

An examination of international employees' use of
native languages in service encounters in the
hospitality industry

A dissertation submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of International Hospitality Management (MIHM)

Student: Tingting Chen
Primary supervisor: Dr David Williamson

2017

School of Hospitality and Tourism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	v
ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Customers' preferences of language use	6
2.2.1 The role of control in service encounters	7
2.2.2 Language as a carrier of emotional connotations	8
2.2.3 Customers' preferences for authentic experience.....	9
2.2.4 Second language as a symbol of individual competence	10
2.3 Employees' perceptions on language use.....	10
2.3.1 The status of customers in service encounters.....	12
2.3.2 The backfire effect of native language use	13
2.3.3 The role of English as the workplace language.....	15
2.3.4 Cultural diversity and politeness.....	15
2.3.5 Respect received from in-group customers.....	17
2.4 Work stress in relation to native language use	19

2.4.1 Sources of work stress	19
2.4.2 The stress-generating characteristic of hospitality work.....	20
2.4.3 High and diverse expectations from customers	20
2.4.4 Role identification of service employees	22
2.4.5 Perceived workload	24
2.4.6 The impact of emotional labour on work stress.....	25
2.5 Summary of literature review	29
2.6 Conceptual framework.....	31
Chapter 3. Methodology.....	34
3.1 Introduction of paradigm	34
3.2 Paradigm choices	37
3.3 Justification of paradigm choice.....	40
3.3.1 Role of the researcher	42
3.4 Research method.....	43
3.4.1 Research design	43
3.4.2 Data analysis.....	47
3.4.3 Participant glossary	48
3.4.4 Reliability and validity	49
3.4.5 Ethical considerations	49
3.5 Summary	50
Chapter 4. Findings.....	51
4.1 Introduction	51

4.2 Adoption of native language in service encounters.....	53
4.2.1 Always follow customers' language choice	53
4.2.2 Change to native language when customers have difficulty in English	55
4.3 Voluntary adoption of English	57
4.3.1 English in the workplace	57
4.3.2 Respect our guests	61
4.3.3 Individual personality	63
4.4 "I will hide my identity..."	64
4.4.1 Demanding customers and perceived workload	65
4.4.2 Not well respected	67
4.4.3 Over-accommodation	70
4.5 Stress related to the use of native language	72
4.5.1 Where is my position?	72
4.5.2 Demanding customers and perceived workload	75
4.5.3 Excessive in-group affiliation of customers	78
4.5.4 Emotional labour in speaking native language	80
4.6 Summary	82
Chapter 5. Discussion	85
5.1 Introduction	85
5.1.1 Conceptual framework.....	86
5.1.2 Main findings.....	87

5.2 Employees' awareness and desire to accommodate customers with native language.....	89
5.3 Employees' ambiguous position in service encounters	92
5.4 Calls for respect from customers	95
5.5 Increased workload following the adoption of native language	98
5.6 Employees' perceptions of intimacy shown by customers.....	101
5.7 Summary	104
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	105
6.1 Introduction	105
6.2 Summary of main findings	106
6.3 Potential contributions	108
6.4 Limitations and implications for future study	111
References	113
Appendix A – Ethical Approval.....	129
Appendix B – Information Letter	130
Appendix C – Consent Form	132
Appendix D – Interview Questions.....	133
Appendix E – Coding Example	135

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.....	33
Table 1. Participants profile	48

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed 

Date 17/10/2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr David Williamson, for his continuous professional guidance, inspiration, and encouragement through all stages of my dissertation. I couldn't have completed this dissertation without his sincere supervision. I cannot thank David enough for encouraging and inspiring me to pursue the completion of my work, especially when I encountered all kinds of obstacles. I sincerely appreciate all the input from David into this study.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Peter Kim and Warren Goodsir, who gave their interests and recognition to this study in the initial stage of my work, which has been a motivation for me to carry forward this dissertation. I want to give my thanks to AUT faculty staff for their kind help during the period of my Master journey. Heartfelt appreciation to all the participants who gave their valuable experience, support, and time for my work; their generous sharing of their stories contributed greatly to the completion of this study.

I am also grateful for all the friends around me; their friendship, encouragement, and support helped me pass difficulties in my study and my life. Thanks to Toni, Xiao, Hui, Chenwei, and Panzi, friends who have been taking care of me all the time. Thanks to Zoe, Lia, and Alex, who kept me company in the study room and offered their help whenever it was needed. Particular gratitude to my friend and roommate, Blake, who offered her experiences, suggestions, and assistance throughout this study; thank you for your prayers whenever I am in need of help in my life.

Deep appreciation to my family for their unconditional and unwavering love and support for my pursuit of further study overseas. Thank you for believing in me and being there for me all the time; your boundless love is the most precious thing in the world to me.

Finally, I acknowledge Kelly Moss for her input into this study via correcting and editing the manuscript for me.

ABSTRACT

In the modern globalised context, it is commonplace in the hospitality industry for international employees to serve customers in their native language when they share the same ethnicity. Many studies have been conducted to explore the use of native language between employees and customers, but most of these studies have investigated customers' attitudes from the perspective of customer service. Thus, how service employees perceive serving customers with the same ethnicity using their native language is still under-researched in the hospitality industry. This study addresses this gap by examining service employees' perceptions of native language use in intercultural service encounters. By employing semi-structured interviews as the research method, this study interviewed international hospitality employees from five-star hotels in Auckland. All the employees spoke English as second language and had experiences of speaking their native language in customer service.

The findings of this study reveal that international hospitality employees have the willingness and awareness to accommodate customers of shared ethnicity with their native language. While in specific service encounters, the shared ethnicity has the potential to constrain employees' adoption of their native language use when serving customers from the same country. Main factors contributing to the avoidance of native language include ambiguous positions, lack of respect, extra workload, and excessive intimacy from customers.

In consideration of the scarcity of research into employees' attitudes towards the adoption of native language in customer service, this study is the first attempt to

investigate native language use in intercultural service encounters from the perspective of service employees in the hospitality context. Results of this study contribute to the literature on intercultural service encounters and work stress regarding international employees' native language use. Also, for hotel practitioners, findings of this study may offer them valuable managerial implications in establishing applicable and effective language policy concerning native language use in intercultural service encounters.

Chapter 1. Introduction

As is the case in other service industries, the hospitality industry is characterised as labour-intensive, and it relies heavily on competent workforce supply. On a global level, the hospitality industry has been faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining high caliber employees (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). The hospitality industry in New Zealand is no exception, as it too faces the challenge of ensuring that its growing market, with an increasing number of tourists from all over the world, can be satisfied by providing qualified people and service; it is imperative that the hospitality industry positions a sufficient workforce of the right caliber properly (Brien, 2004). Despite the demands of this situation, the labour shortage has been shown to be problematic in some destinations in New Zealand, and it is estimated that the situation will not be improved in a short period of time; in such situations, migrant workers have played an important part in filling this labour shortage (People and skills, n.d.). These international employees contribute greatly, given the multi-cultural backgrounds of customers worldwide, both by alleviating the pressure of staff shortage and by offering valuable expertise that may not be provided by local employees (Sadi & Henderson, 2005).

The core of service in the hospitality industry lies in the communication between customers and service employees (Kang & Hyun, 2012). Research into service encounters has shown that communication plays an important role in affecting customers' consumption behaviour and how customers perceive the service (Holmqvist & Van Vaerenbergh, 2013). A negative perception of communication has been

suggested to lead to negative customer feedback and behaviour (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2005). Given this context, difficulties in intercultural service encounters caused by customers and employees speaking different native languages might make communication more difficult (Holmqvist et al., 2013). This was made clear by Reeves (1990), who asserted that for enterprises with customers and markets speaking a foreign language, the management of communication has been greatly neglected.

Language is a means through which communication takes place. The issue of language use in organisations is important not only for corporate companies, but also for employees who need to deal with customers' needs at the very first stage (Angouri, 2013). In service industries, the diversity of customers' and service employees' cultural backgrounds has made the service exchange more complex (Sizoo, Plank, Iskat, & Serrie, 2005). Results of prior research suggest that in light of service employees' behaviours, culturally diverse customers regard the service they receive as inequitable (Barker & Härtel, 2004). Paswan and Ganesh (2005) argued that the cultural background of service employees is significantly related to the comfort of customers during the interaction, which further affects customer satisfaction. In such situations, language and language skill has been regarded as a factor affecting customer behaviour in intercultural service encounters (Luna & Peracchio, 2001). International customers' behaviours in intercultural service encounters involving employees of the same ethnicity has received attention from both marketing and service perspectives. For example, customers are reported to have an expectation of receiving extra care and more help when the service employee shares the same ethnicity with them (Montoya &

Briggs, 2013). In such service encounters, customers present a higher level of comfort and decreased interpersonal barriers, as they perceive the employee as similar to them (Coulter & Coulter, 2002; Montoya & Briggs, 2013). Besides, a negative influence on tipping behaviour and word-of-mouth was found when customers were not served with their native language in an intercultural service encounter (Van Vaerenbergh & Holmqvist, 2013, 2014).

Despite the considerable research into the effect of language use in intercultural service encounters, extant studies focus specifically on customers' attitudes and behaviours in a multilingual context and exclude service employees' perceptions towards this issue, so how service employees perceive the use of their native language in service encounters remains unclear. Svensson (2006) pointed out that in these studies of service encounters, the lack of focus on employees' perceptions of the issue brings the validity and application of the findings into question.

One consequence of cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace is that employees need to accommodate fluctuating interaction patterns and contingent communication scenarios dynamically (Mortensen, 2010). In intercultural service encounters, service employees who share the same ethnicity with international customers may need to exert more effort to accommodate their customers when compared with other employees. The challenge of adopting the shared native language appropriately while satisfying customers with varying demands might be a strain for international hospitality employees.

The primary purpose of this study is to shed more light on international employees' perceptions of native language use as well as the consequent stress they may experience in service encounters in the hospitality industry. In order to deepen the knowledge of international hospitality employees' perceptions of their native language use, this study tries to fill the literature gap by examining the following three research questions:

1. How do international hospitality employees feel about speaking native language in serving customers with a shared ethnicity in service encounters?
2. How does employees' use of their native language (both voluntarily and involuntarily) in service encounters affect their work stress?
3. How does the use of employees' native language affect their overall work experience?

The service encounter has been characterised by the active involvement of both customers and employees in the hospitality context (Holmqvist & Van Vaerenbergh, 2013). Given the significance of customer-employee communication and the important role of employees in building customer experience and influencing customer behaviour (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994), understanding service employees' perceptions of using their native language in serving customers with the same ethnicity will generate potential theoretical contributions to literature on work stress and emotional labour in relation to employees' language usage. Practically, the study will offer managerial implications for hospitality managers in understanding workforce diversity and dealing with challenges in multilingual markets.

This dissertation consists six chapters. The first chapter outlines the background of this study and put forward research questions.

The second chapter refers to the literature review and conceptual framework. First, previous research concerning the language preference of both customers and hospitality employees is reviewed and discussed. Following the literature review, a conceptual framework regards employees' stress related to their native language use is created. According to the conceptual framework, three factors are attributed to employees' stress in service encounters involving customers speaking the same native language.

The third chapter refers to the methodology adopted by this qualitative study. The choice of paradigm is identified and justified. Research design, data collection process as well as the method used for data analysis is briefly introduced.

In the fourth chapter, findings of the study are presented. Reasons for employees' adoption of their native language (both voluntarily and involuntarily) and avoidance of using their native language are identified.

The fifth chapter revisits the conceptual framework. Main findings drawn from the study are discussed.

The last chapter concludes the study by summarizing the main findings and potential contribution of this study, limitations and implications for future studies are identified.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the literature foundations for this study by gathering together streams of work related to the studied topic. The literature review consists of three sections. The first section reviews the language preference of customers impacted by both pragmatic and symbolic factors. The second section refers to literature related to how service employees perceive native language use in service encounters. The final section looks at the work stress that might be related to native language use of service employees.

2.2 Customers' preferences of language use

Customers show different language preferences in intercultural service encounters which provide them with the choice of speaking both their native language and their second language (MacIntyre, 2007). Individual willingness to communicate in their first language has been found to be negatively correlated with individual willingness to communicate in a second language (Charos, 1994). It has been revealed by sociolinguists that people's willingness to communicate in their second language depends on various situational variables (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998), for example, the dialogist (other person involved in the dialog), self-confidence, communicative competence, social status, and personality traits of each person. Other variables that have been identified as related to the willingness to communicate in a second language include the knowledge of the topic, the specific conversational context, and even the fluency of the dialogists (Kang, 2005). In consideration of all these

fluctuating variables, it is predictable that customers' language preferences in intercultural service encounters may vary individually.

2.2.1 The role of control in service encounters

According to research in the sociolinguistic field of second language communication, non-native speakers face the risk of encountering comprehension difficulties which can induce ambiguity (Kang, 2005). When applying this linguistic knowledge to service management sectors, researchers came up with the idea that in intercultural service encounters, people may intend to avoid speaking a second language due to doubts about their second language proficiency in efficiently achieving the desired outcomes (Holmqvist, Van Vaerenbergh, & Grönroos, 2014). Holmqvist and Grönroos (2012) proposed that customers' language choice may be influenced by their perceived risk in service interactions. Surprisingly, proficient bilingual customers also show lower levels of comfort in second language communication (Luna & Peracchio, 2005). In a qualitative study, Kang (2005) introduced the feeling of security as a key psychological antecedent in the willingness to communicate with second language; the author further identified knowledge of the topic, the interactional context, and the dialogist as factors contributing to perceived safety in second language communication. Another concern is that some customers have reported being the recipients of unequal and degraded service when they addressed employees with accented second language (Barker & Härtel, 2004). MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed that people prefer their native language when they don't feel control in communication. The role of control in communication was

also echoed by Holmqvist et al. (2014), who reported that customers are not willing to communicate in second language when they perceive a low level of control.

2.2.2 Language as a carrier of emotional connotations

It has been pointed out that apart from utilitarian value which is practical for the smooth and successful communication, customers also seek non-utilitarian values (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). For example, customers achieve symbolic value in consumption with their self-enhancement and group membership satisfied (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011).

Researchers have suggested that compared with domestic service encounters, intercultural communication involves more uncertainty (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988) and anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985) for international customers. Therefore, the need for power and self-enhancement may increase commensurately when people are involved in intercultural service encounters with a foreign cultural background (Wang, Miao, & Mattila, 2015).

According to Hornsey and Gallois (1998), people tend to achieve self-enhancement by obtaining a sense of in-group superiority in contexts involving uncertainty. (The term *in-group* in this study refers to shared ethnic identity, while *out-group* refers to different ethnic identity.) Language has been considered as a conveyer of individual identification (Pavlenko, 2005). In consideration of the emotional connotations attached to language, it has been suggested that in intercultural service contexts, service employees need to consider the status of customers and give customers the control to create in-group superiority for themselves (Wang et al., 2015). By doing so, customers' sense of out-group status in a foreign country will be less salient when service

employees accommodate customers' language choice. Researchers have suggested that language is closely related to nationalist feelings, which affect customers' perceptions of the product or service (Redondo-Bellón, 1999). Individual feelings for a certain language (both native language and foreign language) have the potentiality of exerting an influence on customers' choices (Gopinath & Glassman, 2008). This may be another reason why some customers as highly proficient second language speakers have also been shown to display a preference for native language and tend to avoid second language (Dörnyei, 2003; Fernandez et al., 2004) and why customers tend to rate service employees whom they feel familiar with higher than others (Patterson & Mattila, 2008).

2.2.3 Customers' preferences for authentic experience

The view that customers prefer to be served with their native language is one of the most consistent findings emerging from prior studies (Holmqvist, 2011; Montoya & Briggs, 2013), and it has been applied to service encounters by hospitality practitioners to accommodate and please customers (Holmqvist, Van Vaerenbergh, & Dahlén, 2013a). Holmqvist et al. (2013a), however, challenged this perspective by arguing that switching language is not always welcomed and accepted, and customers might feel humiliated if after initiating a conversation in a second language they are answered in their first language.

The function of language has been broadly extended rather than merely serving as a means of interaction (Holmqvist & Grönroos, 2012). Research by Kraak and Holmqvist (2016) proposed that the default language in the destination country used by service

employees may contribute to customers' experiences of authenticity. People intend to get involved in the local population when visiting a foreign country (Muzaini, 2006). Speaking the local language is one of the approaches that international customers can use to fit in with the local society and avoid the salient identification as out-group members (Krishnan & Berry, 1992).

2.2.4 Second language as a symbol of individual competence

Except for the desire for authentic experiences, people who have learned the local language as a second language may need the opportunity to practice or speak their second language and feel good that they can conduct a conversation in another language (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). In social interactions, people have the desire to show their competence and to be recognised as intelligent (Lim & Bowers, 1991). In intercultural service encounters where customers believe they are competent in their second language, when customers initially address employees with second language, service employees' attempts to accommodate customers may potentially challenge their perceived competence and further lead to a sense of humiliation (Holmqvist et al., 2013a). The outcomes of the studies of Holmqvist et al. (2013a) also indicate that service employees' language shift is sometimes perceived by customers as a threat of identity rather than an accommodation.

2.3 Employees' perceptions on language use

Apart from communicative function, individuals' sociolinguistic competence also reflects their ability to follow different roles of making the appropriate use of language in various settings (Hymes & Gumperz, 1972). It has been stated by Callahan (2005)

that being able to speak a second language presents people with challenges concerning language use in different contexts, and the choices of language use are affected by a variety of factors, such as the linguistic proficiency and social status of both participants of the communication as well as the context where the interaction takes place. This may be reflected in the research of Callahan (2005) which showed that compared with other situations, workers were more willing to shift to the preferred language of dialogists in the workplace. Service employees were also shown to be aware of the fact that the language preferred by customers may not always be the language with which they are most competent. Callahan (2006) further proposed that some service employees intend to switch to their customers' strongest language regardless of the language customers used on first contact.

In addition to customers' preferences, language choice in the workplace can also be shaped by organisational rules and by interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, in research concerning language preference in hospitality service encounters, most prior studies assumed a similar perspective for employees and customers, indicating that service employees also prefer interacting in their native language with customers who share the same or a similar cultural background (Martin & Adams, 1999; McCormick Jr & Kinloch, 1986; Sharma, Tam, & Kim, 2009). This to some extent can be explained by the results of the research conducted by Montoya and Briggs (2013) which suggest that employees who are members of a subcultural group, or a culture differing from the mainstream or parent culture of their country of residence, usually with a relatively minor representation, tend to give more benefits (e.g., extra discounts) to other in-group

members. This idea is in line with social psychology studies asserting that people prefer to treat their in-group members with more preference (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Ng & Tajfel, 1982). Given the ideas of in-group familiarity and favouritism, the assumption of employees' willingness and preferences for using their native language in service encounters seems quite acceptable. However, since service employees are more aware of the specific service context, compared with customers, they may have more realistic expectations about the service delivery (Mudie, 2003). The different levels of knowledge on service provision between customers and service employees may differ their perceptions towards and evaluations of the service outcomes (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000).

2.3.1 The status of customers in service encounters

Due to the increasingly competitive market environment, the marketing function tends to be more customer-centric by focusing more on the fulfilment of individual wants by providing effective service (Sheth, Sisodia, & Sharma, 2000). Market orientation puts an emphasis on forging the relationship with customers. For enterprises wherein performance is centred around the marketing concept, they are expected to outperform other competitors by identifying the needs of their target market customers and formulating strategies to fulfil those needs (Saxe & Weitz, 1982), and the pursuit of customer satisfaction has been a key approach in achieving organisational goals (Homburg, Wieseke, & Bornemann, 2009). With the globalisation of economies, more enterprises have acknowledged the significance of retaining their overseas customers by offering more personalised services in customers' native languages. Consistent with the

notion of market orientation, it has been suggested by prior research that because of their status, customers are endowed with the ability to make their mother tongue the main language for communication (Callahan, 2005).

In service industries, this kind of market-oriented practice is usually implemented through individual front-line employees (Brown, Mowen, Donovan, & Licata, 2002) .

As participants directly involved in the implementation of these marketing practices, front-line employees affect customers' evaluations of the service to a large extent. It is imperative that individual employees play an active role in bridging the relationship between customers and the organisation by identifying and fulfilling customer wants (Hunter & Perreault Jr, 2007). It has been found that employees are aware of their status as customers and of the importance of having their language preferences accommodated (Callahan, 2005).

