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The Impact of Tour Guides' Language Communication Skills on the Quality of Tourism Services: A Sample of Travel and Tourism Companies in Baghdad

L'impact des compétences en communication des guides touristiques sur la qualité des services touristiques : une étude portant sur les agences de voyage et les entreprises touristiques à Bagdad

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Résumé : Working as a tour guide is an important career choice, as it requires a range of communication skills, foremost among which are language skills that contribute to enhancing the quality of tourism services across the following dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. To achieve the research objectives, a survey was conducted on a sample of tourists at travel and tourism companies in Baghdad, where the researcher described and analysed a purposive sample of 334 respondents, supported by in-depth interviews with a group of participants. Among the most notable findings of the study is the high level of interest shown by tour guides in communication skills, which have a tangible and intangible impact on tourism services in their various dimensions.

Keywords: tour guide, tourism, communication skills, language skills, quality of tourism services.

Le métier de guide touristique constitue un choix professionnel important, car il requiert de multiples compétences en communication, notamment des compétences linguistiques qui contribuent à garantir la qualité des services touristiques à travers leurs différentes dimensions : la tangibilité, la fiabilité, la réactivité, la sécurité et l'empathie. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de la recherche, une étude exploratoire a été menée auprès d'un échantillon de touristes dans des agences de voyage et de tourisme de la ville de Bagdad. Le chercheur a procédé à la description et à l'analyse d'un échantillon intentionnel composé de 334 unités, étayé par des entretiens approfondis avec un groupe de participants. Parmi les principaux résultats de l'étude figure l'intérêt marqué des guides touristiques pour les compétences en communication, qui ont une incidence tant matérielle que morale sur les services touristiques sous leurs différents aspects.

Mots-clés : guide touristique, tourisme, compétences en communication, compétences linguistiques, qualité des services touristique

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1. Introduction:

The impact of tour guides' linguistic and communication skills on the dimensions of tourism service quality according to the SERVQUAL model, particularly within the context of Iraqi travel and tourism companies. Hence, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by analysing the relationship and influence between language and communication skills and the quality of tourism services in travel and tourism companies in the city of Baghdad . It has become necessary to focus on the factors that contribute to improving the quality of service provided, foremost among which are the skills of the tour guide, particularly linguistic and verbal skills, which represent the primary means of communication between the tourist and the tourist destination.

Language and communication skills play a pivotal role in conveying tourist information and knowledge in a clear and engaging manner, as well as helping to build a positive mental image among tourists and enhance their level of satisfaction. Furthermore, a tour guide's possession of these skills helps to bridge cultural and linguistic communication gaps and enhances the effectiveness of interaction between the guide and tourists, which has a direct impact on the quality of the tourism services provided.

Accordingly, this research aims to highlight the linguistic and verbal skills of tour guides and demonstrate their impact on improving the quality of tourism services, through an analytical study of the views of a sample of travel and tourism companies. This research is an extract from a Master's thesis entitled 'Tour Guide Skills and Their Impact on the Quality of Tourism Services: An Applied Study of Travel and Tourism Companies in the City of Baghdad'.

The research is organised into three main sections: the first covers the study methodology; the second addresses the theoretical aspects related to the research variables; and the third is devoted to the practical aspects, data analysis and hypothesis testing. The research concludes with a set of conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 Research Problem:

Given the rapid development of the tourism sector and increasing competition to provide outstanding services, the development of tour guides' language and communication skills is considered one of the key factors in improving the quality of tourism services. However, some travel and tourism companies pay insufficient attention to developing these skills among guides in a manner that meets the requirements of the tourism industry. Based on the above, the research question can be formulated as follows: Is there a correlation and impact between the linguistic and communication skills of tour guides and the quality of tourism services?

2.1 Significance of the Research:

The significance of this study stems from the importance of the tourism sector as one of the vital service sectors that contributes to supporting the national economy and enhancing the image of tourist destinations. The study also derives its importance from its examination of the linguistic and communication skills of tourist guides and their relationship to the quality of tourism services provided.

The importance of the study is evident in the following:

a) Enriching the theoretical framework by presenting a theoretical framework that clarifies the concept of linguistic and verbal skills, the dimensions of tourism service quality, and the relationship between them.

b. Benefiting the management of travel and tourism companies and tourist guide departments by highlighting the importance of developing the linguistic and verbal skills of tourist guides and their impact on the quality of services provided to tourists.

c. To assist bodies responsible for training and development in the tourism sector in designing training programmes that contribute to enhancing the competence of tourist guides and improving their professional performance.

d. To provide scientific findings that researchers and scholars in the field of tourism and hospitality can utilise to conduct future studies addressing the same variables or related ones.

