



A STUDY ON THE NEED FOR ANALYZING AND MODIFYING THE COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM FOR HOTEL MANAGEMENT GRADUATES OF UTTAR PRADESH TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: After a thorough scrutiny of Communication curriculum for business purposes with the course coordinators from different institutes affiliated to Uttar Pradesh Technical University, offering Hotel Management course. A needs analysis was conducted to a group of final semester graduates undertaking Hotel Management course and to check the relevance from industry perspective industry personnel from the hospitality industry were also included in the test. This study utilized the same questionnaire for all respondents in order to investigate whether the industry needs correlate with the graduates' communication skills. The questionnaire was also formulated based on the recommendation of the language department of the Universities. The recent Communication curriculum for business purposes has revealed significant discrepancies between the graduates and the industry personnel responses especially on listening and speaking activities. However, both respondents claimed that graduates should have more communication activities and less writing activities. Based on the findings, a recommended curriculum for Hotel Management graduates was designed taking into considerations the needs in learning Communication for business purposes, adapting the framework of Hutchinson and Waters (1987). It is anticipated that the recommended curriculum will benefit graduates as well as the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Hotel Management, communication curriculum, needs analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a statutory body, and a national-level council for technical education, under the Department of Higher Education. Established in November 1945 first as an advisory body and later in 1987 given statutory status by an Act of Parliament, AICTE is responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education and management education system in India.

It is assisted by 10 Statutory Boards of Studies, namely, UG Studies in Eng. & Tech., PG and Research in Eng. and Tech., Management Studies, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Pharmaceutical Education, Architecture, Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Information Technology, Town and Country Planning.

In its 25 April 2013 judgment, the Supreme Court said "as per provisions of the AICTE Act and University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, the council has no authority which empowers it to issue or enforce any

sanctions on colleges affiliated with the universities as its role is to provide only guidance and recommendations." Subsequently, AICTE was getting approval from the Supreme court to regulate technical colleges on a year-to-year basis till January 2016, when AICTE got blanket approval for publishing the Approval Process Handbook and approve technical colleges including management for the session 2016-17 and in all future sessions." In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(4) read with Section 23 of the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Act, 1987 (No. 52 of 1987), AICTE has reconstituted the All-India Board of Hospitality & Tourism Management, w. e. f. 11th May,2016. The main concern of the study is on the communication curriculum, which needs to be re-evaluated according to the needs of the industry and graduates.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The recent curriculum adopts a wide spectrum of English for specific purposes which are known as English for business communication. The study aims to identify whether the recent curriculum meets the needs of the industry. The study aims to find.

1. What are the hotel management graduates' needs in learning English for business communication?
2. Does the industry's need correlate with the hotel management graduates?
3. How would propose curriculum design look for hotel management graduates' usage of English in the industry?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language, especially in the hospitality industry should not be taken for granted since language makes communication effective. Studies revealed that the service quality falls behind our neighboring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. Service, in this case, would also involve communication between the host and the guests which is the main business in the Hotel and Catering course. To communicate effectively, it is undeniable that language; in this case English in India, is very crucial to the hotel management graduates. In keeping in line with globalization, the teaching and language learning has evolved tremendously that leads many course designers and language practitioners to improve their teaching methodology and approaches to suit the learners' needs and the expectation from outside world. In the case of English for specific purposes, due to the increase demand from the industrialization, the globalization and the hospitality and travel industry, the teaching of English for Specific has also flourished and evolved. Historically, English for Specific Purposes has become vital and innovative activity within the teaching of English as a foreign or second language movement (Howatt,1984). With the variant of English to suit the learners needs, designing specific courses to better meet these individual needs is natural in ESP. In this case, the role of ESP practitioner should be distinguished. Dudley Evans and St.John (1998) believe that there are five key roles that ESP practitioner has to fulfill which are as a teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator. Therefore, designing specific courses to better meet the learners' needs should be the main concerns of ESP practitioners.

It is crucial to decide on the ESP Framework to recommend for the study. In this case Hutchinson and Waters (1987) framework, is referred for the study that concern with Needs Analysis, formulation of Goals and Objective, Selection of Curriculum and Course Design, Materials Selection, Methodology of teaching and Evaluation. Nevertheless, there are also language and culture that need to be considered in designing a curriculum. Effective communication does not only involve language use but also gestures, eye contact and appropriate body language.

A good example of a study on the language need of Hotel and catering graduates is by Harun and Blue (2003) on the use of hospitality language on front office of four hotels in Britain. The study focused on the need of specific language for first speakers of English. They concluded that the hospitality industry entails a specific type of language that is hospitality language. The study done by Harun and Blue had initiates the issues of the language use in the hospitality industry. They also state that hospitality language can be regarded to be in the area of English for Occupational Purposes with a substantial overlap with General Purpose English (GPE).