2.3.2 The backfire effect of native language use

According to Callahan (2005), employees who speak more than one language have knowledge of the phenomenon that language preference is not necessarily consistent with language proficiency. It is possible that people study a language and want to practice and use the language, and when service employees are aware of this, they may show their patience even though the language is hard to understand by continuing to communicate in the customer's second language. While some employees are reported to switch to the customer's native language when addressed with non-fluent second language, the choice of language switch may carry the implication of questioning the customer's capability of speaking their second language. It has been advised by prior

studies that in intercultural service encounters, customers may feel offended when service employees associate their race or accent with an inability to understand or speak English; even when service employees try to accommodate these customers by talking more loudly and slowly, customers regard the behaviour as offensive rather than considerate (Barker & Härtel, 2004). Holmqvist, Van Vaerenbergh, and Dahlén (2013b) also found that when service employees try to accommodate customers by communicating in their first language, customers may feel that service employees are downgrading their communication abilities.

Service employees' choice of speaking customers' native language implies several predictions, amongst which is the implication that employees observe the shared ethnicity between customer and employee (Callahan, 2005). Although the traits of physical appearance can be used in predicting ethnicity and deciding which language to use (Genesee, 2003), embarrassment can be induced by voluntarily assigning customers the capability of speaking a particular language when employees predict customers' ethnicity incorrectly (Callahan, 2005). A good example is that the word "Chinese" does not only refer to people from China, but also to Chinese people from other parts of the world, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, to name a few. For these Chinese people, Chinese is not used as their native language. In consideration of the potential outcomes that can be created by the inaccurate prediction of customers' ethnicity, it is possible that employees will not try to accommodate customers when they are not sure about their ethnicity.

2.3.3 The role of English as the workplace language

Bernsten (1994) proposed that as a neutral language which can be applied to avoid implications conveyed by identity-related languages, English can be used to start a communication in not only English-speaking countries but also many other places in the world. This statement was echoed by the study of Callahan (2005) which indicated that the default language (English) can always be used initially when the customer's language preference is not clear. Most of Callahan's participants claimed that English was their first choice for the initial encounter with a customer because it does not adhere to specific cultural perspectives (Ricento, 2006). They also claimed that in the workplace, it was more professional for them to speak the default language because it got the job done. Additionally, employees who had been speaking the work language (English) during their entire shift found that when addressed with another language, they might answer in English unconsciously. It was also reported in the study that employees were more willing to accommodate older customers than their younger counterparts (Callahan, 2005).

2.3.4 Cultural diversity and politeness

While there are some behavioural rules that can be practiced universally, different cultures have different behavioural rules (Mann, 1986). For example, the behavioural norms in social interactions, such as the ways of building and maintaining relationships, can vary depending on where a person is from. (Argyle, 1978). Other behavioural norms that can vary include evaluating and distributing importance to interpersonal interactions (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986), initiating communications, expressing intimacy, and deciding the volume of interactions (Jensen, 1970). To be more specific,

people show differences in eye contact and body movement, in appreciating, in apologising, in bidding farewell, and in the ways they perceive responsibility and embarrassment (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

On the basis of an in-depth study of three unrelated cultures and languages, by outlining the abstract and common principle underpinning the polite behaviours, Brown and Levinson (1978) generalised principles of social interactions for examining the quality of social interactions and relations in a broad of cultural backgrounds. The politeness model is well known by linguistic researchers and has been put into use in a variety of fields (Kong, 1998). However, though Brown and Levinson (1978) admitted the “non-universality” characteristic of their model, other researchers further echoed this idea by pointing out that the model was Western-oriented and problematic when applied in Asian contexts (Gu, 1990; Kong, 1998). According to Scollon and Scollon (1991), in Western service encounters, there exists a call-answer-topic sequence in social interactions; the person initiating a conversation need to start with a greeting and after the response is given by the counterpart, then the person who initiates the conversation moves to introducing the topic; the call-answer sequence is preliminary before initiating a topic. This fixed interaction sequence is deeply rooted in Western conversation behaviours. However, it is not applicable universally. For example, in Asia, the call-answer-topic pattern is replaced by the topic-response pattern where the person who starts the encounter abruptly starts the topic without a preliminary greeting.

Scollon and Scollon (1991) interpreted this phenomenon on the basis of relationship difference, asserting that the relationship with service employees was regarded as an

outside relationship rather than an inside relationship with family members; therefore, facework, which was described by Goffman (2003) as self-presentation in social interaction encounters, was not necessary. Take the Chinese for example: Westerners feel confused about the Chinese manner of directly approaching a service employee and finishing the contact with what they need (Kong, 1998). This kind of cultural difference between customers and service employees is one of the factors that affects the experiences of both parties, and accordingly, their satisfaction toward each other (Reisinger & Turner, 2002). Scollon and Scollon (1991) argued that the Chinese way of starting a topic without preliminary greetings conflicts with the routine of discourse in Western service encounters, and service employees' readiness to help has led to some negative outcomes, such as regarding Chinese customers as stereotypically impolite and invasive; therefore, service employees respond negatively by showing hostility and being nonresponsive.

2.3.5 Respect received from in-group customers

The differing behavioural rules in service exchanges discussed above implies that interactions between people with different cultural backgrounds may encounter communication problems due to the distinct views people hold. In intercultural service encounters, local behavioural rules may affect how international hospitality employees perceive service encounters and how they behave. In light of the constraints which may result from local culture and the workplace, the ways in which international service employees perceive the behaviours of their in-group members may differ from those in domestic service encounters.

In the group value model, Tyler and Lind (1992) put forward the idea that individual self-esteem and behaviour is given by group members, and is shaped by pride and respect received from within the group. Tyler, DeGoey, and Smith (1996) further argued that feelings of pride and respect are associated with group members' self-esteem and their willingness to connect themselves with the group by obeying the group rules and helping fellow group members. Social psychology studies have acknowledged the significant effect of respect received from other in-group members on strengthening group identification (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002). In addition, it has been shown that respect received by fellow group members is accompanied by the desire to exert effort to contribute to the group (Sleebos, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 2006). Branscombe et al. (2002) have suggested that members respected by fellow in-group members are likely to exhibit in-group favouritism and group-serving behaviour. In addition, perceived respect also contributes to enhanced group loyalty (Simon & Stürmer, 2003). Conversely, adverse consequences were found to be created by undermined group identification when respect is lacking within the group (Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002).

The literature reviewed above to some extent reveals how native language use in international service contexts are perceived, especially by customers. Other factors which may influence service employees' adoption of native language are presented, while it can be seen that studies of how employee themselves feel and perceive their native language use in international service contexts are still scarce. Therefore, the first objective of this study is to investigate the perspectives of service employees regarding

their feeling of adopting their native language when serving customer speaking the same native language.

2.4 Work stress in relation to native language use

2.4.1 Sources of work stress

Stress is defined as a reaction to realised threats or unwanted situations that are beyond one's control (Cranwell-Ward, 1998). When applied to the vocational setting, work stress refers to an individual's response to demands generated in a given work environment (Karasek, 1979). It can be potentially induced by conflict-filled situations in every employee's daily work experiences, and efforts have been made by organisations and researchers to explore the issues of work stress in relation to lowered productivity and employee morale (Ross, 1995), as it is expected to be negatively related to work attitude and performance (Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013).

Brymer, Perrewe, and Johns (1991) identified three types of stress induced by work-related stressors: psychological stress, physiological stress, and behavioural stress. These researchers also found that affording employees job autonomy alleviated employee stress to some extent. Zohar (1994) considered role stressors and job characteristics stressors as the primary sources of stress. Role stressors consist of role conflict and role ambiguity, and job characteristics stressors encompass workload and empowerment. Role conflict can occur when one person has conflicting expectations of the role, when different persons expect different things, or when there is disagreement from someone regarding a certain issue, while role ambiguity arises from vague role-related expectations and a lack of information that is necessary to get things done.

2.4.2 The stress-generating characteristic of hospitality work

Employees in workplaces are vulnerable to varying work stressors, and it can be particularly common in fields that call for customer-orientation because employees are exposed to contradictory demands from both the organisation and the customers (De Ruyter, Wetzels, & Feinberg, 2001). Given prior research showing that work stress is particularly acute in customer service industries, it is reasonable to expect that customer-related stress may be especially common for hospitality employees (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Zohar (1994) has argued that in the hospitality industry, the main stressors discussed above are accentuated for non-managerial employees; because of the nature of customer-contact work, they experience high levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and workload. The stress-generating characteristics of employment in the hospitality industry have been recognised by prior researchers (Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan, 2010; O'Neill & Davis, 2011), and these stress-generating characteristics were revealed to be negatively associated with service delivery (Kim, 2008). In consideration of the fact that the quality of service delivery and customer satisfaction depend largely on employees who deliver the service, it is of great significance to understand the work stress of hospitality service employees (Jung & Yoon, 2013).

2.4.3 High and diverse expectations from customers

Karasek and Theorell (1990) attributed work stress to advanced work requirements, which is regarded as one of the unique features of hospitality work (Zohar, 1994). Ross (1995) came up with a similar idea, regarding both extensive demands for quality service and poor management practices as work stressors. This idea can be well-reflected in the hospitality industry due to the immediacy of service delivery and

the particular job requirements such as continuous face-to-face communication with customers (Chiang et al., 2010; Dann, 1990; Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). For example, when customers try to get preferential treatment benefits by expressing expectations that are beyond service employees' acceptable limits, and that can hardly be rejected because of their customer status, work stress is generated (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Evidence has shown that being assigned undesirable tasks by a supervisor potentially induces stress (Dormann & Zapf, 2002). It has been revealed by studies of Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld, and Van Dierendonck (2000) and Schaufeli and Leiter (1996) found that high demands from clients can result in service employees having the perception of a lack of reciprocity treatment (which can be, for example, when the appreciation received and the effort invested is not balanced), and this is also related to burnout and stress.

Distinct from many other occasions, a service encounter presents employees with a setting where they need to follow varying parameters when deciding which language to use (Callahan, 2005). Because of the diversity of customer expectations, when facing a customer with shared ethnicity, in one case, employees may convert to their native language voluntarily and show in-group favouritism to accommodate and please customers (Callahan, 2005; Wang et al., 2015), especially when customers are not fluent in the default language of the country they are visiting. In another case, they may switch to native language by following the customer's language choice when the customer initiates the conversation in their native language (Callahan, 2005). In addition, employees' language choice is not only a result of the interaction with customers, they

may also be required by supervisors to modify their language choice to improve customer satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2009).

2.4.4 Role identification of service employees

In consideration of the reciprocal nature of interactions in the resource exchange process, it is important that customers be aware of the role performance (Burke & Tully, 1977) and behave appropriately in response to the service offered by service employees (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Role theory has been substantiated in service marketing research in its illustrating employee-customer relationships in service encounters (e.g. Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985; Wu & Mattila, 2013). Role theory regards the service encounter as a role performance in which both service employees and customers behave appropriately in their own positions (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). A service encounter is regarded as appropriate when both participants have the knowledge of their roles and display the expected performance (Rizal, Jeng, & Chang, 2016). Based on role theory, discomfort might be induced in service encounters because of one party's deviation from the expected role (Sizoo et al., 2005).

Being part of an in-group has many implications. One of these implications is that in-group members have an obligation to help their fellow members, and this is particularly prominent in collectivist societies where people give priority to collective goals compared with personal goals (Nisbett, 2010). Inference theory suggests that customers make a priori judgments with available cues about the product or service before consumption (Huber & McCann, 1982). In service encounters involving an employees from the same cultural background, customers may fail to perform their role

as expected, for example, by looking forward to receiving some form of in-group favouritism (Montoya & Briggs, 2013). Giving customers preferential treatments can to some extent increase customer satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty (Hong-kit Yim, Anderson, & Swaminathan, 2004; Lacey, Suh, & Morgan, 2007). However, on the other hand, it may also endanger the service employee's efficiency in providing other customers with the same quality service (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremler, 2002). In addition, customers not being served preferentially may become dissatisfied and perceive this as unequal treatment (Lo, Lynch Jr, & Staelin, 2007).

Customers may prefer to be served in their native language or by employees sharing the same ethnicity, but according to Gremler, Bitner and Evans (1994), service employees may concentrate more on providing professional and standard service rather than on the interpersonal relationships and customisations that are usually expected by customers. Besides, compared with their customers, service employees experience stress from their job requirements to accommodate to all customers; hence, they may be less willing to display in-group preference (Montoya & Briggs, 2013; Mudie, 2003). Furthermore, people may have distinct attitudes towards group identification. Take China for example, where the customer-service employee relationship in service encounters varies (Kong, 1998). In a study conducted by Pan (2000), the relationship between salespeople and clients was found closely resembling an in-group relationship with a large amount of facework, while some Chinese people may view the service encounter as a kind of out-group, rather than in-group, relationship (Kong, 1998). In such situations, the relationship between the customer and the service employee is instrumental and

short-term (Hwang, 1987). A second language, which can be used to serve as a distancing method, may be applied by employees to distance themselves from people with the same ethnic group under such circumstances (Bond & Lai, 1986). Callahan (2005) echoed this idea by arguing that service employees showing a low level of group identification may overlook these characteristics to back up the automatic use of the country's default language.

In intercultural service encounters involving customers and employees with the same ethnicity, due to the obligation of catering to all customers, employees may show different perceptions with their customers regarding in-group membership favouritism. However, when employees fail to distance themselves from shared membership in the group because of the responsibility to take care of the customer, a stressful situation is created for the employees.

2.4.5 Perceived workload

In large hotels, employees from operational departments are most immediately and directly responsible for the achievement of customer satisfaction, and jobs for these operational staff are usually physically demanding. In addition, because of the nature of their jobs, they are required to provide customers with quality service within expected timeframes over which they have limited control (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). Montoya and Briggs (2013) contended that the enhanced customers' identification of ethnicity with service employees might change the nature of customer service, considering that service employees from minority groups may have the incentive to treat their in-group customers differently by offering them preferential treatment. However, taking the

workload into account, with the conflicting expectations for both prompt and quality service, employees may need to manage their time allocation well to ensure they meet the level quality service required, and under such circumstances, it may be irritating for them to disproportionally allocate their time and resources (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997).

In a study conducted by Montoya and Briggs (2013), it was revealed that customers from collectivist societies hold higher expectations towards service provision and look forward to preferential treatment when they are served by employees from their ethnic group. This kind of expectation of in-group favouritism may create extra workload for service employees, both physically and psychologically, because they need to adjust both their emotions and behaviours to satisfy the customers' demands. Hochschild (1983) and Karasek (1979) have argued that the perceived work demands and the need to control their emotional expressions may engender stress for service employees. Other researchers have reported similar findings suggesting that an increased perceived workload was found to be related to work stress (Glaser, Tatum, Nebeker, Sorenson, & Aiello, 1999), emotional exhaustion (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002), and impeded job performance (Singh, 2000).

2.4.6 The impact of emotional labour on work stress

In spite of the physical duties and mental responsibility that hotel service employees need to take in workplace (e.g., in catering to customers' preferences on the basis of complying with hotel standards and policies), they also carry out emotional labour to display sincere and genuine caring for customers in service delivery (Johanson & Woods, 2008). The concept of emotional labour was originally created by Hochschild

(1983), who used it to refer to service employees' application of emotional performance in service delivery beyond their regular cognitive and physical responsibilities.

Emotional labour involves three layers of acting behaviours: surface acting, deep acting, and genuine acting (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). When genuine feeling and desired expression conflict, surface acting and deep acting are more likely to be applied in service delivery. Surface acting denotes service employees adjusting their facial and behavioural expressions to display desired emotions in customer service, while deep acting means that in addition to the modification of physical appearance, employees also change their inner feelings to exhibit cheerful and positive emotions. Genuine acting occurs when there is congruency between an employee's felt emotions, physical expressions, and organisational display rules. The emotions expressed to show concern for customers have become part of the evaluation and measurement of service quality from the perspective of the industry (Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014) and from the perspective of customers (Albrecht & Zemke, 1990).

Due to the involvement of consistent customer contact in hospitality work, previous studies have regarded the frequency or the quantity of interactions with customers as the source of workload and burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). It has been argued that despite of the quantity of interactions, the quality of interaction experiences should also be taken into account (Frone, 1999), as the interactions may involve the requirement for employees to control and regulate the emotion they display in expected ways (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). Apart from the perceived work demands, the control and modification of

personal emotional expression for organisational purposes was argued to be inherently stressful by Hochschild (1983) and Karasek (1979).

Service-based industries stand out by providing customers with premium service (Grönroos, 2007). Apart from physical demands, quality service delivery also requires customer-contact employees to display expected and preferable emotions in interactions with customers (Shani et al., 2014). Hochschild (1979,1983) came up with the idea of common expectations regarding the emotional display of individuals who are involved in service contexts, and the concept of emotional labour includes service employees' efforts in managing their feelings to demonstrate publicly-expected emotions.

Employment in the hospitality industry has been argued to be highly related to emotional labour, as customer interactions require employees to suppress authentic negative feelings and only express organisationally-expected positive and desirable emotions such as being welcoming, joyful, passionate, and friendly (Kim, 2008; Lee & Hwang, 2016). These display rules can be made explicit in job descriptions or implicit in job requirements together with the general social and occupational norms (Grandy, 2000; Johanson & Woods, 2008; Van Dijk & Kirk, 2007). To make the situation even worse, Pizam (2004) argued that compared with employees who are properly trained to adapt to emotional labour (e.g., health care workers), hospitality employees are left to face the emotional dissonance by themselves.

Based on the various views service employees may hold pertaining service encounters with customers sharing the same ethnicity, when customers tend to show the group membership and the preference of native language service, the emotional demands

create the need for employees to manage their emotional situation, and this emotional work is very likely to generate stress for employees (Grandey, 2000). For customers with special language preferences, employees may have to modify their language choice to meet the organisational requirements (explicit or implicit) or customers' demands (Callahan, 2005). When employees involuntarily hide their true feelings and modify their emotions to communicate in their native language merely because of job requirements, stress might be induced by the effort of controlling and modifying their genuine emotions.

The important role that hotel managers and supervisors play in shaping the emotional labour of service employees has been suggested by Lam and Chen (2012). The findings of Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) revealed that supervisors may pay great attention to employees' emotional expression to make sure that the expected emotions are displayed. Direct monitoring of employee behaviour by supervisors was found to be related to the requirements of emotional labour performance (Tolich, 1993). Shani et al. (2014) also indicated that hospitality employees respond sensitively to the way that supervisors treat them, and negative feelings may be induced in the absence of fairness, understanding, and respect. When service employees switch to their native language only to follow supervisors' instructions, it is likely that surface acting will be applied. Given the impact of emotional labour on work stress, employees may experience stress relating to native language use in service encounters differently depending on how managers and supervisors respond to employees' native language use.

In consideration of the fast working pace along with the requirement of effective and high quality service in the hospitality industry, work stress of service employees has been a field of interest for researchers and many studies have been conducted to examine the stress of service employees in the hospitality industry. While in the international hospitality sector, especially when employees and customers share the same ethnicity, work stress caused for international service employees by how to adopt their native language in serving customers has been neglected. Based on the reviewed literature, this study will investigate the stress experienced by international hospitality employees in service contexts involving their native language use.

2.5 Summary of literature review

Native language use in intercultural service encounters has been studied in various fields, including hospitality, marketing, business, language, and psychology. Despite the widely accepted assertion that customers desire service in their native language, researchers have found that in specific contexts, international customers may prefer to use their second language instead. This can happen when customers are competent in their second language or when they want to have a more authentic experience of local culture.

In the hospitality industry, and especially in hotels, satisfaction of customers' demands needs to be maximised. When it comes to language preference, studies have shown that employees have awareness of customers' preferences for both their native language and their second language in intercultural service encounters. Being aware of the need to accommodate these customers, employees will speak their native language when

serving customers from the same country. In addition, employees may adopt English in service delivery due to the knowledge of customers' willingness to speak their second language. Apart from the considerations of customer preference, employee language use may also be constrained by the status of English as the default and expected language in the workplace. Another factor influencing language use in the workplace can be the different service patterns inherent in different cultural background. Finally, employees' language choice may also depend on their interactions with customers. Drawing evidence from psychological studies, in-group identification may be impeded by the lack of respect received.

In reviewing studies regarding international hospitality employees' adoption of their native language in service encounters, employees are found to face challenges in choosing the proper language in service delivery, and this may induce work stress. Sources of stress related to the adoption of native language are mainly attributed to five aspects. Firstly, international hospitality employees are conscious of customers' different language demands; however, different customers have their own language preferences, and how each individual customer wants to be served remains unknown to service employees. Secondly, with the self-identification as service professionals, employees may have different attitudes towards shared ethnicity with customers, and when customers show increased intimacy, the service context may become stressful for service employees. Thirdly, when customers show the desire for service in their native language, considering that few employees can speak the same native language and that employees have the responsibility of taking care of every customer, customer demand

for being served with native language create extra workload for employees, and heavy workload as a job stressor is intrinsically stressful. Lastly, the service context can also become stressful when employees exert emotional labour in providing native language service by modifying their emotions and suppressing their true feelings.

