

CHAPTER 19

Korean for Specific Purpose Program for Students of Hospitality

Jason Bumyong Sung

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

1 Introduction

Demands for workforce with knowledge of Korean language and culture are increasing. In *Hawai‘i Business* magazine, South Korea was described as “a rising star in Hawai‘i tourism, with its arrival numbers almost doubling in the first half of 2010 compared with 2009’s first half” (Wiles, 2010). The article also stated that this growth “was faster [than] the U.S., Canadian, Japanese, Chinese or other big markets”. In addition, evidence for the need for a Korean-speaking workforce can be found in talks during the Hawai‘i Language Summit (2013). At this meeting, participants from Hawaii’s business community, government agencies, and education sectors discussed preparing a multilingual workforce for the state of Hawai‘i and identified that a Korean-speaking workforce is needed in both the hospitality and retail sectors. Despite of this kind of demand, there are not currently any Korean for Specific Purposes (KSP) programs in Hawaii.

The current case study attempts to address some of these potential needs with the ultimate goal of building a KSP course for students or others who are currently working in the hospitality sector. As a first step, this paper will be focused on creating a 4-week (16 hour) KSP course as one of the courses offered by the Office the Continuing Education and Training of the Kapi‘olani Community College in Honolulu. The specific target learners are people who will work or are working at reception desks in hotels here in Hawai‘i with no previous knowledge or minimal knowledge of Korean.

Although reception desks are the one place where most interactions occur between guests and staff at a hotel, there appear to be very few if any speakers of Korean working at these positions. From my own past experience, I have heard from relatives or acquaintances that have visited Hawai‘i that none of them mentioned interacting with any Korean-speaking staff members during their hotel stays. According to them, they mentioned that there were many workers who appeared fluent in Japanese, but Korean was nowhere to be found. Following up on this, I investigated whether any Korean for specific purpose were being offered in Hawai‘i and found that none were currently being offered. In fact, Korean is not even being offered in any of continuing education programs, despite the presence of several Japanese and Chinese conversation courses. One Japanese for Business Tourism Industry course is being offered at one of the community colleges in Hawai‘i, but no other languages for Tourism purposes were located. Furthermore, this course is required for the students who major in the hotel industry.

1.1 Institutional Background

As for the institution, Kapi‘olani Community College (KCC) is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the college offers 21 associate degrees. In addition, the Office of the Continuing Education and Training at KCC offers a large variety of non-credit courses such as State of Hawai‘i Tour Drive/Guide, Workplace Professionalism, and Employee Engagement. KCC is the biggest community college in the state of Hawai‘i.

As mentioned, this proposal seeks to create a Korean for specific purpose program for people who are interested or currently working in the hospitality industry. The researcher plans to work with the Office of the Continuing Education and Training at KCC. The program will take approximately 16 hours to complete. The program will cover three major areas, including (a) an introduction to culture and history, (b) work tasks (e.g., checking in/out guests), and (c) informal guest interactions (e.g., giving directions). It will be categorized as a conversational Korean course at the elementary level focusing on these situations. Cultural components as well as customer management skills for foreign customers will be part of the course curriculum because the researcher believes that cultural appropriateness is crucial when staff interacts with foreign customers.

2 Needs Analysis

The researcher first referred to related previous studies to gather information on potential needs, following up with an interview with a person who has been working in the industry for several years to get a better grasp of the hospitality industry from an insider’s perspective.

Reading previous studies helped to understand what is involved with the language used in the hospitality field. Blue & Harun (2003) introduced a term “hospitality language”, which they claimed involved particular patterns of language, and these patterns tended to reflect the arrival-departure cycle. Table 1 summarizes these particular patterns in terms of the arrival-departure cycle.

Table 1

The Commercial Arrival-departure Hospitality Cycle (Blue & Harun, 2003, p. 75)

Stage	Activity	Language use
Arrival	Pick-up service in some hotels; luggage may be carried by porters; registration at the reception. All services are commercial	Greeting by driver, welcome by receptionist. Routine and rehearsed language used. Formal question-answer transactions in formal tone. Varies with category of hotel
Familiarization	Receptionist briefs guest on what and where in-house facilities are available, and on meal and check-out times; guest may also read in-house brochures and ask questions about hotel	Briefing style, rehearsed messages, additional questions and answers, formal tone, language use varies according to category of hotel
Engagement	Independent use of facilities in rooms and in different sections of the hotel. Popular items include: TV, restaurant and bar, pool, gymnasium, sauna, disco	Mostly formal and impersonal, but may depend on how long guest stays in a hotel. Difficult to predict exact language needs other than those relating to use of facilities
Departure	Luggage transfer, preparation of bill, perfunctory farewell conversation	Mostly rehearsed language, mostly formal and impersonal

Another noteworthy detail provided by Blue and Harun (2003) is a description of functional activities at hotel reception desks in terms of the frequency in which these activities occur (Table 2).

