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**HOSPITALITY HAVOC: RESEARCHING ONLINE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN'S SERVICE SECTOR****Abstract:**

Japan's service sector is renowned internationally for the level of hospitality, or *omotenashi*, it provides to tourists, both domestic and from abroad. Recent concerted efforts by the government, in the form of campaigns targeting visitors in anticipation of the 2020 Olympic Games, however, have resulted in a massive increase in overseas visitors that have flooded communities. This has put pressure on locals working in hotels, restaurants, railway stations, taxis - in short, anyone associated with tourism.

The biggest hurdle for many local staff is their inability to communicate, even at a rudimentary level, in languages other than Japanese. With regard to language needs, approximately half of the over 28,000,000 visitors recorded in 2017 came from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan with their first or second language being Mandarin, not English. The government-funded, three-year research project described in this presentation\* aimed to provide basic level online courses in Mandarin to staff in a variety of tourist venues, including an art museum, souvenir shops and hotels in Shizuoka Prefecture. We selected this area due to the fact that Mount Fuji is located there, resulting in year-round tourist traffic and a concrete, ongoing need for foreign languages.

With each location, we identified challenges resulting in gradual modification of the training format and research progression. I will describe the original design and gradual evolution of the project, explaining in chronological order obstacles encountered at each venue, and the impact this had on how the project was reorganized. Results to date will also be presented.

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**Keywords:**

blended learning, Japan, service sector, hospitality, research, foreign languages