4. METHODOLOGY

The respondents who are the hotel management graduates of final semester undertaking a degree course in Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

4.1 Sources of Data

4.1.1 Graduates

For the purpose of the study, a group of sixty - six graduates from the final semester undertaking Hotel Management and Catering Technology course were the first respondents for the study. It is appropriate to choose degree course graduates because they have longer duration in learning the course and they were larger in number than diploma or certificate holders. The final semester graduates had also undergone industrial training in the fifth semester thus; they were supposed to be exposed more on the job experiences.

4.1.2 Industry Personnel

Next, the second respondents of the study are the industry personnel who had the experience working in the hotel as human resource and Training managers who had been working in the hospitality industry for over than five years.

4.2 Data Gathering Method

Prior to designing the interview questions and the questionnaire, the literature on how to construct and design questions in needs assessment studies were. An interview was first conducted with the Hotel Job consultants.

Questions formulated concerns with

- 1.the needs of the graduates' usage of English language
- 2.the communicative activities required for hospitality industry workers.

The information gathered from the Hotel Job consultants were then adapted in the questionnaire for the graduates and the industry personnel. Hence, the questionnaire formulated is not from the researcher instinct but based on the information gathered from an expert.

4.2.1 Interviews

The interview done comprises of two types of interviews that were unstructured and structured. Unstructured interviews were conducted on ten course content lecturers. This kind of interviews is more suitable as the respondents were the researcher's colleague. Most of the unstructured interviews were done in the office lounge or during graduates' classes in the restaurant. While graduates were doing restaurant operation (service), the researcher took this opportunity to have informal discussion with the course lecturer. Another reason for selecting the unstructured interview technique was the advantage of having no unanswered questions, as this frequently happens in questionnaires and the opportunity for clarification of misunderstandings (Mackay, 1978). Questions formulated are basically on the graduates' English competencies and the communicative activities they need to perform while doing practical training and after they join the workforce in the hospitality industry. On the other hand, structured interviews were conducted with the hotel personnel where graduates were doing their practical training.

Structured interviews were utilized on human resource managers and front office managers around Lucknow and Agra. The personnel involved were first contacted by the training and placement coordinator to obtain their consent. The selection on hotels was based on the grade of the city in context to being a tourist destination and no. of Five-star hotels.

Questions are based on

1. The hotel management graduates work related activities
2. Communication activities done by graduates. For instance, how does this particular student's response to queries from customers and how does he or she response to instructions and direction from the management.
3. The personnel will also be asked on the use of English language among the hotel management trainees.

5. FINDINGS

The questionnaire is divided into several parts that consist of personal details, speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities and extra information. As seen from the results below, we could find various discrepancies in the responses between the graduates and the industry personnel. The findings of the questionnaire will be described on the next page that begins with the personal details.

5.1.1 Personal details

The personal details consist of the information only on graduates' English SPM result and the reasons why they want to learn English in hotel management degree course.

1. SPM results

Grade	A1	A2	C3	C4	C5	C6	P7	P8	F9
Respondent (%)	0	1	5	5	5	19	60	2	3

2. Why I want to learn English

I want to learn English because	Total (%)
English is an international language	17
I want to improve my speaking skills	30
I want to improve my writing skills	13
I want to improve my listening skills	17
I want to improve my reading skills	13
It is the requirement of the course	10

5.1.2 Responses on Speaking Activities

Table 4.1: Responses from graduates and industry personnel to speaking to the customers

Activities	Frequency (%)					
	Always		Seldom		Never	
	ST	IND	ST	IND	ST	IND
Attend to the customers (restaurant and front office)	45.5	90	53	10	1.52	0
Present and answer enquiries about the menu orally	31.8	80	57.6	20	10.6	0
Describe and explain types of menus	32	90	56	10	12	0
Respond orally to customer's complaints on food and beverage	18	60	67	30	15	10
Answer enquiries on local establishment	22	40	68	40	9.1	20
Answer enquiries on hotel facilities	38	30	62	50	0	20
Respond to customer complaints on hotel services	24	20	64	40	12	40
Conduct tours on hotel facilities	15.2	10	47	40	37.9	50
Arrange and inform guests of transport arrangement	20	20	50	70	30	10
Answer telephone calls for reservation	40	50	30	30	30	20
Respond to complaint on rooms	30	30	53	20	17	50

Legend: ST- STUDENT

IND –INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

Table 4.2: Responses from graduates and industry personnel on speaking to manager

Activities	Frequency (%)					
	Always		Seldom		Never	
	ST	IND	ST	IND	ST	IND
Discuss ways to improve customer service	13.6	10	59.1	50	27.3	40
Describe charts and graphs at meetings	3	0	47	30	50	70
Present reports at meeting	4.5	0	50	60	45	40
Explain difficulty to managers	14	20	53	60	33	20
Take part in meetings actively	9.1	10	59	80	32	10
Give oral report regarding work	6.1	20	52	80	42	0

Legend: ST- STUDENT IND –INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

5.1.3 Responses on Listening Activities

This part reveals the response from the graduates and the industry personnel on the listening activities between the graduates and the customers and also between the graduates and the manager.

