

'How May I Help You', Language Use of Receptionists in Selected Business Organizations in Lagos State Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined 'How May I Help You', Language Use of Receptionist in Selected Business Organizations in Lagos State Nigeria. The study focused on the analysis of selected "texts" from receptionist discourse, covering some selected aspects of receptionist language. In the receptionist discourse, emphasis is placed on the features, meaning or functions, and the importance of that "context of use" plays in the total explication of the meaning of language use by receptionist. The discourse roles and paralinguistic features in receptionist language is therefore of paramount importance in this study. The study employed the use of descriptive survey design. The study adopted M.A.K. Halliday's functional approach to language that investigates the context of language use-the sort of interactive or linguistic exchanges that one can observe in receptionist language. In addition, the study applied the contextual configuration of the Halliday, to analyse the sort of social interactions within the context of receptionist discourse. The sample is drawn from both male and female receptionist in two selected organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria. Also, the sample was randomly selected from the two organizations which are located in different districts in Lagos state. This was to allow for a comprehensive analysis. The method of face-to-face or personal oral interview with the aid of a tape recorder will be employed. I shall also make use of note-taking and personal observation. Recorded data and the notes made from observation, will be collected on the spot, personally by the researcher. The analysis of data by highlighting the textual features of the selected texts of receptionist discourse. The study concluded that both the structural and the cohesive elements combine to make the selected texts highly textual. The combination of all this helps to highlight the language, meaning and utterances in the environment of receptionist discourse. The study recommended among others that in order to improve the receptionist's role in organizations, the organization's management should adopt a system where the receptionist is schooled on polite use of English.

Keywords: Language, Reception services, Business organizations, Lagos State.

Introduction

Whatever else people may do, when they come together, whether they play, fight or work, they talk. We live in a world of words. We talk face – to – face and over the telephone and everyone responds to us with more talk. As a result, hardly a moment of our working lives is free from words. Thus, the possession of language more than any other attribute, distinguished humans from animals. To understand our humanity, one must understand the language that makes us human. According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many people, it is language which is the source of human life power. Furthermore, there are many people; it is language which is the source of human life power.

Furthermore, there are many occasions when what we say matters enormously and has marked effects on the conduct of our lives. In using language to give orders, to control people and things, a

precise and logical use is necessary: Thus, there are some orders we can give without language at all – a look, a gesture, may sometimes be clear enough.

Moreover, functionalist such as Bronislaw Malinowsky (2003), Roman Osipovich Jakobson, Rupert Firth and more recently, Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and his followers who argued that language does not function in isolation from other aspects of human behavior. The scholars insist that the totality of the meaning of a particular piece of language cannot be extracted from the linguistic structures alone. Therefore, they propose an investigative paradigm that combines both the study and the analysis of the linguistic elements and other extra-linguistic features in the environment of the language use as contributive factors to the explanation of the totality of its meaning.

The analysis of the use of English by receptionist is therefore an example of an institutionalized use of language, where not only the verbal exchanges but also the non-verbal cues or extra-linguistic features effect how language is used in order to make meaning.

Problem Analysis

Most receptionists are unskilled in the act of receiving and making calls. Calls that could last about five minutes are prolonged with avoidable delays. Thus, callers pay more for air time that could have been less. Most of them have no strict self-discipline: they are cut impersonal and rude in conversation.

Thus, it is not enough to say “yes” or “hello”. This is because; it does not give any information as regards to the receptionist’s name, identification of their department or company. Most of them say, “Can I help you?” When they mean “How can I help you?”

All these culminate to give or create bad impression for the organization they are representing through their unfriendly manner to their callers. In addition, most receptionists have low level of educational qualification. This of course, helps to hinder their professionalism.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research work is an attempt to analyze the linguistic and extra-linguistic features which characterize receptionists’ discourse. The study sets out to provide some insight into forms of the linguistic exchanges and interactions among receptionists and their callers.

In addition, the study considered the meaning (in terms of use) of some of the “texts” they use and the context in which such text occurs; and their contribution to the meaning of the discourse.

Thus, discourse analysis often seen as an investigative paradigm for the analysis of any piece of language in use; would provide the “tools” for analyzing both the linguistic and non-linguistic features in the selected texts.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does the language of receptionist enhance effective communication?
2. Does the uttering of a statement simultaneously evoke the receptionist discourse?
3. Does “context” influence the features or the functions of a piece of language?

