

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents five subtopics: the background of the study, the statements of the problem, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background of Study

According to Razali and Jaafar (2012), a complaint is important information indicating customer dissatisfaction with an organisation's services. In the hospitality industry, guest satisfaction is a top priority, and handling complaints is crucial to maintaining guest satisfaction. Guests who complain not only through the front office, but also give their complaints through the hotel's email. In New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort, handling guest complaints via email comes not only from the guest's email but also from intermediaries such as online travel agents or travel agents who forward the guest's complaint to the hotel. In handling guest complaints via email, using language functions and expressions is crucial to maintaining professionalism and creating an impression of empathy. Resolving guest complaints with proper language selection is vital to maintaining guest satisfaction. Identifying the language functions and expressions used by staff in handling complaints will provide insights to improve communication and increase guest satisfaction.

According to Ramphal (2016), handling complaints in the hospitality industry involves seven main steps. First, the complaint is received, and the issue is recognised

and formally recorded in the complaints register. Second, an initial review is conducted to assess the validity of the complaint and determine the steps required for its resolution. Third, communication is essential to keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation, especially if it takes longer than expected. Fourth, resolution should be achieved as quickly as possible, with clear communication of the outcome to the complainant. Fifth, documentation is essential to ensure all details are correctly recorded, including issuing a receipt to the complainant. Sixth, a follow-up is done to evaluate customer satisfaction with the resolution. Seventh, continuous improvement is achieved by conducting regular complaint handling reviews to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The most common guest complaints include room cleanliness, malfunctioning facilities such as air conditioning and telephones, and refund requests. In response to these complaints, staff speak to the General Manager (GM) for direction before responding. Language is essential in the complaint handling process. The language should reflect empathy and responsibility and offer solutions without worsening the situation.

The importance of language functions and expressions in the tourism industry, especially in handling guest complaints in emails, is rarely researched. New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort staff often use English to reply to emails, and understanding the functions of English expressions and handling guest complaints should be prioritised. Blundell et al. (1985) classify language functions into several main types: giving a reason, suggesting, offering something, giving something to someone, thanking, complimenting, showing sympathy, and apologising. This type is relevant in professional communication, particularly when handling guest complaints through

email. According to Breitsohl et al. (2014), three key aspects should be considered when responding to e-complaints: response speed, message tone, and content orientation.

This research aims to identify the language expressions used by staff in complaint emails to improve communication skills and provide a deeper understanding of the functions of language in handling guest complaints in emails at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

The problems in this research are:

1. What language functions are used in handling complaints by email at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort?
2. What language expressions are used in handling complaints by email at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose or aims of this research are:

1. To identify the language functions used in handling complaints by email at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort.
2. To identify the language expressions used in handling complaints by email at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is that it provides both theoretical and practical benefits.

### 1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to language functions and expressions analysis, particularly by using appropriate language functions and expressions to handle email guest complaints.

### 2. Practical Significance

- a) For Staff: This study can help staff at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort to improve communication, particularly by using appropriate language functions and expressions to handle guest complaints in emails
- b) For Future Researchers: This research can serve as a reference for those who are interested in studying language functions and expressions, especially handling complaints in emails

## 1.5 Research Scope

Based on the problems, this research focuses on identifying the language functions and language expressions used to handle complaints in emails at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort, based on the types of language functions and expressions from Blundell et al., (1985) such as giving a reason, suggesting, offering something, giving something to someone, thanking, complaining, showing sympathy, and apologizing. This type is relevant in professional communication, particularly when handling guest complaints through email. Previous studies examined language functions and expressions in hotel and travel agent contexts. This

research specifically focused on handling guest complaints via email at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort.