Table 4.3: Responses on listening activities with the customers

Activities	Frequency (%)					
	Always		Seldom		Never	
	ST	IND	ST	IND	ST	IND
Listen to customer's/guest's enquiries	54.5	70	40.9	30	4.5	0
Listen to customer's orders	58	70	41	30	1.5	0
Listen to customer's complaints	42.4	70	53	30	4.5	0
Listen to manager's explanation of work process	51.5	80	43.9	20	4.5	0
Listen to manager's explanation on hotel policies, procedures, and decision	42	70	53	30	4.5	0
Listen to instruction from managers	48.5	90	43.9	10	7.6	0
Listen to manager's explanation of safety precaution	48.5	70	47	30	4.5	0

Legend: ST- STUDENT IND –INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

5.1.4 Responses on Writing Activities

Table 4.5: Responses on graduates' writing activities.

Activities	Frequency (%)					
	Always		Seldom		Never	
	ST	IND	ST	IND	ST	IND
Write in response to complaints from customers	9	10	11	20	70	70
Write in to respond to customers' complaints on the service	9.09	0	66.7	70	24.2	30
Write minutes of meetings	3.03	0	47	30	50	70

Take down notes during meetings	20	0	53	60	27	40
Write to						
a) reply to customers' enquiries on room rates	12.1	10	57.6	50	30.3	40
b) reply to customer's enquiries on hotel facilities	19.7	10	54.6	60	25.8	30
c) reply to customer's enquiries on food and beverage	12.1	10	51.5	50	36.4	40
Write reports						
a) occupancy	18.2	20	32	10	50	70
b) field trip	9.1	0	32	30	59	70
c) accident report	6.06	0	59.1	70	34.8	30
d) sales report	7.6	20	36.1	30	56.4	50
e) daily report	21	30	67	70	12	0
f) progress report	7.6	20	65.1	50	27.8	30
Fill in reservation forms	36	70	55	30	9.1	0
Fill in menu order	47	80	45.5	20	7.6	0
Write menu to be used in the restaurant	25.8	10	27.3	30	47	60
Write instruction on job description	11	10	33	40	56	50

Legend: ST- STUDENT IND –INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

5.1.5 Responses on Reading Activities

Table 4.6 :Responses on reading activities from graduates and industry personnel

Activities	Frequency (%)					
	Always		Seldom		Never	
	ST	IND	ST	IND	ST	IND
Complaint letters from customers	39	25	50	75	11	0
Job specification and duties in English	40.9	37.5	51.5	50	12.5	7.6
Recipe and instruction in English	45.5	50	48.5	50	6.1	0
Journals, books to improve job knowledge and skills	36.4	50	54.5	12.5	9.1	37.5
Instruction on safety precaution	27.3	38	66.7	63	6.1	0
Letters of reservation from customers	37.9	25	53	75	9.1	0
Technical specification/description in English	40.9	37.5	51.5	62.5	7.6	0

Legend: ST- STUDENT IND –INDUSTRY PERSONNEL

5.1.6 Other language activities

Both graduates' and industry personnel's response of other language activities on the importance of certain topics in learning English in Bachelors in Hotel management also varies. To answer this part of questionnaire, both the industry personnel and graduates are required to put a number according to the importance of the topic starting from number 1 for the most important to number 13 for the least important. In the questionnaire, the activities are jumbled and both respondents are given the opportunity to rearrange the activities on their own discretion.

Below is a table that depicts the results of other language activities which preferred by both respondents.

Table 4.7: Graduates and industry personnel's response on the importance of certain topics

No.	Activities	Graduates (%)	Industry personnel (%)
1	Grammar	58	71.2
2	Pronunciation	25.2	35.5
3	Telephone Skills	24	32.4
4	Vocabulary	22.5	32.4
5	Handling complaints	20	66.9
6	Reading and writing memos	22	34.2
7	Role play and presentation	21	34.6
8	Job hunting Skills	19.3	33.9
9	Communication in meeting	11.8	17.2
10	Dictionary Skills	17	65.2
11	Report writing	16.2	16.7
12	Writing minutes and agendas	16.2	15.9
13	Writing and understanding business documents	16.2	15.7

Both graduates' and industry personnel's responses show that they prefer grammar lesson to be the most important in English language lessons. Likewise, the industry personnel's percentage is higher by eleven percent (13%) compared to the graduates' in placing grammar as the top priority in learning English. This might reflect that the industry regards grammar in communication as an important element. The least favorite language activities for both respondents is writing and understanding business documents with only less than seventeen percent of the responses. On the other hand, the industry personnel placed dictionary skills at nearly sixty five percent even at the tenth placed. Even though the graduates placed the dictionary skills at the tenth placed the percentage is lower by thirty eight percent than the industry personnel.

