

Ukraine is preparing for Euro-2012 and hoteliers are working to accommodate guests who will arrive at this great sports event. Much effort is devoted to staff training. In this respect special attention should be paid to training the frontline staff who are the first to welcome guests at the hotel, so they are, to a great extent, responsible for the level of service that keeps guests happy and willing to return. There is no need to argue that they should be able to communicate effectively with their foreign guests. Here arises the problem of their English language competence as English is considered to be the language of international communication. The language competence of the front line personnel refers to their ability to use the language corresponding to different stages of the arrival-departure hospitality cycle, their fluency in the so called "hospitality language." (Blue 73).

"Hospitality language" includes linguistic expressions which are connected with hospitality concerns. This aspect of language use has a long history of development, having evolved from expressions of care for visitors and the kindness of the host to modern commercial practices in hospitality establishments. Nowadays it is divided into two clearly distinctive groups - one used in hosting activities as a social obligation; the other - in activities involving payment. In both cases, participants observe the etiquette that is traditionally practiced; they are involved in interpersonal mostly cross-cultural communication. No need to say that front office personnel should clearly differentiate these two groups and use primarily "commercial hospitality language."

Viewed as a process, hospitality language covers four stages: arrival, familiarization, engagement, and departure, which are called the 'guest cycle' (Kasavana 424). All four stages are usually associated with a certain public understanding of the language used. For example, arrival is associated with greetings, and departure with farewell. Between these two stages, there might be serious conversations and less formal exchanges, covering a wide range of communicative activities. Still the most common cases of the language used can be defined and practiced by the personnel.

These cases may be presented as follows.

**Arrival** The hotel provides a pick-up service to its guests, that is a guest is met at an airport or railway station and transported to the hotel. Then a porter carries their luggage to their rooms. Guests check in at the reception.

As all services are commercial, the language is formal. The personnel use routine and rehearsed phrases - formal question-answer transactions in a formal tone. Of course, it varies with the category of a hotel, but usually it is limited by the following phrases:

*Good evening, how may I help you? Good afternoon, sir, do you have a reservation with us? Could I have your passport, please? May I have your credit card, please? Would you just fill out the registration form? The cost is \$150 per night, including buffet breakfast. How will you be paying?*

*You will be in Room 301, which is on the third floor. Here's your key and your key card. (Yates)*

**Familiarization.** The receptionist briefly informs the guests about in-house facilities available, meals (room service, restaurant), check-out times. The guests may read in-house brochures and ask questions about the hotel.

The information is given in a briefing style. The receptionist uses rehearsed messages.

If guests have additional questions, they are answered in a formal tone. The language varies according to the category of a hotel.

*The restaurant is open from 7 to 10 am and from 6 to 10 pm.*

*You can reserve a table for tonight here.*

*The swimming pool and sauna are in the basement.*

*The concierge may book theatre tickets for you.*

*You may ask the concierge to book a guided tour of the city. (Yates)*

**Engagement.** The guests use independently the facilities in their rooms and in different sections in the hotel. Popular items include: TV, restaurant and bars, pool, gymnasium, sauna, disco.

The personnel use mostly formal and impersonal language. But it may depend on how long guests stay in the hotel. Exact language needs other than those relating to use of facilities at this stage are difficult to predict.

*How can I help you?*

*The last orders at the restaurant are at 2 o'clock. But it's probably best not to get there quite so late. It's best if you book a table. I can do that for you.*

*You can buy some sun lotion at the gift shop just next to the reception in the hotel*

*I'll just have to find out if there are tickets still available.*

*If you get to the concert hall before 7.30, you can collect the tickets and pay for them then. They're reserved in your name.*

*If you have some clothes that need washing, look inside your closet and find a plastic bag and a laundry list. Put the clothes in the bag and fill out the form. I'll send someone to collect it in about ten minutes. (Yates)*

**Departure.** A porter takes the guest's luggage to the registration desk or taxi (bus). The receptionist prepares a bill. A perfunctory farewell conversation takes place.

The personnel use mostly rehearsed language which is, preferably, formal and impersonal.

*Here is your bill, Mr Cook.*

*The individual charges are itemized and the receipts are here.*

*I may explain the extras included in the bill.*

*That charge is for the hire of the court and tennis equipment.*

*Could you sign here on the dotted line?*

*I hope you enjoyed your stay in our hotel.*

*The porter will take your luggage to the bus (taxi).*

*Have a nice trip! Safe journey! (Yates)*

This article has discussed some sociolinguistic aspects of hospitality with a focus on receptionist- guest exchanges at the hotel reception desk. Hospitality language used in these situations arises from a combination of procedural, behavioral and linguistic acts, verbal and non-verbal, direct and indirect. In its commercially constructed character, hospitality language has a standardized universal form with its own register of special terms. It is clear that hospitality language should be included in professional hospitality programmes in order to train effective qualified front-line personnel. Learning how to speak clearly to foreign guests without sounding patronizing, thinking about how to make the message more explicit, and considering some of the problems involved in cross-cultural communication would be of value to anyone who might have to deal with foreign guests.

**Literature Cited.**

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