

**INTERNATIONALISATION OF CADIZ BAY PORT:
STAFF TRAINING IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES**

ANTONIO MANUEL BRENES CASTAÑO

University of Cadiz

Abstract: *The maritime sector is pivotal for the economic growth of coastal cities like Cádiz, Spain. In our globalised world, ports face high competitiveness, emphasising the growing need for English-proficient staff. This research focuses on the Port Authority of Cádiz Bay's language-training programme, aiming to enhance employees' English proficiency for job excellence. Through a qualitative study, the paper not only analyses the current programme but also proposes an alternative linguistic training approach. The ultimate objective is to equip port workers with language skills that contribute to providing excellent services to users, addressing the evolving demands of the maritime industry.*

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Internationalisation of Ports, Training Programmes.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Public Ports of the Government of Spain

According to information found on the website of “Puertos del Estado” (2023), *the Spanish government's port authority*, Spain boasts the longest coastline among European Union countries, spanning an impressive 8,000 km. Its strategic geographical location, positioned proximately to a major global maritime route, solidifies its standing as a key hub in international shipping and a significant logistics platform in southern Europe.

In accordance with “BOE” (2011), *Official State Gazette*, the Spanish Port System comprises 46 ports of general interest under state ownership, managed by 28 Port Authorities. According to Annex I of the Consolidated Text of the Law on State Ports and the Merchant Marine (LPEMM), the port of the Bay of Cádiz is explicitly defined as a state port of general interest, located in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. As specified in the text, Cádiz and its Bay, which includes El Puerto de Santa María, the Free Trade Zone of Cádiz, Puerto Real, Bajo de la Cabezuela, and Puerto Sherry, are part of this state port.

The intricate logistical and transport networks facilitated by these ports are underscored by compelling statistics: they handle nearly 60% of exports and 85% of imports, significantly contributing to 53% of Spanish foreign trade within the EU and 96% with third countries.

Moreover, the impact of this maritime activity is profound, contributing almost 20% to the GDP of the transport sector, constituting 1.1% of the overall Spanish GDP. Beyond economic indicators, the sector actively sustains direct employment for approximately 100,000 individuals and indirectly supports around 175,000 jobs, emphasising its crucial role in both the national economy and job market.

In conclusion, the port sector emerges as a linchpin in the economic landscape of Spanish coastal cities. Beyond enhancing local industries' competitiveness and attracting foreign investment, well-developed port infrastructure acts as a catalyst for job creation, economic growth, and the evolution of supporting industries and services. The multifaceted impact positions the maritime sector as a cornerstone in Spain's economic prosperity.

1.2. The Port of the Bay of Cádiz

The port of Cádiz stands as a testament to the passage of time, with its origins dating back to the Phoenicians, believed to have founded this maritime marvel. This historical tapestry, woven with the threads of centuries, has shaped the port into a storied entity, etching its significance in the annals of maritime heritage.

Despite its illustrious history, the port has also weathered challenging moments, including those occurred in the 19th century. The port faced a setback from which it has not fully recovered, despite earnest efforts throughout the 20th century. In 2013, a new container terminal project was proposed to boost traffic, promote technical improvements, and implement new commercial strategies in the port. Since 2022, this terminal has been partially operational. Upon reaching full functionality, it is expected to have a decisive impact on the economy of the city of Cádiz and its bay. The growth of maritime logistics services is anticipated to have a positive influence on the labour market, transportation infrastructure, and significantly impact the city-port interface (Jigena Antelo et al. 2023).

After delving into the rich historical backdrop and contemporary advancements of the Port of the Bay of Cádiz, we shall now undertake a profound exploration of its geographical significance. This port has earned distinction for its strategic positioning along sea routes that connect countries in North, Central, and South America, Africa (encompassing South Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, and the entire Maghreb), as well as Northern and Southern Europe. Furthermore, Cádiz serves as the gateway to the Mediterranean and, consequently, acts as a pivotal link to South Asia, China, and, to a lesser extent, Oceania (Jigena Antelo et al. 2023).

