties and work towards refining the procedural and curricular obstacles, the future of English for tourism in Saudi Arabia can appear very encouraging. Currently, English for tourism has changed into the language of global tourism and hospitality even between countries that do not use English as a native or even a foreign language.

An additional obstacle was that several scholars stated that they studied English using grammar-translation methods as instructed by text materials and teachers, and they ignored the other four skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the importance of the native language is complete and the motivation for learning English seems to be contributory rather than integrative. Learners and teachers specified that English will not

disturb the native language or the religious faith in Saudi Arabia. Besides, learning English will have no undesirable effect on the public's culture as they will not create adverse actions. English for tourism, on the other hand, possesses great appreciation and is viewed as a science and technology language. Teachers and learners claimed that using English in the field of tourism proves that language users are superior compared to others. It increases their prospects and gives them the chance to get a proper career. Saudi learners' approach toward the English language is very significant because it reveals the Saudi's perspective of the language. It is viewed that Saudi learners have a respectable approach toward the English language in the field of tourism, which will help them spread the English language in Saudi Arabia in the future since the contribution of technology and media is very prevailing in the favor of English language for tourism.

In addition, the results of the study indicated that learning English for tourism needed to be incorporated with media since there is a tendency in education to implement technology in the educational field. English for tourism is like any other field of language learning; it has many characteristics that include knowing all the language skills. For instance, speaking is one of the most difficult skills to cover. As a result, learners and teachers showed that they could pass this obstacle with the assistance of some supplementary materials. The case for the implementation of technology in tourism education is grounded on the learner's personal experiences. Learners can master the English language and the values of English-speaking people via many media channels. It also raises learners' critical thinking, inspiring them to develop as successful viewers and listeners, and therefore creators of their messages. Learners at diverse levels showed that seeing media is the most thought-provoking method to learn as an audio-visual process. In addition, the Internet and Suggestopedia are other modes of learning that should be considered for developing English for tourism. Every learner enjoys learning the language by watching movies and listening to music irrespective of where they are and when they do that. Foreign films on tourism and hospitality can be an assist and are the optimum ways to develop learners' language, improve unintended syntax knowledge, and ease the ability for effective interaction. Also, movies contribute to understand-

ing a large number of unacquainted phrases merely by showing the image on the screen. Learners understood that seeing tourism movies without titles and then seeing them with the transformation helped them understand difficult terms.

Learning English for tourism via films is an input-based education. Learners start by remembering a considerable of accurate English stretches. Then, they attempt to simulate them and generate modern vocabulary ^[24]. Films on tourism also let learners acquire a new language that is not yet in glossaries since these expressions are part of specific dialects of some countries like informal English. Learners also study how native speakers state expression with accurate word stress, with the appropriate intonation quality, and with correct pitch. Besides, learners can select to acquire to express English like native language speakers if they are involved in a specific accent or dialect. Learners and teachers stated that the English language for tourism textbooks connected to English language education on media allows present learners to relate and design course books according to their requirements, and it supports learners to collaborate in groups, among many relevant satisfying effects since the course books are huge and modern. The permitted accessibility setting of the English language for tourism resources on media offers students unrestricted choices about varied language maneuvers, grammar consciousness, and various communication prospects from diverse nations using the English language. Learners of the English language value tourism course material on media to emphasize these academically growing sources. Media is making teaching today more reachable to many learners around the world. It correspondingly has the latent to spread fresh categories of positive quick learning.

Learners of the English language for tourism at all levels of education can also take advantage of experts in the field of education through academic courses presented through open-access periodicals, and global symposia available to large viewers implementing specific smart submissions for virtual and face-to-face interaction. Media can be applied for a selection of purposes and in a diversity of approaches in language education. The more learners apply it, the classier their learning skills develop. The mainstream media websites are present and contribute beneficial linguistic evidence. They can offer an extensive

choice of genuine resources that are critical to the learner's progression. Consequently, they can be applied as additional online scholastic developments that permit learners to interact with native speakers and knowledgeable teachers.

