



# LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN RUSSIA

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**Abstract.** *The present study explores language policy and management in the industry of hospitality and tourism in the Russian Federation. Hospitality is a vital sector of the economy which receives strong government support. In 2021 and 2022, amendments to the Federal Law on the Foundations of Tourism Activity were adopted and the National Project “Tourism and the Hospitality Industry” was initiated. These documents aim to promote tourist activity in the country as well as improve the quality of TOPs (tourism-oriented products). Foreign language command is inextricably linked with service quality and employees are expected to follow the accepted language code and protocol, though this is unevenly implemented. The paper analyses the adequacy of language policy in the field of hospitality. The term “language management” is preferred to “language policy planning” (LPP) as it better reflects the efforts made to implement changes in current language practices within the social group of hospitality professionals. These changes are driven by the latest political and social developments and reflect current economic and social environment. The paper draws on the latest relevant government documentation and industry language practices, comparing this analysis with the perceptions of 130 interns in Russian hospitality establishments. The comparison identifies existing language problems in the hospitality industry and points to directions for future enhancement. The study also aims to explore the adequacy of English-language preparation for hospitality professionals. It considers foreign language instruction for occupational purposes both at the tertiary level and in the workplace setting. The research paper aims to shed light on how language policy and language management may be of relevance to ESP (English for special purposes) teachers in the area of hospitality.*

**Keywords:** *language policy, language management, language problem, language instruction, language norms, standardization, language practices*

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# ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ПОЛИТИКА В ИНДУСТРИИ ГОСТЕПРИИМСТВА В РОССИИ

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**Аннотация.** Данная публикация исследует языковую политику и языковое планирование в индустрии гостеприимства и туризма в Российской Федерации. Гостеприимство является значимой отраслью экономики и получает поддержку государства. В 2021 и 2022 гг. были внесены изменения в Федеральный закон «Об основах туристской деятельности» и запущен национальный проект «Туризм и индустрия гостеприимства». Целью данных инициатив является продвижение и развитие туристской активности в стране и улучшение качества туристических продуктов. Знание иностранных языков неразрывно связано с уровнем качества обслуживания гостей, и работники этой сферы обязаны следовать языковым нормам и протоколу, что, тем не менее, внедряется не повсеместно. Исследование рассматривает степень достаточности языковой политики в указанной индустрии. Понятие «языковое управление» является предпочтительным по отношению к термину «языковое планирование», так как лучше отражает усилия, направленные на внесение изменений в языковые практики в социальной группе работников сферы гостеприимства. Данные изменения вызваны политическими и экономическими тенденциями и отражают нынешнее социально-экономическое положение. В статье анализируются текущие государственные документы, относящиеся к теме исследования, в сравнении с мнениями 130 стажёров, проходящих практику в учреждениях гостеприимства. Это позволяет выявить пути улучшения языковых практик и языковой политики в данной индустрии. Исследование также посвящено анализу уровня языковой подготовки в сфере гостеприимства. Освещаются текущие модели обучения английскому языку для профессиональных целей как на уровне высшего образования, так и в рабочем контексте. Обсуждается взаимосвязь между языковой политикой и обучением иностранному языку для специальных целей.

**Ключевые слова:** языковая политика, языковое управление, языковая проблема, обучение языкам, языковые нормы, стандартизация, языковые практики

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The hospitality sector is recognized as crucial for inbound and domestic tourism development. The English language is universally accepted as the lingua franca – a global language used in cross-cultural communication. Globally, in the hospitality industry, knowledge of at least one foreign language is vital and pre-requisite [22]. The tourism and hospitality industry offer excellent advancement opportunities worldwide, with Russia being no exception.

Language in hospitality is of paramount importance and is a highly regulated medium. At each step of the guest cycle, the hotel or restaurant employee is expected to utilize a set of standard formulas and expressions. These are explicit language norms meant to guarantee guest satisfaction, to streamline service and avoid mishaps. In multinational hotel chains, employees will follow ready scripts, both for instances of oral and written communication with the guest. These scripts will differ slightly from chain to chain,

however, retaining their essence – serving the guest in the most prompt, courteous, accurate and hospitable way.