Theoretical Review

The Functional Approach to Discourse Analysis Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Linguistic

Investigations into “the functions of language” have often featured prominently in linguistic research. The central role of function has been interpreted in various ways and related to all levels of language.

Moreover, the Prague school contributed to the development of functional understanding of language at the sentence level through Mathesius Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP). While the Prague school scholars and to a greater extent, Firth also addressed the communicative of language, it is Halliday’s theory, which has comprehensively investigated and developed situational as well as formal functions at a level between language and its socio-cultural context.

Systematic-functional inter-relation of function takes into account the speaker of a given language and what they can do with it. This interpretation operates at two levels of abstraction. The first level is that of particular uses of language – for example to approve or disapprove; to express personal feelings; to greet etc.

However, looking at uses of language in this sense according to Margie Bains (2000) is potentially misleading. If only this level is considered, the impression is given that such users are easily identified and can be neatly listed and classified, a task that Firth had indicated would be a difficult task. Halliday (2003) puts this level of function into perspective:

“It is obvious that language is used in a multitude of different ways and purposes. It is not possible to enumerate them, nor is to try. There would be no way of preferring one list over another. These various ways of using language are sometimes referred to as “Functions of language”. But to say language has many “functions”, is to say to more than they do different things together”.

Furthermore, in accounting for how language is used, for the choices speakers make, M.A.K Halliday prefers to talk of functional grammar; as he puts it:

“The nature of language is closely related..... The functions it has to serve. In most concrete terms, these functions are specific to a culture: the use of language to organize fishing expeditions in the Trobriand Islands, described half a century ago by Malinowski, has no parallel in our own society. But underlying such specific instances of language use, are more general functions which are common to all cultures. We do not all go on fishing expeditions, however we all use language as a means of organizing other people, and directing their behavior”. (Halliday, 2003)

The English Language in Nigeria: A Criterion for Receptionist

It is common knowledge that much has been said or written about the English language in contact with Nigerian languages with a history of about three hundred years. English language has ceased to be a mere colonial legacy but has penetrated virtually every work of life of Nigerians. Its function ranges from being an official language, language of inter-ethnic communication to the most role of interpersonal, private family life (communication).

English is the language of commerce and the law of
Politics and the administration of education and of

Culture at all levels....”.

Similarly, Adetugbo (2002) explains that as the country's official language, it performs all the major functions, personal, social, directive, regulative and imaginative.

Thus, the English language has become institutionalized in Nigeria. As a second language variety, it belongs to the second category of Kachru's (2003) classification of the varieties of English into three concentric circles. This second variety is called the “outer circle” which is norm developing and conforms with the characteristics of an institutionalized natives varieties. These include: the length of time in use; the extension of use; the emotional attachment of second language users with the variety; its functional importance, and socio-linguistic status.

Through Nigeria is a multilingual speech community, the place given to our indigenous language is minute, the English language dominate them. Moreover, the English language is vested with a status higher than that of any indigenous languages in Nigeria because of its history and function.

Qualifications of a Receptionist

The qualifications of a receptionist given by Fisher (2002) may be briefly summarized as follows:

a) Good General Education:

The “minimum” suggested standard is the G.C.E (Ordinary level).

A good general education must necessarily include a sound knowledge of English grammar and knowledge of an extensive vocabulary.

b) Good Practical Grounding

In accounts. Although it is seldom necessary for the receptionist to keep a complete set of books, most receptionist will find that certain amount of accounts work has to be carried out in the form of a bound book or ledger or card index ledger system, back accounts and reconciliation statements, cash and petty cash books. Expenditure accounts etc. a sound training in the double entry method of book keeping, is therefore of the utmost importance.

c) Interest in Current Affairs and a good standard of General Knowledge

While a well-groomed appearance plays an important role both in obtaining a receptionist post in being singled out later for promotion, the importance of sound knowledge in receptionist work cannot be over emphasized.

In receptionist work a good active vocabulary is as important as a sound active vocabulary; Fisher meant the words that you can use correctly, both in speech and in writing.

This can be achieved by reading intensively and extensively, and always keeping a notebook available in which new words can be jotted down, including their meanings.