Furthermore, the language applied in media and online classes can have an important effect on performers' language skills, so displaying online classes of different genres could be reflected in a learning situation. Because English for tourism is a global language, it can be convenient to use online tourist documentation as a basis for English language learning. As a result, while interrelating with other non-native language users, learners can expand their English language. As formerly specified, online and internet videos/films hold a diversity of languages, which the learners may not have experienced in an educational setting. Watching video games/films can be seen as a learning situation in which learners can develop their language skills.

4. The Limitation of the Study

The current research is limited as it investigates the future of teaching English to tourism in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of the 2030 vision a case of Al Ulla city; the sample of the study included only 100 EFL students and 30 instructors. The fast geographical expansion of Saudi Arabia prevented the researcher from eliciting data and including a larger number of participants that would be comprehensive enough. The results of the study cannot be generalized to the mainstream populations in related educational settings. Further, the items of the textual analysis items and the class observation process were restricted to the purposes of the present study only using communication accommodation theory ^[3].

5. Suggestions for Future Research

This study suggests the following:

- (1) Including respondents from diverse settings.
- (2) Observing the features influencing the use of English for tourism and offering probable solutions to difficulties.
- (3) Analyzing the influence of collaborative use of English for tourism in different Saudi contexts.

6. Conclusions

Most Saudi learners are keen to learn the English language to prosper in learning their fields either in Saudi or overseas, particularly for their students, and this is not possible without mastering verbal English language for tourism with a specific level of competence. Other learners' strategy is to collaborate and live by obtaining a rigorous profession to advance either in Saudi or outside. Saudi learners also would appreciate a better awareness of the standards and societies of other societies from several worldwide. There are certain measures that policymakers, academia, tourism specialists, and English language administrators must monitor. Academic experts and professionals should give language teachers good salaries grounded on their expertise, concentrations, and the learners' age they teach, provide universities with suitable accommodations for English instruction and distribute continuing reviews to be knowledgeable about teachers' difficulties, and keep it explicit that the English language is a significant measure of the prospectus.

This research was a considerate attempt to accomplish what the prospect of the English language for tourism in Saudi Arabia will be constructed on several bases. The research forecasts a growth in the number of English educators and initiates, and it forecasts development in the excellence of the education/knowledge procedure. Such growth and improvement are not only overseen by public education. Diverse influences can help in increasing the instruction and knowledge of English such as new know-how delivered by media channels and by both private and public schooling and universities employing more native-like lecturers as English instructors even if this policy will enlarge more costs to the students and educational organizations with uncertain finances. The subject of providing good education to Saudi learners is a very stimulating factor that may obstruct some of the courses of effective learning.

Another inspiring concern in the future is to persuade lecturers teaching English for tourism fields at higher education levels to contract the weight of teaching materials and textbooks of linguistics and literature theories with the present weight, which is about 81% of resources; and this delays the opportunity of tally more options concentrating

on both language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) and English for Specific Purposes. What learners require is to intensify their language and to emphasize prospectuses that are explicit such as prospectuses connected with English for tourism and related English programs concentrating on specific purposes (ESP) for varied spectators of learners who intend to prosper in future professions that do not need a dense hypothetical experience in linguistic theoretical aspects or even awareness with present fictional concepts and literary collections including dramas, poems, and narratives spreading to primitive ages. Learners do not study Ancient and Middle English since they are after acquiring Contemporary English with its current language, syntactic, and practice. Furthermore, a prospective reconsideration of the purpose of the English language in Saudi should emphasize education globalized interaction to reinforce the cooperation between global authorities' unlimited social viewpoints.

Therefore, the interaction theory proposes that there are certain social variations that Saudi users of English would keep to get an endorsement from other effective and native English users, and this exploits the efficacy of interaction with a useful shared distinctiveness even if speakers fit to diverse genetic personalities. Saudi speakers of English act more influence in settings necessitating effective English either for getting better professions or traveling overseas. Saudi learners with acceptable English would not have a lesser eminence when they change from one cluster to another all general the world. The possession of decent English is supposed to lessen social status differences and support the constancy of such position by showing constructive self-classification.

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