Language is therefore seen as a conductor of hospitality values and *service spirit* [28] and is inextricably linked with the social circle in which it is used. *Moments of truth* [28], a term used in the hospitality industry for guest encounters, can only occur through language. Service, language and the social domain of hospitality are inseparable. Bianco [3, p. 144] argues that language cannot be separated from social context.

There is not one definition of language policy (LP) and language policy planning (LPP). McGroarty, cited in Bianco [ibid., p. 145] defines language policy as *the combination of official decisions and prevailing public practices related to language education and use*. It is carried out by government and corporate bodies and promotes a standard language for a group, in our case, hospitality professionals [24]. This definition is useful to us as it highlights the implications of LP for foreign language teachers [3, p. 143] and the effect that LP has on education and curriculum planning. Another definition of language policy can be *laws and regulations, which state when, where and by whom each language is to be spoken*. As for language policy planning, the term is defined by Cooper [6, p. 45]: *language policy planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional allocation of their language codes*. LPP also refers to how policies are applied to treat linguistic “lacks” in social groups. Spolsky [26, p. 80], however, prefers the term “*language management*” to “*language policy planning*” as it better reflects the fact that the language situation *is manipulated as a result of direct efforts*.

The main components of LP, as identified by Spolsky [ibid.], are language beliefs, language practices, and attempts at managing these practices. This study aims to identify language practices and beliefs in hospitality and to shed light on current language management initiatives in Russia.

Foreign language policy varies from country to country and depends heavily on local practices and regulations. Language policy in the hospitality industry in Russia has not yet received sufficient attention. The present paper is therefore also aimed at researching foreign language policy in the hospitality field in the Russian Federation.

The hospitality industry is a multifaceted field comprising Lodging, Restaurants, Events and Tourism. Each of these sectors provides a variety of job prospects. This study focuses on language policy applied across the fields of hotel and restaurant management. It does not concern itself with language policy in the area of event management. The author recommends further research regarding language policy in this field.

This paper argues that while language policy for L1 (hereinafter first language / native tongue) is sufficiently developed and universally applied, foreign language communication norms are inadequate. This study will focus on analyzing relevant documentation and practices in the field of language policy and identifying “lacks” or “*language problems*” [ibid., p. 6] in hospitality workplaces in Russia.

The author aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key directions of language policy in the hospitality Industry?
2. What are the specific *language problems* in foreign language policy in hospitality establishments in Russia?
3. What are the means of implementing language policy in the hospitality industry?
4. What are the implications of language policy for ESP practitioners in tertiary education establishments?

## Methodology

This research paper is a qualitative descriptive study. A survey was undertaken to obtain and analyze the perceptions of 130 tertiary level hospitality students and interns regarding foreign language policy and language training in the hospitality and tourism sector. Questionnaires were anonymous for higher reliability of data and guarantee of anonymity. All respondents possess relevant work experience of at least three months in the industry and were chosen on a voluntary basis. Questions were directly related to language policy and practices in the workplace. Interviews with three industry experts were conducted

to collect valid data on the subject. This revealed an inadequacy of foreign language training and standards in the field. Document analysis was used to support the evidence and the findings. Consequently, this paper presents a descriptive overview of the current initiatives to enhance language policy in the hospitality field, such as the introduction of a national industry language exam, language instruction at the tertiary level and introduction of educational social programmes. All these initiatives are geared towards defining and standardizing language policy across the industry and streamlining hospitality language assessment procedures in the territory of the Russian Federation.

## Research design

The study was conducted in the following manner:

1. Document analysis was undertaken.
2. A questionnaire was devised and administered among 130 hospitality interns.
3. Data obtained from the document analysis and the survey results were compared and conclusions were made.
4. As a response to these findings, possible directions for language policy and management were outlined.