3.1 Research Objectives:

The main objective of this study is to analyse the nature of the relationship between tour guide skills and the quality of tourism services. Our current research aims to:

a) Determine the extent to which linguistic and verbal skills are present within the organisation under study.

b) Identifying the extent to which the dimensions of tourism service quality are present collectively (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy)

c) To identify the impact of linguistic and verbal skills on the combined dimensions of tourism service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) within the organisation under study (travel and tourism companies in the city of Baghdad).

4.1 Research Hypotheses:

A research hypothesis is a fundamental statement that helps guide the researcher towards achieving the objectives of their study, and assists in organising the data collection and analysis process. A research hypothesis is defined as a preliminary conception that is subject to testing and analysis during the research stages, with the aim of confirming or refuting it. Accordingly, the research hypothesis can be defined as follows:

a – There is a statistically significant correlation between language and communication skills and the quality of tourism services.

b – There is a statistically significant causal relationship between language and communication skills and the quality of to`urism services**.**

5.1 Research Methodology:

In the present study, the researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical approach based on the nature of the study variables (the language and communication skills of the tour guide and the quality of tourism services). This approach is suitable for studies seeking to identify the relationship between variables and the effects of that relationship.

6.1 Scope of the study:

The scope of the study can be defined as follows:

a. Geographical scope: The geographical scope of the study was limited to travel and tourism companies in the city of Baghdad.

b. Demographic scope: The demographic scope of the study comprised tourists dealing with travel and tourism companies, from whom a sample of 350 tourists was selected.

c. Temporal scope: The study was conducted between 2025 and 2026

7.1 Research tools

The researcher relied on the data and information necessary for the study, in both its theoretical and practical aspects, using a range of tools

A- Theoretical tools: The study relied on Arabic and foreign sources and references, including relevant research, journals, scientific articles, and university theses and dissertations.

B. Practical tools: Various scientific sources were used to collect data and information in order to complete the practical aspect of the research.

C. Questionnaire: The researcher used a questionnaire prepared on the basis of the literature and previous studies relevant to the research variables. It comprised two main sections: the first concerned the linguistic and verbal skills of the tour guide, and the second related to the dimensions of tourism service quality according to the, and the five-point Likert scale was adopted to measure the responses of the sample participants SERVQUAL

Table (1) Scales of the five-point Likert scale

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Source: Compiled by the researcher

B. Interviews: To reinforce the quantitative findings and provide a deeper interpretation of them, the researcher conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of tourists. The responses were analysed using thematic analysis to support the study's findings and provide a field-based interpretation.

C. Statistical methods and measures used in data analysis

1. Cronbach's Alpha.
2. Weighted Mean.
3. Response intensity (relative importance %) (The relative importance).
4. Standard deviation.
5. F-test.
6. Simple linear regression analysis.
7. Amos statistical software (Structural Equation Modelling).
8. SPSS statistical software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

H - Validity and Reliability Tests

The validity of the questionnaire requires that it pass validity, reliability and internal consistency tests by applying a face validity test to confirm that the questionnaire items accurately represent the research topic for which they were designed, namely (The linguistic

and verbal skills of tour guides and their impact on the quality of tourism services) is accurately represented. To demonstrate the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher relied on Cronbach's Alpha.

8.1 Previous studies:

(Al-Rawadiah, 2015)

Title of the study	Tourist Guidance and Tools for Managing Tourist Groups
Scope of the study	Jordan
Methodology	Analytical
Sample	A case study of tourist guides in Jordan
Objective	Understanding the role and skills of a tour guide in managing tourist trips
Statistical methods	Arithmetic mean, percentages, frequency distribution
Key findings	It highlighted the profession of tour guiding, its tools and the evolution of the core duties of a tour guide
Similarities with the study	A sample of guests at tourism organisations was surveyed to assess the extent of their loyalty to the tourism organisation
Differences from the study	Applied in a geographical location different from that of the current study
Implications of the current study	Used as a reference in the theoretical section

(Al-Shajiri, 2025)

Title of the study	The differentiation strategy and its impact on improving the quality of tourism services
Scope of the study	Baghdad
Methodology	Analytical
Sample	A Survey of Travel and Tourism Companies in Baghdad
Objective	The impact of a differentiation strategy on the quality of tourism services through management practices and the implementation of strategic ideas that contribute to a sustainable working environment
Statistical methods	Arithmetic mean, percentages, frequency distribution
Key findings	A differentiation strategy has an impact on improving the quality of tourism services.
Similarities with the study	The selection of the quality of tourism services as a dependent variable in the two studies
Differences from the study	The difference in the independent variable between the two studies
Implications of the	Use it as a reference for the theoretical aspect

current study	

Previous studies have shown that linguistic and verbal skills are a key factor in the success of the tourist guiding process, as they help to improve communication with tourists and facilitate the clear conveyance of information. The researcher believes that the importance of these skills is not limited to the communicative aspect alone, but extends to directly influencing tourists' perception of the quality of the tourism service and their level of satisfaction with it.

