



# Talk & Interaction in Commercial Hospitality



# Presentation

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*A Quantum Leap in Excellence - Education Without Borders*

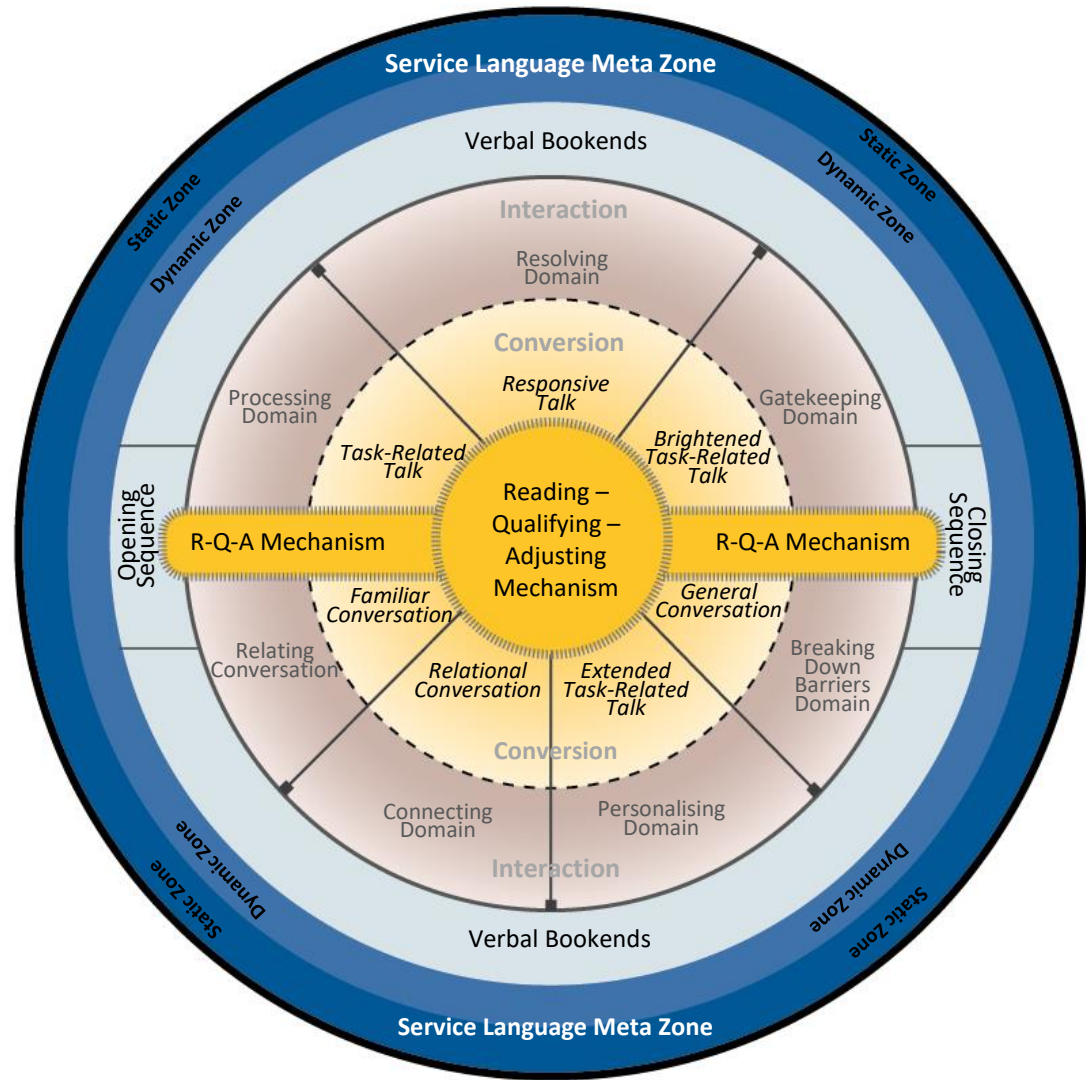
# Background

- Dr Madalyn Scerri developed a theoretical framework of service language and communication in her PhD titled the 'service language model'.
- The framework is being applied and developed by Scerri and Presbury in diverse service settings including peer-to-peer accommodation (Airbnb) and residential aged care.
- Both Scerri and Presbury teach guest experience and service management and design to tertiary hospitality students.
- From this foundation, the researchers seek to develop a teaching and learning resource that can be applied to enhance TH&E graduates' soft skills directly related to verbal communication with customers.