## Document analysis and language practices

Language policy should not be seen only from a linguistic perspective but should be placed in a broader social and economic context. In 2021, the Russian legislature adopted amendments to the *Federal Law on the Foundations of Tourist Activity in the Russian Federation* [7], initiated the *National Project "Tourism and the Hospitality Industry"* [15] and launched the *State Programme of Tourism Development* [9]. The key objectives of the project are the development of tourist infrastructure, improving the accessibility of tourism services and enhancement of management and administration in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is geared towards boosting tourist flows in the territory of the Russian Federation, which should result in the decrease of unemployment and increase of economic growth across all regions of the country. The necessity to maintain a high image of tourism in Russia in the light of current events has led to an interest towards foreign language policy in the field of hospitality.

Requirements regarding language mastery of hotel personnel are stipulated in two government documents: the *National Professional Standards* [20], [21] and the *State Regulations on Hotel Classification* amended on April 7, 2022 [19].

The *National Professional Standards* in the hospitality industry in Russia comprise the two occupational profiles, namely "Manager of a Hotel Chain" [20] and "Manager of a Food and Beverage Establishment" [21]. The pre-requisite capability for both occupational profiles is a *mastery of English or another foreign language in relation to the characteristics of constant customer base of the hotel/restaurant establishment at a level sufficient for effective professional communication*.

It is noteworthy that the terms above lack adequate definition. It is not specified what level of English or other foreign language mastery is pre-requisite. The characteristics of *constant customer base* are also vague and unspecified. The scarcity of this description can serve as an indicator of inadequate attention towards foreign language policy and practices in the field.

Another government document concerning language policy in the industry is the *State Regulations on Hotel Classification* [19]. Here, language skills do not represent a standalone category, but are part of a broader set of criteria for human resources assessment. Each foreign language skill receives a corresponding number of points that, together with other grading criteria, adds up to the final score. This score determines whether the hotel complies with the desired star rating or not.

Language proficiency is a criterion applied across all levels of staff in lodging establishments from managerial positions to line personnel. For all staff positions, assessment criteria include language skills adequate for the fulfillment of professional duties. Requirements for senior management positions are presented in Table 1.

Language requirements	Points in the point-grade rating system
Knowledge of one foreign language, (English or another language of international communication <sup>1</sup> ) at a conversational level	1
Knowledge of a minimum of two foreign languages (English and other languages of international communication)	2

Table 1. Hotel language requirements for senior positions

Slightly different criteria apply to personnel who maintain direct interaction with the guest, such as front-office positions (see Table 2). These positions are specified as: administrators and porters, reservations managers, guest communications managers, sales division managers, dining room managers, bartenders and waiting staff. This list is subject to modifications (restriction or expansion) in accordance with the organizational chart of the hotel in view.

Language requirements	Points in the point-grade rating system
The ability to establish communication with guests in at least one foreign language (English or another foreign language of international communication). A "conversational" level of English is required.	2
Knowledge of two foreign languages (English and other languages of international communication), at a conversational level	3
Knowledge of two foreign languages (English and other languages of international communication), where one language is used at a conversational level and the other is spoken fluently	4
Complete fluency in a minimum of two foreign languages (English and other languages of international communication)	5

Table 2. Hotel language requirements for front office positions

Analysis of the above criteria leads to the following conclusions:

- requirements regarding language mastery vary with regard to hotel category;
- the language requirements are not stated as prerequisite or mandatory;
- knowledge of foreign languages is only one of broader criteria for hotel assessment;
- fluency in a minimum of two foreign languages is given a high weighting (of five points).

Language mastery is therefore perceived more as an asset rather than a prerequisite. On condition that the hotel meets the highest requirements in other aspects of assessment, the hotel may still rank high on the classification scale with or without the hotel staff meeting language requirements.

It should also be noted that the provision does not specify any language testing procedures. There is also an evident absence of definitions for "conversational" and "fluent" level of command of language. Interviews with industry experts corroborate that language assessment procedures are not in place.