9.1 Research Population and Sample:

The researcher selected travel and tourism companies in Baghdad as the setting for the present study, given their direct relevance to the study's subject and variables, as well as their alignment with the research focus of the Faculty of Tourism Sciences. There was also an urgent need to examine the linguistic and verbal skills of tour guides and the quality of tourism services provided by these companies, due to a number of factors related to the environment in which they operate, namely the nature of tourism activity, reputation, profitability, and compliance with regulations and laws, as well as the pursuit of excellence, based on statistics from the Tourism Authority.

Accordingly, the research population was defined to include travel and tourism companies in the Rusafa and Karkh districts, numbering 601 companies following a comprehensive census. The research sample consisted of tourists who had dealt with these companies. To determine the appropriate sample size, the formula proposed by Hair (2014: 101) was adopted, resulting in a minimum required number of 330 questionnaires. On this basis, 350 questionnaires were distributed, of which 341 were returned, with 7 damaged and 9 not returned, bringing the number of valid questionnaires for analysis to 334, with a response rate of 95.43%.

2. Theoretical Aspect of the Study:

1.2 Linguistic and Verbal Skills

In the current study, communication skills refer to the tour guide's ability to communicate effectively with tourists through listening, speaking, language proficiency, presentation skills, body language, and interaction management. Therefore, the term communication skills is used throughout this study as a comprehensive concept encompassing linguistic and verbal competencies.

The term 'skill' (mahara) is derived from the verb 'mahara' (to master). To 'mahara' in or with something means to master it and become adept at it; thus, a person is considered skilled if they have mastered a field of knowledge or a craft.

Skill in the technical sense: is the ability to perform a task with precision, ease and control over the effort and time expended by the individual (Kanaan, Nawaf, 1992, p. 297) .

Communication Skills

Language is considered one of the fundamental means of human communication, as it is the easiest way to understand and interact with others. Every society has its own language. In the Holy Qur'an, in Surah Ar-Rum, verse 22, Allah says: 'And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours; indeed, in that are signs for those who possess understanding.' This affirms the importance of language as one of the signs of Allah, the Almighty.

Tourist guides are classified according to the languages they are proficient in; there are guides specialising in welcoming English-speaking tourists, and others who are proficient in French, Spanish, Italian, German or other international languages. A single guide may be proficient in more than one language, and a licence to practise the profession is only granted after passing a language test that demonstrates their ability to use it (Al-Rawadiyah, Ziad Eid, 2015, pp. 77-78)). Linguists have classified language skills into four main categories: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Ibrhim, 2015, p. 12). A language skill can be defined as a person's ability to use language accurately, flexibly and proficiently in an appropriate manner (Hammam, 2018, p. 75). These skills are based on communication theory, whose main components are: the sender, the receiver, the message, and the medium; language is considered the medium in question in the process of communication.

These skills are based on communication theory, whose main components are: the sender, the receiver, The message, and the medium. Language is considered the medium in the communication process, as communication can only take place when its two essential parties are present; the sender may be a speaker or a writer, whilst the receiver is a listener or a reader. Consequently, Linguistic proficiency comprises two oral skills (listening and speaking) and two written skills (reading and writing) (kazim, 2018, p. 33). Language is one of the core skills of a tour guide; when addressing a tour group, their speech must be clear, comprehensible and accessible to all tourists, and they must speak concisely and simply, in a clear tone of voice, without compromising the information provided. Speech, with its vocabulary, expressions and sentences, is the most important means by which the guide conveys their information and feelings, and represents the primary method of imparting knowledge (Al-Akili, 2016, p. 71). When tourists ask the tour guide questions about a particular topic, he must listen to them carefully; he must also possess good communication skills and an understanding of the tourists' various languages, which makes the tourist feel respected and cared for. The quality of their speaking and listening skills makes the tour guide an influential figure in the eyes of tourists (Damayanti, 2020, p. 38). A tour guide must possess the ability to understand words and phrases and demonstrate linguistic accuracy, so that they can comprehend the ideas of others and express them clearly in speech; linguistic proficiency enables them to carry out their duties

