



## CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND ENGLISH COMMUNICATION QUALITY IN F&B SERVICE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRAK

*Globalisasi industri perhotelan menuntut lulusan yang tidak hanya kompeten secara linguistik, tetapi juga secara interkultural. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran pemahaman lintas budaya sebagai penentu kualitas komunikasi bahasa Inggris mahasiswa dalam praktik layanan Food and Beverage (F&B) di pendidikan perhotelan. Studi ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan melibatkan 33 mahasiswa melalui simulasi layanan restoran. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik berdasarkan kerangka Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa meskipun sebagian besar mahasiswa memiliki kemampuan dasar bahasa Inggris, hanya sedikit yang menunjukkan pemahaman lintas budaya yang memadai. Permasalahan utama meliputi penggunaan bahasa yang terlalu langsung, bentuk sapaan yang kurang tepat, lemahnya strategi kesantunan, serta interferensi bahasa pertama. Sebaliknya, mahasiswa dengan kesadaran interkultural yang lebih tinggi mampu menggunakan bahasa secara kontekstual, menjaga kesantunan, dan menyesuaikan komunikasi secara efektif dalam interaksi layanan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pemahaman lintas budaya berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kualitas komunikasi, melampaui aspek akurasi linguistik hingga mencakup kesesuaian budaya dan kompetensi interaksional. Oleh karena itu, integrasi aspek interkultural dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan pelatihan vokasional perhotelan menjadi sangat penting untuk mempersiapkan mahasiswa menghadapi komunikasi dalam lingkungan layanan global.*

**Kata Kunci:** *pemahaman lintas budaya; kompetensi komunikatif interkultural; komunikasi bahasa Inggris; layanan F&B; pendidikan perhotelan; kualitas komunikasi*

### ABSTRACT

The globalization of the hospitality industry requires graduates who are not only linguistically competent but also interculturally capable. This study examines the role of cross-cultural understanding as a determinant of students' English communication quality in Food and Beverage (F&B) service practice within hospitality education. A qualitative design was employed, involving 33 students participating in simulated restaurant service interactions. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed thematically based on the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework. The findings reveal that although most students demonstrate basic English proficiency, only a few exhibit adequate cross-cultural understanding. Key issues include

overly direct language use, inappropriate forms of address, weak politeness strategies, and first language interference. In contrast, students with higher intercultural awareness are better able to use context-appropriate language, maintain politeness, and adapt their communication effectively in service interactions. These findings confirm that cross-cultural understanding significantly influences communication quality, extending beyond linguistic accuracy to include cultural appropriateness and interactional competence. Therefore, integrating intercultural aspects into language instruction and vocational training in hospitality education is essential to better prepare students for communication in global service environments.

**Keywords:** *cross-cultural understanding; intercultural communicative competence; English communication; F&B service; hospitality education; communication quality*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The fast expansion of the global hospitality sector has underlined the need for professionals who are equipped with both technical expertise and strong intercultural communication skills. In service-oriented industries like Food and Beverage (F&B), communication is a key factor in customer satisfaction and service quality. As hospitality venues are more and more a place where guests from different cultures meet, the skill to communicate properly across cultures has become a main professional (Chen & Starosta, 2012; Shen et al., 2022).

English being the language of international tourism, serves as the medium of communication in most F&B service contexts where staff at the frontline are compelled to communicate with guests in a clear, polite, and culturally appropriate way. Communication in such situations is not only about the correctness of language but also about comprehending the cultural norms, values and expectations which determine the patterns of interaction such as politeness strategies, forms of address, and non-verbal cues (Baker, 2017; Byram, 2020). Hence, hospitality students need to equip themselves with sufficient English language proficiency as well as the ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences in order to be able to perform efficiently during actual or simulated service encounters.

In practice, vocational hospitality education students, especially those majoring in F&B service practice, often

find it difficult to use English communication in the correct culturally ways. Although they are able to show the basic language competence, the way they communicate still is not very sensitive to cultural differences that in the end can cause misunderstandings or less effective service interactions. This shows that there is a mismatch between students' language skills and their cultural awareness which is a must in hospitality settings (Yang et al., 2022). The situation is exacerbated by the fact that cross-cultural understanding does not find much room within English language instruction and F&B service training. The majority of current teaching methods are focused on service skills and language while neglecting cultural aspects of communication. Consequently, students do not have the necessary skills to deal with intercultural exchanges in work situations (Muñoz et al., 2025; Tran & Duong, 2018; БИМЕНОВ & ТОКСАНБАЕВА, 2024).

