

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In the context of customer service, particularly in the hospitality industry, nonverbal communication plays an important role in interacting with guests. Nonverbal communication can significantly impact customer satisfaction, from facial expressions to gestures, body language, and eye contact. Nonverbal communication can help hotel staff reinforce the message conveyed and understand the reactions of guests or interlocutors when receiving it (Kusumawati, 2016). In essence, this form of communication, which encompasses movement and appearance, significantly enhances the verbal delivery of information (Deby et al., 2024). In the hospitality industry, various departments work together to achieve a common goal, which is to achieve customer satisfaction (Sartika et al., 2017).

The front office department is one of the departments that has an important role in a hotel. The front office is located at the front of a hotel because the front office staff have the task of selling rooms to guests and conducting Check-In and Check-Out, which is the source of information regarding the hotel and information outside the hotel (Asmin, 2014). Therefore, mastering the check-in process is considered one of the competencies that must be achieved (Muliadi et al., 2023). The front office is important to the success of a hotel by providing services, ensuring guest satisfaction, and thus generating maximum revenue (Sartika et al., 2017).

When handling a check-in process at a hotel, front office staff often rely on nonverbal cues to create a positive first impression, establish a good relationship

with guests, and ensure smooth communication (Arsini 2022). When communicating with guests, nonverbal communication is almost automatically used; therefore, nonverbal communication is fixed and always exists (Pohan, 2015). As service interactions increasingly involve individuals from different languages, nonverbal communication becomes crucial for conveying messages across language barriers (Adnyani, 2018).

Many studies have examined the significance of nonverbal communication in direct communication between service staff and guests. For example, Sudantari et al. (2019), studied how hotel front desk staff use verbal and nonverbal communication to achieve guest satisfaction, while Dewi (2017) studied Chinese tourists' perceptions of receptionists' body language. Furthermore, research by Simanjuntak (2020) analyzed the symbolic nonverbal interactions of staff at hotels in Bandung, and Siregar (2012) examined public opinion on the role of nonverbal communication in increasing hotel occupancy in Medan. Similar research was also conducted by Eleazar (2017), Muralidhar et al., (2017), and Syamsudin (2021), who found that nonverbal communication used by front office staff has a significant influence on guest satisfaction. All of these studies share the same context: assessing how nonverbal communication affects service quality and customer perceptions in the hospitality industry. Approaches to analyzing communication conveyed through visual media or specific environments have proven to be effective. For example, Paramarta (2022) analyzed messages from road signs, which is in line with this research method that focuses on analyzing nonverbal communication from visual media (YouTube videos).

These studies generally analyze body movements, gestures, facial expressions, posture, proxemics, or the use of space and distance, physical appearance, such as clothing, makeup, tone of voice, and eye contact. In addition, findings from studies by Yoon et al., (2016), Agarwal (2021), Tansy (2021), Rismiatun (2020), and Kueh (2013), also confirm this, where they found that nonverbal communication has a significant positive influence on perception, satisfaction, and service quality. Jannah (2024) and Mutiara et al., (2023) even analyzed a more specific case, namely the use of nonverbal communication by deaf baristas and employees with disabilities, which shows how nonverbal communication can help when there are barriers to verbal communication and reinforce verbal language.

The results of these studies consistently show that nonverbal communication plays an important role in improving service quality. However, nonverbal communication has not only been studied in the context of tourism but also outside the context of hotel services. For example, research by Justisiani (2014), Hadipoero (2018), and Peleckis (2015) found that nonverbal communication is important in the context of hospital service and business negotiations, emphasizing that body language can often reveal unspoken intentions and emotions. Meanwhile, Sohn (2018) also found that chefs' nonverbal communication can influence customers' perceptions of service quality, highlighting the importance of this skill for all staff lines. Similarly, research by Kasmgila (2020) and Mosa (2021) examined nonverbal communication in the context of service in banks between front office staff and customers. The results showed that the use of nonverbal communication has a strong influence on

emotional responses and customer satisfaction.