- Using a constructivist methodology and a reflexive approach (Dupuis, 1999), the researchers set out to critically reflect on their experiences and knowledge to develop a training tool that meets the aims of this project.

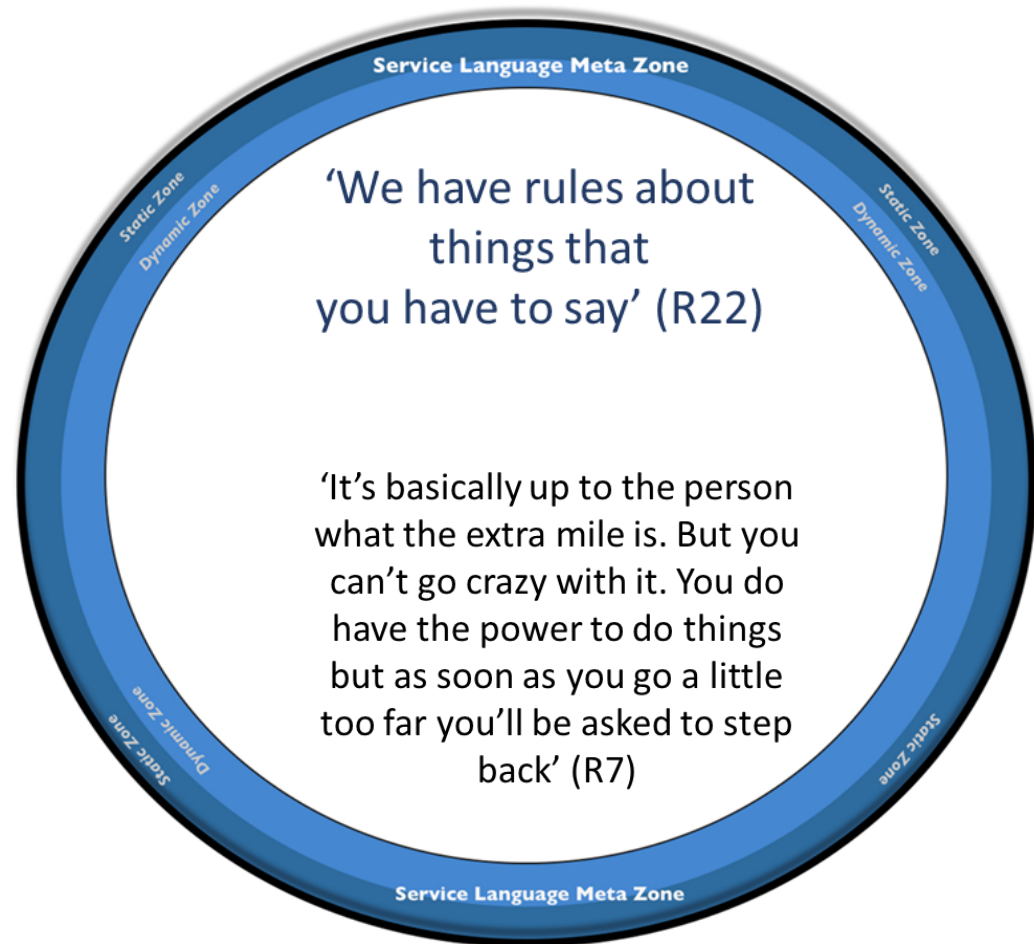
# Project Objectives

- To develop a training tool to enhance graduates' soft skills directly related to verbal communication with customers. Three main objectives guide the project's conceptual development:
  - Objective 1: To systematically review literature related to TH&E soft skills and service communication.
  - Objective 2: To propose a theoretical but practical model (herein referred to as a 'training tool') to teach communication soft skills for service delivery.
  - Objective 3: To develop structured teaching notes to accompany the training tool.
- The second phase of the project will integrate empirical data collection to prepare for the implementation of the training tool in tertiary education.

