

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND
EFFECTIVE USE OF ENGLISH IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND
EMPLOYEE'S PERCEPTION IN MUSANZE

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Abstract

Many countries worldwide are striving to service of excellence to their guests. Hospitality is one of the main sectors where everyone working in this domain must be have good and effective communication skills. English is one of the famous languages which are used for better service delivery. This study was carried out to investigate English language communication skills and effective use of English in the hospitality sector. The study used 30 participants from hospitality premises in Musanze District. The results indicate that the majority of respondents explained that communication skills and effective use of English are a cornerstone in service delivery in hospitality sector and having staffs who are good at communication skills contribute a lot to the customer satisfaction in this domain...guest house managers insisted on effective English training of prospective employees.

Keywords: communication skills, effective use of English, hospitality

Nowadays, post-industrial society services have the greatest importance in meeting human needs. In sector of services, hospitality plays an important role. In order to ensure the quality of hospitality services it is necessary to find common language between supply and demand sides. Communication skills are an important element of hospitality industry. Understanding of performance expectations are keys to the achievement of tourist satisfaction. Good oral and written communication skills are the top skills important to hospitality practitioners at different position levels. Good English communication during the study will add value to students' education. According to that fact the hospitality program itself will encourage critical thinking and for example tourism problem solving when it is necessary. In the tourism industry supply and demand side must communicate perfectly in order to ensure quality and needed performance standards (Arati Prabhu& Prachi Wani, 2020).The Establishment of hospitality infrastructure such as hotels and accommodations, conference facilities are creating more jobs opportunity. However, it has been realized there is still a gap in supplying skilled labour force in the sector. Since English has become an international language, it has become increasingly necessary for employees working in tourism to develop the language skills to be able to fulfil the requirements of tourists. Furthermore, globalization has increased competition in hospitality markets, and destinations are exposed to tough price competition on homogenized products by rivals worldwide (Mirkovic, 2011). It is pertinent that employees, employers and educators have a consensus of what are the competencies that are required to be instilled in

learners to prepare them for the hospitality industry. The author has studied and supported the fact that students who are likely to pursue a career in Hospitality work force must realize that communication skills are seen vital to the work force. “Soft” skills, particularly communication skills in English will make students more employable (Arati Prabhu & Prachi Wani, 2020).

Ghisi, J, as cited by (Arati Prabhu & Prachi Wani, 2020), says there is a growing acknowledgement that economies of the 21st century need to be knowledge based rather than commodity based and be driven by knowledge development innovation and commercialization. Experience economy and creative industries develop and sell products of experience based on creative labour. In today’s moving forward world, hospitality sector have been taken as a trigger to the development of countries. The globalised skills which are needed to compete in this moving world, English communication skills play a great role in hospitality sectors. According to Leslie & Russell, as cited by (Nahid Zahedpisheh1, Zulqarnain B Abu bakar1 & Narges Saffari1, 2017) being skilful in foreign language skills is necessary for people working in the hospitality sector. The reason is that it is the means for having communication with foreign tourists and understanding cultural differences. In fact, for those who are seeking employment in the tourism, hospitality and service industry, it is essential to stay highly motivated in order to be accurately fluent in a high level of professional service language. In the Rwandan TVET¹ schools that offer hospitality and tourism management education language skills are given priority. According to (Arati Prabhu & Prachi Wani, 2020), Future hotel and tourism industry needs educational establishments that provide hospitality management courses and language training. You can ask yourself how tourism itself generate income and contribute to the country’s economy. By 2011, tourism industry was contributing 63% of the country’s service export earnings and boosting balance of payments (Pius O. Odunga, Manyara Geoffrey & Yobesia Mark., 2019)

Research questions

What is the role of English language communication skills in hospitality service delivery? what are the challenges faced by employees in using effective English in their daily activities? What are the possible solutions to the problems that hinder the effective use of English in hospitality sector in Musanze?