The receptionist and the telephone callers and Interviewing

The telephone plays an important role in the modern office. A great deal of business is transacted over the telephone. It is therefore necessary for the receptionist not only to be able to handle the telephone efficiently, but also to convey a favorable impression of her firm every time she receives or makes a call. More so because the firm is often judged by the telephone manner of its staff (Fisher op. cit.).

This leads to the next point which is accurate telephone skills (J. Tailor, 1994). They are vital in any type of oral communication. On the telephone, it is particularly important not only to listen but to let the caller know that you are doing so. That is what Tailor (op. cit) has called “active listening”.

Active listening, she says, "will help you to listen and the other person to express herself". Moreover, on the phone, you are restricted to express your voice and cannot smile; frown etc, in order to compensate for these shortcomings, the telephone user (receptionists) should make a conscious effort to increase the number of times they say "yes", "Mm", I see or even grunt; thus indicates to the other person that you are paying attention.

Another skill is that of asking Question. It is important to ask questions when necessary and constantly check for understanding with your caller, not forgetting to take notes during or after call. Tailor says asking the right questions in the right way, at the right time is important; although it is not always recognized as such. She gave seven main types of questions highlighted as follows:

1. **OPEN:** this is designed to encourage people to talk, To explore a topic in a general way and to start off a discussion. The receptionist is likely to ask "tell me about . . ." Or "what happened when . . .?"
2. **PROBLEM:** These helps to tease out more detailed information such as "what happened next".
3. **CLOSE:** These are used to establish simple specific Facts and tend to elicit one-word answers: "What time Did this happen?" "Do you have the receipt?"
4. **REFLECTIVE:** These are often used in counseling, problem solving, and it helps to diffuse emotionally charged situations. Here the receptionist repeats back what the other person has said as In: "you are happy about the way we dealt with your problem?" You say you felt upset about the news?"
5. **LEADING:** These are frequently used but not very helpful except in gaining acceptance of one's point of view as in "I suppose you checked it out first?" This tends to lead to The answer you expect.
6. **HYPOTHETICAL:** These can help people to think about New ideas: "What will happen if?"
7. **MULTIPLE:** A string of questions should be avoided as they only serve to confuse both questioner and the other person being questioned.

When we consider the users a telephone can be put to such as: selling, buying, explaining, giving and receiving, discussing, negotiating, arranging, confirming, networking – the least is endless and these are just business calls. Even contacts and agreements may be made by telephone and confirmed later in writing.

It is of paramount importance that every receptionist adheres to the skills of telephoning through self-discipline.

Receiving Calls

In this aspect, the receptionist is guided of the company's "house manner" or style. That is, the exact form of "greeting" when receiving a call may be determined by policy, the size of the organization and its relation to the switchboard, etc.

Thus, the receptionist is expected to always sound lively and interested in what the caller has say. They should not just say "yes" or "hello" but they should also say "Good morning or Good afternoon", identifying their department or company. When they want to sound really helpful, they add "How may I help you" in most cases they say "Can I help you?"

Furthermore, the receptionist should always answer the telephone promptly. An outside call should be answered by saying:

"Good morning. This is ELF Company". Saying "Hello" is both meaningless and time wasting in that it conveys no information to the caller but compels her to ask who you are.

Thus, the receptionist should not only say "Good morning, followed by the name of the company but he/she should also identify himself by his first name. Thus should be done before asking "How, may I help you".

In addition, the receptionist never puts a call through to her employer or boss before ascertaining that she is willing or ready to take it. He or she would ask the caller courteously to wait. Then when she had connected the person who owns the call or the person receiving the call on a behalf, it is necessary to tell the caller that you are putting him through. It is wrong to have the caller "in the air" (Fisher op.cit.).

Receiving Callers

Callers may be divided into two classes: those "with" appointments and those "without" appointments. Just as the right telephone manner helps to give the caller a favourable impression of the firm, so does the receptionist manner when receiving personal callers either confirm, or destroy that impression. Her manner therefore, while not lacking indignity, should be pleasant and welcoming, warm and friendly. To all callers therefore, the receptionist must be unfailingly polite and helpful, while avoiding any suggestion of self-importance (Fishers op.cit.).

Interviewing Callers

Here, considerable tact is called for; the receptionist should possess a cheerful, pleasant and courteous manner while tactfully obtaining such particulars as name and address and the nature of callers business: It is important they make a brief note of every interview for their employer.