Based on the literature review, international hospitality employees' language choice is a complex system consisting of various contributory constructs, and stress may be induced in the process of applying native language in service encounters. This study will investigate following aspects relating to international hospitality employees' language choice in service settings:

- 1 How do international hospitality employees feel about speaking native language in serving customers with shared ethnicity in service encounters?
- 2 How does employees' use of their native language (both voluntarily and involuntarily) in service encounters affect their work stress?
- 3 How does the use of employees' native language affect their overall work experience?

2.6 Conceptual framework

In order to examine the stress created by the use of native language in the workplace, this study develops a conceptual framework concerning the stress experienced by service employees when adopting their native language in service encounters. On the basis of reviewed literature, this study proposes that in intercultural service encounters, when service employees serve customers from the same country with native language, three main aspects will contribute to the generation of work stress.

It has been made clear that customer language preference in intercultural service encounters varies. This variety in language preferences can be attributed to customers' competence with second language (Holmqvist et al., 2014) as well as the emotions (Pavlenko, 2005) and status symbols (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011) they attach to their native language. Varying customer preference creates an ambiguous situation for service employees, as they may receive different expectations from different customers.

When customers are served by employees sharing the same country of origin, customers may attach more in-group emotions to the service delivery than they would in traditional intercultural service encounters. At the same time, due to their roles as service professionals in service delivery and considering the responsibility they need to take, service employees may hold different views on their relationships and native language use in service interactions. Therefore, in service encounters involving customers speaking the same native language, the service setting can be stressful when employees' self-identification is threatened by customers showing in-group identification and intimacy.

Also, when customers show their preference for native language service, the service employee who speaks the same native language with the customer may face increased workload beyond what is considered routine for their job. As a major job stressor, workload is positively related to work stress (Zohar, 1994).

To sum up, due to the nature of hospitality jobs, employees face a diversity of challenges in dealing with customer demands. When customers prefer to be served in

their native language during intercultural service encounters, service employees may experience stress related to varying language expectations, extra workload, and intimacy shown by customers which leads to ambiguous role identification.

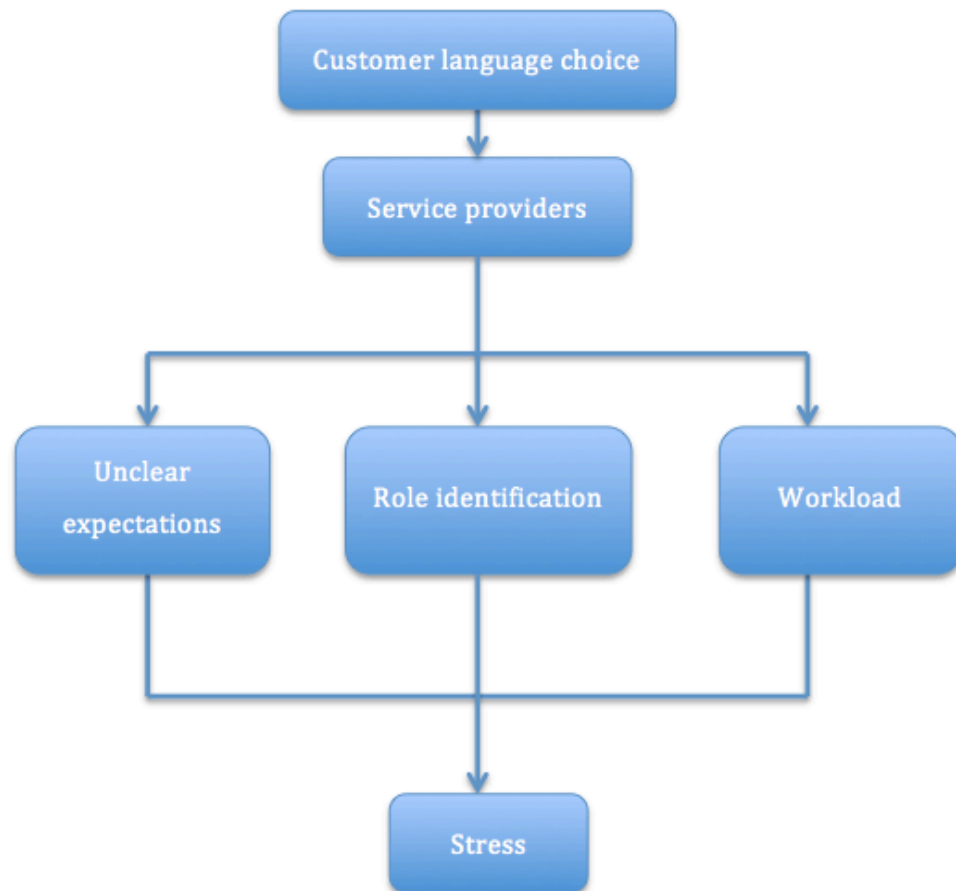


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter sets out the philosophical and methodological foundations of this research. Firstly, it introduces the importance of the research paradigm and philosophical ideas that undermine research and provides definitions of the related concepts of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Secondly, it justifies the researcher's choice of an interpretive paradigm for this study through critiquing the positivist and interpretive paradigms and identifying the concepts inherent in this research. The researcher's position in the research process is identified as being consistent with the paradigm and research approaches applied in this study. Thirdly, this chapter provides details about and justification for the overall research methods, including the semi-structured interview research design, participant recruitment method, chosen sample size, data analysis and reporting methods, participants, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Introduction of paradigm

In spite of the intangible status of philosophical ideas in research (Slife & Williams, 1995), philosophical ideas play an important part in the research process, as they explain why researchers choose certain research approaches (Creswell, 2013). These philosophical ideas have been described using different terms, for example, as worldviews (Creswell, 2013), paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Mertens, 2014), or ontologies and epistemologies (Crotty, 1998). In this study, the term *paradigm* will be applied to refer to the philosophical ideas behind the research.

In the interpretation of the history of science, the word *paradigm* was described as a widely recognised scientific achievement that provides a framework of specific

problems and solutions for practitioners (Kuhn, 2012). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigm refers to “a set of basic beliefs or worldview” (Egon G Guba, 1990, p. 17) that provides researchers with ontological and epistemological stances along with corresponding choices of method. Consisting of a “strong network of commitments: conceptual, theoretical, instrumental and methodological,” a paradigm addresses the question of how knowledge is studied and interpreted (Kuhn, 1970, p. 42). A paradigm serves to identify the significant problems and how these problems can be properly solved by providing an “implicit body of intertwined theoretical and methodological belief that permits selection, evaluation, and criticism” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 17). The paradigm sets the researcher’s focus in specific ways to resolve problems existing in the certain paradigm; therefore, it outlines the framework for researchers in “making order out of the chaos” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 11).

A paradigm is a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Egon G Guba, 1990, p. 17), and it contains the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Within each paradigm, varying ontologies and epistemologies give rise to diverse values and perspectives, and these differences in the deeper levels behind paradigms differentiate one paradigm from another (Grant & Giddings, 2002). It is argued that “having a particular ontological position constrains the epistemological position you can logically hold. Methodologies, in turn, express ontology and epistemology” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 12). In order to understand the philosophical foundations underpinning the current study and establish a coherent set of

research approaches, the concepts of ontology, epistemology, and methodology must be explained.

Ontology refers to our basic beliefs concerning the nature of being, existence, or reality (Gray, 2013). It deals with the question of whether reality is external from consciousness or whether it come into existence from consciousness (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Realists answer this question by acknowledging that the real world exists irrespective of an individual's perception of it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and that truth is factual rather than evaluative (Field, 1982). Relativists believe that there are multiple realities and human beings have various ways of accessing reality (Gray, 2013).

Ontology sets out the basis for developing epistemology, which is concerned with the nature of knowledge and “the relationship between the enquirer and the known” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Grant & Giddings, 2002). Crotty (1998) interpreted epistemology as a way of explaining how we know what we know. For example, based on a realist ontology, objectivism asserts that reality is objective, existing independently from human consciousness, and that reality can be investigated. Constructivist epistemology objects to this idea, proposing that truth and meaning arise from an interplay between our engagement with the realities in the outside world, rather than existing externally to our consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Constructivists believe that multiple meanings are developed based on individual experiences, and these varied meanings guide researchers to seek for the variety of perceptions that emerge from the researched phenomenon rather than narrowing the perceptions into categorised ideas (Creswell, 2013). Given this understanding of knowledge, even on the same

phenomenon, meanings can be constructed differently by individuals with different values (Crotty, 1998).

Methodology refers to the theoretical assumptions and principles underpinning a research approach; it involves the way a researcher constructs research questions and the choice of specific methods for research (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Harding (1987, p. 3) describes methodology as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed.” The research methodology corresponds to the chosen ontology and epistemology and the research process reflects the paradigm and methodology (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The logical flow in ontology, epistemology, and methodology contains the choice of specific methods to collect and analyse data (Gray, 2013).

3.2 Paradigm choices

Established on the foundation of a realist ontology and objectivist epistemology, the positivist paradigm entails the assumption of “an ordered universe made up of atomistic, discrete and observable events” (Blaikie, 1993, p. 94). It argues that reality can only be investigated by researchers with the method of scientific inquiry, as reality exists externally to human consciousness (Gray, 2013). Within a positivist paradigm, knowledge is to be discovered for the use of explaining, predicting, and taking control of events (Grant & Giddings, 2002), and the goal of the researcher is to discover the truth by developing and testing hypotheses through scientific inquiry (Cocks, 2012; O'Leary, 2004). In the process of doing research within a positivist paradigm, the role of the researcher is as an objective observer who is expected to distant the self from the

researched subjects. By employing this approach, the anonymity and confidentiality of researched subjects is ensured (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

This perception of the absolute truth of reality and knowledge was challenged by the notion of post-positivism (Phillips & Burbules, 2000), which recognises the “subjective, multiple, and unstable characteristics” of the interpretation of meanings and knowledge (McCouat & Peile, 1995, p. 10). It indicates that when it comes to human issues, “the search for grand narratives will be replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 11). Moving one more step forward, it is suggested that the interpretive approach, rather than the positivist approach, might offer more profound understanding and implications for practitioners (Chell, 1985), which is coherent with the assumption underpinning the interpretive paradigm that the social world of life is “culturally derived and historically situated” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

The interpretive paradigm opposes the deterministic approach of understanding human knowledge (Grant & Giddings, 2002) and tries to focus on the things and events themselves by investigating the meanings and labels human being attach to them (Farber, 1943). Within an interpretive paradigm, reality cannot be known without the subjective knower (Egon G Guba, 1990). The interpretive paradigm focuses on conceptions of individuals and implies that individuals understand the world by developing subjective meanings of their experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2012). These subjective meanings do not originate from sole individuals, but are constructed through interactions with others and through social and historical norms

imprinted on those individuals. The diversity and heterogeneity of the meanings developed from the research objects require the researcher to inductively seek for complex views and understandings instead of classifying and categorising the meanings in a deductive way (Creswell, 2012). Knowledge is created from the data, but it does not simply emerge from the data (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). The intersubjectivity between the researchers and the participants provides the basis for understanding and interpretation (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, & Benton, 1992; Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1997). The researcher is involved in the research as an “acting, feeling, thinking, and influencing force in the collection and interpretation of the data” (Daly, 1995, p. 1). The way the researcher interacts with the participants and perceives the experiences of the participants affects how the data will be collected and interpreted (Friend & Thompson, 2003).

How researchers view the nature of reality and the way in which knowledge is created (whether objective or subjective) influences the way they conduct a study as well as the results drawn from the study, and generally speaking, positivist and interpretive paradigms are closely related to quantitative and qualitative research, respectively (Newman & Benz, 1998). Quantitative research professes the use of “hard, generalisable” statistical data, while qualitative research relies more on “deep, rich” observational data (Sieber, 1973, p. 1335). This is consistent with the view of Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) regarding qualitative researchers as being able to add more depth and richness to the researched phenomenon without the constraints of previously created constructs. Miles and Huberman (1994) also argued that compared

with numbers, the concreteness and vitality of words endows qualitative studies with the quality of “undeniability” to better convince readers.

Due to the difference between the qualitative and quantitative way of doing research, there has been a debate concerning the two types of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), with regard to whether the two research methodologies, along with their corresponding paradigms and methods, are compatible enough to be mixed in a single study (Guba, 1990; Howe, 1988). With the recognition of the values of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, some researchers assert that research should move across the boundary set by positivists and interpretive research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A third research approach, mixed methods, is argued to be able to bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), and there are a growing number of studies researching the mixed methods as a methodology (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Newman & Benz, 1998).

3.3 Justification of paradigm choice

In consideration of the research questions pertaining to employees’ perceptions of native language use in service encounters and the consequent stress they may experience, the primary aim of this research is to generate a narrative of the multiple views constructed on the basis of individual experiences. Given the need to narratively reflect and illustrate the available evidence concerning the varied views, the interpretive paradigm is considered the appropriate choice for this research as the primary goal of interpretive research is to understand the complex realities constructed individually,

socially, and historically (Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Grant and Giddings (2002, p. 12) explained the logical and congruent relationship between researchers' basic beliefs, worldviews, and their choice of research paradigm by pointing out that "holding a given ontology entails a particular epistemology which in turn constrains your methodology" and "methodologies, in turn, express ontology and epistemology." By choosing a relativist ontological stance, which favours the concept of multiple socially-constructed realities, the researcher is entailed to adopt a constructivist epistemology reflecting the multiple ways of constructing meanings and understandings (Creswell, 2013). Interpretive research is underpinned by the relativist ontological assumption asserting a locally- and explicitly-constructed social reality (Egon G Guba & Lincoln, 1994) "by humans through their action and interaction" (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 14). The interpretive researcher answers the epistemological question by admitting that "findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Egon G Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111), which complies with the constructivist epistemology suggesting that findings are formed through the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

In this study, the researcher believes that international hospitality employees' perceptions of their native language use in given contexts does not exist objectively and independently from their consciousness but are created from employees' interplay with specific service encounters, customers and culture, therefore, various perceptions of their native language use can be created by different employees depending on their individual experiences. Also, in this study, the researcher plays as a subjective knower

by interacting with the participants and influencing the collection and interpretation of how participants perceive their experiences. Taking into consideration of the philosophical assumptions explained previously, this study applies an interpretive paradigm, which is grounded on a relativist ontology and a constructivist epistemology.

3.3.1 Role of the researcher

The topic was created from the personal experience of the researcher. As an international hospitality employee, the researcher has the experience of speaking native language in various customer service encounters. This special role offers the researcher insight into how other employees respond to this kind of service encounter, and this insider perspective has, to a certain extent, informed the researcher's choice of research approach. The researcher perceives employees' perspectives regarding their native language use in service encounters as constructed on the basis of their specific customer service experiences as well as on their cultural backgrounds, personal characteristics, and other related factors. This mirrors the assumptions underpinning the interpretive paradigm concerning reality and human knowledge. On the basis of the researcher's perception of meanings and human knowledge, this study will be conducted within the interpretive paradigm.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), the interpretive paradigm concentrates more on the concept of the individual and suggests that knowledge is generated based on individual experiences. In the interview process, researchers tend to depend on participants' understanding of the studied topic (Creswell, 2013). The insider role allows the researcher of this study to better capture employees' perceptions of native

language in specific service encounters and to build a more profound and in-depth knowledge about the topic studied.

3.4 Research method

A researcher's ontological and epistemological stance should be "consistent with the research paradigm and chosen methodology and methods" (Creswell, 2013, p. 187).

This study adopts relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology underlying an interpretive paradigm (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013). In line with the constructivist epistemology and interpretive theoretical perspective, this study is exploratory in nature and employs a qualitative research method, using face-to-face interviews to collect data.

3.4.1 Research design

The literature review provides the researcher with knowledge and results developed from prior studies that are related to the current study (Gray, 2013). Being grounded on a base of broader literature enables the study to have the potential to extensively explore previous studies and fill in existing literature gaps (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, it sets the foundation for establishing the significance of the research (Cooper, 2016). To obtain a solid backup for the current study, a preliminary literature review was conducted to help develop research questions. Based on the results of the literature review, face-to-face interviews were performed to collect data. Pilot tests have been suggested as helpful in identifying limitations in interview design and making further revisions before implementing formal interviews (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, before commencing formal face-to-face interviews for this study, a pilot test was implemented using unstructured interviews with two international hospitality employees who had the

experience of serving customers in their native language. Feedback from the pilot test was then used to refine the final face-to-face interview questions.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), interviews provide researchers with a proper means to access individual experiences and the meanings people attach to them.

Therefore, the interview was considered as the appropriate method to gain insight into service employees' experiences of speaking their native language in customer service.

There are three common types of interview: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews follow a predetermined questions list and apply closed-ended questions that limit the breadth of the interviewee's answers, so structured interviews are more often used to generate quantitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In unstructured interviews, the interviewer follows the interviewee's direction of experience-sharing, and the interview is more directed by the interviewee (Moyle, 2002), albeit within the limited, predetermined aspects of the topic to be covered (Fylan, 2005). Standing in the middle are semi-structured interviews, which to a certain extent follow a predetermined order and apply open-ended questions while offering the interviewee the flexibility to address the researched issue in their own words, thus helping to generate comparable, thick, and rich qualitative data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Longhurst (2003) described semi-structured interviews as conversations in which interviewees are given the opportunity to answer the questions freely in an informal conversational manner.

This study used the semi-structured interview, one of the most widely used qualitative research methods (Kitchin & Tate, 2000) to collect qualitative data from international

hospitality employees who had experienced service encounters involving customers with shared ethnicity. As this study focused on the process of service encounters, emphasis was placed on front-line service employees in the hospitality industry because they are mostly engaged in interactions with customers in the workplace.

The interviewees for this study were recruited using the snowball sampling technique, wherein the researcher accesses participants through contact information provided by other participants (Noy, 2008). The snowball sampling technique has been recognised as a feasible and effective method for locating and accessing potential participants from specific populations the researcher aims to study (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). One disadvantage of the snowball technique is that recruited participants often know each other; therefore, they may have similar characteristics and shared values, and this kind of similarity might be reflected in their perceptions towards certain issues, which could further bias the study results (Wilmot, 2005). However, the adoption of snowball sampling in this study was regarded as unproblematic. Due to New Zealand's characteristic cultural diversity, despite participants being recruited with the snowball sampling technique and potentially knowing each other, the resultant sample still represented various cultural backgrounds in New Zealand workplaces. This ethnic variety in participants may help yield multiple insights into employees' perceptions on their native language use in intercultural service encounters involving customers speaking the same native language.

The sample size of qualitative research is often relatively small, and it has been suggested that for students, a sample size of 12 is appropriate, and this can be extended

to 20 for a longer project (Baker, Edwards, & Doidge, 2012). Ragin (1992) recommended a sample size of 20 for a master's thesis. However, after reviewing interview-based doctoral theses, Mason (2010) found that the sample size for interviews varies considerably from 1 to 95. In addition to this, evidence has shown that even the single case study can generate rich and in-depth data (e.g., Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Ragin & Becker, 1992). What is more, it was indicated that the limitation in sample size can be remedied by the deep and connected relationship established between the participants and researchers (Baker et al., 2012). Given that qualitative research aims for deep and rich data, a large number of qualitative interviews may be impractical and unmanageable, considering the available timeframe and the researcher's effectiveness in dealing with large amounts of qualitative data (Wilmot, 2005). Based on the suitable sample size for qualitative research suggested by researchers, the researcher of this study aimed at recruiting 8 participants for semi-structured interviews.

Initial interviewees were accessed through the researcher's personal social networks, and initial interviewees subsequently recommended further potential participants. As the first step of recruitment, an invitation email containing an attachment of the participant information sheet (see Appendix B) was sent to potential participants. Interviews were conducted with participants' permission, which was indicated by signing the consent form (see Appendix C). For the full interview questions list, see Appendix D.

All interviews were conducted at the city campus of the Auckland University of Technology in room WU415. Interviews lasted approximately 30–60 minutes. Each

interview commenced with the same opening question: “In your workplace, have you ever experienced serving customers from your country?” Subsequent interview questions focused on interviewees’ specific service encounter experiences and their perceptions of these experiences. With participant permission, interviews were audio recorded and notes were taken in the interview process to help the interviewer with later analysis.

3.4.2 Data analysis

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed into Microsoft Word format. Qualitative data derived from interviews was analysed thematically, identifying the common attitudes and key themes that summarise the views collected from the interviews (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Instead of applying software for analysing qualitative data, data for this study was processed manually. The initial themes were assembled and coded using the open coding system in which notes and headings are written in the text during the reading process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The open coding system provides researchers with an opportunity to see the direction of the research and allows for a brief illustration of core concepts rather than excessive conceptual descriptions (Glaser, 2016). It has been suggested that the note and headings be written down in the margins as much as necessary and read through again to yield a variety of information from the content (Burnard, 1991).