In short, even though there are some differences on the responses from both the graduates and industry personnel, conclusion can still be derived from the results; that some language activities stated in the questionnaires involves directly with hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that graduates' experience differs according to the nature of work and the frequency of communicating with customer. Hospitality industry consists of many areas and fields. In the case of hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University, they can be positioned at any departments in the hotel. The frequency of contact and communication with guests and customers depends on which department they are situated. Since most of the graduates are skilled semi-professional workers, they are better in performing tasks such as in the kitchen and housekeeping department. These graduates are more reserved and prefer to perform their tasks than be sociable with the guests.

The industry personnel, on the other hand, stated that graduates who join the hospitality industry must be amicable and approachable with the guests and customers. If they are placed at the front office department, which is quite seldom because as confirmed by the managers, the placement depends on their English language proficiency, graduates are then encouraged to converse well in English with the guests. Discrepancies on the results show that needs and wants of the graduates and the industry personnel vary according to the specialty in the working area. Curriculum designer has also to consider that graduates are adult and therefore, the choice of materials, methodology and approach to language learning should accommodate their particular cognitive skills and learning ability and should be cognizant to their maturity and social role (Mackay & Mountford, 1978).

Based on the findings and conclusion, specific recommendation should be made pertaining to the future of English for Hotel and Catering for Malaysian polytechnics graduates. Certain criteria should be emphasized in

the development of English language curriculum for Hotel Management and Catering Technology which include:

- Graduates' language competence,
- Graduates future career,
- Stakeholders' agenda and
- The industry's requirements are some of the criteria course designer should probe.

In the case of English for for Hotel Management and Catering Technology, a sound curriculum designer must recognize that semantic and linguistic considerations are forever interrelated and that no approach can deal exclusively with grammatical patterns, situational settings or communicative language. In fact, as teachers of ESP, we are still studying and teaching words and configurations of words that express specific meanings, depending on who says what to whom, how, when, why, and in what social context.

The recent curriculum even though is thorough and consider complete for graduates undertaking all commercial courses, it still lacks the appropriate topics for hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University. The main criterion for the selection of the types of curriculums depends on the applicability to the job and everyday life situation of the graduates. To propose for the specific curriculum for hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University, improving the recent curriculum should be the main aim. Due to the experience of graduates during the practical training, the response from the industry personnel and the hotel managers, I would like to propose a curriculum that fit more for hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University. The purpose of presenting the revised curriculum and extract of teaching materials is to provide different aspects of approaches that are available for polytechnic graduates and hope that the Technical Education Department would consider revising the recent curriculum to suit the needs of the variety of courses for the betterment of the future hotel management graduates of Uttar Pradesh Technical University.

Graduates should be exposed to the language skills depending on what they need most and, in this case, speaking and listening overshadow the other two language skills that are reading and writing. The proposed curriculum will be designed according to specific topics. On the other hand, we should first look into the language skills that should be included since graduates prefer to learn more on language structure than any other skills. Another consideration is the level of English of the graduates. Most graduates who enroll only have pass for English. Thus, reflecting their low language competencies. Graduates, in this case, need more practice on communication and presentation skills as proposed by the industry personnel.

The topics of the proposed curriculum should be related to graduates' needs and course content. And, the language skills and the structure (grammar) should be incorporated in the topics. Thus, the combination of procedural and the process type of curriculum can be merged in order to establish the new curriculum. The curriculum should also adopt the learner- centred approach because graduates should involve actively in the learning process (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Hence, after much consideration the proposed curriculum will adopt learner -centred curriculum with a combination of task based, situational and functional based approach. The combination of these curriculums is appropriate based on graduates' language competencies. Most of the graduates are considered between the lower- intermediate and high- intermediate since in the process of designing the curriculum, the needs of the graduates should also be considered.

Thus, the structure of language (grammar) will also be incorporated during lessons in class. In the case of Hotel and Catering graduates, they must not only be able to recognize the functions but also to produce the appropriate grammatical form to express the function (Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984). The graduates are generally aware of the purposes for which they will need to use English. Having already oriented their education toward a specific field, they see their English training as complementing this orientation.

The contact hours should remain at 30 hours per semester, which enable graduates to learn English for five semesters. Total teaching time for each semester is 15 weeks, having allowed for study leave and examination thus it works out to 2 hours per week of teaching. Thus with the time constraint, graduates should be taught with less topics but more on core skills and communicative skills.

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