

# Study of the English Using Condition of Entry-Level Employees

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## Abstract

The sport industry started its international orientation when Pierre de Coubertin regained his position in the Olympic Games in 1896. And as immigrants moved around in the early 20 century to pursue better lives, they brought different kinds of sports, especially soccer, with them (Schaaf, 2004). Over the past decades, fueled by the power of radio and television, sport has crossed almost every border in the world (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). Followed by the successful expansion of the Olympics and FIFA, professional sports leagues, namely Premier League, NBA, MLB, NFL, and NHL, are making every effort to going global. To increase its international visibility just like other Asian countries do, Taiwan government has officially announced its policy in bidding international sport events. No wonder all of the sport management programs of the Taiwanese universities stress internationalization as their key educational goals.

The ability to communicate is essential in doing sport business. Today's employers will find not only those with extensive professional skills, but also the language skills required to communicate effectively worldwide, and the intercultural adaptability to cooperate with colleagues and clients from different regions. As the industry is dominated by the US, English language seems to be the most common choice (Sport Business International, 2008). Although all of the local sport management programs have intensive English and even Sport English courses, the learning effect has not been evaluated and further discussed yet.

The 37th Edition of the IBAF Baseball World Cup was held in Taiwan in November of 2007, and 16 teams including Australia, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, USA, Venezuela, and Chinese Taipei were participated. This research interviewed 87 event's entry-level employees by a structured questionnaire, and these paid employees are junior students of the sport management program who were on their internship journey. The research purposes were to find out the application scope of the English conversation used by lower-level personnel in an international sport event, and their reactions resulted from the cross-culture communication experiences. The outcome of the research can provide information to improve future English teaching quality. Findings indicated that all of the employees (100%) had chances to speak with foreign team members during the event. And 78% of them said that their chances to speak English were above average.

Female employees had more chances to communicate with foreign players through a T-test examination. More than 60% of their conversations were event related, and the

top 5 topics were (1) asking directions inside of the stadium (2) requesting line-up chart, (3) checking game results, (4) seeking information about event's merchandises, (5) requesting ice cube. Non event related topics were (1) exchanging souvenirs, (2) chatting personal matters, (3) asking where to go for sightseeing, (4) inquiring local gourmet food and restaurant information, (5)greeting conversation. Some 57% of the respondents were not satisfied with their performance in English, 30% were average, and only 20% were satisfied. So a mean of only 2.41 were found in a 5-point Likert Scale with 5 points being the most satisfied, and 1 point being the most unsatisfied. Such findings call attention to the notion that sport management academies should not overlook the gap between the English education and the practices required in international sport events. Recommendations for sport management academies are discussed.

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