While some research has explored English language ability and hospitality skills, hardly any have pointed out cross-cultural understanding as a key ingredient of communication quality in F&B service practice. The majority of research work addresses language skills and service separately, and hardly ever relate cultural knowledge with communication effectiveness (Baker, 2017; Shen et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a big research gap in understanding how cross-cultural factors affect communication performance of students in hospitality education. This study therefore is focused on the investigation of

cross-cultural understanding in enhancing students' English communication quality in F&B service practice. This, among other things, intends to show through what communication performance of students cross-cultural understanding can be demonstrated and what cultural factors mostly influence the service encounters. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) how does cross-cultural understanding influence students' English communication quality in F&B service practice; (2) what aspects of cross-cultural understanding contribute most to effective communication?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Cross-Cultural Understanding in Hospitality Education

Cross-cultural understanding has become a pivotal aspect of hospitality education as the industry is naturally global in its operations. As hospitality workers will inevitably be dealing with clients from different cultures, having intercultural sensitivity and being aware of cultural differences will become necessary skills. Studies have pointed out that the existence of culturally diverse customers in hospitality venues has a direct effect on the nature of services (Badu-Baiden et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2022).

As such, the hospitality workforce should be equipped to change their communicative behavior for different cultural milieus. In the context of hospitality education, cross-cultural understanding is just one more skill; it is the basis of a professional ability. It involves the recognition of cultural standards values beliefs, and actions that influence communication patterns in service scenarios. Studies indicate that when students exhibit more cultural sensitivity, they not only communicate interculturally in a more engaging manner but also deliver superior services (Zhou et al., 2024). Nevertheless, cross-cultural understanding is, in many cases, still a minor topic in hospitality education,

especially in practice-oriented sessions such as F&B service role-play.

### 2.2 English Communication in Food and Beverage Service

Communication in Food and Beverage (F&B) service is characterized by its functional, interactive, and customer-oriented nature. It requires not only linguistic competence but also the ability to deliver messages clearly, politely, and appropriately within specific service contexts. Effective communication in F&B service involves several dimensions, including clarity, fluency, politeness, and cultural appropriateness.

Recent literature highlights that English communication in hospitality contexts extends beyond grammar and vocabulary to include pragmatic competence, such as the use of politeness strategies and culturally appropriate expressions (Xu et al., 2025). In multicultural service environments, communication breakdowns often occur not because of linguistic errors but due to a lack of cultural understanding. For instance, inappropriate forms of address, tone, or non-verbal behavior may negatively affect guest satisfaction.

Furthermore, studies indicate that hospitality students frequently struggle to apply English communication effectively in real or simulated service settings, particularly when interacting with culturally diverse customers (Liu et al., 2022). This suggests that language instruction alone is insufficient without integrating cultural dimensions into communication training.

### 2.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is a widely recognized theoretical framework that explains how individuals communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural boundaries. ICC encompasses a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness that enable

individuals to navigate intercultural interactions successfully (Xu et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2024).

One of the most influential models of ICC is proposed by Byram, which conceptualizes intercultural competence through five interconnected components (often referred to as the *savoirs*): (1) attitudes (*savoir être*): openness, curiosity, and respect toward other cultures; (2) knowledge (*savoirs*): understanding of social groups, practices, and cultural norms; (3) skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): ability to interpret cultural meanings; (4) skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new cultural knowledge and apply it in interaction; and (5) critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): ability to evaluate cultural practices critically. This model emphasizes that effective communication is not only about linguistic accuracy but also about the ability to interpret and respond to cultural differences appropriately (Wibowo et al., 2024).

Recent studies further extend ICC by incorporating dimensions such as empathy, adaptability, and cultural intelligence, highlighting its dynamic and context-dependent nature (Xu et al., 2025). In hospitality education, ICC is particularly relevant as it directly influences students' readiness to interact with international guests and manage culturally diverse service situations.