Subthemes were tabulated after each round of coding, and thematic analysis was used to generate final main themes by integrating all the subthemes emerging from different interviews. Thematic analysis encodes qualitative data with existing codes, which can

be a series of themes, indicators, or a concept with correlated constructs (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis provides researchers with analytic flexibility amongst various theoretical frameworks as the method is independent of the choice of theoretical and epistemological approaches; due to this flexibility, thematic analysis is endowed with the potential to contribute to detail and richness to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this study explored employees' perceptions of native language use in service encounters, the outcome of interpretation was presented narratively.

3.4.3 Participant glossary

A total of 8 participants were invited for the study, all of which were working in five-star hotels in Auckland. Personal information which might reveal participants' identities was not presented in the study, and all participants were assigned an alias.

Table 1 provides a profile of the participants in this study.

Table 1. Participants profile

Name	Gender	Age	Native Language	Department	Tenure
Jay	Male	29	Chinese	F&B	4 years
Jean	Female	25	Korean	F&B	3 years
Ina	Female	24	Bahasa Indonesia	F&B	2.5 years
Rachel	Female	26	Chinese	F&B	1 year
Sam	Male	26	Sinhalese	F&B	2.5 years
Tammy	Female	23	Vietnamese	F&B	1 year
Ella	Female	23	Korean	F&B, Sales	2 years
Kelly	Female	27	Filipino	F&B, Sales	3 years

3.4.4 Reliability and validity

Qualitative study is conducted on the basis of interpretivism and constructivism, in the process of individuals creating diverse realities, the researcher plays a part in influencing the researched as well as shaping the inquiry. It has been argued by researchers that “true value” is a must for all research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), while the quality criteria for qualitative research, for example , reliability and validity, should not be a replication of quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

In this current study, interviews were adopted to collect data. The sample was not chose to be representative, but was drawn purposefully. Participants in this study shared similar experiences of speaking their native language to serve customers with the same ethnicity, the sample are considered suitable for answering the research questions of this study. The application of semi-structured interview allowed the participants to tell their stories and experiences in their own word. In order to provide valid data and minimize the bias that might be caused by the interviewer and interviewees, the presentation of findings applied rich and detailed descriptive language (Creswell, 2013).

3.4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was required for this study as it involved human subjects. Data was only collected after gaining ethical approval (see Appendix A) from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). The participant information sheet contained a short introduction by the author and information regarding the purpose of the study, how potential participants were accessed, how participants could take part in the study, and the ethical principles relating to the study. Participants were

informed that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they had the rights to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, participants were guaranteed that collected data would be processed professionally and honestly for the research purpose.

3.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the philosophy behind this study by identifying the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological stances. Based on the illustration of different research paradigms with identification of their corresponding ontological and epistemological approaches, the choice of an interpretive paradigm entailing a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology was justified as compatible with the topic of this study. The adoption of a qualitative methodology was shown to be consistent with the chosen ontology and epistemology within the paradigm; in addition, it fits into the topic of this study which aims to search for rich and deep data pertaining to international hospitality employees' native language use in specific service encounters with customers sharing the same ethnicity. The research design further mirrored the interpretive paradigm in that it allowed for the generalisation of complex and varied views that participants held concerning the research topic. Apart from demonstrating the philosophical concepts underpinning the current study, this chapter also explained and justified the use of the snowball sampling technique for participant recruitment, the chosen sample size, the semi-structured interview for data collection, and the open coding system and thematic analysis for analysing the data.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to investigate hospitality employees' perceptions on speaking their native language in service contexts. This chapter presents the major themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. Firstly, this chapter presents findings illustrating employees' motivations for adopting English and native language in service encounters. It shows that participants express a preference for initiating conversations in English while also having the awareness of serving customers from the same country with their native language. This awareness is shown by their performance in following customers' native language choice and by their efforts to switch to native language when customers have difficulty with English communication.

Secondly, to provide a more complete picture of employees' attitudes towards adopting native language in customer service, the chapter presents factors influencing the voluntary adoption of English when the service encounter involves customers speaking the same native language. This section reveals that employees' language choice does not depend simply on customers' demands, but is also constrained by other factors, some of which contribute to the adoption of English. These factors include the role of English as the default language in the workplace, the consideration of respecting customers without predicting customers' ethnicity and language preference, and individual personalities.

Thirdly, the chapter identifies the factors resulting in employees' avoidance of native language. Particular attention is paid to the experienced work stress related to native

language use in specific service encounters with customers speaking the same native language. Three main factors are identified as accounting for an avoidance of native language use: demanding customers and perceived extra workload, lack of received respect, and over-accommodated customers who refuse English communication.

Fourthly, employees' experience of stress in relation to their native language use in service encounters is identified. This reveals increased demand and extra workload resulting from the native language communication directly asserts direct pressure on employees. Apart from the fear of being allocated with more physical workload, employees become stressed when their roles in service encounters are blurred.

Employees feel their ambiguous positions in choosing the proper language to serve customers and when the required language use and service pattern conflict with employees' perceptions. Furthermore, in consideration of their roles as service professionals, employees are put under pressure when customers show a strong in-group identification and expectation of favouritism in the process of service delivery. Finally, employees control their emotions by applying emotional labour in native language service encounters, and this kind of control and modification of personal emotion and feeling is inherently stressful.

Throughout this chapter, the terms *employee*, *service employee*, *interviewee*, and *participant* are used interchangeably. The terms *shared ethnicity* and *same native language* are also used interchangeably.

4.2 Adoption of native language in service encounters

In general, international hospitality employees' language choice was found to be customer-oriented. Customers' demands were regarded as the core in service encounters. Service employees show their willingness to adapt to the language preference and choice of customers. In service contexts where customers speak the same native language, service employees have the knowledge of answering in native language when first contacted by customers with their shared native language. In addition, employees also applied native language when they recognised customers' difficulties with communicating in English.

4.2.1 Always follow customers' language choice

The workplace represents a setting where customers' needs and wants are always given priority. Working in the hospitality industry, service employees are aware of the status of customers. When asked about the language they adopted to address customers, all of the interviewees stated that their language choice depended on that of customers. In situations when customers initiated the conversations, all of them expressed the importance of following customers no matter what language they used to start a conversation. In situations where a customer changed from English to native language after recognising their shared ethnicity with the service employee, most of the interviewees replied that in such situations, they would change to their native language to adapt to the customer's needs to show them respect. In describing another situation where a customer recognised her accent in a phone conversation and switched from English to native language use, one participant, Kelly, explained:

... So...yeah, I just followed the language she [the customer] used.

Following customers' language choice does not only refer to the adaption to customers' preference for native language. When confronting customers preferring English communication, service employees also adjust their language according to the customers' wants. This is shown in the following excerpt from Jean describing a situation where a customer replied in English when offered native language service:

Because, I just ... like...tried to understand them. When I spoke Korean, and they replied in English, then I felt this person might have the preference to speak English – I understand that, and I just spoke English. I was just like... following them and making them feel more comfortable.

All interviewees acknowledged that using a different language when responding to customers can be rude. Ina explicitly pointed out that “*forcing the customer to speak the language you speak*” is impolite behaviour, and that accommodating customers' language choice is “*a way to avoid insulting the customers.*” However, one participant revealed an exception to this. The following excerpt from Sam explains why in the context of a service encounter involving customers from different cultural backgrounds, English may be the preferred language to address all customers. Sam describes why he replied to a customer in English instead of in the native language with which the customer first addressed him:

...so he [the customer] spoke Sinhalese, but I replied in English...because his wife was there, she is [and she was] from America. It's really not nice [to reply in Sinhalese], because she had no idea of what was going on ... she needs [needed] to understand what was going on...Maybe the person felt awkward, maybe he felt that I was not nice to him because I spoke English while he spoke Sinhalese,

because I thought that the lady [his wife] would not be able to understand if I spoke Sinhalese, that's why...

4.2.2 Change to native language when customers have difficulty in English

Apart from accommodating customers' language choice, which is mainly determined by customers, the interviews also demonstrated that service employees also regulated their language choice cognitively depending on their evaluations of certain situations and different customers.

The interviewees widely reported their voluntary change to native language when they realised that the customer may have difficulty in understanding or speaking English.

Ella implied that she would switch to her native language so she and the customer could “*understand each other more easily.*” On the whole, interviewees demonstrated an awareness of customers' preferences for speaking and being served with native language, as reflected in the following excerpt from Ina, who shared her perception of customers' language preferences:

I think they will prefer Indonesian...when you are in a different country, you feel more comfortable when you are served with native language. This is what I found from some of the Indonesian customers that I have served. If they find out you can speak Indonesian, they will start to speak Indonesian...

In their evaluation of the customer's ability to conduct conversations in English, service employees made their adjustments depending on either the customer's age or the communication outcomes with customers. A common view amongst participants was that they preferred to accommodate elder customers more when compared with

younger customers, as evidenced by the following excerpt from Ella who expressed her preference of being more accommodating to elders:

... if they are like...elder people, then I will be more likely to offer service with [in] Korean and be more polite. It doesn't mean I will not help if they are young – just if they are elders, I will be more caring.

Sometimes, this preference for accommodating elders was in consideration of the advantages younger people have in acquiring second language skills. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from Jay:

...most of the aged people, they might lack the language competency, so they might expect you to speak native language.

Another concern emerging from the theme of switching to native language was when customers show incomprehension. Half of the participants emphasised asking for permission before changing to native language use or hinting to the customer that they were capable of offering native language service. These participants regarded the switch to native language use straight away without asking for permission as inappropriate.

Rachel explained this in light of her awareness that people could be sensitive:

... perhaps the customer will assume that their English is not good enough because of the accent. I would say it's kind of...people are sensitive.

Tammy expressed the same concern regarding direct switching without asking for permission:

If I switch directly, it's kind of disrespectful for people. You need to be careful when you change your language.

Generally speaking, international hospitality employees are conscious of the need to accommodate customers with their native language. However, in hospitality workplaces consisting of various expectations due to the multiple cultural backgrounds of both customers and employees, employees' language choice proved to be a complex web of constructs casually correlated, and the adoption of native language was constrained by a variety of factors. In order to provide an outline of the factors affecting employees' language choice in service encounters, the proceeding interview findings will be presented according to (1) factors contributing to the voluntary adoption of English in service encounters, (2) factors contributing to the avoidance of native language use in service encounters, and (3) employees' experience of work stress related to native language use in service encounters.

4.3 Voluntary adoption of English

Even though the language choice of service employees is largely customer-oriented, the language in which service employees choose to address customers can be affected by other factors. Given the complexity and distinctiveness of each service encounter, employees showed a tendency to voluntarily adopt English in some situations when attending to customers from their countries. Interviews revealed multiple factors that contributed to employee willingness to adopt English rather than native language in service encounters.

4.3.1 English in the workplace

As a dominant language widely used in international business and the predominant language in New Zealand, there is no doubt that English is used as the default language

in the workplace. All participants emphasised an English-speaking working environment. In other words, they referenced English as having the status of the workplace language in New Zealand. Therefore, they regarded speaking English as “*a basic thing*.” Some of the interviewees also indicated that they tried to avoid excessive use of their native language even with colleagues who spoke the same native language. Even though they were aware of the convenience of communicating in native language, it was considered “*proper to speak English in [an] English-speaking environment*.”

When asked what language they choose to start a conversation, in all cases, participants said English would always be their choice for initiating a conversation, regardless of the ethnicity of customers. This was illustrated by Tammy when she explained, “*I never thought about that I started with my own language ... I will always start with English*.” Tammy’s view was echoed by Rachel, who stated, “*... I would definitely use English first to greet them [customers], no matter if they look like Chinese or... I will start with English*.”

Participants suggested that after the start of a conversation in English, they preferred to continue the conversation in English when they perceived that the customer was capable of doing so. They also felt it was “*not necessary to speak everything in English*” as long as both interlocutors could understand each other. The following excerpt from Jean reveals her preference for speaking English:

Normally, I don't speak too much native language with Korean customers, [I] actually kind of avoid [it], and try to keep the conversation in English rather than my own language, because this is an English-speaking country, and it is in the

workplace, mainly because it is an English-speaking workplace... So usually, I speak Korean with customers when they can't understand English or when they are struggling with using English. But usually, most of the things they try to say are simple stuff, so it is ok; I can make them understand in English.

Considering the various cultural backgrounds in the workplace, service employees also tried to keep the communication with customers in English for the sake of being courteous to their colleagues, as was indicated by Kelly when she explained this “...will [would] also help the colleagues know what is really happening.” This view surfaced mainly in relation to the efficiency in solving some service issues. Sam echoed Kelly’s sentiment, explaining the importance of other colleagues’ knowledge of service situations:

We have to help the guests somehow, but it doesn't have to be [in] native language. I would say English is always preferred because everybody understands [it], so I would prefer English as the key language to explain to customers, so my co-workers will know what we are talking about, and they can just help me if the customer has any needs or problems, and I don't have to explain in English again. It's important, you know, we need to work together, and we need to be efficient.

Apart from the behavioural outcomes, another concern expressed concerning the use of native language in customer service was the awkwardness and embarrassment felt by some of the interviewees. Having been working the whole day using English, a change to native language sometimes makes service employees feel embarrassed. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from Ina:

... because most of the time, we speak English, so when you have to switch from English to Indonesian, especially when you know it's gonna be, probably small

groups, I found it really awkward, speaking Indonesian to other Indonesian customers.

Sam also alluded to the possibly embarrassing situation where the majority speaks English, but some employees need to adopt a minority language in customer service. In such contexts, Sam explained as a service employee, you might feel as if you “*don’t know how to behave even though you know the whole service*” when facing customers with shared ethnicity.

Interviewees also presented how their roles in service encounters as service employees affect how they feel about speaking their native language. Kelly shared her mixed perceptions concerning native language use when playing different roles in service encounters:

... But for me, personally, I prefer to be served by my native language. I feel more comfortable, because in that way, I feel more...like personalise[d]? But if I am the one who provides the service, I feel like I am more comfortable with speaking English, and it’s quite awkward for me to suddenly... to speak my language when I am working in [an] English-speaking environment, so it’s contradicting ... but like [if] I am in New Zealand or other English-speaking countries, if my waiter or waitress talks to me in English, then I will understand that as well.

For most of the participants, there was no organisational policy explicitly suggesting the use of native language in service to their overseas customers.

However, Rachel, who mentioned the organisation handbook promoting native language service in her hotel, perceived the use of her native language as “*quite natural.*”

4.3.2 Respect our guests

In addition to influences from the organisation and the work itself, service employees' adoption of English for communication can also be attributed to their consideration of showing respect to customers. The variety and complexity of cultural backgrounds of hotel customers is one of the challenges facing service employees in communication for both work-related and social conversations.

It was reported by most of the participants that it was easy for them to identify customers from their countries, either through observation or through their very first interaction with them. However, in most of the situations, they avoided showing their in-group membership before customers did so. Half of the participants explicitly expressed that it would be rude to “*make the judgment*” of a customer's ethnicity and native language before the customer reveals their identity. When asked why English was her preferred choice, Ina stated, “*if I start in my own language, to me, it will be a bit rude...because I assume where they come from. I found it quite...not very...anyway, I found it is something really rude if you just guess where somebody comes from.*” In addition, Tammy also explained her idea of showing respect to customers without providing native language service first:

Usually, I will not speak native language with them if they don't start speaking our language. I am happy to speak Vietnamese with them if they want, but I will not show them first that I speak Vietnamese, just for respect.

Kelly shared a similar sentiment and also mentioned the possible negative implications by speaking native language first:

... if I need to talk in my language, I do ask them if they are from [Philippines] ...what if they are not Filipinos, what if they are from other parts of Asia?

In consideration of the diversity of customers in terms of age, individual preferences, and language competency, to name just a few, it is understandable that customers might have different expectations regarding the ways in which they are served when they are in another country. Another theme mentioned repeatedly by interviewees was that some customers have the preference to speak and be attended with English.

Most of the participants identified that younger customers tend to be more “*happy to speak English*” compared with their elder counterparts. One of the participants regarded this as merely being related to personal preference, while six of them considered it as a way for them to show individual competency, since “*they’ve learned the language.*” As an example, Tammy remarked that “*... not many Vietnamese can speak English well, so they may... young people, they maybe want to show that they can speak good English.*” This is also clear in the following description from Jean describing young customers’ embarrassment when addressed with native language:

It was a celebration of birthday, everybody spoke Korean there, but some young people...I tried to help them in our own language; I think they felt they were offended, they might assume that I doubted their English ability. I was like...asking them if they need any drinks, in Korean, but they reacted like: Uh...then they just walked away. So I thought they might feel offended.

For customers who come for travelling, one interviewee referred to their willingness to speak English and talk with local people to experience “*something different from our [their] own country.*”

4.3.3 Individual personality

In each enterprise, there will be policies and rules designed to make sure that the whole organisation runs smoothly, both internally and externally. Participants identified factors that prompted their adoption of English from the perspectives of the organisation, the work itself, and the customers. In addition to these external factors, interviews also revealed personal characteristics to be another factor that can be taken into account.

Some participants indicated that their personality played a role in their language choice in service encounters involving customers from the same country. The effect of personality was found to be associated with their ethnic identification and their willingness to show their ethnic identity, especially in the workplace. Half of the participants suggested that they didn’t feel any additional kinship with their in-group customers and would not show extra closeness. As Sam described, “*I am not trying to be really friendly, even [if] they are from my country.*” These participants preferred to keep the relationship with customers as “*customer and service employee*” where both were treated “*in a proper way*” rather than as a relatively informal relationship. As Jean indicated, “*... I am the one who always keeps distance; I just want that we respect each other, that’s enough.*”

Studies have suggested that people with shared cultural background tend to feel closer to each other. For service employees with weak ethnic identification, showing their

in-group membership to customers by voluntarily speaking their native language can be challenging for them, as illustrated in the following excerpt from Ina:

Sometimes, only because I work in New Zealand, and then we have something in common, people actually will show closeness, and that kind of closeness is actually not comfortable for me. It's just my personality; in the workplace, you need to try to be professional... it's hard for me to speak casually with my Indonesian customers in our language.

4.4 “I will hide my identity...”

It has been made clear by previous studies that service encounters consist of the interactions between customers and service employees. The way that service employees treat their customers to some extent depends on customers' attitudes and behaviours. For international hospitality service employees, speaking their native language in serving customers with the same ethnicity asserts significant effect on their performance in customer service. It was indicated by participants that when they perceived difficult situations might be created for them with the use of native language, hiding their ethnic identity and capability of speaking their native language would help protect them from the threat of a difficult situation. Participants reported that they would pre-evaluate customers' behaviours in the beginning of or even before the interaction as the reference for their service. Take, for example, the following excerpt from Ina describing how her evaluations were made:

I have to say that you do judge your guests. Whenever they walk in, whenever you start a conversation with them, you can see what kind of person they are. I am not talking about racism or something like that, just to know how I should treat that person, in which way. Because from ... like experience, you just know for certain

people, how they are gonna react after you start a bit [of] conversation with them.

Based on these evaluations, participants indicated their desire to avoid speaking native language with customers in some situations. Interview analysis revealed a number of factors contributing to the avoidance of offering native language service.

4.4.1 Demanding customers and perceived workload

In intercultural service encounters, when a service encounter consists of customers and service employees speaking the same native language, the difference from traditional intercultural service encounters can be expected. One recurrent theme that emerged was the increase in customers' demands that sometimes coincided with shared in-group membership and native language. Participants reported that some customers "*feel more comfortable with native language*" and tend to be "*more demanding*". Kelly's interview excerpt expressed her perception of this increase in demand:

But the thing is, if they recognise that you are from the same country as well, that's the time when they become demanding.

Participants distinguished the growing demand from normal customer demand in service encounters. In such circumstances, participants indicated that they would not like to talk to customers in native language when they thought that the customer was behaving inappropriately and crossing the line. When asked to comment on this topic, Ina explained, "... *I have to say, they were pretty demanding, they kept...how to say...asking you for the things that usually people shouldn't do in*

a restaurant.” Jean echoed this view and further explained how switching to native language could increase customers’ demands in dealing with service issues:

In that situation, if I change my language to Korean, they will go farther, they will...like...complain more, more detailed, they will even ask me to bring my manager, they will be more demanding, too weird.

With all these experiences, under such circumstances, service employees tended not to show their capability of speaking their native language when attending to customers when they perceived the possibility of growing demands. With all the experiences of serving more demanding customers, Ina further stated that “... *so when I think they might be demanding, I just avoid it [speaking native language] since [from] the beginning.*”

As a consequence of customers’ increased demands, the perceived workload was identified as another factor contributing to their avoidance of native language, on a more behavioural level. Interviewees indicated that because of their heavy workload, serving every customer with native language was impractical. As Ina stated when commenting on the workload of her job, “...*you have to consider the workload, especially in the food and beverage [industry].*”

Constrained by the workload and time pressure, service employees avoided showing familiarity by speaking native language with customers. For example, Jay described how his workload affected his language choice, explaining “*it’s not enjoyable to speak native language in all the situations, because the workload will be heavier and it’s*

always busy, so we don't really have that time to build that kind of relationship with every customer."