in a precise and highly accurate manner (Lugosi& Bray, 2008, p. 40). Furthermore, literacy skills represent a crucial aspect linking the tour guide to tourists; reading, writing, listening and speaking form the cornerstone of mutual understanding between them, enabling the guide to achieve their objectives during the tour (Al-Zawini, 2022, p. 46). Reading is the best way to enrich the mind, and if the tour guide possesses these skills, it helps them to describe and observe with precision, acquire conversational skills, and master the art of dealing with tourists in a refined manner, and enables them to describe scenes and objects accurately and swiftly whilst implementing the tour programme (Al-Akili, 2016: 71). Linguistic skill, and the explanation and interpretation it entails in what the tour guide presents to tourists, represents a form of mediation between diverse cultures, such as translating topics that are unknown or unfamiliar in the culture of the tourist destination into a language or cultural language that is understandable to tourists, such as bringing a place, phenomenon, event or work of art to life in a comprehensible and convincing manner to intellectually transport tourists from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge (Rabotic, 2010, p. 4). For this reason, a tour guide must be able to use language fluently and clearly, avoiding complex and difficult vocabulary that tourists may find hard to understand or interpret, They should also avoid words with multiple meanings, out of consideration for tourists and their diverse cultural backgrounds. It is therefore essential that tour guides use clear, simple expressions that are suitable and appropriate for various cultures (Magdy, 2016, p. 108). Linguistic skill is not merely a verbal performance limited to imitating others, but rather a linguistic skill based on clear thinking and on the mental processes in which the guide relies on information and knowledge related to the language and culture of the tourists (Chikuta, 2017, p. 2). This requires the guide to be competent in gathering information about the diverse cultures of tourists, to be psychologically prepared to accept others, and to be open-minded; language is a skill that the guide must acquire and master its rules (Al-Shimari, 2018:34). In addition to mastering foreign languages, a guide must possess a high level of intelligence and eloquence when speaking so that they can hold the tourist group's attention throughout the trip (Rady, 2016:3). Among the most important speaking skills required of a tour guide are the following(Al-Rawadiyah, 2015: 77–78)

A. Voice control and articulation:

Controlling the volume of one's voice, ensuring it is appropriate for the setting and varying it in pitch to attract and hold the attention of the tour group, whilst paying close attention to articulation.

B. Appropriate speaking pace

The pace of speech should be balanced; neither too slow, which causes boredom, nor too fast, which makes it difficult to understand (Al-Badiri, 2017, p. 10). One should speak slowly and

calmly, pausing during the speech to allow sufficient time for the tourist to reflect on the scene they are viewing, as well as giving them the opportunity to ask questions and make enquiries.

C. Calculated pauses

Pausing during the speech to give the tourist an opportunity to absorb, reflect and ask questions.

D. Body language and gestures

Paying attention to the signals one gives off whilst speaking and minimising negative ones as much as possible, including:

1- Positive facial expressions: Facial expressions should be positive by maintaining a smile at all times, as this helps to build a friendly relationship with tourists and gives them a sense of reassurance, trust and familiarity (Mitchell, 2005, p. 30); avoid showing signs of annoyance or confusion.

2- Eye contact: Try to look the listener in the eye when speaking to them, ensuring that your gaze conveys respect (Butterfield, 2009, p. 6).

3- Hand gestures: Minimise random, unintentional hand movements, as these distract the tourist's attention; use gestures only when necessary to support explanations and clarifications.

Based on the above, linguistic and verbal skills can be defined as the tour guide's ability to use language accurately, flexibly and proficiently through four key skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), whilst controlling voice and articulation, maintaining an appropriate speaking pace, pausing judiciously, and employing positive body language, thereby enabling them to express their thoughts and feelings and convey knowledge to tourists clearly and easily. The language skills of a tour guide are an essential part of the communication process, as they focus on the guide's ability to use language correctly in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, as well as their ability to translate and interpret, whereas communication skills go beyond the linguistic aspect to include active listening, persuasion, body language, dialogue management and an understanding of cultural differences, making them more comprehensive in the process of interacting with tourists.

2.2 Quality of Tourism Services:

The quality of tourism services is a relatively recent concept in the literature on tourism management, and has attracted widespread attention due to its direct impact on achieving tourist satisfaction and enhancing the competitiveness of tourism organisations. Most authors and researchers agree on the inclusion of the concept of perception, which means that it is

tourists in the tourism sector who decide whether the service provided is of good quality or not (Gemar, Soler &, 2019, p. 2). The concept of service quality and its improvement in the tourism sector differs from that in tangible, physical production sectors, as tourists base their judgements on the quality of tourism services on the quality actually provided to them, as well as on the ultimate benefits they derive from that service. Therefore, their assessment of that quality depends on two fundamental dimensions: the technical quality of the tourism service (what is provided) and its functional quality (how it is provided), ensuring that it meets their requirements and preferences (Toman, 2020, p. 66).

Service quality represents one of the most important aspects of the relationship between the tourist and the organisation, as the tourist's perception of service quality is based on their experiences with the organisation. The assessment of service quality determines whether the tourist will continue to deal with the organisation or not; negative attitudes towards the service provided lead to the end of the commercial relationship with the organisation, as the tourist feels they have not received fair service. On the other hand, satisfaction and a positive belief in good service can lead to continued dealings with the organisation (Dehghanpouri, 2020, p. 4).