Another set of documents are internal industry documentation and training materials for employees, such as the Marriott training manual. These are set to promote instances of proper foreign language use for hospitality while discouraging inappropriate use. The phrases are carefully scripted and take into account guest psychology and service standards. An example is using "How can I assist you?" as opposed to "How can I help you?", as the latter may evoke a hint at a weakness in the guest. The word "help" is therefore considered illegitimate. Other words like this include *problem*, *can't*, *won't* and others. It is noteworthy

<sup>1</sup> Languages of international communication in this case are specified as languages, except English and Russian, that are the official languages of the United Nations Organization: Arabic, Spanish, Chinese and French.



thy, however, that while these foreign language norms appear in company literature, they are not always enforced or monitored, in contrast to native language use, which is more strictly regulated.

The document analysis is corroborated by results obtained from 130 respondents from a leading hospitality school in Russia at the tertiary level, the Faculty of Hospitality at the Institute of Industry Management at RANEPA. All respondents have undergone official work placement in prominent hotels such as Lotte, Marriott, Mercure, Metropol, Lotte, Ritz-Carlton, and large national restaurant chains, such as Meat & Fish and Coffeemania, with a duration from three months minimum.

As seen from Table 3, the number of respondents who claim that no knowledge of foreign languages was requisite in the workplace as opposed to those stating that the knowledge of English was a prerequisite, is equal. Entry level interviews in English were held in approximately 30% of the cases, with over 65% of respondents claiming that no such interviews were held.

	Yes	No	Other
Knowledge of English or another foreign language is prerequisite	48,1	48,9	3
Interviews in English or other language testing procedures were in place	32,1	65,6	2,3
An international language proficiency certificate, such as the IELTS or TOEFL, was required	0	100	
On-the-job language trainings were held	9,9	88,5	1,8
On-the-job language trainings are necessary and should be implemented	91,6	8,4	

Table 3. Survey results: language prerequisites and on-the-job training

Further data from Table 3 is based on a set of questions concerning on-the-job trainings. Within the 9,9% of cases where language trainings were held, in approximately 11% they focus on studying professional industry language, 3% focused on both general English and professional English, and 2,3% on general English solely. These trainings were held from once a week (seven respondents) to once a month (four respondents). In the remainder of the cases, respondents claim to either not remember how often the trainings were held, or that these trainings were a one-off event. In the vast majority of cases, the trainings concerned only front-line personnel such as the front desk and uniformed services. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that while in approximately half of hospitality establishments in view knowledge of English is prerequisite, on-the-job language trainings in the same establishments are practically non-existent. It is important to note that the cases in which trainings were held concerned only international hotel chains and were non-existent in national restaurant establishments. Three experts from the field corroborate this, stating budget constraints and high staff turnover as the principal reasons. Survey results also demonstrate that standardized requirements towards foreign language command are lacking and that language assessment procedures are inadequate.

Respondents were subsequently asked about foreign language command of hotel and restaurant employees as perceived by them. Results are demonstrated in Table 4 below.

Frequency of contact with guests in a foreign language (English or other)	Number of respondents (in %)
Never	27,5
Once or twice in the whole time of the work-placement (no less than three months)	Fewer than 3
Once a month	21,4
Once every two or three weeks	9,2
Every week	8,4
Every few days	9,2
Every day	20,6

Table 4. Survey results: frequency of guest contact in English

The results reveal that the number of frequent guest contacts in English amount to around 30% of the cases. It is also noteworthy that such cases are largely predominant in hotel establishments and are marginal in restaurants.

Table 5 presents data on the number of hotel employees who possess a conversational level of command of English, as perceived by the respondents:

% of employees, as perceived by respondents	% of respondents
100% of employees	7,6
70-80%	25,2
50-60%	27,5
Fewer than 50%	10,7
25%	8,4
Fewer than 25%	11,5
Almost no one	9,2

Table 5. Survey results: number of employees with a conversational level of English

The perceptions of over half of the respondents reveal that 50% and higher of employees have a conversational level of English, meaning they can maintain basic conversation with the guest. Based on the information described earlier, this leads to believe that hospitality students enter the workplace with a given level of language proficiency, which is not enhanced later in the workplace (80% of respondents claim that this proficiency is due to university language studies).