Table 2

Functional Activities at Hotel Reception (Blue and Harun, 2003, p. 79)

Functions	Frequency	%
Information and queries	15	32.60
Miscellaneous requests	12	26.10
Check-ins	9	19.60
Check-outs	8	17.40
Complaints and criticisms	2	4.30
Total	46	100.00

After reviewing several previous studies, the researcher also interviewed a person who has been working in the hotel industry. The interview lasted 45 minutes, and the conversations were recorded with permission. While distributing surveys would have gathered more information, the researcher decided to conduct an interview first to get a glimpse of the hospitality industry since the researcher had no direct knowledge about the industry. In addition, by conducting an interview the researcher was able to better identify the kinds of questions and topics that would be most useful should a follow-up survey be created.

Based on the responses of the interview, I learned that the interviewee had worked in various positions, including the front desk, at a local hotel in the past, and that he is currently a manager for the one of the departments. Although he is not Korean, he went to Korea as a part of special intensive Korean language program. He has since maintained and even apparently

enhanced his Korean skills since returning, which he attributes to his need to interact with guests from Korea on a regular basis.

The first question that the researcher asked was regarding the number of Korean tourists coming to Hawaii. He responded that increasing numbers of Korean tourists are coming to Hawaii, honeymoon couples in particular, and that JTB, one of the Japanese tourism companies in Hawaii, is accordingly looking for Korean speaking staff to meet demands of the market for Korean people. He also mentioned that while some of the Korean tourists speak fluent English, some do not appear have any functional command of English.

When I asked the interviewee to identify target situations that learners of a KSP course might best benefit from, he emphasized that staff should be aware of Korean culture as well as knowing its history. He said that hotel staff members often speak Japanese to Korean or Chinese guests and this can offend guests because of their historical relations. He suggested that staff members should first ask in English about their nationalities in order to be aware of these differences and adjust accordingly.

Regarding the target situations learners need to know about from a linguistic perspective, the interviewee identified three situations that typically involve interactions in Korean. They are (a) checking-in guests, (b) checking-out guests, and (c) providing directions about tourist attractions. The interviewee also pointed out that Korean guests frequently make requests from desk staff, such as electric kettles to heat water and adapters for chargers, which are common in Korea.

Table 3 summarizes the findings of the interview in terms of different areas of possible study. The final column, miscellaneous, contains vocabulary items or contexts that were mentioned in the interview but could not be categorized in any specific areas.

Table 3

Summary of Interview Findings with a Hospitality Worker

Area	Specific Targets
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korean culture (e.g., honorifics, respecting elders) • Korean history (e.g., territorial conflicts)
Checking in/out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings • Numbers (e.g., days, dates, room numbers) • Requesting personal information (e.g., passports, credit cards, itinerary or coupons) • Charges (e.g., room service & meals) • Types of payment
Providing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenities (e.g., spa, laundromats, pool, bar) • Elevators • Restaurants • Money exchanges • Transportation (e.g., trolley, city bus) • Tourist attractions
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests (e.g., electric kettles, adapters, bed-guards) • Emergencies • Weddings • Standing in line

One additional source of data gathered was in relation to existing Japanese for specific purpose courses, one of which was a Japanese for customer management course and the other a Japanese for business and tourism industry course. Under the assumptions that many staff

interactions are shared by both Japanese and Korean hotel guests, information about these courses was useful for comparative and content-related purposes. Both of these courses focus on the different target situations learners of any language may encounter when working in the service industry, so that even if the language focus is different the tasks themselves can be useful. Secondly, through online information about these courses I was able to specify potential target vocabulary and phrase items that could be necessary for future learners.

The next step for this needs analysis will be observing how front desk staff or concierge workers actually interact with Korean customers and thereby gather information about necessary language items such as vocabulary and grammar for each target area. This will play a crucial role in order to make the language authentic for the KSP course. For example, simplified language for the purpose of instruction may be easier for hotel staff to acquire and use, but these simplified expressions won't be much use since customers will not also use these simplified constructions.

To accomplish this step, one hotel in Waikiki area where most staff members and guests are Korean will be selected for observation. Research by Masoumpanah and Tahririan (2013) can provide useful information for conducting this part of the need analysis. Adopting their approach, the researcher plans to interview receptionists and managers to ask questions about job requirements, attitudes toward customers, and the type of training that staff receive. I will also ask receptionists if their conversations can be recorded when they actually interact with customers. In addition, a questionnaire survey will also be distributed to students who are majoring in hospitality at KCC to find out what they want to learn. Some of the questions that listed in Masoumpanah and Tahririan (2013, p. 9) asked respondents to rate their interest in

different components of the course, such as “I want to be a hotel receptionist”, “I need to learn how to speak”, and “I think the curriculum offered by the school is compatible with my future goals”. These questions and more will be useful in gauging student needs in relation to the final KSP course.

