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Language and Communication Training in Hospitality Education

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Providing exceptional service and cultivating personal relationships are critical to guest satisfaction in the travel and hospitality industry. Whether it is a courteous response, clear instructions, or a warm greeting, language and communication are essential tools for frontline staff. To prepare students for this reality and reflect the multicultural environment of the Philippines as well as the broader global market, hospitality education must place a strong emphasis on multilingual communication instruction in English, Filipino, and regional dialects.

English remains the universal language of tourism. It enables communication with international guests, travel agents, and multinational stakeholders. In the Philippines, frontliners in hotels, resorts, and tourism offices are expected to speak grammatically sound English. Within the standards of quality service, English has become a mandatory tool for interacting with future customers. For this reason, the development of language skills is essential to an effective communication process (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011). However, relying solely on English overlooks the needs of domestic and regional travelers and the power of cultural connection through native language use.

The ability to speak Filipino and regional dialects such as Chavacano, Cebuano, or Ilocano allows hospitality workers to connect more personally with local guests. In multilingual regions, the ability to switch languages seamlessly can diffuse tension, clarify service concerns, and demonstrate a deep sense of Filipino warmth and hospitality. Language is not just a tool – it is a bridge to trust, respect, and cultural identity.

Grammar and vocabulary should not be the only things taught in effective communication training. It has to include tone, body language, empathy, the ability to listen, and how to solve problems. For example, a hotel receptionist or tour guide needs to know how to communicate clearly, handle problems diplomatically, and stay professional even when things get tough. Erazo et al. (2019) stress that being good at a language isn't just about being correct; it's also about understanding cultural differences and meeting the needs of different customers.

Ceneciro et al. (2023) state that constructive feedback in the classroom makes students much more confident and skilled at communicating. Long (2005) recommends the use of Language Needs Analysis (LNA) to guarantee that language instruction is relevant. LNA connects language training to real-world business duties like addressing grievances, giving directions, and managing difficult guests.

Schools should integrate customer service simulations and encourage hospitality-focused dialogues in both English and Filipino. Additionally, basic modules in Mandarin, Korean, or Nihongo can be included in hospitality education in recognition of the increase in foreign visitors from China, Korea, and Japan. Speaking a foreign language makes visitors feel at home, which boosts client loyalty and improves business results (Torres & Kline, 2013).

Language and communication are indispensable skills in tourism and hospitality education. More than just speaking clearly, students must learn to communicate with empathy, adapt to different guest needs, and represent Filipino hospitality with authenticity. Due to the increasingly varied nature of the tourism industry, graduates of hospitality programs must be able to communicate both locally and internationally in addition to being prepared for the field.

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