# A Grounded Theory of Service Language

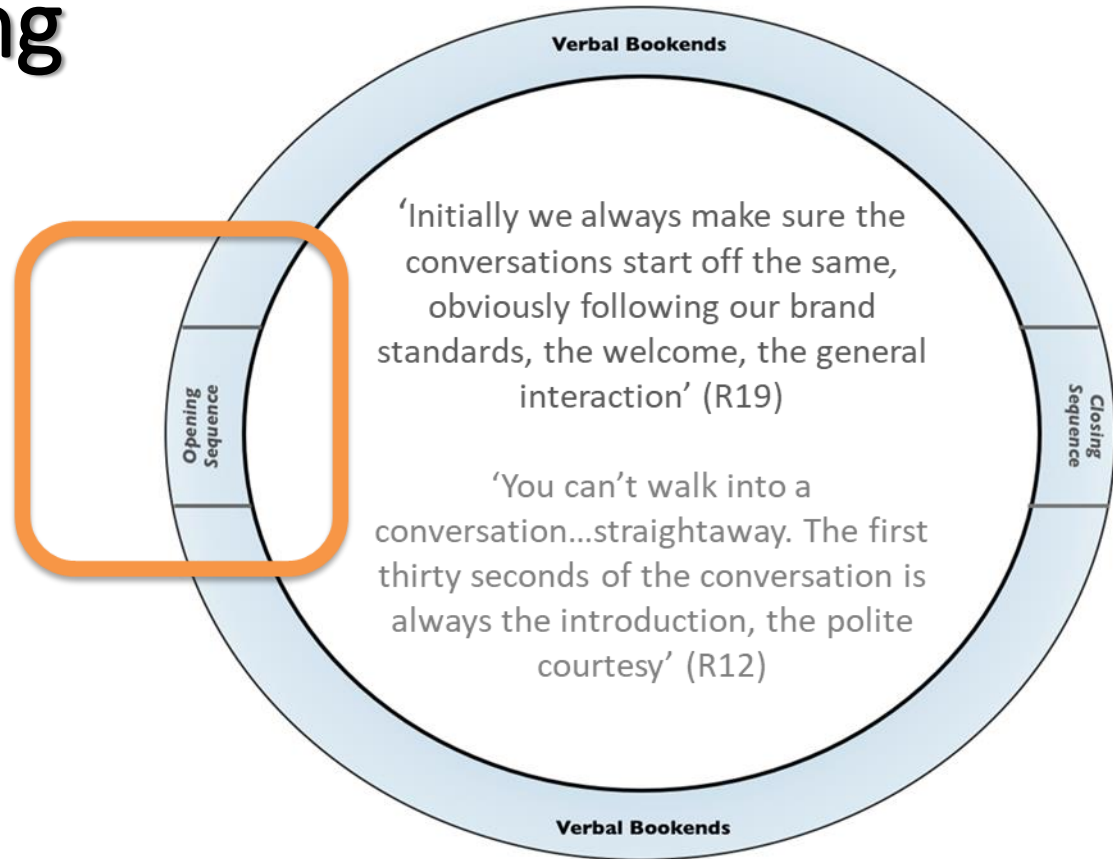


# Layer 1: The Meta Zone



# Layer :2

## The Opening Sequence





# Layer 3: The Reading – Qualifying – Adjusting Mechanism

‘Reading a little bit about  
your guest, if you can,  
before you’ve even spoken  
to them’. (R16)