The concern of potential increased workload caused by native language use normally comes with a comparatively large number of customers. For example, when a group of customers from a service employee's native country appear at the same time, that's the time when the service employee perceives the forthcoming workload. This is illustrated by Ina, who expressed how she felt when facing a group of customers from her home country:

Thank God, they didn't find I speak Indonesian, otherwise, they are gonna ask me to be their personal server, and I will [be] stuck there the whole day.

Another interviewee, Ella, who presented her willingness to speak native language because of the feeling of connection with customers from her country, shared her experience when she tried to hide her capability of speaking her native language:

It was really busy, and I was doing hosting. A big group of Korean guests came in ... maybe because of my appearance, they tried to speak Korean, I don't know why, but I just pretended that I didn't understand Korean ... they were talking among[st] themselves in Korean. I could understand them, but I just ... didn't show them that I speak Korean.

4.4.2 Not well respected

Coming from the same country means that people know each other better, in terms of both their attitudes and their behaviours. Participants acknowledged that sharing the same ethnicity with customers meant they were more aware of those customers' preferences than their colleagues from another culture were. Another theme related to

this shared in-group membership emerged as a reason for employees' avoidance of native language use: feeling disrespected.

Participants pointed out that they would choose their language based on "*how they* [customers] *react and how they treat me and my colleagues.*" Five of the eight interviewees referred to feeling of not being well respected by customers from their countries, and they would use English instead of native language in such situations. Jay mentioned that some customers showed no respect when served with native language, and in his words, "*take your help for granted.*" Rachel said that she would not reveal her Chinese identity when she realised that customers were rude, and stated she would "*stand a little bit behind*" and "*protect myself [herself] from that situation.*" Slang used by customers in communication was also regarded as disrespectful. For example, Jean described her experience of being treated without respect:

Some of them were quite rude to me, after they know [knew] I speak Korean, because obviously I am younger than them ... because they can do ... they feel more comfortable with Korean ... because you are Asian, and you ... like you are from the same country, the way they call me is like "Hey, lady" instead of something like "Excuse me." Some people, they try to be the "Queen" and "King."

Unlike situations where the service employee can avoid using native language from the beginning when they perceive possible pressure, in circumstances where the service employee has already shown their in-group member identity and the service needs to be conducted in native language, in order to get rid of the feeling of disrespect, service

employees tended to withdraw themselves from the stressful service encounter. This dynamic is well-illustrated in the following excerpt from Jean:

I feel so uncomfortable, and usually, I will swap the workplace with my colleagues...I can't do anything, I am just...I am done with this, I might ask my supervisor to put me somewhere else so I don't have to serve them.

The feeling of disrespect was sometimes made more salient when service employees thought customers treated them differently after they provided a “more personalised service” by serving them in native language. Jean identified the different reactions of some customers when served in native language and in English:

... I had a group of 200 Korean guests. Another Korean colleague and I served them. They kind of ignored us. We tried to get their room numbers, and they said “why do you need that?” and they just walked away... If you speak in English, they are not familiar with the language and they will listen to you really carefully. And they will just walk away if you speak Korean, but if it's another language or the server is a foreigner, that can make them stop, so just because we are from the same country, they might become more [rude]... I have been thinking, why? But I can't really find the answer.

In addition to the disrespect received from customers, both verbally and behaviourally, the feeling of disrespect was also sensed based on the “understanding of that country from where you come.” A more culturally-loaded concern regarding the lack of respect emerged when Ina talked about her feeling of “being judged”:

...They expect you to do a more respectable job; they don't expect to find you to be a waiter or a waitress. In my country, actually in many countries, if you are a waitress, you will be judged, especially [in] Asian countries... so this is one of the

reasons I try not to reveal where I am from, because I have the feeling of judgment from people from my country because of the culture that I am familiar with... I hate that kind of feeling; I feel that sometimes I am not well respected.

In addition to attributing this feeling to her awareness of her own culture, Ina also attributed the feeling to the nature of hospitality work, as she mentioned, *“I think it comes with the occupation... it’s actually [an] honest job. You work hard and you get paid; it’s fair pay, but still, that can’t make the feeling disappear.”*

4.4.3 Over-accommodation

In the service industry, the importance of customers’ status is quite obvious. Most organisational operations are directed at aiming for better accommodation to customer needs. In the hospitality industry, with the growing intercultural interactions between customers and service employees and the problems created by cultural differences, efforts have been made to find solutions for this issue, both within the industry and in academia. Most of the solutions are customer-oriented, whether the solution is using native language web or mobile applications in assisting customers or providing menus in customers’ native languages. Participants understood customers’ status and showed their willingness to accommodate customers’ language choice, however, they also presented another view of accommodating customers’ language choice: that it sometimes results in a need for over-accommodation.

The need for over-accommodation was noticed by participants as a common consequence to native language use. Participants noted that customers *“refuse[d] to speak any English”* after being served with native language. Even for customers who

could speak some English, once they recognised that a service employee spoke their native language, they depended completely on service employees who spoke native language. Considering that there may be a limited number of employees who can speak a particular native language, this can place a great deal of pressure on them. Rachel offered one such example in her interview of how native language use led to the pressure of a customer requesting over-accommodation:

Another situation is no matter what happens, he will only look for me... even he can speak a little English, but he will still look for me if he wants something, even if it's just a very simple request.

Participants expressed their desire for customers to make some effort in speaking some English and following the local rules when in another country. Even though participants could accommodate customers' language choice, they regarded customer refusal to speak any language of the hosting country as not very appropriate, especially for young people and those who could speak some English. Ina's comments illustrate this viewpoint:

When you go to someone's country, I think it is common sense that you basically need to be able to speak the basic words of that country. If a customer comes to me and only speaks our language, I don't think it's acceptable... so the problem with some guests... if you accommodate them too much, they will think they are in their place and everybody should follow their rules... so that is the reason that sometimes I refuse to speak my native language and some of my Chinese colleagues refuse to speak Mandarin...

4.5 Stress related to the use of native language

Stress is a common topic in the industry of hospitality. Due to the great effect that workplace stress has on employees, many studies have been conducted to investigate employee stress from different perspectives. In intercultural service encounters where customers and service employees share the same cultural background and native language, the service encounter is very specific. In this specific type of encounter, an intragroup resource exchange takes place in another country, and the stress that employees experience in these types of scenarios may be different from the stress experienced in traditional service encounters. From participants' descriptions of experiences serving customers from their own countries, concerns about stress related to shared native language use recurred throughout the interviews and emerged as an important theme. Participants attributed this stress to multiple factors.

4.5.1 Where is my position?

“When in Rome, do as Romans do” is a widespread saying, which implies that people should follow local rules and customs when in another country. In an English-speaking country, there is no doubt that people are expected to speak English. However, this may not be the case in intercultural service encounters involving customers and service employees speaking the same native language, and according to participants, how to choose the proper language and service pattern to serve customers turns out to be a stressful challenge for service employees.

Most participants expressed feeling placed in an ambiguous position and expressed hesitation in choosing which language to use when serving customers with shared ethnicity or native language. Some of the ambiguities arise from participants' inabilities to fully seize customers' needs. Considering the special relationship between the two parties in such encounters, choosing the right language with which to address customers, without putting customers in an awkward situation, places service employees in a dilemma. Embarrassing situations can result, such as when service employees provide native language service, but customers show the preference to speak English. Rachel described her experience with this situation, explaining, *"sometimes, it's really awkward that I offer them that I can speak Chinese, and I speak Chinese with them, but they still use English."* Jay shared a similar experience of offering service in Chinese and being responded to in English. Jay regarded this as *"understandable, but a little bit upsetting."*

Another ambiguous position arises when service employees realise that customers may have difficulty with, but still try to speak English, and then the desire to offer native language service and the awareness of the customer's willingness to speak English collide. Jean expressed her puzzlement in such situations:

I feel so bad, whenever they try to speak English and explain something to me but they can't...I feel like...should I help? But it's really not good if I have already started in English and suddenly changed the language, I feel like it might offend them, even I can see they have some difficulty... sometimes, people feel embarrassed with they can't speak English, but they try to speak English, at that time, I can't really disturb them by speaking Korean, because they try to speak it.

Another ambiguity referred to repeatedly by participants concerns the service patterns derived from the two different cultures. When in an English-speaking working environment, in addition to being expected to behave according to local norms, employees are conscious of the importance of providing standard service catering to customers from all over the world. At the same time, customers who don't speak English and are being served by a service employee speaking the same native language tend to show a preference for the native service pattern with which they are more familiar. In these instances, service employees feel the collision of customer preference and their own position identification. Participants emphasised the difference between Asian and local service encounters, stating that customers from Asia “*don't expect much interaction*” and most of them are “*not aware of the manner and rules here.*” Jay explained this difference well in the following excerpt:

For some Chinese guests, they don't want be engaged in the interaction, even though when I provide the service in Chinese, they don't want to waste the time with you... it has something to do with the cultural background... they prefer to go to the topic directly without much communication...sometimes, I feel my position is quite embarrassing.

This kind of stress can also been generated when the service employee feels as if they are “*being forced to follow their [the customers'] ways.*” Because of the specific culture and social conventions shared by both sides, service employees feel obliged to not only change their language, but also the service pattern. For

example, Jean shared her feeling of stress when customers showed the preference to be served in Korean service patterns:

But people, especially elder guests, they want me to follow Korean culture. So when I speak Korean, I need to serve with full respect ... it's different, I have to be more polite and show more respect to Korean guests because we are from the same country...it's quite difficult, they want to be served like... parents, even I am just a service employee. I need to be "kid." I need to be really careful.

Participants showed their willingness to speak native language when customers have difficulty in English, including offering help to other departments. However, when asked by supervisors to provide native language service, especially after service employees had adopted English as the service language, embarrassment and stress was created. This is shown in the following excerpt from Jean which explains how one such service encounter was made stressful for her by her supervisor:

Some Korean guests made a reservation for [a] birthday, but something was wrong and they didn't get the table which they should [have] be[en] given. My supervisor asked me to sing the birthday song in Korean for them. I was like...It's not in Korea, it was so embarrassing...my supervisor wanted to make them happy ... It was so stressful, because when they came, I didn't speak Korean, but I was asked by other people to do it... If I served them from the beginning in Korean, I might do that, but still...

4.5.2 Demanding customers and perceived workload

As mentioned above, with their use of native language, service employees might need to face increased customer demand and consequent workload, and these potential challenges might lead service employees to refrain from adopting native language in

service encounters. When looking behind the curtain, it's not hard to understand that kind of behaviour, as some participants attributed customers' reinforced demand and potential workload as a source of stress in service encounters. Service employees feel stressed when they need to allocate more time to specific customers. As Jean explained, under these kinds of demands, *"I feel like I need to do more, like extra service for them, and it pushes me under the pressure."* Ina also explained that enhanced customer demand and potential workload created stress for her:

...generally, I found it's pretty much the same, some guests do, some guests are very demanding and [require] you to spend more time with them. It will be more stressful because they need your time more than other guests, that's properly the most stressful part.

Aside from directly impacting on service employees' stress levels, the perceived workload also created stress for employees indirectly through affecting their language choice. The following example from Ella presents how she felt in a service encounter where she was struggling with her language choice:

I just didn't show them that I could speak Korean at first, I just... didn't say anything. Then they tried to talk to me in English, and I found they were struggling, so I realised maybe I needed to speak Korean... I felt so bad because I just said nothing when I should have said something first. I thought I was wrong in the beginning.

Another view echoed by most of the participants was that because of the shared ethnicity and language and the perceived closer relationship with service employees, customers were more likely to express the desire for extra benefits. As

Ina stated, “...some people, they may expect you to be especially good with them because you are from the same country.” Jay also emphasised that customers’ desires for benefits or preferential treatment seemed to be based on shared ethnicity and native language:

I don’t think they would have a request like that if they were served by someone else...but they were served by me, whom they could easily communicate with...so they would like to know if that [benefit] was possible...

According to participants, most of the preferred benefits customers asked for were in relation to premium prices or complimentary items. Kelly explained, “*it feels like...automatically you will know that they are expecting something...more than the standard service ...*”

In response to customers’ desires for extra benefits, all participants indicated that they would try to help customers by “*considering what I can do,*” or what could be done, but they would not offer discounts, superior service, or oblige any other requests that they regarded as “*cross[ing] the line.*” Participants who felt more emotionally connected with customers from their countries also shared this view. For example, Tammy commented, “*I treat them all the same, based on the service standard of [the] hotel, not treating them better or...I can help them as much as I can, but I can’t do more for them because they are from my country.*”

From the responses on this topic, it is clear that participants refused to offer extra benefits to customers from their country because they regarded it as “*unfair to*

other customers.” All participants referred to the importance of treating everybody equally. Sam emphasised this idea in the following excerpt:

In hospitality, it has to be the same, everyone should be treated in the same way, like rules, service, regulations....for me, I will not prepare and offer more service for them because they are from my country, my duty is to serve everyone equally.

4.5.3 Excessive in-group affiliation of customers

Most of the participants acknowledged that native language helped in making their communication with customers easier. However, when customers attached too much emotion to the interaction because of the shared in-group membership, the situation became stressful for service employees.

One stress-inducing situation derived from customers’ strong in-group identification was the length of the encounter, with some participants expressing concern that “*it becomes a long conversation.*” Being constrained by various expectations from customers and the pressure to provide quality service within an acceptable timeframe, hospitality employees face the challenge of allocating their time well to make sure that each guest can be provided with standard and quality service. When the service employee’s in-group member identity is revealed, some customers will try to start conversations with the employee because of their familiarity. Service employees reported that they got stressed when such conversations turn into long ones. Jay shared one such experience of serving a group of customers from his country:

...they will be happy when they find that I can speak Chinese...and some of the customers will start talking with me and asking some questions, I can understand how they feel, the problem is if one customer asks, others will also ask, then I

need to answer all these similar questions, I actually spent a lot of time...that actually affected my productivity... sometimes, I need a smart way to avoid these situations.

Ina also shared her experience when she was stressed about being engaged in a long-lasting dialogue:

...I tried to keep them alright by answering their questions, and I spent 20 minutes just with the two guests...so the moment they started the conversation, they just didn't let me go, they kept asking more questions and expected you to talk with them more. Every time I went back to that table, they would started talking with me again... whenever they start a conversation, it will become quite a long one, because of the feeling of familiarity.

In addition to the impact on personal productivity, some participants mentioned concern for their co-workers' workloads when these types of situations occurred.

They considered it unfair for their co-workers, who would then need to “*take care of the whole other guests by him/herself.*” In such situations, service employees felt the “*urge to end the conversation quickly to go back and help your [their] colleagues with other customers.*” Ella echoed this view by saying “*when it's busy and I show them that I am Korean, they [customers] will start talking to me in Korean for a long time. When it's busy, I feel like I want to avoid speaking Korean with them because I can't chat with them when everyone is working.*”

Despite concern over lengthy conversations which might result from the use of native language, concerns regarding privacy issues were more widespread. Participants expressed feeling uncomfortable when asked about personal issues after using native

language. Rachel, who noted feeling a kinship with customers from her country, mentioned being asked private questions as a negative result of offering native language service to customers. When asked to offer detail about the issue, she explained “*sometimes, they will ask too much personal information... sometimes, I feel [it’s] too personal, that I don’t want to talk about it.*” Two of the participants reported that they were asked about their pay. Jean commented on this phenomenon:

If they find that you are from the same country, they will ask like...ask a lot of questions, I even got questions like: How much do you make an hour? I was like: Er...it’s kind of...I don’t really mind, people can ask questions, but it is too private. Sometimes, I feel it’s hard to make a clear position.

Participants indicated the desire to keep communication formal. When customers showed excessive closeness and the conversation got too personal, it was considered as improper for workplace, where proper roles need to be identified and certain standards followed. The following excerpt by Ina expressed this view:

...sometimes, it gets too personal... I prefer it [to be] a work thing and to keep it [as] a work relationship. Some of the questions, I don’t think they are suitable for [the] workplace, because that’s my personal thing, it’s not something that I love to tell strangers that I just meet, even though they are from the same country. In the workplace, you need to try to be professional. When things get too personal, then it becomes a little bit uncomfortable.

4.5.4 Emotional labour in speaking native language

According to the descriptions from interviewees, service employees get stressed when they are engaged in native language service encounters when they don’t feel comfortable speaking their native language for various reasons. However, though the

themes that emerged from the interviews suggested that service employees' perceptions of native language use and their language choice could be affected by multiple factors, participants pointed out that it was the customer who had the final say. As Kelly put it, *"...so at the end, it is the guest[s] who will be the one[s], who will decide what will be the means...what language will be used to communicate, because they are customers."* This means that even being involved in stressful service contexts, service employees need to show proper emotion and provide acceptable service because of the status of customers. When asked what she felt when serving difficult customers, Rachel's explanation revealed how surface acting was employed:

I would say...especially when served with native language, some of the customers will be really picky and demanding, and it is quite annoying, sometimes. But because I work in a five-star hotel, so the service I provide needs to be really professional, I can't show anything on my face, no matter what they ask, we need to try our best to accommodate them.

In terms of displaying required or appropriate emotion, stress doesn't come only from engaging with customers. The role of supervision in affecting employees' adoption of emotional labour can be revealed in Jean's example of being asked by her supervisor to sing the birthday song for Korean customers. She commented, *"because my supervisor wanted to make them happy, so I had to do that...I was so embarrassed."* By following the instructions of her supervisor, the emotion which carries stronger in-group identification was displayed. However, embarrassment and stress were also created due to the emotional dissonance.

In addition, when asked about their overall perceptions on speaking their native language in customer service, participants revealed that deep acting was widely adopted by service employees. Participants were aware that they had opinions that conflicted with customers' opinions and that using native language might produce negative results. Generally, however, participants attributed negative results to the cultural differences and the nature of hospitality work. Take for example, Jay, who shared his opinion, stating, "...when serving these customers, of course, I feel upset, but I see it as my job to serve people and handle...different situations." Sam reinforced this point of view in the following excerpt:

We can't be right, guests are always right...that is the work in hospitality. I am not talking about other jobs, but if you work in hospitality, the guest is the most important thing...if something goes wrong, it's okay, it's just something from the work, so I would say we have to be really patient.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented findings from the semi-structured interviews which revealed international hospitality employees' perceptions of speaking native language in serving customers from their own countries. To achieve the aim of this study and answer the research questions, main findings will be further looked at in the discussion chapter.

This chapter first outlined service employees' language choice in service encounters involving customers speaking the same native language. Generally, service employees make their language choice on the basis of customer orientation. Findings showed that the language chosen by customers would be the key determinant of service employees'

language choice. In addition, native language would be adopted by service employees when customers showed incomprehension of English.

Factors that promote English as employees' preferred language in serving customers were also identified. These factors include the status of English as the default language in New Zealand and in the workplace, the consideration of customers' preferences for speaking and being served in English, and the role of service employees' personalities in their decision-making.

Service employees' reasons for avoiding the use of native language or revealing their in-group identity in service encounters were revealed and were based on employees' preconceived customer behaviours. One reason for the avoidance was the perception that following employees' adoption of native language, customers' demands increase along with an accompanied increase in workload. A second reason was the perception of a lack of respect from customers following the use of native language. A third reason was the tendency for customers to expect over-accommodation or refuse to speak English after being served in their native language.

Findings regarding service employees' perceptions of using native language in servicing customers of shared ethnicity illustrated that the use of native language generated stress in several ways. Service employees felt placed in ambiguous positions in service encounters involving customers speaking the same native language. They also perceived that native language use often resulted in increased customer demand and a potential increase in workload. In addition, excessive kinship attached to the employee-customer

relationship by customers, or customers' excessive in-group affiliation with employees of shared ethnicity was also found to create stressful situations for service employees contributing to longer conversations that placed demands on time and intruded upon employees' privacy. Finally, the emotional labour exerted by employees in the context of native language use and resulting situations was another source of stress. Findings showed that service employees employed both surface acting and deep acting in serving customers with their native language. In the following chapter, the main findings will be discussed with an emphasis on the following five ideas:

1. Employees' desire to accommodate customers' native language preferences.
2. Employees' ambiguous positions in specific service encounters.
3. Calls for respect from customers.
4. Effects of perceived workload on language choice.
5. Employees' fear for increased intimacy shown by customers.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings drawn from the interviews. First, the research questions and conceptual framework are revisited. Second, main findings are summarised followed by in-depth discussion of each main finding. The last section of this chapter provides a summary of the discussion of main findings.