#### **2.4 Cross-Cultural Understanding as a Determinant of Communication Quality**

The understanding of cultural differences is extremely important as a factor that influences the quality of communication, especially in places where service is the main offering. The quality of communication in the food and beverage service industry can be assessed with the help of a number of indicators such as clarity, appropriateness, politeness, effectiveness, and responsiveness.

According to the results of research, people who have a better understanding of cultural differences are more likely to display communication behaviors that are more effective, i. e. changing how they speak, not causing cultural misunderstandings, and showing culturally appropriate politeness (Zhou et al., 2024).

Besides that, cultural intelligence and intercultural awareness help reduce communication anxiety and enhance interaction performance in the hospitality sector (Lee & Hwang, 2024). On the other hand, a poor knowledge of cultural differences may result in miscommunication, stereotyping, and unsuccessful service delivery. This is very important in food and beverage service where there is a constant direct interaction with guests. Hence, adding cross-cultural understanding to communication training is a must if we want to enhance students' communication quality.

#### **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

The framework of Michael Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which serves as the primary theoretical foundation of this study, is employed to examine the relationship between cross-cultural understanding and effective English communication in food and beverage (F&B) service contexts. Byram's ICC model conceptualizes intercultural competence as a multidimensional construct comprising attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness, all of which collectively enable individuals to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural boundaries. These components, often referred to as *savoirs*, include openness and curiosity toward other cultures, knowledge of social groups and their practices, skills of interpreting and relating cultural phenomena, and the ability to critically evaluate cultural perspectives (Byram, 2020).

In hospitality settings, particularly in F&B service, such competencies are essential as service providers are required not only to use accurate language but also to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and adaptability when interacting with guests from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, the ICC framework provides a robust theoretical basis for understanding how intercultural competence contributes to the quality of English communication in professional service encounters (Badu-Baiden et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2024). This research considers cross-cultural understanding as being shown through three main aspects: cultural awareness, intercultural attitudes, and interaction skills. Cultural awareness means that students are familiar with cultural norms, values, and expectations which affect communication behavior in hospitality environments. Intercultural attitudes are about being open, showing respect, and being willing to have a positive interaction with people from different cultures. Interaction skills refer to the proficiency of individuals to change their language, manner of speaking, and ways of behaving to fit the intercultural situations they experience during service interactions.

To some extent, these factors are the basis for the assumption of the influence of students' quality of English communication during F&B service practice. In this research, communication quality is measured by the following five aspects: clarification smoothness suitability, politeness, and capability. Clarification is the skill of delivering a message clearly; smoothness means the use of language in a spontaneous and confident way; suitability is the use of language that is culturally and professionally right; politeness means the use of polite and culturally accepted language; capability is the successful achievement of service communication goals. Referring to this model, the conceptual basis of the present research leads to the premise that the higher intercultural communicative competence

one has, the better English communication in hospitality services one can produce. Simply put, participants who have a better understanding of culture, display a positive stance towards intercultural interaction, and possess the skills of adaptive interaction will be able to communicate very accurately and appropriately in F&B service situations.

Indeed, this theoretical point of view fits the hospitality education most since interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds is a major professional skill expected of a hospitality staff. Besides, it is in line with the latest researches which advocate that intercultural communicative competence must be purposefully embedded in vocational and language education to help students enhance the service communication skills that they will in fact need in the real world. Consequently, the ICC model is a solid conceptual basis to study/cross-culturally analyze the role of cross-cultural understanding in the enhancement of professional English communication skills for hospitality services.

### **3. METHOD**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore in depth how cross-cultural understanding functions as a determinant of students' English communication quality in Food and Beverage (F&B) service practice. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it facilitates a detailed examination of participants' communicative behaviors, cultural awareness, and interactional patterns within authentic or simulated service contexts. Recent studies in intercultural communicative competence (ICC) research emphasize the suitability of qualitative and mixed-method approaches for capturing the complexity of intercultural interactions, particularly in educational and hospitality settings (Liu et al., 2022; Permatasari,

2023). Furthermore, the case study design enables the investigation of contextualized phenomena within real-life learning environments, which is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of communication practices in vocational education.

### 3.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Denpasar Tourism Academy, a hospitality education institution, focusing on second-semester students enrolled in the Food and Beverage (F&B) service course. These students were selected as participants as they are at an early stage of professional training and are actively engaged in simulated service interactions that reflect real-world hospitality contexts. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who were directly involved in F&B service practice sessions. This approach is consistent with previous research, which identifies hospitality students as a relevant population for examining the development of intercultural competence due to their direct exposure to culturally diverse service scenarios (Liu et al., 2022).