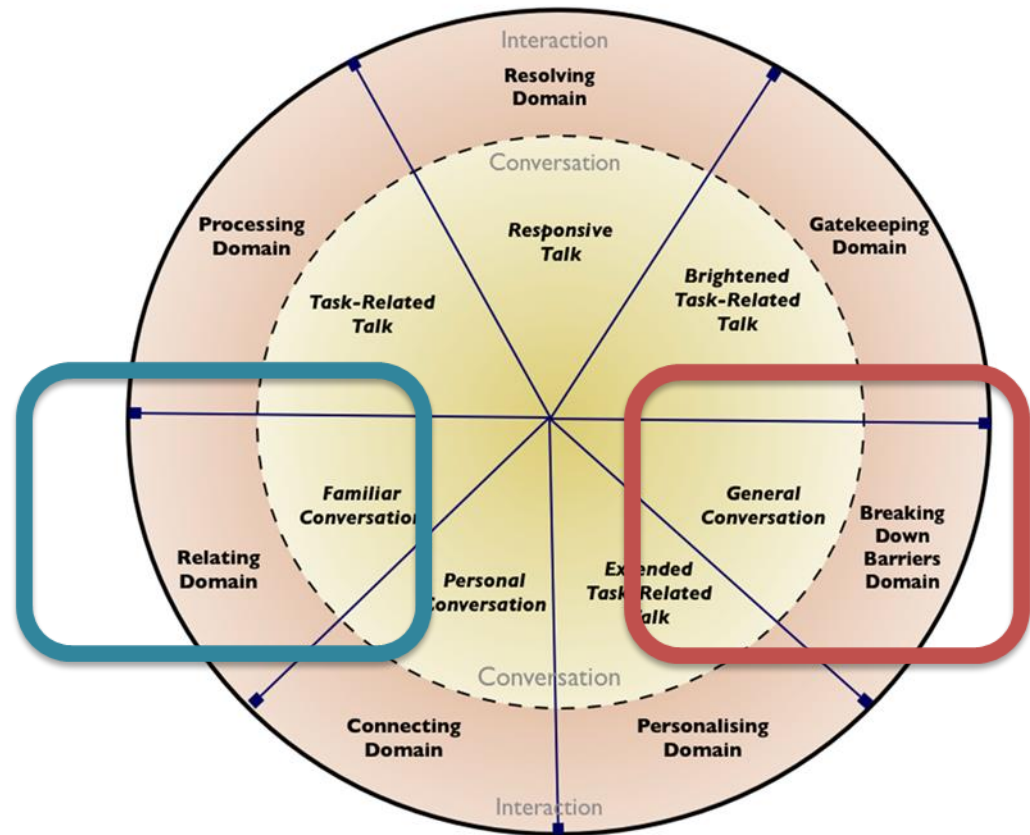
‘You have to analyse the  
situation, basically, and who  
it is, to be able to get the  
gist of whether you should  
do or say something’ (R7)



‘To find out what their expectations are, to be able to go beyond it, you  
need to first find out what they want... qualify their initial request and  
then you lay it down from there’ (R19)