The aim of this study was to investigate native language use in service encounters from the perspective of international hospitality service employees. To address the inquiry of how service employees perceive the adoption of their native language in serving customers sharing the same ethnicity, three main research questions were asked:

1. How do international hospitality employees feel about speaking native language in serving customers with shared ethnicity in service encounters?
2. How does employees' use of their native language (both voluntarily and involuntarily) in service encounters affect their work stress?
3. How does the use of employees' native language affect their overall work experience?

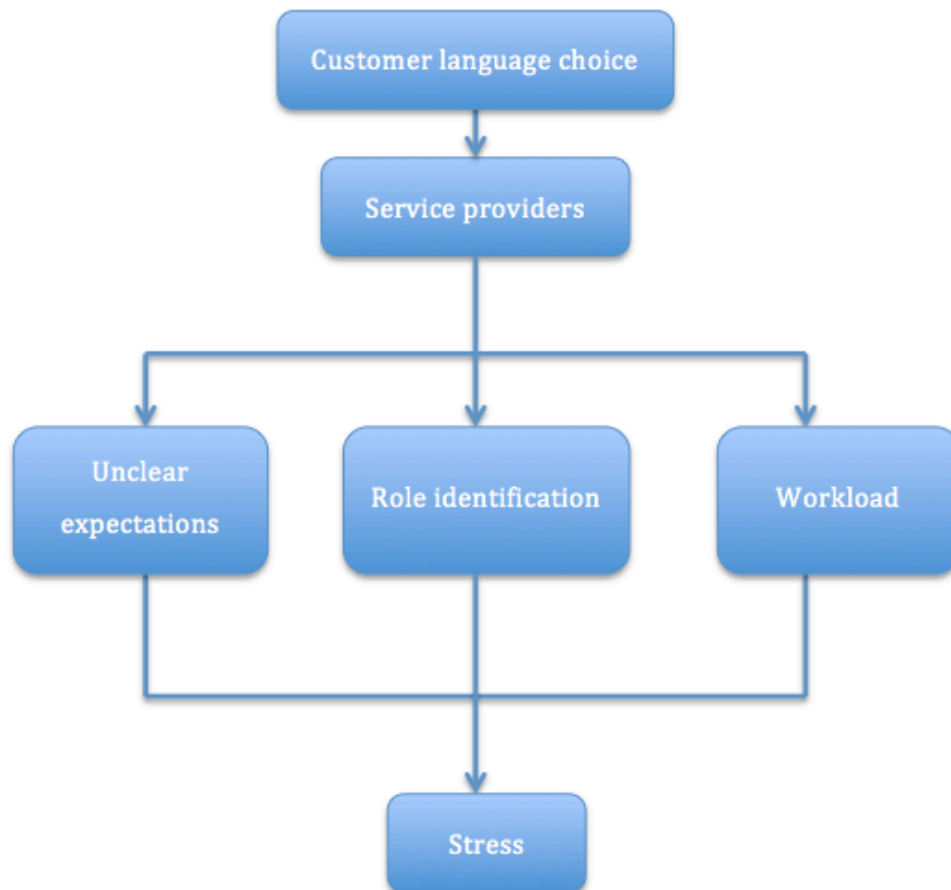
To answer these research questions, previous research related to native language use in the workplace was examined. Due to the limited literature related to service employees' perceptions of speaking their native language in customer service, relevant concepts and theories from other disciplines were adopted and applied in the

service setting to provide a conceptual background for discovering service employees' perceptions of their native language use.

The foregoing literature revealed customers' perception of their native and second language use in service encounters. In addition, it identified factors that might contribute to service employees' different perceptions. This chapter starts by briefly reviewing the conceptual framework built on the examination of existing literature. Next, it discusses the five main findings that emerged from this study. How the findings reflect prior studies or further deepen the knowledge of employees' native language use in service encounters will be elaborated.

5.1.1 Conceptual framework

When confronted with a service encounter involving customers of shared ethnicity, the task of speaking native language in service delivery can create work stress for service employees through diverse and unclear language expectations, ambiguous role-identification, and increased workload created by the adoption of native language.



5.1.2 Main findings

Interviews revealed five main findings that shed light on how international hospitality employees perceive their native language adoption in service encounters with customers sharing their ethnicity. These five findings reflect employees' overall attitudes towards their native language use, factors influencing voluntary adoption of English, reasons for avoiding the use of native language, and stress related to native language use.

Firstly, employees are aware of customers' preferences and show a desire to accommodate customers of shared ethnicity by speaking their native language. This is illustrated by employees' performance in following customers' preferences as well as

by employees' adaption to customers' incomprehension of English by offering native language service.

Secondly, employees express concern about their ambiguous and embarrassing position in the special intercultural service encounter where the customer is from the same country. This ambiguity is apparent in two aspects of the intercultural service encounter: choosing the proper language for addressing customers of shared ethnicity, and choosing the proper service pattern to address customers of shared ethnicity.

Thirdly, the respect afforded to employees by customers affects employee willingness to provide native language service. All participants mentioned this as an antecedent of accommodating customers' with the use of native language.

Fourthly, employees perceive that customers tend to become more demanding when native language use is offered. This may lead employees to hide their identity as in-group members and their capability to provide native language service out of the fear of potential increased workload.

Finally, when customers are served by employees of shared ethnicity and native language, customers may attach an in-group affiliation to the service interaction and regard their relationship with the service provider as more intimate. This kind of intimacy shown by customers may generate stress for employees considering their role as service professionals in the workplace.

5.2 Employees' awareness and desire to accommodate customers with native language

Even in an English-speaking country and public environment where English is regarded as the default language, hotel employees expect that customers' may have native language preference. Interview results suggest that employees' language choice is centred on emphasising customers' wants and needs. Customer preference is shown to be the key factor influencing employees' language choice, and employees will always address customers with the language customers adopt by to start the conversation. When employees are firstly addressed by customers with native language, employees will respond with native language. Interview results suggest employees regard the behaviour of replying to customers in another language as inappropriate and rude. They also regard customers' wants as the most important determinant in their decision-making regarding language choice.

This finding of customer language preference affecting employee language choice is consistent with the findings of Callahan (2005) suggesting customer preference has the power to influence what the public language will be, and it can result in native language, rather than English, being used in the workplace. The bilingual participants in Callahan (2005) study stated that they would respond to customers in whichever language customers used because "they are customers." Callahan's participants also acknowledged that the adoption of the opposite language of customers' choice was not preferable and could lead to negative service outcomes.

Service employees' desire to accommodate customers' language preferences can be shown by their performance of switching to native language when customers have difficulty communicating in English. The accommodating behaviour of switching language is also consistent with the findings of Callahan (2005) which showed bilingual employees would switch to native language in response to customers' incomprehension of English. The employee perception that it is necessary to get customer permission before switching language is also consistent with findings from Callahan (2005).

Employees have experiential knowledge of the fact that using a second language to some extent represents an individual's competence, and switching language can be perceived by customers as doubting their language ability. Indeed, literature has highlighted that second language use can be a symbol of individual competence. This is consistent with the suggestions of Barker and Härtel (2004), who noted that customers may feel their second language ability is belittled when service employees show the effort to accommodate customers by speaking more slowly and loudly. The results of this study with regard to employees' perceptions of customer preferences are similarly consistent with the findings of Holmqvist et al. (2013a), who also examined employees' language shifts in service encounters. Holmqvist et al. (2013a) pointed out that customers might feel humiliated if they perceive their competence is challenged when service employees shift their language in the intention to accommodate them; the authors also suggested that service employees should never attempt to initiate the language switch in service communication. In addition, the humiliation experienced by

customers was identified by Claus, Geyskens, Millet, and Dewitte (2012) who stated that customers might react negatively when they perceived a doubted self-image.

Consistent with previous literature, the significant effect of customers' language choice on employees' language choice can be attributed to employees' knowledge of the important status of customers in service contexts. The importance of putting customers first has been dictated in the marketing discipline as essential to achieving organisational goals (Levitt, 1960). This can be reflected in this study by employees' performance of both following customers' native language choice and offering native language service when customers show difficulty and incomprehension in English communication. This recognition and accommodation of customers' needs echoes the idea of Saxe and Weitz (1982) that organisations based on customer-orientation satisfy customers by identifying and adapting to their needs.

Behind the customer-oriented behaviour revealed in employees' language choice is the concept of customer sovereignty, a paradigm for effective organisational performance which runs through a wide range of organisational practices (Gay & Salaman, 1992). Due to the change that has been made on the competition landscape by the global business environment, competitors and customers have been transformed from being passive players to playing an active role in marketing competition. In the competition between enterprises in gaining new customers and retaining existing customers globally, it is imperative that corporations keep consistent pursuit of ever-increasing customer sovereignty (Ali, 2007). Customer sovereignty can be understood as customers' feelings of being in charge (Korczynski, 2002). As evidenced in previous literature, customers

may prefer their native language in intercultural service encounters where they experience a feeling of lacking control. Being provided with the right to choose their preferred language and be served with native language, customers are given the leading role in service encounters with employees speaking the same native language.

5.3 Employees' ambiguous position in service encounters

Shared ethnicity between service employees and customers in intercultural service encounters has been recognised by researchers as benefiting both parties in the interaction. For example, Stauss and Mang (1999) argued that the common values and behavioural rules derived from the shared cultural background of customers and service employees contributes to mutual understanding and helps them know more about each other's expectations. While being able to speak more than one language adds great significance to an individuals' communication competence, bilinguals also face challenges with deciding which language to use in different situations. Though employees in this study acknowledged the convenience of native language communication for both sides in the interaction, they also expressed this led to feeling placed in an ambiguous position in the special service encounter.

This sense of ambiguity is not surprising, given that previous literature about native language use in intercultural service encounters has stated that international customers might have diverse expectations about language use. These differing expectations are affected by a variety of factors, including their second language competence and in-group identification, to name just a few. Because of the differences embedded in

customers' language choice, knowing which language to use depending on different service scenarios and differing customer demands can be a predicament for employees.

With the advantage of speaking the same native language with customers, these employees are assumed undoubtedly as the perfect choice to fulfil the demands of international customers. According to participants' discourses, the advantage of speaking the same language can also be a disadvantage in their language decision-making as it creates an ambiguous context where employees may not be able to precisely identify customers' language preferences. This ambiguous situation can be quite obvious in situations when customers' incomprehension is detected. It can lead to embarrassing situations, as explained by interviewees, when service employees provide native language service only to find customers don't wish to speak native language. This inversion effect of the use of shared native language is consistent with Callahan's (2005) study which indicated that the adoption of native language entails more risk than English, and negative consequences can ensue when mistake are made in predicting customers' language preferences. This backfire effect of using native language in intercultural service encounters was also noticed by Holmqvist et al. (2013a).

Employees are aware that the adoption of native language might offend customers in terms of communicating an assumed second language inability. For employees sharing in-group member status and the same native language with customers, how to choose the expected language can be a stressful task because it is impossible to know for sure which language an individual customer expects. With the understanding of customers' varying language expectations, service employees may be put in situations where they

struggle to choose the appropriate language without embarrassing themselves or the customer.

Yet another source of ambiguity was revealed by participant discourses: identifying their role and identity when customers of shared ethnicity prefer to be served in their native way. In this situation international hospitality employees are constrained between disparate cultures and the special context, resulting in ambiguity and struggle. When customers are not familiar with local culture, and their preference is the native service pattern with which they are more familiar, this can challenge employee service routines that have been established on the basis of local service rules. This conflict between different cultural service patterns expected by customers and service employees is consistent with the concept of cultural diversity discussed in previous literature.

Researchers from different areas have recognised that diversity of culture has a significant impact on intercultural service interactions, and cultural shock has been noted to occur in intercultural service encounters (e.g., Kong, 1998; Stauss & Mang, 1999). As suggested by preceding studies, people from different countries have their distinct ways of establishing and maintaining interpersonal contact which can be reflected in their manner of starting conversation, conducting eye contact, and mutual interaction (Argyle, 1978; Jensen, 1970; William & Young, 1984).

In intercultural service encounters involving parties from the same country, despite sharing the same “script” of service interaction based on their home culture, employees can encounter the problem of blurred position in serving customers of shared ethnicity when customers drive them to comply to their home “script.” Considering the

previously discussed awareness employees have of the working environment and the local interaction patterns they become accustomed to using in attending to customers, this is understandable.

Language modifications made to cater to customers' language preferences are regarded as necessary and quite acceptable by service employees, considering that customers may lack second language competence. However, when it comes to service routines consisting of certain manners and rules that need to be followed, some employees feel modifying the service pattern in serving customers with shared ethnicity is unacceptable, especially when they are "forced" by customers to follow their ways. In these instances, employees feel placed in the ambiguous situation of needing to deviate from the local service pattern and behave differently with others is created. Consistent with previous literature, Chinese employees note that differing culture-related service rules, such as the Chinese call-answer service sequence (Scollon & Scollon, 1991), can result in embarrassment for employees and colleagues from other cultural backgrounds.

5.4 Calls for respect from customers

Prior studies examining how customers react in service encounters when served by employees of the same ethnicity have yielded different results. These results provide hotel practitioners valuable advice contributing to a better understanding of customer-orientation concerning customers' language preferences. Reynolds and Harris (2006) suggested that a general assumption existing in most of the studies about customer-orientation is that all customers will behave in a manner that is reasonable and suitable. While considerable research has identified the positive effect of shared cultural

background in promoting interactions in intercultural settings (e.g., Stauss & Mang, 1999; Montoya & Briggs, 2013), the doubt of the appropriateness of some customers' behaviours is applicable in intercultural service settings involving customers and employees with shared ethnicity. Findings from this study revealed employees identify negative consequences of serving customers in native language as important components in service interactions; speaking the same language can result in the negative consequences of customers perceiving closer relationships and customers affording employees with a lack of respect.

It was noted from the interviews that employees place great emphasis on the respect shown by customers, and most of their group-serving behaviours can be based on the precondition of "if the customer is nice" and "if the customer treats me with respect." According to participants, disrespectful behaviours from customers are attributed to the convenience of speaking native language and the familiarity resulting from a shared cultural background. This kind of familiarity leads to customers behaving more arbitrarily towards employees of the same ethnicity. This is particularly pronounced when customers are not satisfied with the service, as given the choice to express their dissatisfaction in native language can also lead to aggressive customers which puts service employees under more pressure.

The tendency for group-serving behaviour to be influenced by the level of respect afforded to employees is consistent with previous research. According to Tyler et al. (1996), group members' feelings of respect can be reflected in their level of connection to the group. It was found that group members tend to show more group-serving

behaviours, including higher levels of group recognition and consciousness to help other group members, when they receive increased levels of respect (Tyler et al., 1996). Findings of this current study showed employees feel offended when customers take their “customised” native language service for granted, when customers use slang to make request, and when customers ignore employees’ enquiries and offerings. When such situations arise proceeding the initiation of using native language, employees tend to withdraw themselves from the service encounter. This withdrawal behaviour is in line with social psychological research arguing that the respect received from in-group members is closely related to group identification and the group-serving effort of individuals ((Branscombe et al., 2002). More specifically, Sleebos et al. (2006) proposed that disrespected members elicit decreased in-group identification, increased psychological distance from the group, and increased avoidance of being included in the group with the affordance of a low personal status.

Additionally, this study revealed that when disrespectful behaviour is perceived before initiating a conversation, employees will distant themselves from the customer without exposing their in-group identity. Some employees believe that the feeling of being judged comes with the occupation of hospitality work, and note that in intercultural service encounters involving customers from the same country, this feeling can be more salient because of the shared cultural background and social norms. As indicated by Sharma et al. (2009), shared cultural background between customers and service employees contributes to the improvement of predicting behaviours of each other.

As stated in participant interviews (e.g., Ina and Jean), employees evaluate customers and use these evaluations as a reference for service and whether to use native language, and withdrawal behaviour is established on the basis of pre-conceived customer attitudes and behaviours with reference to prior experiences. This tendency to evaluate customers before service takes place is consistent with the findings of Barker and Härtel (2004) that service employees evaluate and categorise customers based on pre-existing attitudes and perceptions generated from previous experiences, and employee behaviour is directed by these evaluations. It is also consistent with the findings that employees may draw on their prior experience of interaction with particular customers to decide their language choice (Gafaranga, 2001). Researchers also show that in the same way that customers prefer to seek service employees with the same cultural background (Härtel & Fujimoto, 2000), service employees also modify their behaviours on the basis of received feedback (Bitner et al., 1994) and seek people whom they prefer to serve according to their evaluations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

5.5 Increased workload following the adoption of native language

When exploring work stressors related to native language use, employees mentioned that customers may expect a higher level of service when served by employees sharing the same ethnicity. This expectation of enhanced service and over-accommodation can create extra workload for service employees, as they have the responsibility to satisfy customers. Employees explained that in experience, customers' expectations and demands increased when they were given the choice of being served in their native language. Employees described customers as more demanding when they realised

service employees could speak their native language. This use of native language meant that employees with shared ethnicity sometimes had to exert more effort to present in-group favouritism behaviours when compared with local staff or staff from other cultures. This view is in line with the statement of Nisbett (2010) that people are usually obliged to help their in-group members, and this phenomenon is more obvious in collectivist cultures.

When the enhanced demands of customers are perceived by service employees to be related to increased workload, the stress concerning choosing the proper language to address customers emerges. This stress stems from the worry of not being able to provide every customer with standard and acceptable service when they are more engaged in dealing with the psychological and physical workload of customers with shared ethnicity. In situation, in order to evade the potential workload, service employees may avoid using native language. However, as was the case with Ella, when employees realise after attempting to hide their ethnic identity that customers have difficulty speaking English, the stress of failing to provide native language service is created again. Therefore, it can be seen that the stress regarding workload in relation to native language use is sometimes a double-edged sword for service employees.

In reviewing international customers' perceptions of intercultural interactions, it is not difficult to understand customers' increased demands. It has been suggested that customers with different cultural backgrounds perceive service encounters significantly differently. This can be reflected in their different attitudes toward service employees and their expectations of the service encounter; this exerts further influence on how

customers interact with service employees and make service assessments (Raajpoot, 2004). In addition to service employees' difficulties in identifying the expectations of customers with various cultural backgrounds, more difficulties and challenges can arise when customers have limited language ability and less experience in intercultural service interactions than they do in domestic service interactions (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). Combining all these issues, it is not surprising that many culturally diverse customers report receiving inequitable service from service employees and perceptions of low service performance and satisfaction (Barker & Härtel, 2004). Taking into account customers' perceptions of inferior service, it is understandable that customers become more demanding and have greater expectations of equal or superior service when they come in contact with employees that conveniently share the same ethnicity and native language. Similar views have been expressed in the study by Montoya and Briggs (2013) which explored how shared ethnicity of three subcultures in the US affects service encounters; according to employees in this study, customers show their desire for preferential treatment from service employees of the same ethnicity to compensate for their less accepted culture and perceived disadvantages as members of minority subcultures in the social context.

Employees from this current study note that customers ask for extra benefits when they learn of shared ethnicity or native language capability. However, without exception, all participants report a preference to provide standard service to all customers, regardless of cultural background, and hesitancy to provide superior service or preferential treatment to customers of shared ethnicity. Employees from this study regard equality in

service as inherent in the nature of hospitality work and regard requesting preferential treatment, whether in terms of discounts or tangible complementary items, to be inappropriate customer behaviour. They also consider obliging such requests as being unfair to other customers. This is in contrast to the findings of prior studies indicating that congruency between customers and service employees in intercultural service encounters may change the nature of resource exchange in the form of service employees allocating resources disproportionately and offering extra benefits and preferential treatment to customers of shared ethnicity (Montoya & Briggs, 2013).

5.6 Employees' perceptions of intimacy shown by customers

Previous literature has acknowledged that when compared with domestic service contexts, intercultural service encounters are fraught with more uncertainty and anxiety (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). In intercultural service contexts which differ from the domestic service contexts that customers are familiar with, customers may need to fulfil their self-enhancement by getting connected with other group members (Hornsey & Gallois, 1998). As a carrier of individual identification (Pavlenko, 2005), native language is used by customers as tool to achieve self-enhancement and in-group identification. The findings of this study may reflect this dynamic, as according to participants, customers tend to show their in-group membership behaviour and express the desire to conduct more conversation when they are aware of the employee's shared ethnicity. When customers lack the language ability or the confidence of using their second language, being served with their native language provides them with the guarantee of getting adequate service which they may

perceive could not be easily received when using a second language. In addition to feeling more at ease with communicating in their native language, customers may feel more comfortable because of the familiarity and relate more intimately with service employees of shared ethnicity.

Participants indicated that they understood customers' feelings because of the familiarity. However, this kind of familiarity often resulted in lengthy conversations. Participants regarded long conversations as an impediment to providing standard service to other customers and as a source of extra workload for their co-workers, as was well reflected in one participant's statement of the fear of becoming one customer's "personal server." When customers show intimacy because of cultural familiarity, they usually initiate a long conversation without the awareness of service employees' responsibility of taking care of other customers. Participants expressed their urge to put an end to the conversation when customer attached too much emotion or intimacy to the employee-customer relationship. Customer expressions of strong in-group identification make service provision stressful for the employee, who may employ an estrangement strategy, as presented in Ina's case, in avoiding further contact and interaction with the customer with the help of colleagues.