The advent of new technological frontiers marked a transformative epoch for ports worldwide, and the Port of the Bay of Cádiz was no exception. This era bore witness to the emergence of cutting-edge infrastructures that reshaped the port's skyline, the catalysation of both public and private investment initiatives that propelled its modernisation, and the establishment of port authorities to govern its expanding operations. A notable aspect of this era was the port's strategic diversification into not only maritime activities but also military and tourism ventures, broadening its scope and influence.

Navigating these changes adeptly, the Port of the Bay of Cádiz has consistently striven to maintain not only its historical significance but also its economic competitiveness on the global stage. The resilience displayed in the face of evolving dynamics speaks volumes about its commitment to innovation and adaptability.

Exploring the extensive array of services offered by the Cádiz Bay Port Authority, as meticulously outlined on their website, unveils a multifaceted approach to maritime activities. From aquaculture, acting as a thriving hub for specialized companies engaged in aquaculture production and research, to container management, overseeing a vast surface area dedicated to the efficient flow of container traffic, the port epitomizes versatility in its operations. Additionally, the port serves as a regular port of call for majestic cruise vessels, facilitates the smooth handling of liquid bulk traffic essential for ship provisioning, champions sports and leisure with high-performance sailing centres, sustains the traditional fishing activities that have been part of its identity, and provides state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate ro-ro traffic across its four docks.

In essence, the Port of the Bay of Cádiz not only reflects historical maritime prowess but also epitomises adaptability and innovation in response to the evolving dynamics of global trade and technology. Its diverse array of services underscores its role not just as a maritime hub but also as a dynamic economic and cultural contributor to the region, weaving together the past, present, and future in the maritime tapestry of Spain.

1.3. Evolution of Ports in a Globalized Competitive World

The role of ports in the economic development of coastal cities cannot be overstated. It is an established fact that "ports constitute an important economic activity in coastal areas" (Takrim 2016). Beyond being mere gateways for goods, ports serve as dynamic hubs that catalyse economic growth, providing employment opportunities, fostering trade, and attracting investments.

The traditional conception of ports has undergone a profound transformation, propelled by the forces of globalisation, trade liberalisation, and the burgeoning phenomenon of cruise tourism. This evolution signifies more than just a shift in physical structures; it marks a paradigmatic change in the very essence and function of these maritime gateways.

In the contemporary landscape, the significance of ports extends far beyond the conventional role of facilitating the movement of goods. They now stand as dynamic hubs intricately linked to the economic fortunes of coastal cities. The throughput of both goods and passengers at ports emerges as a linchpin in driving the economic growth of these urban centres. As conduits for international trade, ports play an essential role, facilitating over 80 percent of the total world merchandise trade, as highlighted by Mangan (2017). This staggering statistic underscores the centrality of maritime trade in the interconnected global economy.

Moreover, the seascape of coastal cities undergoes a significant transformation due to the growing influence of cruise tourism, a facet that has gained remarkable prominence in the broader tourism market (Dwyer & Forsyth 1998). Ports, beyond their traditional cargo operations, now actively embrace the influx of cruise ships, ushering in a wave of economic opportunities. The impact of cruise tourism on the economy of coastal cities is multifaceted, encompassing increased local business activities, such as tourism-related services and retail, as well as infrastructural development that enhances the overall attractiveness of these cities. The allure of coastal destinations, combined with the rising popularity of cruise vacations, positions ports as key players in this sector. According to Brida and Zapata (2010), cruise tourism alone has the potential to generate a staggering \$18 billion annually in passenger expenditure. This underscores the transformative economic potential within the cruise industry, establishing it as a substantial revenue stream for coastal cities with well-developed port facilities. In this contemporary maritime milieu, the once-static image of ports has evolved into a dynamic catalyst for economic vitality. Their role as facilitators of global trade and hosts to the burgeoning cruise industry positions them at the forefront of economic development in coastal cities. As the maritime landscape continues to evolve, these ports serve as not only conduits for the movement of goods and people but also as engines propelling the economic prosperity of the regions they serve.