It will also be interesting to conduct a comparison analysis of these metalinguistic and nonlinguistic features to those of non-Korean employees. In addition, the researcher also plans to interview staff within at the human resources department at hotels. This will also shed light on what kind of employees they are looking to hire and the skills they value.

3 Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) specify what students will be able to do upon the completion of the course. The following SLOs are derived with reference to Bloom (1956)’s Taxonomy of Education Objectives, and based on the data I have gathered so far. Of course, these will need to be revised based on the results of the full needs analysis, and should reflect both what students need to be able to do and what is possible for them to accomplish within the scope of the course. Below are projected outcomes for students being able to:

- Recognize aspects of Korean culture including its historical background
- Demonstrate culturally appropriate behaviors in interacting with Korean customers
- Perform business-related tasks in Korean in the areas of checking-in/out procedures and giving directions
- Recognize and produce appropriate vocabulary items and phrases for business tasks in the hospitality industry

The SLOs involving cultural aspects were chosen for several reasons. As mentioned earlier, the interviewee stated the importance of developing employees' knowledge of the target culture before anything else. The discussion notes from the Hawai'i Language Summit also addressed this issue. According to the discussion notes, the hospitality sectors have demands not only for employees who can actually service individuals from China, Japan, and Korea using these languages, but also for employees with pluricultural competencies. Pluricultural competencies were described as "the ability to use languages for the purpose of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures" (Coste & Zarate, 2009, p 11). This current recognition by the hospitality industry for a focus on cultural aspects precedes language aspects.

For language needs, the SLOs reflected the results of the need analysis so far. The language portion of the course will strictly focus on three target situations, checking-in and checking-out processes and providing information for directions. One of the comments that the interviewee made was that finding the time for entire staff members was extremely difficult. Therefore, the course will require as few hours as possible to accommodate the employees' schedules. In addition, checking-in/out processes and giving directions are not easy tasks to achieve for students at the beginning level. They will involve various types of vocabulary items, grammar, and speech styles.

4 Materials and Curriculum

The course will take a communicative approach where students are exposed to meaningful learning to reflect the nature of a language for specific purpose program. Learners in a language for specific purpose program have immediate real needs that require grammatical competency as well as sociolinguistic competency, thus I believe a communicative approach serves this purpose best. Although the course will be designed with multiple syllabuses, such as structural, situational, functional and task-based, the course will mainly take the form of a situational syllabus with many activities that resemble pedagogical tasks.

The 4-week (16 hour) course will be organized in the following way. The course will have three main units, (a) introductions, (b) hotel check-in, and (c) directions. Each unit will have three to seven sessions depending on its content and difficulty. I consulted the instructor of a Japanese for Business Tourism Industry and another Japanese instructor who interviewed staff currently working in the industry for assistance in the development of the course plan. Table 4 shows the course schedule and the outcome of each unit.

Table 4

Projected Course Schedule

Unit	Session	Unit Outcome
Unit 1		
Introduction	Session 1 ~ 3	Romanization Introduce oneself Basic daily greetings Speech Level Brief history
Unit 2		
Hotel Check-In	Session 4~10	Conduct hotel check-in Numbers & counters Request guest's information: name, phone numbers Formality & Concept of service
Unit 3		
Directions	Session 11~16	Word order Location words Give directions Using appropriate hand gestures

Regarding the course materials, demonstration dialogues for each unit will be presented with vocabulary and grammar items. Students will learn these items through role-plays, lectures, discussions, and other exercises. All of the materials will be created since there are not any currently existing materials for people in the hotel industry (see Appendix A for a sample dialogue activity). Table 5 summarizes some of the topics that will be covered in each session. These sessions will be arranged to reflect different levels of difficulty whenever possible.

Table 5

Projected Scope and Sequence Chart

Unit	Functional Category	Function	Syntax	Lexis	Miscellaneous
1.1	Culture & History Greetings and Introductions	Greetings Introducing	Word order Sentence enders: <i>-(s)mnida</i>		Romanization
2.1	Using numbers	Using Numbers in providing information	Sentence enders: <i>-eoyo / a yo</i> Honorifics/ Sentence level <i>-(u)seyo</i> <i>-jwuseyo</i>	Numbers Counters days, dates, room numbers Address Money	
3.1	Giving directions	Locations	Locations: <i>-e isseyo?</i>		

5 Assessment and Evaluation

The aim of this course is to train hotel staff to perform certain business tasks within the hospital industry in a culturally appropriately manner for Korean guests. Therefore, criterion-referenced achievement tests fit as a good way of assessing the degree to which learners have achieved the objectives of the course. Two types of course outcomes exist for the program, including cultural and language aspects. For the cultural assessment, the researcher plans to require students to write an essay about Korean culture including Korea's historical relation with

neighboring countries like Japan and China. Students will be required to exemplify values of Korean culture like Confucian influence and their *ppali ppali* (hurry-hurry) culture.

