Communication Strategies between Chinese Employers and their Basotho Employees

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Abstract
In Lesotho, an increasing number of supermarkets and small stores, in both urban and rural areas, are owned and/or managed by Chinese. This paper is a preliminary attempt to document how workplace communication takes place between Chinese employers and their Basotho employees. It specifically investigates communication strategies used in carrying out daily interaction, looking at the use of the three languages Sesotho and Chinese as mother tongue languages for both parties, then the international language, English, and their possible mixing. It discusses whether there could be said to be a local pidgin developing. The paper also looks at non-verbal communication strategies, such as gestures, and whether more ‘experienced’ employers and employees are used to ‘mediate’ in workplace communication. Data were obtained from questions administered to employees of Chinese stores. It was supplemented by observations in such stores. Analysed data reveal that competency and fluency in a language is not a hindrance in business. Workers and their employees could always employ any means of communication to carry out their normal routines.

Key words: Communication strategies, Workplace communication, Chinese employers, Basotho employees

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