

The Study on Constructing a Curriculum Model of Hotel English for Undergraduate Hospitality Management in Taiwan

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Abstract—To meet the development of the international tourism market, international tourist hotels have gradually replaced tourist hotels in Taiwan. Owing to the industrial trend, foreign language proficiency, which is essentially communicative skill training required for undergraduate students/learners and industrial practitioners, has been significantly emphasized and noticed among educational institutions and hospitality industries. This study namely aimed at constructing a English curriculum model for hospitality field which infused from English for Specific Purposes. The modified Delphi technique was adopted to determine the relevant course contents of ESP curriculum model for hospitality derived from the consensus of both educators and practitioners. The results revealed that two dimensions of ESP curriculum model for hospitality field constructed as well as nine courses contained in this study respectively. Also, it appears that Taiwan's hospitality educators and practitioners should assist students/learners to strengthen English proficiency.

Index Terms—hospitality education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), curriculum design

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, Taiwan has moved into a position of advancing in the travel and tourism industry. The number of foreign visitors has been increasing annually since 1992. With rapid progress in the tourism industry, international tourist hotels have gradually replaced tourist hotels in Taiwan due to meeting the transformation of internationalization of tourism market. Blue and Harun (2003) also indicated that in order to meet the rising demand of international travel, the hospitality industries need the staff in the front-line who are capable of communicating with the clients from different verbal countries. Likewise, Taiwan will get insight of an increasing demand for the cultivation of professionals specializing in hospitality for which the educational sector should be responsible.

Accordingly, with the trend of globalization and the future of hospitality higher education is in its ability to educate adults (Powers, 1993), mastering foreign language skills ought to be cultivated for hospitality and tourism students before employment. Lin and Chang (2003) indicated that foreign languages dimension was perceived as the foremost and very important course by respondents in the study. It reflects the fact that Taiwan is receiving most of their international travelers from worldwide. However, English for hospitality and tourism is viewed as an area of business English (Cho, 2005) proficiency has been a basis of being acquired and used in workplaces and schooling institutions; has become a key benchmark for national competitiveness as well (Cheng, Chiu, & Lin, 2010).

To reinforce its national competitive edge and accelerate its progress with professionalization and internationalization, specifying an approach to enhance foreign language proficiency for students and professionals in the field of hospitality has become a major issue among the academic institutes and industrial sectors. Lin, Wu and Huang (2013) also stated that with the growing needs of using English to communicate fluently with foreign hotel clients, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a major subject for students in Taiwan. Meanwhile, the curriculum design and implementation of a comprehensive and multidimensional ESP program for hospitality in Taiwan is now seen as urgent (Cheng, Chiu, & Lin, 2010). Of implications, Taiwan has made a great deal of effort to improve its English education as well as to enhance English proficiency among nations in order to develop and broaden the perspective of globalization. In light of the above statement, this study aims at integrating the dimensions and criterions taught in hotel English via related literature reviews and consensus of interviewees and experts; furthermore, it is to construct the ESP curriculum model for hotel English to meet the demands of hospitality industry as well. It is anticipated that the results of this study will provide as the reference for the development of hospitality education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *English for Specific Purposes*

English for specific purposes is a curriculum design for professional purposes. It namely aims at developing and cultivating learners/students with the level of English proficiency required in the workplace, which will guide them to express and comprehend English at a specialized level (Yang, 2010). Bracaj (2014) also stated that it is important to recognize what requirements the certain learners are willing to learn English because most of them have different purposes to employ the skills of English rather than applying it in their daily life. Currently, owing to globalization and demands in the foreign language markets, ESP has become an important subject in institutions of higher learning. With the development of internationalization for hospitality industry, Wang and Horng (2004) proposed that hotels for international tourists are to provide highly professional services whose key factor for success lies in addressing human needs. Meanwhile, Chen and Chen (2006) indicated that adapting professional materials to the needs of learners will help to increase their learning motivation and interest. Meanwhile, learners recognize clearly that they learn the language not only for their interest but also improve their ability to be hired easily in the future workplace (Bracaj, 2014). Thus, there has been the necessary need to deliver and offer information on how an ESP curriculum design can be constructed which integrates theory and industry practice that will guide students and allow them to apply and demonstrate their communication, interaction skills and social abilities via English usage in a “real” workplace.