(Taylor, Russell&, 2000, p. 79)define it as a set of characteristics of tourism services that have the capacity to satisfy specific needs of tourists, whilst (Al-Ta'i & Qadar, 2008, p. 56)define it as the level of satisfaction that

d. Reducing operational costs: Non-compliance with specifications leads to additional costs and potential losses, whereas quality reduces errors and deviations (Al-Qais, 2012, p. 45), (Boustila, 2017, p. 65).

E. Enhancing reputation and brand image: Quality preserves the organisation's reputation, strengthens its presence, and aids its participation in local and international markets (Al-Saadi, 2017, p. 162), (Al-Tamimi, 2021, p. 71).

F. Continuous development and improvement: Quality ensures the continuous updating of processes and the development of services (Abu Alroub, 2012, p. 370)

g. Responding to technological developments: Technological advancements have raised consumer expectations, prompting organisations to keep pace with technology to ensure higher quality (Bauer, E., & Adams, R., 2013, pp. 17-18) (Al-Mustawfi, 2017, p. 92)

2.4 Dimensions of Tourism Service Quality:

The present study drew on the SERVQUAL model, one of the most widely used models for measuring service quality, as proposed by Parasuraman et al., It consists of five key dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. These dimensions were adopted to measure the quality of tourism services provided by travel and tourism companies. Researchers consider service quality to be a multidimensional topic, and the number and nature of these dimensions vary across service organisations. Consequently, the dimensions of tourism service quality are numerous, as many authors and researchers have referred to the dimensions

of tourism service quality in general, noting that tourists base their evaluation of the service provided on the level and quality of the service using a single measure. Consequently, researchers have adopted a set of dimensions through which the quality of tourism services can be measured, whilst noting that measuring service quality differs entirely from product quality; there is a set of dimensions for measuring service quality that enjoy a high level of acceptance (Abdul Hamid, 2018, p. 32).

Consequently, the five dimensions identified for measuring the quality of tourism services were: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility, which constitute a tool for measuring and evaluating the quality of tourism services provided by tourism organisations. Consequently, most studies on service quality have addressed these dimensions, upon which tourists base their expectations and subsequently their judgements of the quality of tourism services; many researchers and authors have therefore adopted these five dimensions

A – Tangibility: This refers to the process of focusing on the physical aspects associated with the provision of tourism services, whereby the service is delivered to the tourist through the physical characteristics and features accompanying the provision of the service, such as the physical facilities comprising equipment, apparatus, means of communication and so on, This encompasses the appearance of physical facilities and equipment, human resources, buildings and structures, and the external appearance of those providing tourism services, as well as suitable waiting and reception areas. This represents a psychological dimension that influences the decision to return to the same service provider on subsequent visits, It also affects the attractiveness of tourism organisations to their guests, and reflects their internal organisation (Toman, 2020:87). Tangibility in tourism organisations refers to physical facilities, the materials and equipment used, and communication materials, including the personal appearance of the tourism service provider.

Based on the above, the researcher considers that the tangibility dimension is the tourism company's ability to embody tourism services through tangible physical elements such as facilities, equipment, buildings, the cleanliness of the premises, the appearance of staff and the organisation of the working environment, which form the tourist's crucial first impression and directly influence their assessment of the quality of tourism services, thereby enhancing their sense of comfort and confidence even before receiving the actual service, and reinforcing the likelihood of them returning and recommending the services.

B – Reliability: This represents the staff's ability and knowledge in providing tourism services, and it is the highest level of assurance provided by tourism service providers (Al-Imam, 2003, p. 215). It refers to the tourism service provider's ability to deliver the promised services in a reliable manner, with a high level of accuracy and proficiency. Many researchers have noted

that reliability indicates the extent to which a tourism service provider is capable of fulfilling and adhering to the provision of services to tourists with reliability, accuracy and consistency. Reliability in the service sector also refers to adherence to the specified times for providing tourism services and delivering them to tourists at the agreed time (Thiab, 2010, p. 77).

Based on the above, the researcher considers reliability to be the ability of the tourism company and service providers to fulfil their commitments and deliver the promised services to tourists with accuracy, consistency and reliability, whilst adhering to specified deadlines. This strengthens tourists' trust in the tourism company and enhances their satisfaction and the company's reputation in the market, whereas a breach of promises leads to a loss of trust and a decline in performance; therefore, reliability is a fundamental factor in the continuity and growth of tourism companies.
The researcher argues that safety is the level of trust and reassurance that tourists feel towards a tourism company, which is achieved through the knowledge, competence and qualifications of staff, and the reliability of the services provided; It is a fundamental dimension that significantly influences the performance of tourism companies and their success in building long-term relationships with tourists, as safety in tourism is not merely a functional aspect but a strategic foundation for building a relationship based on trust, loyalty and continuity, and for shaping a positive mental image of the company.