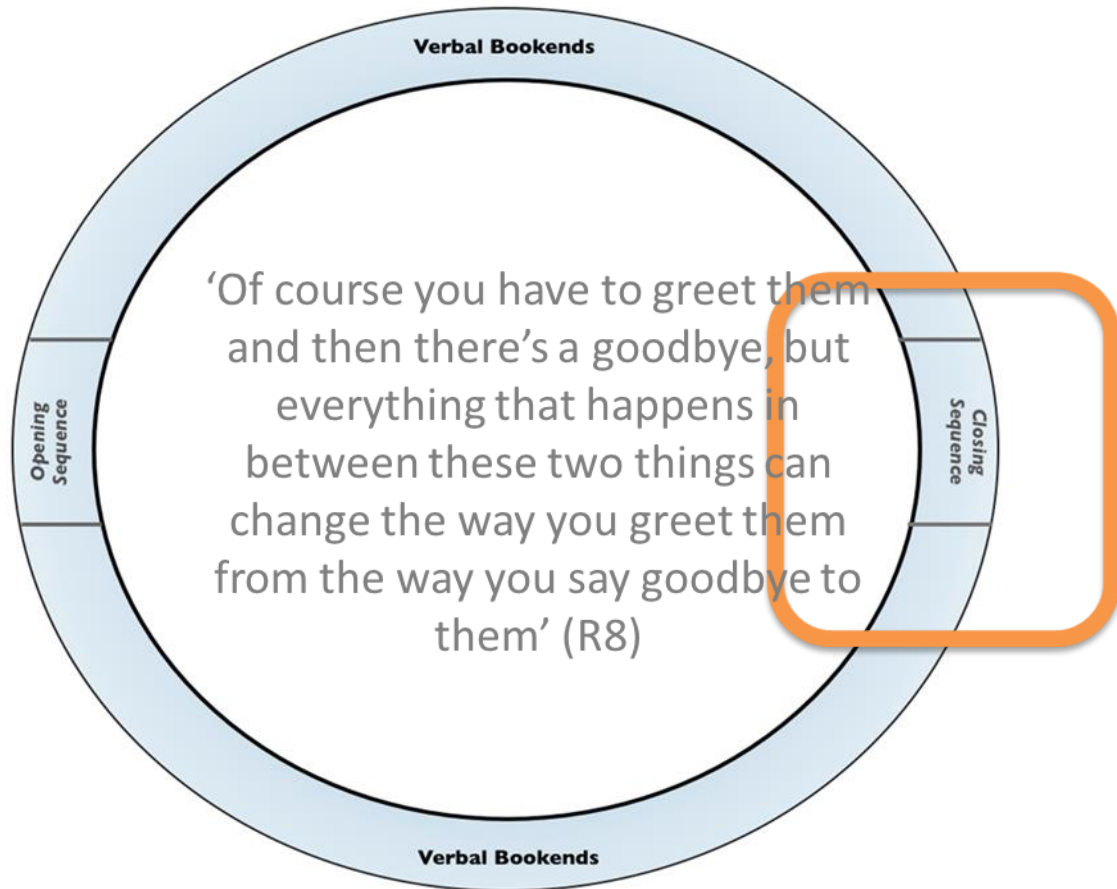


# Layer 4: The Interactional – Conversational Domains



‘What happens in between the standardised sayings, the greetings and the farewells, is between you and the guest ...you get trained a certain way, but...there is no written rule on how to progress with a lot of these things’ (R19)

# Layer 2: The Closing Sequence



# The Challenge

- Teaching and learning of generic skills such as verbal communication, success depends significantly on the skills being made explicit for students.
- One way of creating that explicit learning is through structured theoretical but practical models, devised specifically for the context of study.
- As stated by Sisson and Adams (2011, p.144) “the challenge for hospitality educators today is to ensure that the soft competencies are given equal or greater weight than hard competencies in education and training, even though hard competencies are often easier to define, teach, and assess”.

# The Challenge

**Phase one of this project reflects the conceptual development of the training tool and teaching notes, and relates to several research questions, such as:**

- Why is it important to enhance communication excellence for the development of TH&E students' soft skills?
- What elements of service communication can be embedded in tertiary education as a form of soft skill development?
- What teaching procedures and activities can be developed to embed service communication in the constructivist classroom?
- How can the training tool and teaching notes can be effectively implemented into the tertiary education classroom?

# Rapid Systematic Literature Review

## List A:

Words	Soft Skills and hospitality Verbal communication and hospitality Service Language and hospitality Spoken Communication and hospitality Interpersonal Communication and hospitality Person centered communication and hospitality Hospitality language Communication and service in hospitality Communication and social skills in hospitality Communication and service in hospitality
Year of Publication	No restrictions
Type of Source	Only international peer reviewed journal articles
Publication Stage	Final and Published only
Language	English only
Type of Research	Both qualitative and quantitative

## List B:

Phrase	Teaching and verbal communication in higher education
Year of Publication	No restrictions
Type of Source	Only international peer reviewed journal articles
Publication Stage	Final and Published only
Language	English only
Type of Research	Both qualitative and quantitative

# Literature

- Literature on communication and especially on verbal communication has not progressed very much since the publication of Scerri's theses.
- There appears to be a good discussion in the literature through the 90's and early 2000's but slows after that.
- Whilst communication is listed as an important aspect of graduate skills and attributes, verbal communication is not specifically mentioned.
- Much more is written about verbal communication in health and medical services.