B. *Types of ESP*

In Bracaj’s study (2014), there are three types of English for Specific Purposes:

1. Cultural-educational,
2. Personal and individual,
3. Academic/occupational

This study focused on learning English for occupational purpose, which represent that learners require utilizing English in their work or their professional field. The courses they take part in due to what kind of demands they have.

C. *The Implications of ESP in Hospitality Industry*

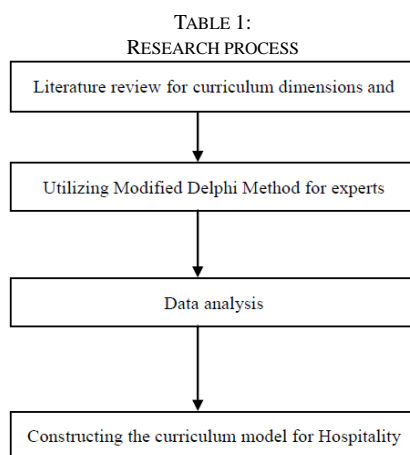
Horng (2003) presented the viewpoints for the development of hospitality education in Taiwan: 1) Curriculum planning to address industrial needs and changes, the curriculum should address practical challenges and keep up with the times to strike a balance between academic requirements and industrial needs so as to cultivate professionals to the expectations of the industry concerned. 2) Diversification of standardized core courses professional courses: In order to be vertically consistent and internationally connected, the curriculum for hospitality should contain general and professional courses according to the resources and characteristics of each school. 3) Curriculum and professional integration: Hospitality professionals should possess both general and professional abilities. Wang and Horng (2004) proposed that hotels for international tourists are to provide highly professional services whose key factor for success lies in addressing human needs. According to above the articulations, English can be taken as the professional and training skill trained for undergraduate hospitality management. Additionally, English implies that the linkage basis of communication and insight of cultural diversity to expand internationalization around the world as well.

With the rapid demand for English professional in Taiwan, universities or colleges ought to pay more efforts to assist students/learners raise the level of foreign language proficiency. In the field of hospitality, it ought to be focused on foreign language education to develop and cultivate students/ learners with the high level of English proficiency required to communicate professionally to achieve the fulfillment of job accountabilities in workplaces within home and abroad. Therefore, an appropriate ESP curriculum design aims at constructing the superior course contents which students/learners can be trained to foster an autonomous learning style in pursuit of a lifelong goal in career development. The English curriculum for hospitality not only focuses on teaching objectives and learning outcomes of students/learners, also emphasizes on the key to enhance students’ and learners’ levels of English proficiency. Based on the viewpoints, the instructors can direct their effort to the most urgent needs students will have as professionals in industrial sectors (Cheng & Chang, 1995).

Recently, English courses offered by departments of hospitality have been various in Taiwan. However, courses in English for hospitality have transformed into being oriented to the needs of education and industry; established as part of the English curriculum by most university. Huang (2008) emphasized that with more attention given to tourism and hospitality in the general environment, English for hospitality will be seen as a priority course by many schools. Accordingly, as the country endeavors to increase its investments in tourism and hospitality, most local educational institutions are striving to open relevant courses in line with this national development. In addition, ESP has been urgent for university to construct specific courses to serve hospitality market demands and to facilitate the innovative construction of specialized English utilized in hospitality industry since EGP has been lack of meeting industrial demands. Consequently, how to integrate and induct practical business operations with English courses is a challenge for educational institutions and service industries.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To explore and construct a proper ESP curriculum design for hotel English, this study was conducted via a qualitative research approach utilizing modified Delphi technique with experts (e.g. faculty members with experiences of industrial sectors in hospitality and practitioners/managers in hotel industry) to integrate the dimensions and course content through determining consensus. Also, this study applied and adopted the dimensions and course content partially related hospitality English proposed by Huang (2008). The flowchart of research process and ESP curriculum model for hospitality are shown as Figure 1.