Over 90% of respondents claim that on-the-job language trainings are necessary and only 17% believe that their level of English is sufficient for working in the industry. This reveals a gap between the initial English level of interns and the required level to successfully perform work functions. The current situation is different for second foreign language command, with over 60% of respondents claiming that no or almost no members of staff speak two or more foreign languages.

Results obtained from the survey therefore reveal the following:

- there is no general shortage of English-speaking staff in hospitality establishments, however, their current level of language proficiency was achieved prior to the work placement;
- guest contact in English is comparatively low at international hotels and large hotel chains, which can be explained by the current political and economic climate.

Therefore, information obtained from the survey and the expert interviews have revealed a number of *language problems*:

- overall, interns do not feel that their level of English is sufficient for successful performance of work duties;
- on-the-job language trainings are implemented in a small minority of cases and in large international hotel chains;
- interns feel that on-the-job language trainings are lacking and necessary;
- in large hospitality establishments, high language proficiency is pre-requisite; however, many interns do not feel their language level is sufficient;
- foreign language usage is neither standardized nor regulated;
- the lack of standardization can lead to situations of confusion or mishaps reflecting badly on the quality of service.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that language policy in the hospitality industry in Russia is neither explicit, nor regulated by any particular body. Language practices vary from establishment to establishment and rely mostly on internal rules. The discrepancy between the importance of foreign language communication in the industry and the lack of consistent policy has led to efforts in better language management. These efforts aim *to constrain what is considered bad language and encourage what is considered good language* [26, p. 8].

Language management in this case is seen as a “*problem-solving*” activity [ibid.] aimed to bridge the gap between the group’s needs and the existing situation. These can be *normative needs*, such as linguists’ expertise, the group’s *felt needs* or *expressed needs*, according to Dua, cited in Bianco [3, p. 151].

### Language management in hospitality

Language policy planning can take many forms. For the purposes of this paper, we will consider *corpus planning*, *usage planning* and *acquisition* language planning as highlighted by Cooper (cited in Wingard) [29]. Corpus planning involves linguists working on language norms for a social group. Usage planning focuses on defining and expanding the domains in which language is used. Acquisition planning describes how norms of language usage are to be acquired.

### National standardized English for hospitality exam

Language management is universally agreed to involve four stages. These include identifying the problem, formulating ways of resolving the problem, deciding on the norms to be enforced and implementing it through the system of education [3, p. 144].

As was concluded from the document analysis and survey results, a key problem regarding language policy is the lack of standardization of language practices and norms. These norms should be implemented in hotel and restaurant establishments using a top-down approach, as researchers maintain that the recommendations of language planners should always prevail over the preference of language users [ibid., p. 145].

The withdrawal of Russia from the Bologna process in 2022 and the suspension of activity of international testing organizations has rendered international language certificates, such as the IELTS, TOEFL and Cambridge certificates, irrelevant in the territory of the Russian Federation. It is noteworthy that even before the current situation occurred, such certificates were not mandatory nor did they offer any competitive advantage to the candidates that held them. This is corroborated by the replies of survey respondents, who unanimously replied that international language certificates were not required nor considered by the employer.

Inadequacy of standardization in the area of language command in hospitality has therefore led the stakeholders of the industry to believe that such standards should be introduced in the territory of the Russian Federation. This resulted in the introduction of a national English exam for hospitality professionals, developed by the author. The exam was devised in collaboration with key industry stakeholders to ensure its content validity.

The initiative was implemented in June 2022 in a pilot project with an exam administered in the third and fourth years of bachelor studies with 12 third and fourth-year students participating in the exam. All students taking the exam presented proof of relevant work experience in the industry.