Slack (2001) affirms that "the port industry has always been competitive". However, the hard business rivalry and competitiveness among ports we find currently have become a new reality whose harshness was almost non-existent before the actual globalisation (Zhang 2009). Ports are involved in offering effective management and are always under pressure, trying to improve their deficiencies and attempting to offer the best quality service to become the best option for potential customers in this competitive context. These potential customers' satisfaction could be negatively influenced by failures and/or lack of reliability, which may lead potential clients to dismiss the idea of making a deal with some ports. Management, social responsibility, costs, location, infrastructure, efficiency and quality service are key factors that have positive effect on customers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Currently port managers, after measuring their customer's opinions, are making a big effort investing time and money to keep improving and being competitive. Any incident or inefficient outcome, however insignificant it may seem, can be crucial in the selection or dismissal process. That is why having well-trained, skilful staff is necessary.

1.4. Language Training to Port Staff

A poorly functioning or inefficient port not only disrupts operational efficiency but also poses a significant hurdle to attracting investments and fostering the growth of the port market.

The parameters of efficient performance encompass various characteristics, including the establishment and maintenance of a high-quality port infrastructure, coupled with effective operational management. In the era of globalisation, marked by multinational trade, challenges in communication often arise among port workers and international customers (Bocanegra-Valle 2010). A forward-thinking and successful port authority recognises the need to continually train its staff, equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate the evolving market dynamics and deliver the highest quality service in the fiercely competitive globalized world.

While the port sector traditionally emphasises technological advances in training, it is imperative to acknowledge the important role of language proficiency, especially in English, which has become the lingua franca of the maritime sector. As asserted by Bocanegra-Valle (2010), "The English language is an international language for communicating at sea in a multinational, multicultural, and multilingual environment"

In essence, gone are the days when port workers communicated solely with customers from their own countries. The journey of learning English as a lingua franca in the maritime context is a holistic expedition, traversing linguistic landscapes and cultural horizons. It is a bridge that connects not only words but also worlds, fostering an atmosphere of unity and mutual understanding amid the vast seas of global maritime interaction. A robust command of the English language enhances safety, efficiency, and overall effectiveness in tasks, communication with crewmembers, passengers, and other stakeholders.

In the contemporary business landscape, language training has emerged as a vital component for the development of ports. Well-trained staff not only serve as the frontlines but also act as the best ambassadors for their ports. Providing language training instills confidence in staff, empowering them to deliver excellent service that contributes to the overall excellence ports aspire to achieve. Smooth communication with customers becomes paramount when evaluating the quality of services offered by a port.

The evolution of English language training in business areas, particularly within the maritime industry, has undergone significant transformations since the inception of English for Specific Purposes around 1960. Formerly centered on grammar, vocabulary, and translation, teaching methods have embraced a new approach that prioritises meeting learners' specific professional language needs. English for Specific Purposes now offers tailored courses designed to address the unique language requirements of various business sectors, including the maritime industry (Hutchinson & Waters 1987). In the contemporary landscape, a myriad of courses and materials are available to develop essential language skills, ensuring that staff in any business area, including the maritime industry, are equipped to thrive in their roles.

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The strategic port of Cadiz Bay stands as a global nexus for shipping trade and cruise tourism, where ports and their personnel play indispensable roles in fostering international connections. Governed by a dedicated port authority, this maritime hub recognizes the central role of its staff in ensuring the seamless delivery of top-notch services to a diverse clientele and passengers.

As outlined in the port's official documentation, particularly in the section titled "Missions, Views, and Values", a set of core values underscores the port's commitment to excellence:

- Promotion of continuous learning: The port emphasises the importance of ongoing education and skill development to keep its workforce abreast of industry advancements.

- Promotion of teamwork across all areas: Collaboration is a cornerstone value, recognising the significance of unified efforts across diverse departments to achieve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- Respect for people: The port places a high value on treating individuals with dignity and respect, fostering a positive and inclusive work environment.