Regarding the language performance, assessments such as oral exams, role-play exams, and paper exams—including vocabulary quizzes—will be conducted to measure students' achievement. During oral exams and role-plays, students will be required to record their conversations or video record their performances. These recordings will be discussed in pair sessions where the instructor provides feedback. A sample rubric was created to display how scores will be assigned and the type of feedback given to learners (Figure 1).

	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Approaching	1 Does not meet
Task Completion	Superior completion of task; asks and responds appropriately with elaboration.	Completion of task; responses appropriate and adequately developed.	Partial completion of task	Minimal completion of task and/or responses frequently inappropriate.
Structure/ Accuracy	Demonstrates full knowledge of sentence structure	Makes few structural errors but they do not interfere with understanding.	Makes errors that sometimes hinder understanding.	Consistently makes patterned errors such that sentences become hard to understand.
Fluency	Speech sounds natural and appropriate	Speech has short pauses but continuous.	Speech sounds slow and unnatural.	Speech with frequent and long pauses or incomplete sentences.
Cultural Appropriateness	Almost always culturally appropriate, including use of gestures, honorifics and address terms.	Mostly culturally appropriate including use of gestures, honorifics and address terms.	Sometimes of culturally appropriate including use of gestures, honorifics and address terms.	Only little or no of cultural appropriateness , lack of gestures, honorifics and address terms .

Figure 1. Sample role-play scoring rubric.

Although the assessment of each learner will take place during the course, the course will be ultimately evaluated by each learner's job performance in dealing with the target customers.

Assessment of job performance will be measured in two ways. The instructor of the course will assess the recordings of actual conversations between staff and the target customers, and a guest survey will also be used. I believe most hotels conduct short online surveys and so a section will be added so that customers can rate the quality of their experience with the participants of the course. Interacting with the target customers using their language in culturally appropriate ways should be manifested through guests' satisfaction.

This requires communication and cooperation between the instructor of the course and the staff at management level from the industry. Therefore this relationship will be created from the beginning and must be continued throughout the course. The coordinating staff from the industry also should receive progressive reports of the participants from the instructor. Feedback from the coordinating staff will be shared and used to make adjustments to course objectives and other areas of the course.

6 Conclusion

The KSP course provides many potential benefits. First, participants of the program will gain linguistic and cultural competence that is immediately applicable to their work. The participants who successfully complete the course will be able to use Korean to provide customer service in linguistically and culturally appropriate manners. Secondly, as for the institution, KCC, the program meets the two of the mission statements of KCC: that the program provides training for Hawai'i's people and it builds partnerships with business organizations to support lifelong learning. Lastly, teachers of the program will the gain experience necessary to build a curriculum that is focused on the systematic use of course components such as using needs to

determine SLOs, materials, and assessments. Indeed, the most prominent benefit of this project is the design of a KSP course that integrates and combines each component of curriculum development towards helping hospitality workers use Korean in the workplace.

The current study is, however, limited in many areas. First, more need analysis must be conducted. Although the researcher interviewed one worker at a hotel to identify target situations, vocabulary items, and phrases, more information needs to be gathered in order to gain more specific information on each of these areas. The researcher believes that this kind of information, such as frequency of vocabulary items, can be collected by surveying staff members who are concierge or currently working at the front desk. Also observing how these people interact with Korean customers will provide good ideas for the course materials.

In the end, I learned that opportunities are growing for Korean language for specific purposes, particularly in areas of retailing and hospitality sectors. I also learned that there are many language for specific purpose programs for other languages, and I hope that I may be able to do the same for the Korean language.

Appendix A

Demonstration Dialogue for Session 11(simple directions)

Asking for restroom

C: *Jeogiyo, hwajangsil i eoti e isseoyo?

S: Sooyeongjang geon.neopyeon e itsumnita.

C: Sooyeongjang eun eoti e isseoyo?

S: (Using proper hand gestures) sooyeongjang eun elevator eyop e isseoyo.

Translation

C: Where is the restroom?

S: There is one across from the pool.

C: Where is the pool?

S: The pool is next to the elevator.

Note

*jōgiyo: Its literal meaning is ‘it is over there’. However, it is often used to politely get someone’s attention or to open a conversation. ‘Yōgiyo’ which means ‘it is over here’ is also used for the same purpose.

Vocabulary

‘hwajangsil’: restroom, ‘eoti’: where, ‘isseoyo’: exist (polite way), ‘jeogi’: over there, ‘itsumnita’: exist (formal way)