A. Research Design

This study applied modified Delphi technique to integrate consensus and issues of ESP curriculum design and course contents for hotel English among a broad group of hospitality educators and industry professionals as panel experts. The Delphi technique is commonly used to gather and acquire the opinions of a group of experts in order to facilitate decision-making (Broomfield & Humphris, 2001). In an effort to determine the ESP in hospitality, this study was based on the viewpoints proposed by Huang (2008) and adopted the two proper dimensions related hospitality English as basis of literature reviews infusing to construct the curriculum design and course contents of hotel English (see Table 2). Accordingly, this study used a five-point Likert scale with 5= *important most*, 4= *important more*, 3= *average*, 2= *important less*, and 1= *important least*. The survey requesting demographic information of panel expert included gender, age, years of employment, industry experience, and possession of a hospitality degree. Meanwhile, the statistical analysis and figures were referred in terms of mean and standard deviation. Arithmetic mean can be explained as the most appropriate measurement for the central tendency of interval variables and ratio variables. Standard deviation is on behalf of the dispersion of each variable from the mean in a group. Namely, a lower standard deviation implies that the data gets closer to the mean as well. According to above statement, the items with $M < 3.5$ and $SD \geq 1.0$ ought to be eliminated from the dimensions. Besides, expert consensus towards ESP curriculum design and course contents for hospitality were evaluated based on the least Quartile deviation (QD). The consistency of consensus level (see Table 1) in this study were applied from the viewpoints proposed by Holden and Wedman (1993).

TABLE 2:
CONSISTENCY OF LEVELS

Levels	High	Medium	Low
Q.D	$Q.D \leq 0.60$	$0.60 < Q.D. < 1.00$	$Q.D. \geq 1.00$

TABLE 3:
ESP CURRICULUM MODEL FOR HOSPITALITY

Dimensions	Contents
English for Hotel Services	(1) Reception counter services: check-in registration, introduction to facilities, luggage service, check-out, cashier and accounting, tour package introductions, lost-and-found services
	(2) Hotel telephone service: room reservations, transfers, taking messages, telephone manners
	(3) Room service: Room administration, complaint response, meal service
	(4) Other hotel services
English for Food and Beverage Services	(1) Reception counter services
	(2) Food ordering services
	(3) Meal services
	(4) Complaint responses
	(5) Bill payment and see-off services
	(6) Introducing menus
	(7) Introducing utensils and recipes
	(8) Other food and beverage services

Source: Huang(2008)

B. Panel Selection

Linstone and Turoff (1975) indicated that a 5 to 10 person panel as the best number in order to effectively achieve the research goals. Brooks (1979) proposed a maximum number of 15 specialists with two to four rounds of questionnaire surveys. Moreover, Ludwig (1997) suggested that an expert panel ought to consist of uniform groups, such as being from the same discipline, and that it should be made up of only 10 to 20 persons. In accordance to the basis, the researchers had determined that only 15 hospitality educators and industry professionals as the experts for the panel were to be used in the current study.

C. Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the instrument was determined by measuring the internal consistency of the instrument using a procedure developed by Cronbach (1951). Alpha-coefficients for the constructs ranging from .774 to .925 were all well above the .70 standard of reliability as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Accordingly, a reliability analysis of the constructs was conducted and based upon 15 responses with returned usable surveys in this study. Therefore, the reliability for the instrument as a whole was .913 and the internal consistency of the survey instrument was acceptable and reliable. It is shown in Table 3.

In order to construct the validity, the researchers acquired one industry professional and another one educator to critique the survey to determine the validity of the courses before the survey instrument was finalized. Also, it was integrated by means of literature reviews. Furthermore, the result was used to develop the final version of the survey and to assure the instrument's content validity.

TABLE 4:
RELIABILITY OF ESP CURRICULUM MODEL FOR HOSPITALITY

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha(α)</i>
English for Hotel Services	.902
English for Food and Beverage Services	.889
Total	.913

IV. RESULTS

A. Panel Profile

A total of 15 usable answer sheets were returned, 10 were from practitioners (66.7%) and 5 were from educators (33.3%). Of the returned answer survey. The responding educators have or had industry experience, and the responding practitioners earned hospitality-related degrees. Consequently, 15 cases were used in this study.