# Literature

What did the literature tell us about teaching verbal communication.....

- Overall, the training programmes that were effective in improving communication skills were learner-centred and included practising the skills.
- A combination of didactic and practical components appeared to improve skill acquisition.
- Training strategies that seemed to be effective were:
  - role-play;
  - simulations and structured and;
  - small group discussions.

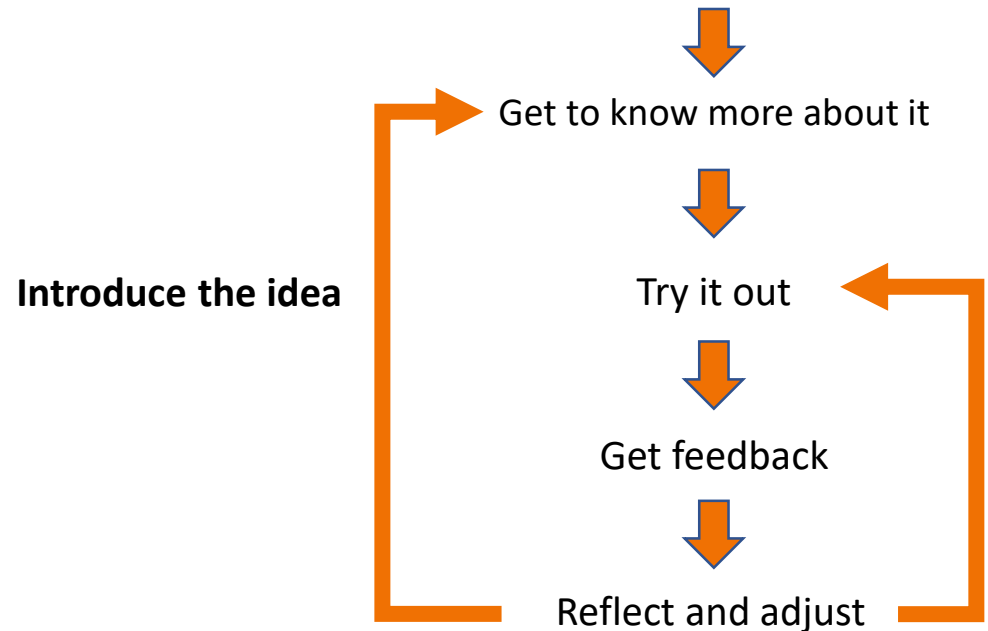


# The Module being built..

- Introduction to what is communication and specifically verbal communication.
- The theory – model
- Practical examples through case study, role play scenarios, building an understanding of style and language to help understand best practice
- Activities at a number of points
- Self testing
- Booklet format that can be a stand alone module, a micro module in another course or used as part of a workshop.

# The Teaching Strategy

- The teaching strategy adopted is to develop activities and resources that a teacher can use to enable the students to learn rather than be taught.
- Using a simple model of learning designed by Hughes, Toohey & Hatherly (1992).



# The Teaching Strategy

**Simple Model of Learning: Toohey, S. (2010). Designing Courses for Higher Education.**  
*The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.*

Encounter OR be introduced to the idea, concept, principle of skill	Introductory case, discuss the case and discuss some of the issues involved, explore what the students already know and check for misconceptions.
Get to know more about it	Introduce the theory and the service language model to the students, asking questions to check their understanding and using the case to explain the various stages of the customer journey and the model.
Try it out for oneself	By this stage students begin to have some grasp of the topic and they can begin to try and use their new knowledge. Add an activity/exercise ...model/language etc.,
Get feedback	Most commonly coming from the teacher asking questions and group discussion during the activity.
Reflect, adjust and try again	Taking account of the discussion and deciding how one's performance needs to be adapted....then do a role play..... and repeat the learning

# Next Steps

## Feedback

- Further analysis of the literature
- Test and evaluate the teaching tool
- Further reflection by researchers



Thank you