The exam assumed an official legal status and involved issuing certificates by the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia. Despite this legal status, the pilot exam assumed the function of a *diagnostic test* rather than a finalized assessment procedure.

Administering a diagnostic test involves the stages of analyzing needs, formulating goals and objectives, content creation, test administration and evaluation [2], [4], [10], [11], [12]. In terms of language policy, the test involves corpus and usage planning, as candidates’ answers are graded against hospitality norms and protocol. For the purposes of the exam, sample answers were developed by the exam developer and approved by the said professional association. Grading was carried out based on the number of instances of coincidence between the candidate’s answer and the model answer. The exam is therefore an example of corpus planning [29], as it aims to identify language items to be used by industry professionals. It is also a case of usage planning [ibid.], as it analyses how and using which patterns hospitality professionals should communicate.

One of the primary functions of the pilot test was identifying language problem situations through needs analysis. Needs analysis involved gathering information about the students’ *objective language*



needs [17], [18], [23]. This was achieved by identifying the students' *present situation* and *lacks* – their specific weaknesses – in relation to the requirements of the professional *target situation* (establishing communication with the guest and carrying out professional work functions) through diagnostic testing. To triangulate research, feedback and evaluation was immediately gathered from industry experts directly involved in assessing candidates.

The diagnostic exam involved the following procedures:

- a written test comprising 60 questions on the use of English, professional terminology and reading professional texts (30% of the overall grade);
- a writing task assessing writing skills in two areas: replying to an e-mail enquiry and replying to a negative guest review (20% of the overall grade);
- an oral task where candidates maintained dialogues replicating professional work situations, such as dealing with a guest complaint or explaining menu items and promoting restaurant services (50% of the grade); speaking skills are thus given precedence which is reflected in the assessment weighting.

The task and the requirements closely mimicked the students' target situations of working in hotels and restaurants. Students were given sufficient time (90 min. for the written test, 60 for the writing assignment, and 30 for the oral part, 180 min. in total) to reduce time-pressure, and were provided with specific sources to use for reference, such as restaurant menus and internal hotel literature. The diagnostic test thus allowed to accurately analyze the gap between the students' existing *proficiency* [13] and target situation.

The principal goal of the exam is to introduce a standard of language use in the hospitality sphere and to assess candidates' language capabilities against this standard. Both the students' receptive and productive language skills are assessed, which is reflected in the exam structure. The goal statement was used to formulate specific grading criteria.

As maintained by Luka [14], communicative competence is central to hospitality workers. This competence includes *grammatical competence* (*basic lexis, semantics, morphology, syntax, phonology and orthography*), *pragmatic competence* (*contextual lexis, language functionality, unity and continuity of communication*), *discourse competence* (*language exposure and the unity of text and situation*), *sociolinguistic competence* (*understanding of other cultures, register, accent, dialects and interaction skills*) and *strategic competence* (*verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and compensation strategies*).

Based on the above, the following criteria for the exam were devised. In the oral part of the exam, candidates are expected to understand the task at hand; demonstrate listening skills and communication strategies specific to hospitality, using discourse strategies such as backtracking; demonstrate high grammatical control and wide lexical range; and have accurate and appropriate pronunciation. Another capability to grade is the command of professional techniques such as providing tourist information and offering recommendations, promoting hotel and restaurant services, and employing the LAST (Listen, Apologize, Solve, Thank) and LEARN (Listen, Emphasize, Apologize, React, Notify) techniques for dealing with complaints.

The criteria applied to the writing part of the test include: task achievement, following industry standards for writing; grammatical accuracy and range; lexical accuracy and range; structure and coherency; and using semi-formal register in correspondence with the guest.