As shown in the findings and discussed above, both the workload and the working environment affects service employees' language choice. In situations where service employees provide service in their native language, customer behaviours can impede service employees' productivity and ability to provide acceptable service to all customers, and stress can arise from the use of native language. In collectivist cultures,

mostly in Asian countries, a priority is given to the notion of in-group over the notion of the individual (Singelis & Brown, 1995). For example, in China, where collectivist culture is ruled by Confucianism, interrelatedness is emphasised in Chinese social interactions (Bian & Keller, 1999).

Previous literature has also suggested that according to role theory, both customers and service employees are expected to play their roles appropriately in service encounters (Bitner et al., 1990). In intercultural service encounters, however, when service employees share the same ethnicity with customers, the balance of the employee-customer relationship can be affected by this familiarity because customers may behave in a way that deviates from their expected role. This was found to be true in this study, as participants commented that excessive personal conversation initiated by customers of shared ethnicity resulted in deviation from expected roles, leading to “unprofessional” service procedures.

With the identification of their role as service professionals, participants expressed the discomfort with being impelled by customers to talk about private issues. Even when sharing the same ethnicity with customers, according to participants, a basic and standard customer-employee relationship is regarded as essential in the workplace in consideration of the required professional process of customer service. Participants’ emphasis on their role identification can be reflected by role theory (Solomon et al., 1985), according to which a successful service outcome can only be achieved when both sides are clear about each other’s expectations and behave according to clearly-defined roles. It has been indicated that shared cultures contribute to a mutual

understanding of each other's role expectations (Stauss & Mang, 1999). While applying this idea in service settings where customers and service employees share the same cultural background, the role expectations of each party in the service encounter can sometimes conflict, and difficulties in agreeing on proper roles can arise.

5.7 Summary

In summary, findings highlighted service employees' awareness of customers' language preferences and desire to accommodate customers with native language. In the process of offering service to customers sharing the same ethnicity, choosing the proper language and service pattern turned out to be a challenge for employees because of their ambiguous position in such service contexts. Also, service employees' desire for respect from customers was discussed. In native language service encounters, extra workload is a stressor for employees and this perceived workload can lead to employees' avoidance of native language use. Another important finding is that rather than showing group favouritism, employees fear intimacy shown by customers, which is explained by their consideration for productivity and their professional roles in service settings. Based on the discussion of main findings, this study put forward some suggestions from the managerial perspective. It is advised that employees' attitudes toward their native language use need to be acknowledged and valued by superiors and staff. In addition, specific and concrete measures to improve management in these contexts were recommended.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The great importance of catering to international customers from various cultural backgrounds by providing service in their native language has been recognised by both academic researchers and hospitality practitioners. Customers' native language preferences have been accommodated with a diversity of initiatives ranging from customised menus, multi-language check-in systems, and native language services provided by employees of shared ethnicity, which is also the most researched type of native language service. Focusing on achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty by offering native language service in intercultural service encounters, both fields have neglected the counterpart playing an essential part in these service encounters – the service employee.

Recognising the overlooked significance of service employees' perceptions of the use of native language in service encounters, this study therefore aimed to shed light on the adoption of customers' native language in service interactions from the employee's perspective. In order to achieve the objective of identifying how employees perceive speaking their native language in serving customers shared ethnicity, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 8 front-line employees from Auckland hotels who had the experience of serving customers with their native language. Using thematic analysis, data was then analysed to reveal emergent themes in service employees' perceptions of offering service with their native language and perceptions of work stress related to the adoption of native language in service encounters.

6.2 Summary of main findings

In service encounters involving customers with shared ethnicity, employees' adoption of their native language is a widely-used approach to accommodate international customers with diverse cultural backgrounds. Service employees were found to have multi-layered and in-depth perceptions toward native language use in service interactions.

Various factors directing employees' adoption of English or native language were found.

The first factor was customers' status in service encounters. As recipients of service provided by employees, customers' attitudes and language preferences exerted considerable influence on service employees' language choice. In most situations, service providers will cater to customers' language preferences either by following the customers' language choice or switching to native language when customers show incomprehension of English. Three factors were found to contribute to employees' voluntary adoption of English. Firstly, as the default language in both the host country and the workplace, English was deemed the appropriate language to apply for any service encounter. Secondly, due to employees' knowledge of the multifarious meanings attached to second language use by customers and the consequent distinct language preferences, service employees tended to initiate conversations in English to show their respect and to avoid insulting customers by making assumptions about their ethnicity and second language competence. Thirdly, employees' individual personalities and willingness to show in-group identification and in-group familiarity affected whether they preferred using English in service encounters.

There were several reasons for employees' avoidance of using native language. In some situations, employees tried to conceal their in-group membership from their customers. One reason given for this was that customers tended to be more demanding in service interactions after learning employees could speak their native language, partly because this was more convenient for customers. Therefore, in order to distance themselves from demanding customers and the resulting potential workload, service employees sometimes hid their in-group identity along with their ability to speak the native language. Another repeated reason for concealing identity was that employees felt revealing this resulted in feeling not well respected by customers. Based on their prior experiences and their pre-evaluations of customers, employees reported that they would abort the adoption of native language for service communication. Lastly, the concern of expecting customers to follow local service rules was expressed as customers were found to behave inappropriately in a foreign service setting, wanting only native language service.

In service encounters where native language is adopted to conduct conversations with customers, stress related to the use of native language was identified. Service employees expressed their feelings of being placed in ambiguous positions when required by both customers and supervisors to follow their native service rules in service interactions. Customers' increased demands and the resulting workload was regarded as job stressor that caused extra stress for service employees. Being consciousness of the need to provide quality service to every customer, service employees felt the stress of not being able to perform productively when customers showed excessive in-group familiarity.

In-group familiarity also led to tedious conversations and privacy issues as another stressor for employees in service interactions, especially when the two parties attached different emotions and meanings to their in-group membership relationship. Finally, employees' need to modify their emotions regarding the native language use in service was revealed as another stressor. Both surface acting and deep acting were employed by employees in making the language choice.

6.3 Potential contributions

Native language use in intercultural service interactions has drawn the attention of hospitality researchers and hotel practitioners, and considerable studies have been undertaken to investigate how native language adoption is perceived by international customers, yet there has been a lack of investigation into service employees' perceptions regarding the use of native language in serving customers of shared ethnicity. By providing evidence from a variety of disciplines, for example, culture, marketing, sociolinguistics, and psychology, this dissertation, in width and depth, examined hospitality employees' perceptions of their native language use in intercultural service encounters with customers of shared ethnicity, thus contributing to the knowledge gap in research fields regarding the native language use in international service encounters. This study provides evidence of employees' overall perceptions on offering native language service in intercultural service contexts. Considering that prior studies were conducted on the assumption of employees' willingness to talk in their native language with customers from their country, these findings are new to the hospitality service literature, and they identify factors that lead to the adoption of

English and the avoidance of native language. Furthermore, this study potentially contributes to the work stress and emotional labour literature regarding international hospitality employees' language choice in service encounters involving customers of the same ethnicity. Role conflict and role ambiguity in employees' decision-making regarding the use of native language were identified as stressors when examining the issue from the perspective of work stress theory. Additionally, deep acting and surface acting were found to be adopted in service employees' language decision-making.

Findings of this study suggest that in intercultural service encounters, service employees' native language use is a converged result of many factors. It can be noted that how service employees perceive their native language use has been largely neglected by hotel practitioners. In consideration of the role that language plays in service industries, this study poses several implications for hotel marketers.

Firstly, employees are vulnerable to the negative consequences of the adoption of their native language. This can be seen from the stress they experience as a result of speaking their native language when serving customers of shared ethnicity. Considering that employees are an essential component in customer service, the challenge for managers is to identify different international customers' language preferences and employees' attitudes toward using their native language. In light of the diverse cultural backgrounds of customers from all over the world speaking different languages, it would be unfeasible to identify every minority language used in the workplace. However, it would be feasible to focus on the languages used by relatively larger customer groups, and after identifying these, to exercise more care in managing employees with the

ability to speak these languages. It is essential that when allocating tasks requiring the adoption of employees' native languages, supervisors and managers are aware of employees' psychology and behaviour in such service encounters.

Secondly, based on the understanding provided by this study of employees' perceptions of speaking their native language, corresponding coping strategies can be employed to avoid and alleviate employee stress resulting from the use of native language. Take the example of the case of being asked to sing the birthday song for Korean customers in this study; if the provision of native language service is not a part of job description, then special tasks such as this one should only be assigned to employees with their permission. Also, organisations should try to be innovative throughout their service process. In order to lighten the workload of employees speaking the same native language as customers, multi-language services such as online check-in/check-out and reservation facilities, should be provided. In food and beverage departments, menus in different languages ought to be accessible for customers preferring native language. Furthermore, even though service employees are shown to have knowledge of customers' preferences in intercultural service encounters, workshops concerning customer behaviour in service encounters should be offered to hotel service employees. In addition, related organisational guidance and policy might help employees better understand customers' preferences and position themselves appropriately in specific service encounters.

6.4 Limitations and implications for future study

This was a qualitative study with a small sample size, which limits the statistically reliable generalisation of the findings to a larger population in the hospitality industry.

The data was only collected in Auckland, New Zealand, so generalisability of findings to wider populations, such as to hospitality workplaces in other areas in New Zealand, may be limited. The same could also be said for generalising findings to populations in the hospitality industry outside of the New Zealand market; however, as mentioned in Chapter 3, given New Zealand's multi-cultural climate, the findings of this study may still have relevance for other markets.

Another limitation is that all of the participants in this study are from collectivist culture with a relatively high power distance. Even though the population sample to some extent reflects the workforce demographics of New Zealand's hospitality industry, the relatively high power distance of the participants' native culture may have affected their perceptions of their relationships with customers, and this may have exerted more influence on their language choice with customers of shared ethnicity than may occur in participants from other cultures. Therefore, hospitality and marketing researchers could replicate this study with hospitality employees from relatively low power distance cultures and find out if the particularity of the current findings also applies to a larger population that represents various cultural backgrounds. By doing this, more perspectives might be yielded which would contribute to the knowledge of native language use in intercultural service contexts.

As a qualitative study, this study investigated international hospitality employees' perceptions of their native language use in specific service encounters by presenting and interpreting their experiences in service settings. Qualitative studies do not deeply analyse the constructs to discover whether the findings are statistically significant. Future studies can be conducted using quantitative methods to provide deeper insight into the nature and meaning of the data by testing specific hypotheses.

References

- Ali, A. J. (2007). The sovereign customer. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal*, 17(1/2).
- Allen, V. L., & Wilder, D. A. (1975). Categorization, belief similarity, and intergroup discrimination. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 32(6), 971.
- Angouri, J. (2013). The multilingual reality of the multinational workplace: Language policy and language use. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(6), 564-581.
- Argyle, M. (1978). *The psychology of interpersonal behaviour (4th ed.)*: Penquin Books.
- Arnould, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), 868-882.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. (1993). Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. *Academy of management review*, 18(1), 88-115.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of management review*, 14(1), 20-39.
- Baker, S. E., Edwards, R., & Doidge, M. (2012). How many qualitative interviews is enough?: Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research.
- Bakker, A. B., Schaufeli, W. B., Sixma, H. J., Bosveld, W., & Van Dierendonck, D. (2000). Patient demands, lack of reciprocity, and burnout: A five-year longitudinal study among general practitioners. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 425-441.
- Barker, S., & Härtel, C. E. (2004). Intercultural service encounters: An exploratory study of customer experiences. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 11(1), 3-14.
- Bendapudi, N., & Berry, L. L. (1997). Customers' motivations for maintaining relationships with service providers. *Journal of Retailing*, 73(1), 15-37.
- Bernsten, J. (1994). English and Shona in Zimbabwe. *World Englishes*, 13(3), 411-418.

- Bian, W.-Q., & Keller, L. R. (1999). Patterns of fairness judgments in North America and the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 8(3), 301-320.
- Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Mohr, L. A. (1994). Critical service encounters: The employee's viewpoint. *the Journal of Marketing*, 95-106.
- Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Tetreault, M. S. (1990). The service encounter: diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *the Journal of Marketing*, 71-84.
- Blaikie, N. (1993). Approaches to social enquiry. *Contemporary Sociology*, 24(24).
- Boksberger, P. E., & Melsen, L. (2011). Perceived value: a critical examination of definitions, concepts and measures for the service industry. *Journal of Services marketing*, 25(3), 229-240.
- Bond, M. H., & Lai, T.-M. (1986). Embarrassment and code-switching into a second language. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 126(2), 179-186.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*: sage.
- Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., Ellemers, N., & Doosje, B. (2002). Intragroup and intergroup evaluation effects on group behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(6), 744-753.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brewer, J., & Hunter, A. (1989). *Multimethod research: A synthesis of styles*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Brien, A. (2004). The New Zealand Hotel Industry-Vacancies Increase: While Applicant Numbers and Caliber Decrease. *International journal of hospitality & tourism administration*, 5(1), 87-104.
- Brotheridge, C. M., & Lee, R. T. (2002). Testing a conservation of resources model of the dynamics of emotional labor. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 7(1), 57.
- Brown, T. J., Mowen, J. C., Donavan, D. T., & Licata, J. W. (2002). The customer orientation of service workers: Personality trait effects on self-and supervisor performance ratings. *Journal of marketing research*, 39(1), 110-119.

- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods*: Oxford University Press, USA.
- Brymer, R. A., Perrewé, P. L., & Johns, T. R. (1991). Managerial job stress in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 10(1), 47-58.
- Burke, P. J., & Tully, J. C. (1977). The measurement of role identity. *Social forces*, 55(4), 881-897.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis* (Vol. 248): London: Heinemann.
- Callahan, L. (2005). 'Talking Both Languages ': 20 Perspectives on the Use of Spanish and English Inside and Outside the Workplace. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 26(4), 275-295.
- Callahan, L. (2006). English or Spanish?! Language accommodation in New York City service encounters. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 3(1), 29-53.
- Chell, E. (1985). *Participation and organization: A social psychological approach*: Springer.
- Chiang, F. F., Birtch, T. A., & Kwan, H. K. (2010). The moderating roles of job control and work-life balance practices on employee stress in the hotel and catering industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 25-32.
- Claus, B., Geyskens, K., Millet, K., & Dewitte, S. (2012). The referral backfire effect: The identity-threatening nature of referral failure. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 29(4), 370-379.
- Clément, R., Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language The Effects of Context, Norms, and Vitality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 22(2), 190-209.
- Cocks, J. (2012). *The Oppositional Imagination (RLE Feminist Theory): Feminism, Critique and Political Theory*: Routledge.
- Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). Qualitative research guidelines project.
- Cooper, H. (2016). *Research synthesis and meta-analysis: A step-by-step approach* (Vol. 2): Sage publications.
- Cordes, C. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (1993). A review and an integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of management review*, 18(4), 621-656.

- Coulter, K. S., & Coulter, R. A. (2002). Determinants of trust in a service provider: the moderating role of length of relationship. *Journal of Services marketing*, 16(1), 35-50.
- Cranwell-Ward, J. (1998). Stress. In Poole, M., Warner, M.(Eds.), *The Handbook of Human Resource Management* (p. 285). London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Crawford, J., Kippax, S., Onyx, J., Gault, U., & Benton, P. (1992). *Emotion and gender: Constructing meaning from memory*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*: Sage publications.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*: Sage.
- Daly, K. (1995). How persons generate theory: Second order stories Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Symposium on Interpreting Qualitative Data, Annual Conference, National Council on Family Relations, Portland, OR
- Dann, D. (1990). The nature of managerial work in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 9(4), 319-334.
- De Ruyter, K., Wetzels, M., & Feinberg, R. (2001). Role stress in call centers: Its effects on employee performance and satisfaction. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 15(2), 23-35.
- Deery, S., Iverson, R., & Walsh, J. (2002). Work relationships in telephone call centres: Understanding emotional exhaustion and employee withdrawal. *Journal of Management studies*, 39(4), 471-496.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*: Sage publications, inc.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). *Strategies of qualitative research*: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (Vol. 3): Sage.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical education*, 40(4), 314-321.

- Dormann, C., & Zapf, D. (2002). Social stressors at work, irritation, and depressive symptoms: Accounting for unmeasured third variables in a multi-wave study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 75(1), 33-58.
- Dormann, C., & Zapf, D. (2004). Customer-related social stressors and burnout. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 9(1), 61.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language learning*, 53(S1), 3-32.
- Ellis, C., Kiesinger, C. E., & Tillmann-Healy, L. M. (1997). Interactive interviewing: Talking about emotional experience. *Reflexivity and voice*, 119-149.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.
- Farber, M. (1943). *The foundation of phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and the quest for a rigorous science of philosophy* (Vol. 9): Transaction Publishers.
- Faugier, J., & Sargeant, M. (1997). Sampling hard to reach populations. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 26(4), 790-797. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.00371.x
- Faulkner, B., & Patiar, A. (1997). Workplace induced stress among operational staff in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 16(1), 99-117.
- Fernandez, A., Schillinger, D., Grumbach, K., Rosenthal, A., Stewart, A. L., Wang, F., & Pérez-Stable, E. J. (2004). Physician language ability and cultural competence. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 19(2), 167-174.
- Field, H. (1982). Realism and relativism. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 79(10), 553-567.
- Friend, L., & Thompson, S. (2003). Identity, ethnicity and gender: Using narratives to understand their meaning in retail shopping encounters. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 6(1), 23-41.
- Frone, M. R. (1999). Developmental consequences of youth employment.
- Fylan, F. (2005). Semi-structured interviewing. *A handbook of research methods for clinical and health psychology*, 65-78.
- Gafaranga, J. (2001). Language versus Medium in the Study of Bilingual Conversion. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 5(2), 195-219.
- Gay, P. D., & Salaman, G. (1992). The cult [ure] of the customer. *Journal of Management studies*, 29(5), 615-633.

- Genesee, F. (2003). Bilingual acquisition: Exploring the limits of the language faculty Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Key Note Address given at the ISB4 Conference, Tempe
- Glaser, B. G. (2016). Open Coding Descriptions: SOCIOLOGY PRESS PO BOX 400, MILL VALLEY, CA 94942 USA.
- Glaser, D. N., Tatum, B. C., Nebeker, D. M., Sorenson, R. C., & Aiello, J. R. (1999). Workload and social support: Effects on performance and stress. *Human Performance*, 12(2), 155-176.
- Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry*, 18(3), 213-231.
- Gopinath, M., & Glassman, M. (2008). The effect of multiple language product descriptions on product evaluations. *Psychology & Marketing*, 25(3), 233-261.
- Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 5(1), 95.
- Grant, B. M., & Giddings, L. S. (2002). Making sense of methodologies: A paradigm framework for the novice researcher. *Contemporary nurse*, 13(1), 10-28.
- Gray, D. E. (2013). *Doing research in the real world*: Sage.
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 11(3), 255-274.
- Gremler, D. D., Jo Bitner, M., & Evans, K. R. (1994). The internal service encounter. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5(2), 34-56.
- Grönroos, C. (2007). *Service management and marketing: customer management in service competition*: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of pragmatics*, 14(2), 237-257.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). Effective evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches. *Journal of Higher Education*, 54(54), 339.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). FOURTH GENERATION EVALUATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE. *Educational Horizons*, 63(4), 139-141.

- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2(163-194), 105.
- Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: Is there a feminist method. *S Harding Feminism & Methodology*.
- Härtel, C. E., & Fujimoto, Y. (2000). Diversity is not the Problem–Openness to Perceived Dissimilarity is. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 6(01), 14-27.
- Heinonen, K., & Strandvik, T. (2005). Communication as an element of service value. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 16(2), 186-198.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., & Gremler, D. D. (2002). Understanding relationship marketing outcomes an integration of relational benefits and relationship quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(3), 230-247.
- Hill, C. E., Thompson, B. J., & Williams, E. N. (1997). A guide to conducting consensual qualitative research. *The counseling psychologist*, 25(4), 517-572.
- Hinkin, T. R., & Tracey, J. B. (2000). The cost of turnover: Putting a price on the learning curve. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 144-121.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American journal of sociology*, 551-575.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*: Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Holmqvist, J. (2011). Consumer language preferences in service encounters: a cross-cultural perspective. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 21(2), 178-191.
- Holmqvist, J., & Grönroos, C. (2012a). How does language matter for services? Challenges and propositions for service research. *Journal of Service Research*, 15(4), 430-442.
- Holmqvist, J., & Grönroos, C. (2012b). How does language matter for services? Challenges and propositions for service research. *Journal of Service Research*, 1094670512441997.
- Holmqvist, J., & Van Vaerenbergh, Y. (2013). Perceived importance of native language use in service encounters. *The Service Industries Journal*, 33(15-16), 1659-1671.