Although extensive research has been conducted on nonverbal communication in direct service interactions, there is still little research that specifically examines how this nonverbal communication is presented and modeled in digital learning media, such as educational videos on YouTube. In addition, there is still a lack of research that specifically applies Birdwhistell's kinesics theory to analyze aspects of facial expressions, body movements, body posture, and eye contact (each element is interrelated) in the context of check-in procedures on digital platforms. This study aims to fill this gap in further research. The importance of this indirect analysis lies in the fact that these videos represent planned and modeled check-in handling practice for hospitality training. By analyzing this structured educational model, in addition to filling the void in previous research, in this study, the researcher were able to conduct an in-depth and repeated analysis of every movement performed in both videos.

1.2 Problem Identification

This research is the result of an interesting phenomenon regarding the use of non-verbal communication in interacting with guests when handling check-in in two YouTube videos by LINGUA TV and IPB INTERNASIONAL. The use of digital media in this study highlights the role of innovative learning media in improving professional communication and language competence (Dewanthi, 2024). Lingua TV and IPB INTERNASIONAL are YouTube channels whose content contains knowledge in the world of hospitality, where both YouTube channels have knowledge videos about handling check-in, one of which is

demonstrated by a native speaker. Therefore, researchers are interested in examining the use of non-verbal expressions carried out during the handling check-in process used by receptionist staff in the two videos. Because there is rarely any research analyzing non-verbal expressions in video content from Lingua TV and IPB INTERNASIONAL.

1.3 The Scope of The Study

Based on these problems, the scope of this research emphasizes the identification of the use of nonverbal communication in handling check-in in two YouTube videos by Lingua TV and IPB INTERNASIONAL. The research, which was conducted in 2026 on online media, focuses on nonverbal analysis in gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body posture.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of this research, the research questions can be formulative as follows.

1. What types of nonverbal communication are employed in the Lingua TV YouTube video during the hotel check-in procedure?
2. What types of nonverbal communication are employed in the IPB INTERNASIONAL Youtube video during the hotel check-in procedure?
3. What are the differences in the use of nonverbal communication between the Lingua TV and IPB Internasional hotel check-in videos?

1.5 Purpose of study

Based on the problem formulation above, the purpose of this research are as follows.

1. To identify the types of nonverbal communication employed by front office staff in the Lingua TV YouTube video during the hotel check-in procedure.
2. To identify the types of nonverbal communication employed by front office staff in the IPB INTERNASIONAL YouTube video during the hotel check-in procedure.
3. To analyze the differences in the use of nonverbal communication during hotel check-in procedures between the Lingua TV and IPB Internasional YouTube videos.

1.6 Significance of the study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study enriches knowledge in the field of hospitality communication, particularly in front office operations. Specifically, this study shows that the theory of guest check-in handling implicitly requires mastery of nonverbal dimensions such as kinesics to reinforce verbal communication. This study emphasizes that nonverbal communication is an important part of the theoretical competencies required in tourism and hospitality curricula.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Student

This research can be used as a reference for tourism students in utilizing digital media such as YouTube as a means of independent observation before entering the industry. Furthermore, it can provide new general knowledge about the types of nonverbal communication employed by front-office staff, particularly during check-in procedures.

b. For Future Researchers

This study can serve as an academic reference for future researchers interested in nonverbal communication used by front-office staff in the customer service sector.

1.7 Definition of the key terms

The key terms are explained in the following section.

1.7.1 Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is the process of conveying messages through gestures such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, the use of objects such as clothing, haircuts, and make-up, and the tone of voice. nonverbal communication parts such as facial expressions, movements, appearance, posture, and paralinguistics. According to Pohan (2015), the communication, nonverbal communication is almost automatically used. Therefore, nonverbal communication is permanent and ever-present.

1.7.2 Handling check-in

Check-in is the process of registering guests arriving at a hotel. Guest check-in at a hotel is one of the most important parts of the guest service process. The front office staff must be able to provide good service to guests because during the

check-in process, this is their first impression of the hotel, and the front office staff must always build a good impression of themselves and also for their company.

1.7.3 Kinesic

Kinesics refers to the systematic study of nonverbal communication conveyed through body movements, such as facial expressions, body movements, posture, and eye movements. Ray Birdwhistell (2019) views body language as a structured system with socially learned rules that are influenced by cultural patterns, similar to spoken language. In this study, kinesics is applied to analyze how front office staff use body language to demonstrate professionalism during the hotel check-in process.

