

**Module Title:** Foreign Languages and Cultural Awareness

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During breakfast service at the Newport Mercure hotel restaurant, I observed a cultural misunderstanding between our guest and one of our F&B employees, Li Wei, who is from China. The guest, Mr. Johnson, had ordered congee (a traditional Chinese rice porridge) from the menu. Li Wei, following traditional Chinese food customs, prepared the congee plain, as is typical in Chinese cuisine where the diner customizes it with various condiments and side dishes.

Mr. Johnson was visibly unsatisfied and somewhat misunderstood when the plain congee was served. He had expected it to be a more elaborate dish, perhaps with meat, and seasoning already mixed in, similar to how Western-style oatmeal or porridge might be served. Li Wei, noticing Mr. Johnson's confusion, tried to explain the traditional way of eating congee, but the language barrier and differences in food culture led to a tense exchange. Mr. Johnson felt unsatisfied and Li Wei seemed disappointed that her efforts were not appreciated.

In hotel services, cultural differences can appear in every day. That's why it has to be learned and teach cultural awareness to everybody. Learning these key skills is can be a crucial point in every day. Enhance active listening skills to better interpret guests' non-verbal cues and underlying concerns. Active listening involves not only hearing the words spoken but also paying attention to body language example micro-expressions can be brief facial expressions that happen in about 1/25th of a second. tone of voice can be a crucial point in communication with customers while explaining forcefully tone using the first person continuously can sound arrogant and aggressive. Enhancing my communication skills, particularly in cross-cultural contexts, is crucial. This includes learning to explain culinary traditions and practices clearly and patiently.

Encouraging a more detailed description of traditional dishes on the menu could help set accurate expectations. For instance, specifying that congee is served plain with optional condiments before serving the dishes. Practice patience and empathy by giving guests plenty of time to express themselves and showing genuine interest in their needs. Empathy helps in understanding the guest's perspective and building a trust between customers and staff members. Show them empathy to their cultural differences and keep open-minded to learn new traditions and show interest help communicate with guests. Use open-ended questions to encourage guests to share more about their preferences and concerns. Instead of yes/no questions, asking "How can I assist you better?" By developing these skills and making these behavioural adjustments, I can better serve guests from diverse cultural backgrounds and minimize the risk of misunderstandings. Embracing cultural diversity and fostering an inclusive environment not only enhances guest satisfaction but also enriches the workplace experience for all employees.

### **Staff Training Plan:**

Enhancing Cultural Competence in Food and Beverage Staff Service to ensure our employees are equipped to handle cultural misunderstandings, we will implement a comprehensive training program focused on cultural competence, effective communication, and empathy in food and beverage (F&B) service. This plan will help our staff provide exceptional service to our diverse customers, minimizing misunderstandings and enhancing guest satisfaction. Training Objectives increase cultural awareness and sensitivity among employees. Improve cross-cultural communication skills, and make it easier to understand and learn our guests' culture and traditions. Learn how to show and practice empathy and active listening in guest interactions. Practical strategies to handle cultural misunderstandings and become proficient in it. Training Modules include several lessons on cultural awareness and sensitivity the object of this lesson is to educate employees on the importance of cultural awareness and the diversity of culinary traditions. The content of this lesson includes an overview of cultural competence and its significance in the hospitality industry (Weng, Chen, & Chen, 2019). Detailed exploration of common culinary traditions and expectations from various cultures, including Chinese, Indian, Middle

Eastern, and Western. To global understanding of cuisines, and be prepared not just for guests but also for internal development between colleagues to understand each other behaviour and traditional differences. To understand better the tone of voice, behaviour acting and religious subconscious behaviours. Case studies of cultural misunderstandings in Food and Beverage service and their impact on guest satisfaction. Team activities between staff members Interactive discussions and cultural storytelling sessions where employees share their cultural food traditions. How food culture changed in centuries with religious and cultural ways. Presenting and trying diverse culinary practices to experiencing and learning each other traditions to understand our guests better. Effective cross-cultural communication objective to enhance employees' ability to communicate clearly and respectfully with guests from different cultural backgrounds. Content include Principles of effective communication and overcoming language barriers (Lauring & Selmer, 2018). Techniques for explaining culinary practices and menu items clearly. Role-playing exercises simulating guest interactions with potential cultural misunderstandings. Activities include Role-playing scenarios where employees practice explaining dishes and resolving misunderstandings. Language support tools and resources for employees to learn basic phrases in commonly spoken languages by our guests. Empathy and active listening practice objective to develop employees' ability to empathize with guests and listen actively to their concerns. Content the role of empathy in customer service and its impact on guest experiences (Guchait, Neal, & Simons, 2020). Strategies for active listening and addressing guest concerns effectively. Identifying non-verbal cues and body language that indicate guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Empathy-building workshops with scenarios and role-plays. Active listening exercises where employees practice responding to guest feedback. Practical Strategies for Handling Cultural Misunderstandings objective to provide employees with practical tools and strategies to resolve cultural misunderstandings effectively. Content step-by-step guide for handling cultural misunderstandings in real-time. Importance of setting clear expectations through detailed menu descriptions and proactive communication. Encouraging a supportive environment where staff can share experiences and solutions. Activities group discussions on past experiences of cultural misunderstandings and how they were resolved. Developing and reviewing detailed menu descriptions with cultural notes. Implementation plan kick-off Workshop: A full-day workshop to introduce the training program, covering all modules with interactive

sessions and role-plays. Quarterly training Sessions and ongoing sessions to reinforce learning, address new challenges, and update training content as needed. Evaluation and feedback regular feedback collection from employees and guests to assess the effectiveness of the training. Continuous improvement based on feedback and evolving cultural trends. This comprehensive training program will equip our staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle cultural misunderstandings effectively, ensuring a high level of guest satisfaction and fostering an inclusive and respectful dining environment.