- Holmqvist, J., Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Dahlén, M. (2013a). The language backfire effect: do customers always prefer to be served in their strongest language? Symposium conducted at the meeting of the European Marketing Academy (EMAC)-conference
- Holmqvist, J., Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Dahlén, M. (2013b). The language backfire effect: should service providers always serve customers in their strongest language? Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Frontiers in Service Conference
- Holmqvist, J., Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Grönroos, C. (2014). Consumer willingness to communicate in a second language: Communication in service settings. *Management Decision*, 52(5), 950-966.
- Homburg, C., Wieseke, J., & Bornemann, T. (2009). Implementing the marketing concept at the employee–customer interface: the role of customer need knowledge. *Journal of marketing*, 73(4), 64-81.
- Hon, A. H., Chan, W. W., & Lu, L. (2013). Overcoming work-related stress and promoting employee creativity in hotel industry: The role of task feedback from supervisor. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 416-424.
- Hong-kit Yim, F., Anderson, R. E., & Swaminathan, S. (2004). Customer relationship management: Its dimensions and effect on customer outcomes. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 24(4), 263-278.
- Hornsey, M., & Gallois, C. (1998). The impact of interpersonal and intergroup communication accommodation on perceptions of Chinese students in Australia. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 17(3), 323-347.
- Huber, J., & McCann, J. (1982). The impact of inferential beliefs on product evaluations. *Journal of marketing research*, 324-333.
- Hunter, G. K., & Perreault Jr, W. D. (2007). Making sales technology effective. *Journal of marketing*, 71(1), 16-34.
- Hwang, K.-k. (1987). Face and favor: The Chinese power game. *American journal of sociology*, 92(4), 944-974.
- Hymes, D. H., & Gumperz, J. J. (1972). *Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Jensen, J. V. (1970). *Perspectives on oral communication*: Holbrook Press.

- Jetten, J., Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., & McKimmie, B. M. (2003). Predicting the paths of peripherals: The interaction of identification and future possibilities. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(1), 130-140.
- Johanson, M. M., & Woods, R. H. (2008). Recognizing the emotional element in service excellence. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 49(3), 310-316.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Jung, H. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2013). Is the individual or the organization the cause of hotel employees' stress? A longitudinal study on differences in role stress between subjects. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 494-499.
- Kang, J., & Hyun, S. S. (2012). Effective communication styles for the customer-oriented service employee: Inducing dedicational behaviors in luxury restaurant patrons. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 772-785.
- Kang, S.-J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System*, 33(2), 277-292.
- Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 285-308.
- Kim, H. J. (2008). Hotel service providers' emotional labor: The antecedents and effects on burnout. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2), 151-161.
- Kim, Y. Y., & Gudykunst, W. B. (1988). *Theories in intercultural communication* (Vol. 12): ERIC.
- Kitchin, R., & Tate, N. J. (2000). Conducting research into human geography. *Theory, methodology &*
- Kong, K. C. (1998). Politeness of service encounters in Hong Kong. *Pragmatics*, 8, 555-576.
- Korczynski, M. (2002). *Human resource management in service work*: Palgrave.
- Kraak, J. M., & Holmqvist, J. (2016). The authentic service employee: Service employees' language use for authentic service experiences. *Journal of Business Research*.

- Krishnan, A., & Berry, J. W. (1992). Acculturative Stress and Acculturation Attitudes Among Indian Immigrants to the United States. *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 4(2), 187-212.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS: Revolutionary View of the History of Science: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. *The Physics Teacher*, 8(2), 96-98.
- Kuhn, T. S. (2012). *The structure of scientific revolutions*: University of Chicago press.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews* (Vol. 2): Sage, London, UK.
- Lacey, R., Suh, J., & Morgan, R. M. (2007). Differential effects of preferential treatment levels on relational outcomes. *Journal of Service Research*, 9(3), 241-256.
- Lam, W., & Chen, Z. (2012). When I put on my service mask: Determinants and outcomes of emotional labor among hotel service providers according to affective event theory. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(1), 3-11.
- Levitt, T. (1960). Marketing myopia. *Harvard Business Review*, 38(4), 24-47.
- Lim, T. S., & Bowers, J. W. (1991). Facework solidarity, approbation, and tact. *Human communication research*, 17(3), 415-450.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 4, 97-128.
- Lo, A. K., Lynch Jr, J. G., & Staelin, R. (2007). How to attract customers by giving them the short end of the stick. *Journal of marketing research*, 44(1), 128-141.
- Longhurst, R. (2003). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. *Key methods in geography*, 117-132.
- Luna, D., & Peracchio, L. A. (2001). Moderators of language effects in advertising to bilinguals: A psycholinguistic approach. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(2), 284-295.
- Luna, D., & Peracchio, L. A. (2005). Sociolinguistic effects on code-switched ads targeting bilingual consumers. *Journal of Advertising*, 34(2), 43-56.

- MacIntyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language: Understanding the decision to speak as a volitional process. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(4), 564-576.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545-562.
- Mann, L. (1986). Contributions to cross-cultural psychology: An introduction. *Australian journal of psychology*, 38(3), 195-202.
- Martin, C. L., & Adams, S. (1999). Behavioral biases in the service encounter: empowerment by default? *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 17(4), 192-201.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: qualitative social research
- McCormick Jr, A. E., & Kinloch, G. C. (1986). Interracial contact in the customer-clerk situation. *The Journal of social psychology*, 126(4), 551-553.
- McCouat, M., & Peile, C. (1995). The micro politics of qualitative research traditions. *Qualitative research: Beyond the boundaries*, 2-16.
- Mertens, D. M. (2014). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*: Sage publications.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.*
- Montoya, D. Y., & Briggs, E. (2013). Shared ethnicity effects on service encounters: A study across three US subcultures. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(3), 314-320.
- Mortensen, J. (2014). Epistemic stance marking in the use of English as a lingua franca : A comparative study of the pragmatic functions of epistemic stance. *Quill & Quire*, 49(73), 336-337.
- Moyle, W. (2002). Unstructured interviews: challenges when participants have a major depressive illness. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 39(3), 266-273.
- Mudie, P. (2003). Internal customer: by design or by default. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(9), 1261-1276.

- Muzaini, H. (2006). Backpacking Southeast Asia: strategies of "looking local". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 144-161.
- Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative-quantitative research methodology: Exploring the interactive continuum*: SIU Press.
- Ng, S. H., & Tajfel, H. (1982). Power and intergroup discrimination. *Social identity and intergroup relations*, 179-206.
- Nisbett, R. (2010). *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and*: Simon and Schuster.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 11(4), 327-344.
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*: Sage.
- O'Neill, J. W., & Davis, K. (2011). Work stress and well-being in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 385-390.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2005). On becoming a pragmatic researcher: The importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 8(5), 375-387.
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information systems research*, 2(1), 1-28.
- Pan, Y. (2000). Facework in Chinese service encounters. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 10(1), 25-61.
- Paswan, A. K., & Ganesh, G. (2005). Cross-cultural interaction comfort and service evaluation. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 18(1-2), 93-115.
- Patterson, P. G., & Mattila, A. S. (2008). An examination of the impact of cultural orientation and familiarity in service encounter evaluations. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19(5), 662-681.
- Pavlenko, A. (2005). *Emotions and multilingualism*: Cambridge University Press.
- Phillips, D. C., & Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Postpositivism and educational research*: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pizam, A. (2004). Are hospitality employees equipped to hide their feelings?

- Postmes, T., & Branscombe, N. R. (2002). Influence of long-term racial environmental composition on subjective well-being in African Americans. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 83(3), 735.
- Raajpoot, N. (2004). Reconceptualizing service encounter quality in a non-western context. *Journal of Service Research*, 7(2), 181-201.
- Rafaeli, A., & Sutton, R. I. (1989). The expression of emotion in organizational life. *Research in organizational behavior*, 11(1), 1-42.
- Ragin, C. C. (1992). Introduction: Cases of "What is a case?". *What is a Case*, 1-17.
- Ragin, C. C., & Becker, H. S. (1992). *What is a case?: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*: Cambridge university press.
- Redondo-Bellón, I. (1999). The effects of bilingualism on the consumer: the case of Spain. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(11/12), 1136-1160.
- Reeves, N. B. (1990). The foreign language needs of UK-based corporations. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 511(1), 60-73.
- Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. W. (2002). Cultural differences between Asian tourist markets and Australian hosts, Part 1. *Journal of travel research*, 40(3), 295-315.
- Reynolds, K. L., & Harris, L. C. (2006). Deviant customer behavior: An exploration of frontline employee tactics. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 14(2), 95-111.
- Ricento, T. (2006). Theoretical perspectives in language policy: An overview. *An introduction to language policy. Theory and method*, 3-9.
- Rizal, H., Jeng, D. J.-F., & Chang, H. H. (2016). The role of ethnicity in domestic intercultural service encounters. *Service Business*, 10(2), 263-282.
- Ross, G. F. (1995). Work stress and personality measures among hospitality industry employees. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 7(6), 9-13.
- Sadi, M. A., & Henderson, J. C. (2005). Local versus Foreign Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry A Saudi Arabian Perspective. *Cornell hotel and restaurant administration quarterly*, 46(2), 247-257.
- Saxe, R., & Weitz, B. A. (1982). The SOCO scale: A measure of the customer orientation of salespeople. *Journal of marketing research*, 343-351.

- Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). Maslach burnout inventory-general survey. *The Maslach burnout inventory-test manual*, 1, 19-26.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, W., Suzanne. (1991). Topic confusion in English-Asian discourse. *World Englishes*, 10(2), 113-125.
- Shani, A., Uriely, N., Reichel, A., & Ginsburg, L. (2014). Emotional labor in the hospitality industry: The influence of contextual factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 37, 150-158.
- Sharma, P., Tam, J. L., & Kim, N. (2009). Demystifying intercultural service encounters toward a comprehensive conceptual framework. *Journal of Service Research*, 12(2), 227-242.
- Sheth, J. N., Sisodia, R. S., & Sharma, A. (2000). The antecedents and consequences of customer-centric marketing. *Journal of the Academy of marketing Science*, 28(1), 55-66.
- Sieber, S. D. (1973). The Integration of Fieldwork and Survey Methods. *American journal of sociology*, 78(Volume 78, Number 6), 1335-1359.
- Simon, B., & Stürmer, S. (2003). Respect for group members: Intragroup determinants of collective identification and group-serving behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(2), 183-193.
- Singelis, T. M., & Brown, W. J. (1995). Culture, self, and collectivist communication linking culture to individual behavior. *Human communication research*, 21(3), 354-389.
- Singh, J. (2000). Performance productivity and quality of frontline employees in service organizations. *Journal of marketing*, 64(2), 15-34.
- Singh, J., & Sirdeshmukh, D. (2000). Agency and trust mechanisms in consumer satisfaction and loyalty judgments. *Journal of the Academy of marketing Science*, 28(1), 150-167.
- Sizoo, S., Plank, R., Iskat, W., & Serrie, H. (2005). The effect of intercultural sensitivity on employee performance in cross-cultural service encounters. *Journal of Services marketing*, 19(4), 245-255.
- Sleebos, E., Ellemers, N., & de Gilder, D. (2006). The paradox of the disrespected: Disrespected group members' engagement in group-serving efforts. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42(4), 413-427.
- Slife, B. D., & Williams, R. N. (1995). *What's behind the research?: Discovering hidden assumptions in the behavioral sciences*: Sage.

- Solomon, M. R., Surprenant, C., Czepiel, J. A., & Gutman, E. G. (1985). A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: the service encounter. *the Journal of Marketing*, 99-111.
- Stauss, B., & Mang, P. (1999). "Culture shocks" in inter-cultural service encounters? *Journal of Services marketing*, 13(4/5), 329-346.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of social issues*, 41(3), 157-175.
- Svensson, G. (2006). New aspects of research into service encounters and service quality. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 17(3), 245-257.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, 33(47), 74.
- Tolich, M. B. (1993). Alienating And Liberating Emotions At Work Supermarket Clerks' Performance Of Customer Service. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22(3), 361-381.
- Tyler, T., Degoey, P., & Smith, H. (1996). Understanding why the justice of group procedures matters: A test of the psychological dynamics of the group-value model. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 70(5), 913.
- Tyler, T. R., & Lind, E. A. (1992). A relational model of authority in groups. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 25, 115-191.
- Van Maanen, J., & Kunda, G. (1989). 'Real Feelings': Emotional Expression and Organizational Culture. *Cellular Immunology*, 13(2), 230-240.
- Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Holmqvist, J. (2013). Speak my language if you want my money: Service language's influence on consumer tipping behavior. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(8), 1276-1292.
- Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Holmqvist, J. (2014). Examining the relationship between language divergence and word-of-mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(8), 1601-1608.
- Wagatsuma, H., & Rosett, A. (1986). The implications of apology: Law and culture in Japan and the United States. *Law and Society Review*, 461-498.
- Wang, C.-Y., Miao, L., & Mattila, A. S. (2015). Customer responses to intercultural communication accommodation strategies in hospitality service encounters. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 51, 96-104.

- William, G., & Young, Y. K. (1984). Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication. *Bridges Not Walls*, 429-442.
- Wilmot, A. (2005). Designing sampling strategies for qualitative social research: with particular reference to the Office for National Statistics' Qualitative Respondent Register. *SURVEY METHODOLOGY BULLETIN-OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS*-, 56, 53.
- Wu, L. L., & Mattila, A. (2013). Investigating consumer embarrassment in service interactions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 196-202.
- Zohar, D. (1994). Analysis of job stress profile in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 13(3), 219-231.

Appendix A – Ethical Approval



AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

AUT

23 February 2017

David Williamson
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear David

Ethics Application: 17/35 **An examination of international employees' use of native languages in service encounters in the hospitality industry**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to confirm that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has approved your ethics application for three years until 20 February 2020.

AUTEC recommends advising the participants that interviews will take place at AUT and suggests that participants are given the opportunity to review their transcripts. AUTEC also observed that the meaning of 'default' in the context of this research be briefly explained in the Information Sheet.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 20 February 2020;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 20 February 2020 or on completion of the project;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: cbg6018@gmail.com

Appendix B – Information Letter



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

01 /02 /2017

Project Title

An examination of international employees' use of native languages in service encounters in the hospitality industry

An Invitation

Dear participants,

My name is Tingting Chen, a Master student majoring in International Hospitality Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in New Zealand. I am currently undertaking a research project concerning international hospitality employees' native language use in service encounters. The project is a part of my dissertation to complete my qualification.

This research aims to explore international hospitality employees' native language (not the default language) use in service encounters. The study will focus on investigating employees' perceptions on speaking their own native language in serving customers with the same ethnicity. As an international hospitality employee in Auckland, you are considered in an ideal position to give valuable information with your experiences. I cordially invite you to take part in this research.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research is being undertaken as part of my qualification, and the likely output of this research will be a dissertation or academic publication and presentation.

Considering that limited research has been conducted in investigating employees' perception on their native language use in service encounters, this research will make potential academic and managerial contribution to a better understanding of employees' native language use in service encounters.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

The recruitment applied for this research is snowball sampling technique. The potential participants for this research are recruited by the researcher's personal network. The researcher's acquaintances (e.g., friends, colleagues) were first contacted and informed about the research, and they suggested potential participants to the researcher. As you work in the hospitality industry in Auckland, New Zealand and English is not your native language, I consider that you might have the experience of using your native language in serving customers with the same ethnicity, therefore, you are invited to take part in the research.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you have the intention to participate in this research, a Consent Form will be sent to you. You will give your consent to the participation to this research by signing the Consent Form. However, your participation in this research is completely voluntary and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

The research will be conducted in the form of face-to-face interview. Some questions will be asked by the researcher concerning the native language use in service encounters and you will be invited to share your experience of speaking your native language in serving customers sharing the same ethnicity with you. You have the right to skip any questions and withdraw from the interview at any time.

The data collected from you will only be used for the purpose of the research, and the Consent Form you signed will only be valid on this condition.

What are the discomforts and risks?

As the research is related with cultural diversity and ethnicity, there might be slight discomforts caused by the topics.

As this is a workplace-related research, it is possible that you may mention some of your colleagues and superiors in addressing your stories which might lead to potential risks.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you feel any discomforts and risks with any questions or topics, you have the right to skip the questions, terminate the topics and withdraw from the study. You have the right to have your data removed.

Any identifiable information of both the participants and individuals mentioned by the participants will be avoided in the final report and all collected data will only be used for this research.

What are the benefits?

The research is an important part of the completion of my Master study and will assist me in obtaining the qualification of Master.

This research will yield potential contribution to better understanding international hospitality employees' native language use in service encounters and to assisting hotel practitioners in dealing with cultural diversity in the workplace.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost may include transportation to the location where the research will be conducted.

The cost of time for this research will depend on individuals. Normally, the research will take between 20 – 60 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have your right in deciding whether or not to participate in this research. And you are welcome to anticipate in this research before March 30th.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

The completed dissertation will be emailed to all participants. What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, David Williamson, david.williamson@aut.ac.nz, 9 921 9999 ext 8448.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

For any further information about this project, please feel free to contact the research: Tingting Chen, cbg6018@gmail.com. Project supervisor: David Williamson, david.williamson@aut.ac.nz.

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tingting Chen, cbg6018@gmail.com.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

David Williamson, david.williamson@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23.02.2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/35.

Appendix C – Consent Form



Consent Form

Project title: An examination of international employees' use of native language in service encounters in the hospitality industry

Project Supervisor: David Williamson

Researcher: Tingting Chen

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated .
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23.02.2017 AUTEK Reference number 17/35

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D – Interview Questions



Interview Questions

Project title: An examination of international employees' use of native languages in service encounters in the hospitality industry

Project Supervisor: David Williamson

Researcher: Tingting Chen

1. Do you feel it is different to serve English-speaking customers and customers who speak the same language as you? What is the difference?
2. How do you usually start a conversation when you think that the customer may speak the same language as you? /from your country?
3. If a customer speaks to you in English and you know that he/she speaks the same language as you, how do you react? Do you switch to your language or continue in English? Why? Under what kind of situation will you change to your native language?
4. Have you ever experienced when a customer comes to you talking in your language? How do you react? Do you switch to your language or continue in English? Why?
5. How do you think these customers want to be served? With native language or English? If they want to be served with ... what do you think the reasons are?
6. When customers show that they want to be served in a certain language, do you always follow their language choice? How do you feel when you change your language to adapt to customers' preference?
7. Basically, when serving customers speaking the same language as you, do you have a routine in mind to follow and know how to provide the service or you find yourself in an ambiguous situation?
8. How do you identify your role in such service encounters? Do you tend to treat them differently or you treat them like local customers and other international customers?
9. When you speak your own language to serve the customers, how do they respond to your service with your native language?

10. Have you ever experienced when customers ask for some preferential treatment or extra benefits just because you come from the same country or speak the same language? How do you feel when this happens?
11. Have you ever answered in English when a customer talked to you in your language? Can you explain why you choose to speak English?
12. In your workplace, is there any policy requires you to attend to some customers with your own language? Can you remember being required by anyone to serve customers in your language? What do you think of this kind of requirements?
13. Generally speaking, when attending to customers speaking the same language as you, do you feel any stress compared with serving other customers? Was there any service experience that makes you feel stressful?
14. How do you find these stressful service experiences influencing yourself or your work?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience in serving customers who speak the same language as you?

Appendix E – Coding Example

Page	Quotes	Coding
1	I would start with English first	Start with English
1	If the customer speaks English well and keeps in English, then I will also keep in English.	As long as can understand keep in English
1	If the customer speaks English well and keeps in English, then I will also keep in English.	Follow customer Language choice
2	If customer speaks in English, then I will speak English	
3	if they speak Korean, I will speak Korean as well, if they speak English, then I will speak English as they do.	
7	but if they speak English to me, then I will just follow them	
1	like Korean people come here for travel or something, I can see if they are struggling with speaking English, then I would say: Ah, are you Korean? So I will speak in Korean so they can understand.... But if I see like he has some problem with English, then I will speak English so he will feel more comfortable... Because I can tell if they are Korean or not, then I will ask: Are you Korean? If they say yes, I will change to Korean.	Change to native When customers have difficulty
2	Then I will ask if they are Korean, then I can let me speak Korean to me because I can understand, so we can understand each other easily.	
7	If I find them struggling with speaking English, then I will help them	
2	...because some people, you know, want to speak English even that we are from the same country... maybe they are just traveling or something, and they don't really feel like they need to speak Korean when can speak English. When they come to a restaurant, they just need to eat something and leave, and he can speak English, maybe he doesn't feel like he need to speak Korean with us.	Aware of customers' willing to speak