In line with these values, the acquisition of English proficiency emerges as a crucial asset. Proficiency in English not only facilitates seamless teamwork with individuals from across the globe but also opens a window into the rich tapestry of cultures associated with the language, as mentioned before. Language learning becomes a conduit for gaining insights into the diverse backgrounds of countries where English is spoken, fostering a deeper understanding and respect for global diversity. As the port continues to navigate the intricacies of international maritime activities, a multilingual and culturally aware staff becomes an invaluable asset in upholding these foundational values and ensuring the port's continued success on the global stage.

2.2. Method Description

This paper encapsulates two primary objectives, each meticulously designed to delve into the intricate landscape of the language-training programme administered by the Authority of the Port of Cadiz Bay. The inaugural objective seeks to embark on a comprehensive exploration of a specific case study, illuminating the nuances and efficacy of the existing language training initiative provided to the port's dedicated staff. This investigative journey commenced with a direct inquiry to the port's training coordinator, soliciting invaluable insights and firsthand information.

Simultaneously, the second objective of this article is to present an innovative proposal to the training coordinator. This proposal advocates for a distinctive approach to English language training, specifically tailored for the unique needs of the port sector. Rather than adhering to the conventional model of generic English language acquisition, the alternative training framework champions a targeted curriculum under the umbrella of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This strategic approach is designed to hone language skills tailored to the professional requirements of the port staff, ensuring a more precise and impactful training experience. Through this dual-pronged exploration, the paper aspires to contribute valuable insights and recommendations for the enhancement of the language-training programme, aligning it more closely with the dynamic demands of the maritime industry.

After several fruitful exchanges, which involved in-depth discussions via phone calls and emails, the port training coordinator of the Port of the Bay of Cádiz and I mutually agreed to elevate our communication to a more profound level. This led to the proposal and subsequent arrangement of a comprehensive phone interview.

Throughout this enlightening interview, the port training coordinator generously shared valuable insights into the pivotal role that the English language plays in the maritime sector. His detailed explanations shed light on the intricacies of the language-training programme orchestrated by the Port Training Centre.

In undertaking this study, a deliberate choice was made to embrace qualitative research methodologies, recognising the multifaceted nature of the subject matter. Qualitative research, known for its versatility in exploring phenomena within authentic settings, employs a diverse array of methods to delve into the intricacies of real-world scenarios. This approach is characterised by the empirical collection of narrative data from individuals or groups, a process that unfolds organically to unravel the layers of complexity inherent in the phenomena under investigation (Moser & Korstjens 2017).

The selection of a semi-structured interview methodology reflects a strategic choice within the realm of qualitative research, renowned for its intrinsic flexibility. This method operates on the foundation of a carefully crafted set of predetermined questions, functioning as beacons that illuminate the subjects under scrutiny. These questions, deliberately designed to be open-ended,

serve as catalysts for delving into nuanced discussions, steering away from the constraints of simplistic yes or no responses.

At the heart of the semi-structured interview's efficacy lies its dynamic essence. This approach empowers both the interviewer and interviewee with the flexibility to traverse diverse topics, reshuffle the sequence of predetermined questions, and essentially, permit the dialogue to evolve organically. This fluidity not only accommodates the inherent complexities associated with exploring language-training programmes but also ensures that the conversation remains authentic and respondent-driven.

Crucial to the success of the semi-structured interview is the creation of an environment conducive to open dialogue, allowing participants the freedom to articulate their opinions in their own terms. By fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and genuine curiosity, the interviewer seeks to unveil not only explicit responses to the questions but also the underlying layers of meaning that enrich the experiences of the interviewees. This intentional approach recognizes the multifaceted nature of language training programs and aims to capture the depth of individual perspectives, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact on staff and the overall dynamics of the port.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews commonly involve the recording of individuals' attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, providing comprehensive insight into the interview context (Galletta 2013).

Before undertaking the semi-structured interview, data was gathered from the port's webpage, and a list of questions was prepared to guide the interview, focusing on the central theme of English training for the workers at the Port of the Bay of Cádiz. Despite having a guide ready, an awareness of the capacity to explore thematic trajectories in the conversation that might deviate from the guide was crucial.