C – Responsiveness: Responsiveness reflects the tourism organisation's ability to provide the required services, which meet tourists' needs, desires and expectations, as it involves adhering to timelines and delivering exactly as the organisation has previously committed (Al-Imam, 2003, p. 215)). It is the organisation's willingness and readiness to assist its guests, receive complaints and suggestions, provide swift solutions, and address issues arising from the provision of services to tourists by service providers.

Based on the above, we can conclude that responsiveness is the willingness and readiness of tourism companies and service providers to assist tourists immediately and promptly by meeting their needs, responding to their enquiries and addressing their problems with enthusiasm and effectiveness, which plays a pivotal role in determining the extent of a company's efficiency and flexibility and directly influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Responsiveness is a true measure of the efficiency of tourism companies; the higher the level of responsiveness and the greater the capacity for adaptation, the better the company's prospects for competing and expanding in the market.

D – Safety: Safety refers to the level of trust a tourist places in the tourism organisation providing the services, and the extent to which they rely on it to deliver the services they expect—or perhaps even exceed those expectations—and believe these services will be

distinctive, at the specified time and to a high standard of excellence, as well as the extent of the facilities associated with obtaining these services and the credibility of the product offered (Abdul-Qadir, 2012, p. 219). This dimension is considered one of the most consistent and influential in determining tourists' perceptions of the quality of tourism services (Al-Shajir i, 2025, p. 60)

The researcher considers safety to be the level of trust and reassurance felt by the tourist towards the tourism company, achieved through the knowledge, competence and qualifications of the staff and the reliability of the services provided. It is a fundamental dimension that has a significant impact on the performance of tourism companies and their success in building long-term relationships with tourists, as safety in tourism is not merely a functional dimension but a strategic foundation for building a relationship based on trust, loyalty and continuity, and for shaping a positive mental image of the company.

E. Empathy: In the context of tourism service quality, empathy refers to the individual care and attention that service providers in tourism organisations give to tourists. (Zeithaml, 2000, p. 584), as the attitude of the service provider towards tourists encourages the tourist to feel valued; that is, it leads to tourist retention and recommendations to other tourists to avail of those services, as this is achieved through empathy as a factor of great importance, which (Masrurul, 2019, p. 136) leads to tourist satisfaction. This is reflected in the time taken to understand and empathise with the tourist's needs, the level of empathy shown towards these issues, the speed with which they are resolved, and the provision of services that meet their expectations, in addition to personal attention to the tourist and the fulfilment of their individual requirements (Al-Dhamour, 2008, p. 165)

The researcher views empathy as the level of individual and personal care and attention that tourism service providers give to each tourist by understanding their specific needs, empathising with their problems and resolving them promptly, which reflects the human aspect of service provision and distinguishes successful companies, as it creates a positive experience that is hard to forget and contributes to building an emotional connection with the brand, making the tourist feel valued and appreciated, enhancing their satisfaction, and increasing the likelihood of recommendations and future dealings with the company

3. Practical Aspect:

1.3 Analysis of linguistic and verbal skills:

The results regarding the views of tourism and travel companies in Baghdad show that tour guides' use of clear and simple language to convey information is considered a key positive characteristic, with the second paragraph achieving an arithmetic mean of 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.65, reflecting a notable consensus in opinions and a relative importance of 86.50. Meanwhile, the third item, concerning the use of varied linguistic styles to attract tourists' attention, ranked last with an arithmetic mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.05,

indicating greater variation in opinions and a relative importance of 79.34. This suggests that tourists prefer clarity of information over varied linguistic styles, which may reflect the need to develop these aspects to enhance the tourist experience. Tour guides should enhance their skills in clear and simple communication, whilst at the same time working to develop linguistic styles that are more appealing to tourists, in order to improve the overall experience and increase tourist satisfaction.

The overall results also show that the level of linguistic and verbal skills was high, with an overall arithmetic mean of 4.24 and a relative importance of 84.38%, along with a coefficient of variation of 15.64%, indicating an acceptable degree of agreement among the sample participants. The results for items (LCS1) and (LCS4) also indicate good levels of assessment; however, the high coefficient of variation for these items reflects a relative divergence in respondents' opinions, which calls for greater attention to standardising the performance of counsellors in these areas.

