

Gloria Bosch and Torsten Schlak (eds.)

TEACHING



FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR TOURISM

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Peter Lang

Introduction

The genesis of the present volume can be found in the First International Congress on Tourism and Foreign Languages held on 14-15 April 2011 at the University of the Balearic Islands (Spain), since most of its essays were presented there as papers. The aim of this book is to offer a broad picture of the current state of academic research on Foreign Language Teaching for the tourism industry from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds.

Many research studies have been carried out since the early 1960s, and especially in the 1980s, in this subfield of Applied Linguistics which is the Teaching of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP). Hyland defines specific purposes language teaching as a “distinctive approach to language learning based on identification of the specific language features, discourse practices and communicative skills of target groups, and on teaching practices that recognize the particular subject-matter needs and expertise of learners” (Hyland, 2009, p. 201). Language for Specific Purposes addresses the “immediate and specific needs of learners who need that language as a tool in their education, occupational, vocational training or even for social survival” (Long, 2005, p. 19). As a result, Language Teaching for Specific Purposes draws its significance from theoretically-grounded studies and needs analysis research, which is the driving force underlying LSP-programmes.

Due to the importance and global spread of English as a *lingua franca* in international business contexts, most research and educational programmes on specific purposes are related to the English language. Nevertheless, the greater mobility, internationalisation and diversification of businesses implies an increasing demand for specialised communicative, cross-cultural skills by professional groups. Languages such as Spanish and Mandarin Chinese are nowadays becoming more and more important for international business communication, and in some domains like the tourism industry, the demands for less widespread languages as German in the Seychelles or Russian in Mallorca show that language teaching programmes for specific purposes in languages other than English are becoming more and more necessary. According