The profile of expert panel is shown in Table 4. As can be seen, female and male distributions were 60.0% and 40.0% respectively. Nevertheless, approximately 46.7% of respondents were younger than 36 years of age. 53.3% of the respondents had more than seven years of employment. Of responding practitioners, Front Office, Room Division, and Personnel all accounted for 20.0%. Housekeeping represented 10.0%, and Food and Beverage represented 30.0%.

TABLE 5:
EXPERT PANEL PROFILE (N=15)

Characteristic	Educators		Practitioners		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Gender						
Female	3	60.0	6	60.0	9	60.0
Male	2	40.0	4	40.0	6	40.0
Age						
Under 36 years old	2	40.0	5	50.0	7	46.7
Over 37 years old	3	60.0	5	50.0	8	53.3
Years of Employment						
Under 7 years	2	40.0	3	30.0	5	33.3
More than 7 years	3	60.0	7	70.0	10	66.7
Functional Area						
Front Office	---	---	2	20.0	2	20.0
Housekeeping	---	---	1	10.0	1	10.0
Room Division	---	---	2	20.0	2	20.0
Food & Beverage	---	---	3	30.0	3	30.0
Personnel	---	---	2	20.0	2	20.0

B. Modified Delphi Ratings

In this study, 15 hospitality educators and industrial professionals were assigned two rounds of modified Delphi questionnaire surveys. Table 5 presented the mean rating results from the modified Delphi surveys of ESP course dimensions for hospitality. As can be seen, the finding illustrated that "English for Hotel Services" and "English for Food and Beverage Services" two underlying course dimensions and 12 course contents of ESP curriculum model for

hospitality inducted in this study (see Table 2 and Table 5). Furthermore, the mean ratings of the two ESP dimensions for hospitality are weighted at more than 3.5. It reveals that the two fields are considered as basic requirements of ESP curriculum design of hotel business operation for undergraduate hospitality management students. Yet, it indicates the *very important* perception for hospitality educators and industrial professionals as well.

TABLE 6:
COURSE DIMENSION AND OUTLINE MEAN AND WEIGHT RANK

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Weight Rank</i>
English for Hotel Services	4.627	1
English for Food and Beverage Services	4.489	2

C. Rounds of Modified Delphi Technique on ESP Curriculum Design for Hospitality

In the first round of modified Delphi technique (see Table 6), the two dimensions of ESP curriculum model and underlying 12 course contents were analyzed in this study. As the statistical analysis, “Room service” and “Other hotel services”, in “English for Hotel Services” dimension, whose figures of mean score (M) and standard deviation (S.D) were rating for lower standard even Quartile deviation (Q.D) resulted in the consistency.

On the other hand, “Meal services”, “Bill payment and see-off service”, “Introducing utensils and recipes”, and “Other food and beverage service”, in “English for Food and Beverage Services” dimension, whose figures of mean score (M) were rating for lower standard even Quartile deviation (Q.D) and standard deviation (S.D) resulted in the consistency. Apparently, it appealed that the two courses were not reaching to the levels of consensus of panel experts. Moreover, the course contents of lower standard ought to be conducted and evaluated in the second round of modified Delphi survey since it did not reach to 70% the level of coefficient of judgment value. Consequently, the rest of course contents within “English for Hotel Services” and “English for Food and Beverage Services” two dimensions were properly consistent in this study.