Table (2) Statistical description of the linguistic and speech skills dimension

To sort	Coefficient of variation (%)	Relative importance%	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Paragraph
2	16.45	89.22	0.73	4.46	LCS1
1	14.96	86.50	0.65	4.33	LCS2
4	26.41	79.34	1.05	3.97	LCS3
3	23.86	82.47	0.98	4.12	LCS4
	15.64	84.38	0.66	4.22	الاجمالي

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS V.28

2.3 Analysis of the combined dimensions of tourism service quality:

The results regarding the views of tourism and travel companies in Baghdad indicate that the quality of tourism services in general achieved an arithmetic mean of (4.19) with a standard deviation of (0.54), indicating good agreement in opinions and a relative importance of (83.85) and a coefficient of variation of (12.96), indicating stability in the quality assessment. Meanwhile, the safety dimension, which received an arithmetic mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.57, ranked first with a relative importance of 84.88, reflecting the primacy of safety as a top priority for tourists. In contrast, the reliability dimension ranked last with an arithmetic mean of 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.71, indicating its lowest relative importance score of 82.47 and a coefficient of variation of 17.20, highlighting the need to improve these aspects to ensure greater tourist satisfaction. The results show that safety is considered a vital factor contributing to enhancing the tourist experience, reflecting the

importance of tourism companies in providing a safe and comfortable environment. This underscores the need to prioritise safety-related aspects within business strategies. Whilst the quality of tourism services received a good rating, the relatively low rating for the reliability dimension indicates that further efforts are required to improve the reliability of the services provided. Tourism companies must work to enhance reliability by ensuring the continuity and quality of services and making them consistent and dependable for travellers. Achieving this goal requires investment in staff training and the improvement of operational processes to meet tourists' needs effectively. This will help build greater trust with tourists and increase their satisfaction levels, thereby enhancing the company's reputation and increasing the rate of repeat business in the future.

Table (3) Summary of the descriptive statistics for the tourism service quality variable

Ranking	Coefficient of variation (%)	Relative importance%	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Distance
4	16.41	83.97	0.69	4.20	Tangibility
5	17.20	82.47	0.71	4.12	Reliability
2	14.17	84.77	0.60	4.24	Responsiveness
1	13.39	84.88	0.57	4.24	Safety
3	15.76	83.17	0.66	4.16	Empathy
	12.96	83.85	0.54	4.19	Overall

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS V.28

The results show that the quality of tourism services was generally high, with an overall mean score of 4.19 and a relative importance of 83.85%, indicating that the sample's opinions tend towards a positive assessment of the level of service provided. Furthermore, the low coefficient of variation (12.96%) indicates a good degree of agreement among the sample members.

At the sub-dimension level, the results were as follows:

The safety dimension ranked first, with a mean of (4.24) and a relative importance of (84.88%), and the lowest coefficient of variation (13.39%), indicating that respondents view safety as the strongest aspect of tourism service quality, with clear agreement amongst them regarding this assessment.

The responsiveness dimension came second, with a mean score of 4.24, a relative importance of 84.77%, and a coefficient of variation of 14.17%, indicating the staff's efficiency in responding promptly to tourists' needs.

The empathy dimension ranked third, with a mean score of 4.16 and a relative importance of 83.97%, reflecting staff attention to tourists' feelings and the provision of humane services.

The tangibility dimension came fourth, with a mean score of 4.20 and a relative importance of 83.97%, which is a good level, though relatively lower than the previous dimensions, suggesting there is room for improvement in physical aspects (facilities, appearance, equipment).
The reliability dimension came last, with a mean score of 4.12 and a relative importance of 82.47%, and a coefficient of variation of 17.20%, which is the highest, indicating a relative disparity in the sample's opinions and a relative weakness in the companies' ability to provide the service accurately and consistently.

3.3 Testing the research hypotheses:

There is a statistically significant correlation and influence between linguistic and verbal skills and the quality of tourism services.
The results in Table 3 indicate a correlation between linguistic and verbal skills and the quality of tourism services, with a correlation coefficient of 0.536 In addition, there is a positive relationship with the dimensions of tourism service quality, ranging from (0.287) for the safety dimension to (0.575) for reliability, which means that it is important to develop the linguistic and verbal skills of tourist guides, as these skills have a positive impact on the quality of tourism services. Improving guides' communication skills is essential to better meet tourists' needs, thereby enhancing their sense of safety and confidence during trips. If tourism companies focus on training staff in this area, it will help improve interactions with tourists, thereby boosting their satisfaction levels and increasing the likelihood of their return in the future. The move towards strengthening language skills reflects a commitment to providing high-quality tourism services, which will benefit the tourism sector as a whole. The company's increased focus on improving language and communication skills leads to an improvement in the quality of its tourism services by 0.943, with a standard error of 0.044 and a critical value of (21.432), which means that investing in the development of employees' language and communication skills is considered an effective strategic step towards improving the quality of tourism services. This correlation reflects the importance of effective communication in meeting tourists' needs and enhancing their experience. If tourism companies seek to provide high-quality services, they must focus on specialised training programmes in language skills, as this will have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction levels. Improving these skills will also enhance the company's reputation, helping it to attract new tourists and increase the loyalty of existing tourists, thereby achieving sustainable success in the tourism sector.