Furthermore, the receptionist job is an area that is currently receiving high recognition in the corporate. Now, more value is placed on a higher education certificate so much so, than the indicial minimum G.C.E Ordinary level requirement. This was the job that used to be reserved only for the female class who are "less privileged" or "not so educated", in the community.

Thus, today, it attracts a minimum qualification of either a B.Sc. or a B.A, in any field of study, provided you have at least, an above average competence in English language. They lay emphasis on good spoken English and make the job more professional by undergoing regular on-the-job-training programmes. This improves their quality of presentation and makes them well informed. The male sex is not left out.

Finally, the importance attached to the effective use of English language as the (main) tool of interaction has necessitated the investigation into the field.

Methodology

The study focused mainly on the analysis of selected "texts" from receptionist discourse, covering some selected aspects of receptionist language. In order to attempt an analysis of the centrality and functionality of human language. In the receptionist discourse, emphasis is placed on the features,

meaning or functions, and the importance of that "context of use" plays in the total explication of the meaning of language use by receptionist. The discourse roles and paralinguistic features in receptionist language is therefore of paramount importance in this study. The employed the use of descriptive survey design. I will also adopt M.A.K. Halliday's functional approach to language that investigates the context of language use-the sort of interactive or linguistic exchanges hat one can observe in receptionist language. In addition, the study applied the contextual configuration of the Halliday, to analyses the sort of social interactions within the context of receptionist discourse. The sample is drawn from both male and female receptionist in two selected organizations. Also, the sample will be randomly selected from the two organization which are located in different district in Lagos state. This is to allow for a comprehensive analysis. The method of face-to-face or personal oral interview with the aid of a tape recorder will be employed. I shall also make use of not taking and personal observation. Recorded data and the notes made from observation, will be collected on the spot, personally by the researcher. The analyses data by highlighting the textually features of the selected texts of receptionist discourse. These will include theme and information cohesion features. The fact any linguistic unit is the simultaneous realization of the three meta functions (Halliday, 2002). The study attempted an interpersonal approach contextually. The regular linguistic features use by the speaker to convey meanings and intentions; and the various cohesion features will be analyses. The study intended to carry out all these procedures by using Halliday's field, mode and tenor discourse analysis frame-work.

Results/Analys

Discourse analysis holds that both textual and textual features a central to the analysis of a piece of discourse. While the textual features on the other hand deals with the lexical cohesive makers including all items of coherence that gives textures to the discourse.

It is noteworthy to observe that the semantic and grammatical items focus in a piece of discourse represent different aspect the textures of the text. The texture of a text itself is manifested by certain kinds of semantic relations between the individual messages in the piece of discourse and it serves as one of the sources of textual unity.

Obviously, both the textual and textual features are interwoven and are necessary for the total explication of the meaning of a text. It is pertinent to note that in receptionist discourse, the property of the texture within a piece of discourse is related to the listener's perception of coherence which enhances understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the text.

Thus, the analysis in this study, focuses mainly on lexical cohesure makers, grammaticality and politeness. These will highlight the textual and textual features. These include reference, ellipses and substitution conjunction and reiteration.

The data are coded as Text A, Text B, Text C and Text D. they have been carefully collected to represent different forms of discourse in a typical reception setting.

Text A is the telephone discourse of the receptionist obtained by verbal interaction and note-taking. The selected texts are calls termed "internal" and "external". By internal they mean calls coming in within the company premises while external calls are hose calls coming in from outside the company premises.

Text B is another type text, which refers to receptionist discourse with personal callers obtained through the aid of tape recorder and note taking.

Text C referred to the receptionist and colleagues discourse. The text is an example of the type of linguistic exchange that takes place both on phone and personally.

Text D represents the receptionists discourse with their boss. Both text C and D will provide a comparative analysis of the selected exchanges in the overall discourse.

In the analysis, the following notations are used as reflected in the data

_____ R: Receptionist
 _____ C: Caller
 _____ CL: Colleague
 _____ D: Direction

Theme and Information as Features of Discourse:

Every piece of language use has the character of a message (exchange of information) and some form of organization that provides the text the status of a communication event.

Theme and information as features of discourse refer to the internal resource that structure a piece of discourse as a message or a unit of language that is functional. In the corpus, one can recognize quite easily that the utterances are being used to realize certain functions. In essence, they are meant to accomplish inter-personal goals and to convey social, expressive and regulatory meanings. Some of these functions are highlighted or realized in the texts through the means of theme and information focus.