It is imperative that both written assessment and oral testing employ the most rigorous procedures and are aligned with testing principles such as validity and reliability. The exam conforms to ESL (English as a second language) testing requirements as it has *content validity* as *it measures accurately what it is intended to measure* [27]. *Validity* [12] is therefore increased by the high *authenticity of the task* [4] measuring precisely the students' ability to act in target foreign language communication situations. The reading, writing and use of English sections, as well as the oral exam, test the respective skills. To ensure *content validity* [12] assessment must be aligned with the exam goals and content, namely to maintain successful communication with the guest and deliver service. To ensure that the exam is in line with the goal, the exam planners adopted *criterion-referenced, analytic scoring* [4] where candidates' performance is assessed across specific subcategories, such as employing professional techniques in English and using

appropriate communication strategies (see above). The categories contain detailed *descriptors* and are *assigned individual numerical scores* [2], which add up to the final score.

The exam also has *face validity* – being in line with the candidate's expectations. As all candidates have professional experience working in the field, the oral test questions in the form of industry-based dialogues are familiar.

*Reliability* of oral and writing assessment is always a concern [12] and is in our case improved by:

- making assessment criteria transparent to students [10];
- including a detailed scoring key and criteria descriptors [12];
- being graded by at least two independent examiners (who are also experts in the professional field);
- prior examiner training.

Another important element of assessment is washback – *the way the test affects teaching and education that leads up to the test* [27]. *Beneficial washback* [12] can be achieved by the test making students feel that assessment is meaningful and useful for learning and the career, as opposed to being solely a formal administrative procedure. The exam is perceived by the candidates as a positive career investment.

As a result of the pilot exam, the following results were obtained and corroborated by industry experts:

#### *The candidates' specific strengths*

1. Candidates demonstrated a high overall language fluency both in the written and the oral test, as well as good lexical and grammatical range and control.
2. Candidates demonstrated good communication skills and understanding of the task at hand.
3. Candidates demonstrated an ability to self-correct and make individual choices of expression that are appropriate to the situation.
4. Some candidates demonstrated good knowledge of hospitality protocol.

#### *The candidates' specific lacks*

1. Lack of apparent interest and enthusiasm in both the writing and the oral task.
2. A disregard for personal appearance and improper body language in the oral task (crossed legs, closed postures, inappropriate casual clothing, lack of eye contact).
3. Inadequate or inappropriate use of industry terminology.
4. Inappropriate tone of voice, pace, stressing and pausing which conveyed the wrong impression (hesitation, hostility, lack of interest and professionalism).
5. Occasional grammatical and lexical inaccuracies.

The results allow us to make informed decisions on language instruction, which will be the object of this paper in a subsequent section.

The exam also displayed that while following industry protocol was a measure of success, appropriate personal language choice of expression also improved students' scores. This challenges the belief that language policy *should involve only deliberate change to language from public authorities* [3, p. 146]. A bottom-up approach to language policy can be considered using the tools of social psychology.

## **National Demography Project**

Another initiative that can be seen as part of the general language policy is the *National Project "Demography"* [16] geared towards assisting "social" categories with employment. These categories range from women on maternity leave to citizens facing redundancy due to company liquidation as well as students with no professional prospects in their fields of specialization.

The English for the Hospitality programme devised as part of the project caters to the needs of current or prospective tourism professionals across the regions of the Russian Federation. This is believed to contribute towards the development of the hospitality and tourism industry in the country. The program is administered in English and aims to develop English language mastery in the context of hospitality. The programme is congruent with industry standards and is founded on accepted codes of language usage. The course has seen high demand, with over 70 applications in September and April 2022 each. The outcomes of the course are predominantly positive, as determined by student feedback and end-of-

the-course testing. The student subjective needs and wants have been mostly fulfilled as is evident from the student feedback on the course. The measure to which objective needs were met was determined via continuous assessment in the form of unit tests and final assessment.

### Implications for language teaching

Language management also involves acquisition planning [29], which presents ways of learning and internalizing norms of usage identified by language policy. Acquisition planning presents a plan of the methods and procedures in which language norms are to be learnt.