Table(4): The relationship between linguistic and communicative skills and the quality of tourism services

	LCS	TAN	REL	RES	SAF	EMP	QTS
LCS	1						
TAN	.496**	1					
REL	.575**	.739**	1				

RES	.455**	.658**	.713**	1			
SAF	.287**	.544**	.518**	.698**	1		
EMP	.410**	.630**	.599**	.611**	.652**	1	
QTS	.536**	.858**	.859**	.868**	.794**	.829**	1

The results of the correlation matrix show positive and statistically significant correlations at the 0.01 level between all study variables, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.287 to 0.868. The strongest correlations were recorded between Overall Service Quality (QTS) and both Reliability (REL) and Responsiveness (RES), with correlation coefficients of 0.859 and 0.868 respectively, indicating the significant role of these two dimensions in enhancing overall quality. The weakest correlation was found between customer satisfaction (LCS) and safety (SAF), with a correlation coefficient of 0.287; however, it remained positive and statistically significant. Overall, the results indicate strong positive relationships between the dimensions of service quality and perceived overall quality.

Table(5): Standardised weights for the influence of a tour guide's linguistic and verbal skills on the quality of tourism services

Type of influence	Probability (P)	R^2 value	Critical value	Standardised error	Standardised weight	Path of influence		
Moral	0,001	0,709	21.432	0.044	0.943	LCS	→	QTS

The results showed a strong positive direct effect of overall service quality (QTS) on tourist satisfaction (LCS), with a standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.943$) at a significance level of ($P = 0.001$). Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.709$) indicated that overall service quality explains 70.9% of the variance in customer satisfaction, demonstrating the model's high explanatory power.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

1.4 Conclusions

1. The results of the study showed that the level of linguistic and verbal skills among tour guides was high, indicating that they are able to use language clearly and comprehensibly when interacting with tourists.

2. The results indicated a high level of quality in the tourism services provided by the travel and tourism companies studied, in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.
3. The results of the statistical analysis demonstrated a significant positive correlation between the language and communication skills of tour guides and the quality of tourism services, suggesting that improvements in these skills have a positive impact on the quality of services provided.
4. The results of the impact analysis showed that the language and communication skills of the tour guide have a significant impact on the quality of tourism services, which confirms their role as one of the key factors in improving service performance in tourism companies
5. The tour guide's ability to use clear and easily understandable language contributed to enhancing communication with tourists and conveying tourist information more effectively.
6. The results indicated that linguistic diversity and proficiency in more than one language enhance the tour guide's ability to interact with tourists of different nationalities and cultures, which contributes to improving their tourist experience.
7. The study showed that the tour guide's speaking style, including clarity of pronunciation, fluency and good delivery, contributes to creating a positive impression of the tourism service among tourists.
8. The findings confirmed that linguistic and verbal skills contribute to enhancing the quality of tourism services, particularly reliability, responsiveness and empathy, by improving the level of interaction between the guide and the tourist.
9. Effective linguistic and verbal skills help to reduce misunderstandings and communication problems that may arise during the implementation of tourism programmes and tours.
10. A tour guide's linguistic and verbal skills represent an important resource in supporting the quality of tourism services and achieving higher levels of tourist satisfaction with the services provided.

2.4 Recommendations:

1. Developing ongoing training programmes for tour guides in language and communication skills
2. Tourism companies should provide regular training programmes to update tour guides' language and communication skills, including modern tourism terminology and effective presentation techniques, thereby improving the clarity of information and the efficiency of interaction with tourists.

3. Training guides in effective communication skills to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for tourists
4. Training should include teaching guides how to use language to explain safety instructions and reassure tourists during emergencies, thereby enhancing their sense of security and positively impacting the quality of their experience.
5. Conducting regular assessments of guides' language and verbal skills
6. It is recommended that clear criteria be applied to measure the level of guides' language and communication skills, to identify strengths and weaknesses and work on improving them, which will directly reflect on the quality of tourism services.
7. Collaborating with educational institutions to develop specialised language programmes for guides
8. Companies can collaborate with educational institutions to provide advanced training courses in language and communication, thereby contributing to raising the level of professionalism among guides and increasing tourist satisfaction.
9. Using modern technologies to enhance language and speaking skills
10. Leveraging educational apps and digital platforms to develop guides' language fluency and presentation skills, thereby improving their ability to provide accurate and engaging information to tourists.
11. Enhancing non-verbal communication skills alongside verbal skills
12. This includes training in body language, gestures and tone of voice, thereby supporting effective communication and leaving a positive impression on tourists.
13. Linking incentives and promotions to language and communication skills
14. Encourage guides to improve their skills by linking language and communication performance to bonuses and promotions, thereby motivating them to provide a high-quality service.
15. Conducting periodic studies to measure the impact of language and communication skills on service quality
16. Monitoring the impact of language and communication development on tourist satisfaction and service quality on a regular basis, to identify areas requiring continuous improvement.

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