The theme is the most important part of a clause from the point of view of its presentation of message in sequence. It is the element which serves as the starting point for or the point of departure of the message. Thus, it is that which the clause is concerned with.

Across the texts examples of theme and information are highlighted in the dialogic and interrogative forms of the texts. I observed that in early all the texts, there is the use of the words "can I help you?" The use of the auxiliary verb "Can" which questions the ability of the questioner, in carrying out the task in question. Examples.

Extract 1

R: Yes, can I help you?
 C: Yes, do you know Mr.
 R: Yes (I do) please sit down

Again, I also observed that nearly all the texts the two types of interrogative forms (the polar and the wh-questions) that are employed have functional interpretations. Most importantly, they function to confirm, refute and see particular piece of information as is demonstrated in extract 1 above.

In the above fragment, the operator (do) in the polar question function as the theme of the clause. The caller is seeking for a piece of information from the witness which the receptionist supplied in the response.

Extract 2

R_____ Mrs. Ono left some files for you to treat.
 CL_____ Where are they?
 R_____ They are here on the file Cabinet.

You need to know how much stress you Ø Caused me today . . .

In the above extract, there is the omission of the auxiliary verb "have". Thus, rendering the receptionist's response ungrammatical.

In analysis of theme and information, I observed that theme in at one, and the same time is a representation of experience, an interactive exchange and a message within the piece of discourse. The two communicative prominent parts of the clause and the focus are typically distinct. One is at the point of initiation and the other is at the point of completion. This is illustrated in extract 2 above. Theme of a clause can be regarded as the given information, while the new information is the focus. Information itself is used in the context to describe a process of interaction between what is already known or predictable and what is new and unpredictable. It is the interplay of new and given that generates information. Hence, the information unit needed in a piece of discourse is a structure made-up of two functions, the new and the given.

Thus, the information that is presented by the speaker is recoverable or ready, supplied by context is the given information, while the new is the one which has not been mentioned or immediately recoverable, but it may be something unexpected whether previously mentioned or not. The focus or prominence is on the item that contains the elements of newness often located at the end of the information unit, for example:

Extract 3

R___ Do you have your check with you?

C___ No (I do not have it here).

Here, the focus is on the items containing the new information (check booklet). The other part of the clause is the given information.

It is obvious that within any universe of discourse (e.g. receptionist interaction) or set contextual conditions, the speaker can exploit the potentials that the situation defines, using thematic and information structure to produce an astonishing variety of rhetorical effects.

Ellipses and Substitution

These are other forms of grammatical cohesion within the text. Being a spoken discourse, examples of elliptical statements abound in the text. As a cohesive agency and a form of anaphora, ellipses contribute to the semantic structure of the discourse. In the extract above, the use of ellipses makes the discourse textural. Thus, the elliptical expression in the above extract, extracts an efficient communication as needless repetition is avoided.

Information and messages are also connected semantically through the use of the connective interference: "if" as shown in extract 6 above. The connector "if" indicates an inference from what is implicit in the preceding clause. The cohesive marker shows the relationship between the different parts of the clauses.

In the analysis of Text A, an attempt has been made to select some cohesive features that are interwoven into the structure of the discourse that gives textual features to the piece of discourse and highlight the features of English language as used by receptionist.

Discussion

The Contextual Features of Text A

The text described as the telephone discourse has the following contextual features.

- Field of Discourse: The field of activity in this text could be described as a verbal regulation of social interaction through the use of telephone. It is the stage of enquiries/requests is made and answers given.

- Tenor of Discourse: The participants in this discourse can be described as dual active participants: the receptionist and the caller with the exceptions of occasions where a third party is involved. Any of the two interactants could act as the major questioner and respondents depending on who needs to know what. The participant's roles are primary ones, although they have a temporary relationship. The role relationship is highly institutionalized but not rigidly exhibiting features of unequal encounters
- Mode of Discourse: It is primarily spoken with feature of spontaneity in the text. The only part of the discourse that are written or documented are when the message is written down or when reference had to be made to a previous encounter for verification purposes. The questions are orally and the answers too are spontaneous.

In addition, the text is a dialogue and it is grammatically simple and lexically sparse.

The Contextual Features of Text B

The features of the context of this text exhibit similarities with text A.