TABLE 7:
THE FIRST ROUND OF MODIFIED DELPHI TECHNIQUE

Dimension	Course	Mo	M	S.D	Q.D	Consistency
English for Hotel Services	Reception counter services	5	4.80	.414	0	<i>Yes</i>
	Hotel telephone service	5	4.53	.516	0.5	<i>Yes</i>
	Room service	3	3.47	.834	0.5	<i>No</i>
	Other hotel services	3	3.47	.516	0.5	<i>No</i>
English for Food and Beverage Services	Reception counter services	5	4.87	.352	0	<i>Yes</i>
	Food ordering services	5	4.73	.458	0.5	<i>Yes</i>
	Meal services	4	3.33	.816	0.5	<i>No</i>
	Complaint responses	4	4.40	.507	0.5	<i>Yes</i>
	Bill payment and see-off services	3	2.73	.704	0.5	<i>No</i>
	Introducing menus	5	4.80	.414	0	<i>Yes</i>
	Introducing utensils and recipes	3	3.47	.516	0.5	<i>No</i>
	Other food and beverage services	3	3.40	.828	0.5	<i>No</i>

Note: The courses marked with grey area mean no consistency.

As show in Table 7, it presented the results of the second round of modified Delphi survey by the consensus of panel experts. Of analysis computed, even more than 70% courses reached to the levels of consistency within the two dimensions of ESP curriculum model for hospitality. Still, “Other hotel services”, “Introducing utensils and recipes” and “Other food and beverage services” respectively were not at the level of standard in the two dimensions of ESP for hospitality since these course contents may be seldom practiced and utilized in industrial sectors by the viewpoints of panel experts. Therefore, underlying three course contents inducted into “English for Hotel Services” dimension; yet six course contents were categorized in “English for Food and Beverage Services” dimension. Finally, these course contents established in ESP curriculum model for hospitality field, which were integrated via perspective and consensus of hospitality educators and industrial practitioners, may be the basis of construction for specific English training for undergraduate students/learners. Also, it implied that the ESP curriculum design for hospitality can be infused and implemented within educational institutions and industrial practices.

TABLE 8:
THE SECOND ROUND OF MODIFIED DELPHI TECHNIQUE

Dimension	Course	Mo	M	S.D	Q.D	Consistency
English for Hotel Services	Reception counter services	5	4.80	.414	0	Yes
	Hotel telephone service	5	4.47	.640	0.5	Yes
	Room service	5	4.53	.516	0.5	Yes
	Other hotel services	3	3.47	.516	0.5	No
English for Food And Beverage Services	Reception counter services	5	4.87	.352	0	Yes
	Food ordering services	5	4.73	.458	0.5	Yes
	Meal services	5	4.80	.414	0	Yes
	Complaint responses	4	4.40	.507	0.5	Yes
	Bill payment and see-off services	5	4.60	.643	0.5	Yes
	Introducing menus	5	4.80	.414	0	Yes
	Introducing utensils and recipes	3	2.93	.594	0	No
	Other food and beverage services	4	3.13	.060	0.5	No

Note: The courses marked with grey area mean no consistency.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at constructing an ESP curriculum model for undergraduate hospitality management in Taiwan. As the development of Taiwan's hotel industry is moving toward internationalization, the high degree of cultural and ethnic diversity is increasingly present in the workforce. As a result, the development of ESP curriculum design and model for hospitality field must have a view of globalization.

Foreign language education infusing into undergraduate hospitality management was born out of the needs of industry. This has led to the rapid growth and has been one of key successes to internationalization and globalization of hospitality higher education in Taiwan. It has implied that ESP curriculum design and specification course contents for hospitality have been taken as the critical issue considered most within academic institutions and hospitality industries as well. To sum up, hospitality English is a professional skill from the perspective of human resources development. Therefore, ESP curriculum model and course contents, for students/learners of undergraduate hospitality management, can be applicable and determined as a key entry-level to industrial sectors; it can be taken as the referent basis of career development for the perspectives within academic institution and hospitality industry.

An effective hospitality English program should integrate theory with practice through interdisciplinary, learner-centered learning as well as encourages students to assume responsibility for their own learning and interacting with customers and practitioners. Nevertheless, ESP curriculum model for hospitality should foster a spirit of collaboration and teamwork and a self-reflective attitude among educational institutions and industrial sectors. More important, the ESP curriculum development should include industry representatives in its annual curriculum review for content relevancy and inclusion of industry trends. The appropriate defining and application of competencies in collaboration with experienced professionals from the field and the integration of content has been a program's strength.

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