### 3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure richness and enable triangulation. First, non-participant observations were conducted during Food and Beverage (F&B) service simulations to examine students' communication performance, including language use, politeness strategies, and cultural appropriateness. Observational methods are widely employed in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) research to capture real-time interactional behaviors (Metboki, 2025). Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected students to explore their perceptions of cross-cultural understanding and its influence on their communication practices, providing deeper insights into their attitudes, awareness, and

intercultural experiences. Third, documentation, including lesson plans, assessment rubrics, and video recordings of service simulations, was analyzed to provide both contextual and performance-based data. The integration of these multiple data sources is recommended in ICC research to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of findings (Wibowo et al., 2024).

### 3.4 Research Instruments

The study utilized several research instruments aligned with the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework to ensure a comprehensive assessment of students' communication performance. An observation checklist was developed based on key indicators of communication quality, including clarity, fluency, politeness, appropriateness, and effectiveness, reflecting the dual criteria of intercultural communication competence—effectiveness and appropriateness (Zhou et al., 2024). In addition, a semi-structured interview guide was designed to elicit participants' understanding of cultural norms, communication challenges, and adaptive strategies in Food and Beverage (F&B) service interactions. Furthermore, an assessment rubric was adapted from the core components of ICC—knowledge, skills, and attitudes—to evaluate students' cross-cultural understanding as demonstrated in their practical performance (Azizah & Akbar, 2025).

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis through a systematic and iterative coding process. The analysis began with data familiarization, which involved transcribing interview recordings and thoroughly reviewing observation notes to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dataset. This was followed by open coding, where initial categories related to communication quality and cross-cultural understanding were identified. Subsequently, axial coding was conducted

to establish relationships between the components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and students' communication performance. Finally, selective coding was employed to develop core themes that explain how cross-cultural understanding influences the quality of English communication in F&B service practice. The use of thematic analysis is well established in ICC and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research, as it enables the systematic interpretation of qualitative data and the identification of patterns in intercultural interactions (Xu et al., 2025).

### **3.6 Trustworthiness of the Study**

To ensure the rigor and credibility of the findings, several validation strategies were systematically employed. Data triangulation was conducted by integrating multiple sources of evidence, including observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, to capture both behavioral and perceptual dimensions of intercultural communication. In addition, member checking was implemented by inviting participants to review and verify the accuracy of their responses and the researcher's interpretations. Peer debriefing was also carried out through collaborative discussions with colleagues to critically examine the analytical process and minimize potential researcher bias. These procedures are consistent with established best practices in qualitative intercultural communication research, which emphasize the importance of validity through the use of multiple data sources and reflective, iterative analysis (Wibowo et al., 2024).

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the institution, and participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Ethical

considerations are particularly important in educational research involving student participants to ensure voluntary participation and data protection.

## **4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Overview of Participants**

This study involved 33 second-semester students from Class II A of the Hospitality Study Program. All participants were engaged in Food and Beverage (F&B) service practice, particularly in restaurant service simulations conducted in English. These simulations required students to perform authentic service roles, including greeting guests, taking orders, offering menu recommendations, handling complaints, and closing interactions.

### **4.2. Students' Level of Cross-Cultural Understanding**

The findings indicate that only a small proportion of students demonstrated adequate cross-cultural understanding during F&B service practice. While most students were able to produce basic English utterances, only a few showed awareness of culturally appropriate communication strategies, such as politeness, indirectness, and context-sensitive expressions.

This suggests that students' intercultural competence remains limited, particularly in terms of cultural knowledge, attitudes, and interaction skills as conceptualized in the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework.

### **4.3. Typical Cross-Cultural Communication Cases in F&B Service Practice**

The analysis identified several recurring communication issues that reflect insufficient cross-cultural understanding. These cases illustrate how students' communication performance is influenced by cultural factors.