Semi-structured interviews can be conducted in various formats, including face-to-face, over the phone, or through video (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik 2021). Our interview took place over the phone, the conversation was recorded, and was transcribed to analyse the data more efficiently.

2.3. Findings

The outcomes of this qualitative research illuminate several noteworthy themes derived from the analysis of the information gleaned during the interview:

- When applying for positions in various departments, one of the evaluated criteria is the level of English proficiency possessed by the applicant.
- The recently hired personnel from newer generations exhibit an increasingly elevated proficiency in English. They are acutely aware of the necessity for continuous language training, understanding that the quality of their English proficiency can serve as a gateway to future opportunities and, most importantly, significantly contribute to the successful execution of their job tasks.
- The English courses provided by the training programme usually focus on general English training rather than tailoring the content to the specific linguistic needs of different work areas.
- Notably, the training coordinator for the workers at the Port of Cadiz Bay lacked awareness regarding the distinction between General English courses and English for Specific Purposes courses. Additionally, he was unfamiliar with the types of institutions offering courses in this specific format. I shared with him that institutions such as the Center for Modern Languages at the University of Cadiz have been delivering English for Specific Purposes courses to various departments within the university and external companies for over a decade. The coordinator expressed gratitude for this information and requested that I facilitated a connection with the coordinator at the Center for Modern Languages responsible for this type of training.

This insight into the themes arising from the interview provides a comprehensive understanding of the existing dynamics surrounding English proficiency requirements, the evolving language awareness among newer hires, the current focus on general English training, and the potential avenues for incorporating more targeted language courses into the training program.

2.4. Proposal

The Port of Cadiz Bay provides its staff with English courses, emphasising general English proficiency levels aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. However, it is crucial to recognise that attaining a high general level of English does not automatically empower workers to excel in their job duties conducted in English, potentially leading to worker frustration.

In light of this, my proposal advocates for a more tailored approach to the English training provided to port workers. Specifically, the training should align with the distinct work-related needs of each department within the port. This could encompass specialised courses such as Maritime English, Business English, Finance English, English for Customer Service, English for Tourism, and English for Logistics, among others, based on the unique requirements of the workers. English for Specific Purposes courses are strategically designed to address the specific needs of learners, with a central question guiding the curriculum: Why do these students need to learn English?

In the scope of this study, acquiring proficiency in these specific domains would empower port workers to communicate effectively with customers and passengers from diverse nationalities within their work environment. This targeted language training not only enhances their linguistic capabilities but also directly contributes to job performance, fostering a more seamless and satisfactory communication experience in English.

Some of the highest differences between English for General Purposes courses and English for Specific Purposes courses are the following:

Table 1: English for Specific Purposes – English for General Purposes

<i>English for Specific Purposes</i>	<i>English for General Purposes</i>
Generally adult learners	Any age learners
A common goal	Different goals
Short courses	Long term
Essential: Needs analysis	Essential: CEFR
Focused on the workplace	No focus
Focused on specific lexis	A wide variety of lexis
Limited focus on grammar	Full grammatical system
Focused on the skills learners' need	All skills
The methodology chosen depend on the course and on the participants	Methodologies are usually similar in all the courses

Adapted from Woodrow 2017

There is no denying that the type of courses we would need in our study context, English for workers in the different departments of the Port of the Bay of Cádiz, is English for Specific Purposes. Generally, these courses are designed for adult learners who share common goals when attending an English course. In our area of study, the participants are the workforce of the Port of the Bay of Cádiz, aiming to enhance their work functions with excellence in English.

Within the port of the Bay of Cadiz, there are numerous departments which need tailored courses to their specific staff needs. Prior to educators embarking on syllabus creation, a needs

analysis must be conducted with each department. This analysis involves determining the course content, addressing specific skills, selecting appropriate methodologies, etc. Recognised as a crucial data collection method in the field (Nunan 1988), needs analysis provides insights into target needs, encompassing necessities, weaknesses, and desires—such as preferred learning styles. Additionally, it delves into the target situation, considering the context of participants in the learning process, their attitude toward learning English, past learning experiences, and cultural background. As highlighted by Basturkmen (2010), needs analysis stands as an indispensable tool intricately interwoven with the development of language learning materials and curricula.