It is imperative for education professionals and hospitality establishments to join efforts in upgrading linguistic competences of hospitality employees. Foreign language policy in the industry needs to be consistent throughout all levels of ESP education and evaluation from university studies to on-the-job human resources training [1], [8], [22], [25].

Language norms in hospitality establishments are predominantly top-down, as employees are expected to memorize and reproduce language scripts and follow strict codes and procedures. Language use in the industry is perceived in the terms of legitimacy and illegitimacy, as it is a medium to perform service. Illegitimate language use can result in fines and salary deductions.

Tertiary-level education in the field can make these language codes and norms more relatable for interns through education practices based on the *meaningfulness approach*. This signifies that instead of focusing on memorization of phrases and dialogues for common work situations, language education should first build meaning and context around these situations. In this way, students can understand the social value of these norms. This is reflected in foreign language MPF (*Meaning, Pronunciation, Form*) teaching methodology, where meaning and context are presented first, followed by correct pronunciation and lastly, the linguistic form.

Appropriate focus on meaning is possible through target situation analysis, which allows to make informed decisions on curriculum design.

In order to ensure congruency and coherency between foreign language education and language policy, educational institutions collaborate closely with corporate bodies. Instructional decisions are informed by industry practices. One of the leading hospitality schools in Russia, the Faculty of Hospitality at the Institute of Industry Management at RANEPA, is affiliated with the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia. Instructional decisions are approved by the Federation before being implemented in the curriculum. This allows for a better coordination of foreign language policy between educational institutions and the workplace.

The intrinsic characteristics of the industry will thus have a reflection on the curriculum level. Hospitality is defined by its hands-on quality and clearly specified hierarchy. Students embarking on a career in the field start at linear positions at hotels and restaurants gradually advancing to positions of higher responsibility and managerial roles. To achieve this, an efficient foreign language syllabus at the tertiary level provides immersion into the industry starting from the first year of studies through programmes of study such as “English for the Restaurant Business” and “English for the Hotel Business” in year one, and “English for Tourism” and “English for Event Management” in year two of the academic studies. The syllabus is negotiated with the key stakeholders comprised of industry experts from the national hospitality Federation. General English should also be given sufficient attention in the curriculum as students feel it develops their conversational skills [5]. The curriculum is continually enhanced in relationship with changes in the field.

Another key tenet of university hospitality programmes are sandwich degrees, which involve industry placement during the course of academic studies. Internship commonly takes place in the middle of the academic year from February to April, which coincides with major Russian holidays and an influx of guests both at hotel and F&B (food and beverage) establishments. University education and work are therefore intertwined. Hence, language policy is applied both in relation to tertiary-level university studies and hospitality establishments. Students embark on a career in the professional sphere commencing

from their first year of university education and develop occupational profiles and professional portfolios in the course of their studies.

Given the above, university lecturers assume a language-planning function. The focus of teaching activity is around relevant aspects of language and its use in the profession. Instructors become intermediaries between the industry policy-makers and the students. This has several implications. Most importantly, instructional goals and policy goals should be aligned. It is also central for ESP lecturers to receive training approved by industry associations. An initiative is currently in place to implement a hospitality-training centre providing methodological support to the teaching staff.

## Conclusion

The orientation of this discussion was existing language policy and perspective directions for language management in the hospitality sphere, such as language use and testing standardization. Existing language policy in the industry has been found to be sporadic and inexplicit. Language norms for hospitality professionals are inadequate and not enforced by authorities: neither by government nor by corporate bodies. For the foregoing reasons, the author describes a case study of a national standardized English exam for hospitality professionals, introduced in 2022. Approved by the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia, the exam aims to standardize language practices in the hospitality industry and serve as a platform of assessment of hotel personnel language competencies. The paper maintains that English language instruction at the tertiary level should be informed by standards and practices in the industry through collaboration with the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia. This has implications for language instructors, who serve as conductors of hospitality norms and standards through English language education. The paper did not concern itself with details of ESP for hospitality English curriculum design, which can be the subject of future discussions.

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