### **Self Reflection**

While I was in Hotel Mercure I met lot`s of guests mostly at the Front desk. Every guest meets with me first when they arrive. Which is an important role after all. At the beginning of my days, I believed the fastest check-in was the best. Just give the key card and tell the guests which room and floor there are is the best option to check-in. However, after several guests, I started to see after they saw me in the lobby from time to time they still did not interact with me even if their just waiting for delivery or laundry. No questions or any feedback on how are their staying. I was frustrated and also felt disappointed. I also felt a sense of responsibility to prevent such occurrences in the future. I had to analyse and question what I did wrong After a few days of thinking I just remembered what my great-grandfather used to say "As how God received, that's how He was given" ( we use this verb when are we hosting guests) of course this one is a word-to-word translation the English version of my research is " Do unto others as you would be done by. " The meaning of this verb is how are we presenting ourselves or in this case our hotels to arriving guests that`s how they will behave and act while they are staying with us. This traditional verb from a religious culture of the point was able to change my hall's first opinion introduction to our guests. For polite and understanding guest receiving can build trust and openly communicate behaviour between guests and staff members. Quite often experienced when I check in guests at the end of the check-in, I often ask them how we make their stay more comfortable and give them some choices, such as more pillows or towels. Culture and traditions can change things both way positively and negatively. However, I learned that deep cultural understanding and proactive communication are crucial. Upon reflection, I

realized the positive aspect was the opportunity to learn and improve my service. However, the negative aspect was that the guest's experience was negatively impacted. This change in perspective is supported by research indicating that cultural competence improves guest satisfaction and employee morale (Guchait, Neal, & Simons, 2020). This experience taught me that cultural awareness is not just about recognizing differences but also about anticipating potential misunderstandings and addressing them proactively. I learned the value of tradition and culture can improve not just our everyday lives but also affect workplace environments.

## **Presentation**

# **Multilingualism Importance in Hotel Industry**

**Welcome and objectives**

**Overview of multilingualism in the hospitality  
industry**

**Why Multilingualism Matters**

**Case Study: French in the Hotel Industry**

**HOTELS**

## Benefits of Multilingualism

### 1. Enhanced Guest Experience

**Personalized Service:** Speaking a guest's language makes them feel valued and understood.

**Better Communication:** Reduces misunderstandings and improves overall satisfaction.

### 2. Competitive Advantage

**Attract Diverse Guests:** Multilingual staff can cater to a broader range of guests.

**Increased Bookings:** Guests are more likely to choose a hotel where they feel comfortable.

### 3. Staff Development

**Skill Enhancement:** Learning new languages develops cognitive and interpersonal skills.

**Career Opportunities:** Multilingual employees are valuable and often find better job prospects.

## Importance of Language Awareness

### 1. Cultural Sensitivity:

**Respect and Understanding:** Language awareness promotes respect for cultural differences.

**Avoid Miscommunications:** Helps avoid cultural faux pas that can offend guests.

### 2. Professionalism:

**Polite Interactions:** Knowing what is polite/impolite in different languages ensures professional conduct.

**Guest Comfort:** Language awareness contributes to a welcoming atmosphere.

### 3. Problem Solving:

**Effective Issue Resolution:** Language skills help in resolving guest issues efficiently.

**Improved Team Dynamics:** Multilingual teams can communicate better and work more cohesively.

## Focus on French

### 1. Where is French Spoken?

**Global Reach:** French is spoken in over 29 countries, including France, Canada (Quebec), Belgium, Switzerland, and several African nations.

**Tourist Appeal:** Popular destinations for French-speaking tourists include Paris, Montreal, Brussels, and Geneva.

### 2. Difficulty Level:

**Challenge:** French has relatively complex grammar but shares many similarities with English, making it manageable for English speakers.

### 3. Polite vs. Impolite in Business Context:

**Polite:** Using titles and formal language (e.g., "Monsieur," "Madame"), greeting guests with "Bonjour" (good day) and "Merci" (thank you).

**Impolite:** Over-familiarity, interrupting conversations, and failing to use polite forms of address (e.g., "tu" instead of "vous" in formal settings).

## Examples from the Hotel Industry

### 1. Greeting Guests:

**Polite:** "Bonjour, Monsieur/Madame. Comment puis-je vous aider aujourd'hui?" (Hello, Sir/Madam. How can I help you today?)

**Impolite:** "Salut!" (Hi!) - Too casual for a professional setting.

### 2. Addressing Complaints:

**Polite:** "Je suis désolé pour ce désagrément. Nous allons résoudre ce problème immédiatement." (I'm sorry for this inconvenience. We will resolve this issue immediately.)

**Impolite:** "Ce n'est pas notre faute." (It's not our fault.) - Dismissive and unhelpful.

### 3. Offering Services:

**Polite:** "Puis-je vous offrir un café ou un thé pendant que vous attendez?" (May I offer you a coffee or tea while you wait?)

**Impolite:** "Attendez là." (Wait there.) - Direct and impolite

### **Summary:**

Multilingualism enhances guest experience, provides a competitive edge, and fosters staff development.

Language awareness ensures cultural sensitivity, professional interactions, and effective problem-solving.

Using French as an example, we highlighted key polite and impolite practices in a business context.

### **Final Thought**

Embracing multilingualism and language awareness not only improves guest satisfaction but also enriches our professional and personal lives. Let's commit to enhancing our language skills and cultural understanding.

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