To avoid misunderstandings in conversations between people from different nationalities, it is also essential to incorporate sections on intercultural studies into the courses as well. The intercultural approach constitutes a significant element in the foreign language classroom, as it enables students not only to reflect from their own perspective and identity but also to cultivate a positive view of differences as enriching aspects of their personal development. Teachers and scholars widely agree that the primary source of errors leading to misunderstandings is not typically found in phonetic mistakes or deficiencies in grammar usage. Instead, it is often attributed to a cultural gap between the interlocutors (Levey et al. 2001). Including intercultural pragmatics and the significance of non-verbal communication in English for specific purposes courses for the workers of the Bay of Cadiz port will contribute to fulfilling one of the values sought by the port authority, as outlined in section 2.1 of this article: Respect for individuals.

Finally, when it comes to methodology, a language course for Specific Purposes does not have to adhere to a specific method; the method is considered valid if the outcome is satisfactory. It all depends on the information we gather from the needs analysis and the study of the participants. For example, if we focused the courses on their content, content programming could be approached from a functional, notional, situational, or structural standpoint (Fleta et al. 1988). Therefore, generalising the same methodology across all courses would be a mistake, as we should base the approach on the course's objectives, essential skills to cover, course content, and the characteristics of the students.

However, if we had to choose a type of methodology for these courses, we would opt for active teaching methodologies. Teaching based on active methodologies is student-centered, focusing on their proficiency in discipline-specific skills. These strategies view learning as a constructive rather than a receptive process.

Notable and effective approaches to active teaching and learning involve methods such as utilising case studies and implementing problem-based learning in international studies. In these approaches, students grapple with the intricacies of an issue or puzzle, working through potential solutions. (Lantis et al. 2010).

These methodologies highlight the importance of conducting teaching within the framework of real-world problems or professional scenarios. It is crucial to present situations that closely resemble the future professional context of the students. The contextualisation of teaching fosters students' positive attitude towards learning and their motivation, which is essential for meaningful learning.

Finally and equally important, it enables students to tackle real problems with a level of difficulty and complexity similar to what they will encounter in professional practice. This would also prevent the frustration, which we discussed earlier, that a worker may feel after years of training in English and the incapacity to perform their job functions in that language.

3. Conclusion

The port of the Bay of Cádiz stands as a linchpin of strategic significance, leveraging its prime location, robust infrastructure, and global competitiveness. In the ever-accelerating tide of globalisation, where trade and cruise tourism play key roles, the Port in the Bay of Cádiz is

proactively expanding and enhancing its services to meet the demands of the evolving global landscape.

As the port seeks to maintain its status as a key economic driver in Cádiz, a fundamental challenge emerges—to prioritise and elevate its already positive international standing. The rapid pace of development, coupled with global pressures, necessitates a strategic investment in the workforce. The Bay of Cádiz port recognises the imperative to hone essential skills essential for effective interaction with international counterparts.

English proficiency tailored to the specific needs of the port industry becomes a linchpin for the Bay of Cádiz to sustain its upward trajectory. A strategic move involves offering department-specific English courses meticulously designed for the port's workforce. These courses go beyond generic language training, delving into the intricacies of maritime terminology and industry-specific communication. By addressing the practical needs of participants, such specialised courses ensure the seamless integration of learned language skills into their professional roles.

In contrast to general English courses, which may have limited applicability, these department-specific courses foster a direct association between acquired English skills and their practical utility in the context of international maritime interactions. This approach transforms English proficiency from a mere linguistic skill to an indispensable tool, empowering the workforce with the ability to engage in effective communication within the global port community.

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Notes on the author

Antonio Manuel BRENES CASTAÑO holds the position of Assistant Professor and is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Cádiz in Southern Spain. With over 24 years of experience, he has dedicated his career to teaching English. Antonio joined the French and English Philology Department at Cádiz University three years ago. His research area focuses on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Contact Information: antonio.brenes@uca.es