**Table 1. Common Cross-Cultural Communication Cases in F&B Service Practice**

No	Communication Situation	Student Utterance (Observed)	Issue Identified	Cross-Cultural Aspect	Improved Version	Interpretation
1	Taking orders	“What do you want?”	Overly direct and impolite	Politeness strategy	“What would you like to order?”	Lack of awareness of indirectness in service communication
2	Greeting guests	“Hello Mister”	Inappropriate form of address	Cultural norms	“Good evening, Sir/Madam”	Limited understanding of formal hospitality conventions
3	Offering menu	“You must try this food”	Too imposing	Cultural sensitivity	“May I recommend our special dish?”	Inadequate use of persuasive politeness
4	Handling complaints	“That is not my mistake”	Defensive response	Conflict management	“I apologize for the inconvenience, let me assist you”	Lack of face-saving strategies
5	Asking clarification	“Repeat!”	Abrupt and impolite	Interactional norms	“Could you please repeat that?”	Absence of softening expressions
6	Serving food	“This is your food”	Lack of politeness marker	Service etiquette	“Here is your order, enjoy your meal”	Limited understanding of hospitality language norms
7	Ending service	“Finish?”	Inappropriate expression	Cultural appropriateness	“Have you finished, Sir/Madam?”	Direct translation from first language

#### 4.4. Thematic Analysis of Communication Issues

The observed cases were further analyzed and categorized into several major themes:

##### 4.1.1 Directness versus Indirectness

A dominant issue identified was the tendency of students to use direct expressions, which are often perceived as impolite in international hospitality contexts. For example, the use of “What do you want?” reflects a direct communication style that does not align with expected service norms.

This indicates a lack of intercultural sensitivity, particularly in adapting communication styles to low-context, politeness-oriented cultures.

##### 4.1.2 Limited Use of Politeness Strategies

A significant number of students failed to consistently use politeness markers such as *would you*, *may I*, and *please*. Observational data showed that approximately 70% of interactions lacked appropriate politeness expressions.

This finding suggests that students’ communication competence is primarily linguistic rather than pragmatic, resulting in reduced communication quality.

##### 4.1.3 Inappropriate Forms of Address

Students frequently used incorrect or incomplete forms of address, such as “*Mister*” without proper context. This reflects limited knowledge of cultural

norms in professional hospitality settings, where terms such as “Sir” or “Madam” are expected.

#### 4.1.4 Weak Complaint Handling Strategies

Another critical issue identified in this study was students’ limited ability to handle guest complaints appropriately. Rather than responding with empathy and professionalism, many students tended to react defensively, which contradicts established standards in hospitality service. For instance, responses such as “*That is not my mistake*” reflect a failure to adopt customer-oriented communication strategies. This pattern indicates a lack of awareness of face-saving strategies, which

are essential in maintaining positive guest relations and managing service recovery effectively. From an intercultural communication perspective, such responses suggest insufficient development of pragmatic competence, particularly in expressing empathy, mitigating conflict, and preserving the guest’s face within culturally appropriate interactional norms.

#### 4.1.5 First Language Interference (L1 Transfer)

Many expressions used by students were direct translations from their first language, resulting in unnatural or inappropriate English expressions.

**Table 2. Examples of L1 Interference**

L1 Expression (Indonesian)	Student Translation	Appropriate Expression
“ <i>Sudah selesai?</i> ”	“Finish?”	“Have you finished?”
“ <i>Ini makanan Anda</i> ”	“This is your food”	“Here is your order”

This demonstrates that students have not yet developed sufficient pragmatic competence to use language appropriately in context.

#### 4.5. Descriptive Summary of Communication Performance

The overall communication performance of students can be summarized as follows:

**Table 3. Students’ Communication Performance**

Indicator	Number of Students	Percentage
Use of politeness strategies	10	30%
Appropriate greetings	12	36%
Effective complaint handling	8	24%
Culturally appropriate interaction	9	27%

These results indicate that the majority of students demonstrate basic communication ability but lack intercultural competence.

#### 4.6. The Role of Cross-Cultural Understanding

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that cross-cultural understanding plays a significant role in shaping the quality of students’ English communication in Food and Beverage (F&B) service practice. Students who exhibited higher levels of intercultural awareness were able to employ more polite

and indirect expressions, adjust their language according to situational and cultural contexts, and maintain an appropriate tone and interactional style throughout service encounters. These communicative behaviors reflect the essential components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), particularly in terms of attitudes (e.g., respect and openness toward cultural differences), knowledge (e.g., understanding of cultural norms and service expectations), and skills (e.g., the ability to adapt language and interaction strategies effectively). Such findings reinforce the notion that effective communication in hospitality settings extends beyond linguistic accuracy, requiring the integration of intercultural sensitivity and adaptive communicative practices.