Research Methodology

The current study was undertaken at This research was conducted in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. Selected guest house, hospitality studying students were Kalisimbi Lodge, Bravo Guest House and MIPC. Qualitative research design was used because this method allows respondents to express their opinions and ideas freely without limitation of time and other circumstance that can prevent respondent to give all available information. According to Mathis, as cited by (Mushimiyimana.J.D, 2021), qualitative research give chance

¹TVET: Technical and vocational Education and Training

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to interviewee to put out their ideas and feeling about the topic instead of dictating or imposing them the types of things they should answer that was imposed by others. The researcher gathered information from different respondents: students and employees, about the extent to which they use effectively English and the level of their English language communication skills, tour companies' owners and hotel managers were asked whether their employees use effectively English to deliver quality service and satisfy their customer needs. This research was conducted in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. Selected tour companies, hospitality studying students were Kalisimbi Lodge, Bravo Guest House and MIPC². A sample consists of 20 students of a department of hospitality management and tourism studying the branch of hospitality 10 employees working in tour agencies and hospitality industry in the district of Musanze. All the participant filled out the questionnaire. Students were given verbal and written instructions and completed the questionnaires. In order to collect the data from employees, questionnaires were sent via e- mail to the agencies operating in this area. Questionnaires were handed out to be completed in their own time and handed back at their convenience. The respondents remain completely anonymous. In this study, researcher use interview as an instrument for data collection. As study aims at investigate English language communication skills and effective use of English in the hospitality sectors, interview was the best instrument to use. Researcher asked respondents about the time he/she will avail to sit for interview questions.

Collection of Data: The primary data required for the research was collected using Questionnaires. In order to cover the objectives, three different questionnaires bearing straight forward and relevant questions were drafted and handed over to the concerned sample to obtain their responses.

Sample Design: The nature each of the two distinct respondent groups is more or less homogeneous in nature. Two distinct respondent groups were identified: Students doing hospitality and tourism management at MIPC and employees working in hospitality management in Musanze District.

Sample population	Sampling method	Sample size
Students doing hospitality and tourism management	Random	20
employees working in hospitality management in Musanze District	<i>Simple random sampling</i>	10

The sample size was 20 respondents in all. The data was analysed by using basic research was collected from journals, books & internet.

Findings: The results of the findings were presented according to the responses that were answered to every question.

The role of English language communication skills in hospitality service delivery: The students and employees in the hospitality who participated in this study were asked to describe the role of English language communication skills in hospitality service delivery. During the interview the both students and

²MIPC: Musanze Intergrated Polytechnic College

employees agreed that English language communication skills is a cornerstone in hospitality service delivery. In the focus group discussion, the respondents revealed that it will be difficult for tour operators to effectively do their job without having English language communication skills and use it effectively since the majority of their customers are English language speakers. Waiters and waitresses who were interviewed responded that it necessary to have English language communication skills and effectively use it to be good at your job and satisfy your customer but it is not a must. Sign language can also be used since hospitality sectors are inclusive industries. Among the participants, some insisted on the fact that English language communication skills and effective use of it is the cornerstone in service excellence delivery and continuous professional trainings have pe emphasised among all hospitality service deliverers.

Challenges faced by employees in using effective English in their daily activities: This section presented perspective of employees while they are delivering service where customers are English language speakers. They were asked in interview the challenges that they face. The data analysis based on the challenges that was given by employees, are grouped into two main challenges which are lack of intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language four communication skills and inadequate professional training.

Lack of Intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language four communication skills: One hotelier explained *“The challenge that I face is that I do not have intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language reading, listening, speaking and writing since I don’t need it in my daily activities. Whenever a guest comes in, I don’t need to talk a lot; just presenting a menu to him or her and get order from him or her for to pass it to the other side in the kitchen to make it. Seldom will you see me reading any written material in English”*.

Another respondent explained *“At my workplace neither does our boss nor any workmate speak or practice English; we think it is enough to have a good accent of Kinyarwanda. None is intrinsically motivated to do so”*.