- Tenor of Discourse: The participant roles are highly constrained, involving participants of status, and roles that are of semi-equality. The receptionist exercise greater authority and the personal callers acts as respondents if they do not ask question which in turn makes the receptionist a respondents.
- Mode of Discourse: The mode of discourse in text 13 is also primarily spoken. There is also a written aspect of the discourse (filling of forms/cards). It is partly spontaneous and it is grammatically simple.

The Contextual Features of Text C

The features of the contextual of this text – receptionist and colleague has a relaxed undertone.

- Field of Discourse: The text represents the discourse of receptionist with other staff not employer or callers. Flexibility of conduct is shown. The field of discourse could also be described as a verbal regulation of social interaction through the reception setting.
- Tenor of Discourse: The active participants in the discourse include the receptionist and colleague. The participant roles and relationships are cordial, some exceptions are however highly institutionalized depending on the rapport that exists between them. Thus, the context of discourse is mainly that of equal encounter.
- Mode of Discourse: It is a verbal text and primarily in spoken form. It contains a dialogue between the participants. The grammar is simple but sometimes contains errors. It also exhibit some features of interference which is as a result of the relaxed nature of the interaction.

The Contextual Features of Text D

This text which refers to the discourse with boss/employer is slightly different from the previous texts.

- Field of Discourse: The text represents the discourse of a chief executive to an employee. The nature of the social action or what the participants are engaged in is highly formal. It is also a verbal regulation of social interaction and it involves orders and obedience.
- Tenor of Discourse: The participants roles are highly constrained, involving participants of unequal status and roles. The receptionist, the directors, the manager are active participants

in the discourse. Although, the receptionist here is more like the respondent alone on most occasions, while the director is the major questionnaire and exercise greater authority.

- Mode of Discourse: It is also primarily spoken. It revealed a considerable feature of spoken command it is grammatically simple. From the foregoing analysis, one can safely say or assert that the understanding of the context of a particular piece of discourse provided the extra-linguistic information about the socio-culture environment necessary for the total explication of the meaning of the discourse. They also highlight the features of the language use and the situational features in reception discourse.

Paralinguistic Features in Receptionist Discourse

In the course of our investigation of language use in receptionist discourse there are paralinguistic features which I observed to form part of the contextual features in the communication during the interactions and exchanges in receptionist discourse.

Thus, a "nod", "a shake of the head", "wave of the hand" are all part of the paralinguistic features that used to communicate meanings in the context of receptionist discourse. They respectively indicate "yes" or "no" a sign of goodbye or body gesticulation to show someone to a seat or where to go. Most of the non-verbal cues features of spoken discourse which could be found in all the texts. The contextual features pointed out from the texts clearly reveal the importance of the extralinguistic features to the identification of a piece of language use situated within a particular environment of discourse and the context of culture from part of the strategies that help decode the meaning and the functions of the receptionist texts. The contextual configuration serves to interpret the social contexts of the texts, the environment in which the meanings are exchanged.

Conclusion

In these sections, the study has attempted both textual and textual analysis of the texts, as features of discourse in receptionist discourse. The identified both the structural and the cohesive elements which combine to make the selected texts highly textural. The combination of all these helps to highlight the language, meaning and utterances in the environment of receptionist discourse.

In the chapter that follows and attempt is made to highlight the contribution of the social context and extra-linguistic factors to the identification and characterization of the receptionist discourse.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for future consideration which will go a long way to promote effective usage of English language by receptionists. These recommendations are based on my findings:

One, in order to improve the receptionist's role in organizations, the organization's management should adopt a system where the receptionist is schooled on polite use of English.

Two, organizations should as a matter of necessity develops their receptionists by sending them to attend courses in English Language. They should also organize seminars and engage consultants to impart necessary knowledge on the use of English language.

Three, where the callers/customers/visitors are illiterates or semi-literates, the management should provide an interpreter that would explain and interpret the details of the discussion.

Four, provision should be made for more than one receptionist to be on duty if the organization is large and has a heavy flow of clients calling in person or on phone. This will aid better interaction.

Finally, the study is of the view that a receptionist should be multi-lingual as the major “tool” of interaction, the language of the community in which the organization is situated should also be a pre-requisite for the job. This would ease the problem of an interpreter. It will also enhance and prompt healthy interaction and bring more fun into the job.

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