#### 4.7 Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that cross-cultural understanding functions as a critical determinant of English communication quality in F&B service practice. Although students demonstrate basic linguistic competence, their limited intercultural competence constrains their ability to communicate effectively in professional hospitality contexts. This imbalance suggests that communication challenges are not primarily rooted in grammatical deficiencies but in the lack of cultural awareness and interactional adaptability.

From the perspective of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework, these findings can be interpreted as an imbalance among its core components—knowledge, attitudes, and skills. While students exhibit a foundational level of linguistic knowledge, they demonstrate insufficient development in

intercultural attitudes (e.g., openness and sensitivity) and interactional skills (e.g., adapting language to context). This aligns with the ICC model, which emphasizes that effective communication requires not only language proficiency but also the ability to interpret, relate, and respond appropriately to cultural differences. In this study, students' tendency toward direct expressions, limited politeness strategies, and inappropriate responses to service situations reflects a lack of *savoir-être* and *savoir-faire*, which are essential for achieving communicative effectiveness.

When compared with previous studies, the present findings are consistent with research indicating that hospitality students often possess adequate linguistic competence but lack intercultural communicative competence necessary for real-world interactions (Liu et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2024). Similarly, Xu et al. (2025) argue that communication breakdowns in international service settings are more frequently caused by pragmatic and cultural mismatches than by linguistic errors. However, this study extends prior research by providing empirical evidence from F&B service simulations, demonstrating how specific communication issues—such as directness, inappropriate address forms, and weak complaint handling—manifest in practice. Unlike studies that focus primarily on perception or self-reported competence, this research highlights observable communication behaviors, offering a more nuanced understanding of intercultural challenges in hospitality training.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that current instructional practices may not sufficiently integrate cross-cultural elements into language and service training. This supports earlier research suggesting

that hospitality education often prioritizes procedural skills and linguistic forms over intercultural dimensions (Liu et al., 2022). The limited exposure to authentic intercultural interaction and the emphasis on memorization rather than contextualized communication contribute to students' inability to apply cross-cultural understanding effectively.

From a global perspective, these findings carry significant implications for hospitality education in increasingly internationalized service environments. As the hospitality industry operates within multicultural contexts, graduates are expected to engage with diverse guests and navigate varying cultural expectations. The inability to integrate cross-cultural understanding into communication not only affects service quality but may also impact customer satisfaction and organizational reputation on a global scale. Therefore, the development of intercultural communicative competence should be positioned as a core component of hospitality curricula worldwide.

To address this need, this study underscores the importance of embedding cross-cultural understanding into F&B service instruction through pedagogical approaches such as simulation-based learning, reflective practice, and culturally oriented communication training. These approaches enable students to experience authentic interaction scenarios, develop cultural sensitivity, and refine their communication strategies in context. By integrating ICC into both language and vocational training, hospitality education can better prepare students to meet the demands of global service environments.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that cross-cultural understanding plays a crucial role as a determinant of students' English communication quality in Food and Beverage (F&B) service practice. While most students exhibited basic linguistic competence, their communication was often limited by insufficient intercultural awareness, particularly in terms of politeness strategies, cultural appropriateness, and interactional adaptability.

The findings reveal that students with higher levels of cross-cultural understanding were able to communicate more effectively, demonstrating greater use of polite expressions, context-sensitive language, and professional service behavior. In contrast, students with limited intercultural competence tended to rely on direct, literal, and sometimes inappropriate expressions, which reduced the overall quality of communication in service interactions.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the significance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as an essential framework for understanding communication performance in hospitality education. It highlights the need to move beyond a sole focus on linguistic proficiency toward a more integrated approach that incorporates cultural knowledge, attitudes, and interactional skills.

Practically, the study suggests that hospitality education should embed cross-cultural training into F&B service instruction through experiential and simulation-based learning. Such integration is essential to better prepare students for real-world intercultural communication in global hospitality contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its focus on a single class and a relatively small sample size. Future research is recommended to employ

broader samples and mixed-method approaches to further validate and expand the findings.

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