Inadequate professional training: Some of the respondents revealed that they have never got English communication skills professional training ever since they started working. *“Since my first day in this company, I have never had any English language communication skills professional training. I practice English whenever a customer who speaks English comes in and it is sometimes difficult to effectively and perfectly speak it since there are no continuous professional training of English”*. One of the respondents explained.

Possible solutions to the problems that hinder the effective use of English in hospitality sector in Musanze.

This section presented perspective of employees on possible solutions to the problems that hinder the effective use of English in hospitality sector in Musanze while they are delivering service where customers are English language speakers. The respondents were asked to share their opinions and ideas about the problems and how they should do solved. This is subdivided into two themes.

Set workplace rules to stimulate intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language: Ten respondents explained that lack of intrinsic motivation is one of the challenges that hinder English language communication skills and effective use of it in the hospitality sector. “Hotel managers and tour companies’ owners have to set workplace rules that stimulate intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language for their employees to deliver excellence service in hospitality sector. They should come up with innovative ideas to let everyone in at workplace owning that responsibility to effectively use English language”.

Provision of continuous professional development to their employees: Five employees explained that lack of continuous professional development is a point that was rejected for a quiet long period of time, hotel managers and tour company owners have to provide their employees with continuous professional development and sharpen their English language communication skills and foster its effective use in their daily activities. “Some employees need continuous professional development to foster their English language communication skills and promote its effective use in hospitality sector”. One of the respondents explained.

Discussion

This part explains the findings of study and the show the way they are relating with research questions and existing literature. Hotel managers and tour companies should motivate their employees by different means such providing rewards, increasing salaries and giving them scholarship, sending them to the seminars that related to improving English language communication skills and foster its effective use in hospitality sector service delivery. From this study, the findings revealed that English communication skills is a cornerstone in delivering service of excellence in hospitality sector. According to (Nahid Zahedpisheh¹, Zulqarnain B Abu bakar¹ & Narges Saffari¹, 2017), One of the major criteria in employing people in the hospitality sector is the English knowledge. Poor English proficiency and competency can result in hardness in attracting and entertaining the tourists. The study found that challenges that hinder English language communication skills and its effective use in hospitality sector are grouped into two categories: Lack of intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language communication skills and effectively use it and inadequate continuous professional development. Hotel managers and tour companies’ owners have to set workplace rules that stimulate intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language for their employees to deliver excellence service in hospitality sector. They should come up with innovative ideas to let everyone in at workplace owning that responsibility to effectively use English language. They have to provide their employees with continuous professional development and sharpen their English language communication skills and foster its effective use in their daily activities and be aware of the fact that Someemployees need continuous professional development to foster their English language communication skills and promote its effective use in hospitality sector.

Conclusion

In conclusion the study set off clear that hotel managers and tour companies should motivate their employees by different means such providing rewards, increasing salaries and giving them scholarship, sending them to the seminars that related to improving English language communication skills and foster its effective use in hospitality sector service delivery. Students and employees in hospitality sector have to bear in mind that English communication skills is a cornerstone in delivering service of excellence in hospitality sector. They have to know that one of the major criteria in employing people in the hospitality sector is the English knowledge. Poor English proficiency and competency can result in hardness in attracting and entertaining the tourists. The study found that challenges that hinder English language communication skills and its effective use in hospitality sectors are grouped into two categories: Lack of intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language communication skills and effectively use it and inadequate continuous professional development. Hotel managers and tour companies' owners have to set workplace rules that stimulate intrinsic motivation to learn and practice English language for their employees to deliver excellence service in hospitality sector. They should come up with innovative ideas to let everyone in at workplace owning that responsibility to effectively use English language. They have to provide their employees with continuous professional development and sharpen their English language communication skills and foster its effective use in their daily activities and be aware of the fact that Someemployees need continuous professional development to foster their English language communication skills and promote its effective use in hospitality sector.

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