

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In the hospitality industry, service quality is one of the main factors influencing guest satisfaction. Hotels do not only sell physical facilities, but also service experiences created through interactions between staff and guests. Therefore, effective communication becomes an essential aspect in maintaining professionalism and service quality in hotel operations.

The Front Office Department is one of the most important divisions in hotel operations because it serves as the first point of contact between the hotel and its guests. Through direct interactions with guests, the Front Office contributes significantly to creating first impressions related to service quality, professionalism, and guest satisfaction. Within this department, telephone operators play an essential role as the main communication bridge between the hotel and both prospective and in-house guests. Since telephone communication is often the first interaction experienced by guests, telephone operators are expected to deliver clear, polite, and professional communication while following the hotel's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). In addition, they must use appropriate English expressions and language functions to ensure effective communication during guest interactions.

According to Taufik et al. (2022), telephone operators are responsible for various communication procedures, such as greeting external and internal calls, handling calls on hold, receiving guest messages, handling anonymous guest requests, managing wake-up calls, and assisting guests with special requests such

as medical assistance. These responsibilities require operators not only to understand hotel procedures but also to apply effective communication skills in real-time telephone interactions. Dewanthi et al. (2024) further explain that communication competence in hospitality services involves multimodal literacy, including the ability to convey meaning through verbal and non-verbal communication. In the context of hotel telephone services, operators are expected to communicate confidently, politely, and appropriately because their communication reflects the professionalism and image of the hotel.

Based on preliminary observation conducted at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, several variations were found in the way telephone operators handled guest calls. Some operators used different English expressions in similar situations, while several communication practices were not always fully aligned with the hotel SOPs. Variations were also identified in the use of language functions such as greeting, offering assistance, and responding to guest requests. These conditions indicate the importance of analyzing how SOPs, language functions, and English expressions are implemented in real-time telephone communication.

Several previous studies have discussed language use and procedures in hospitality communication. Suardika (2024) examined language functions and English expressions used by guest service officers in hotel services. However, the study focused on guest service officers in general and did not specifically examine telephone operators or telephone-based communication practices. Similarly, Pramesti (2021) analyzed language functions and expressions used by telephone operators in handling guest calls, but the study mainly focused on identifying expressions and did not integrate the analysis of SOP implementation, language

functions, and English expressions in one comprehensive discussion. Nugraha (2021) discussed communication strategies such as paraphrasing, code-switching, and polite expressions used by front office staff to maintain professionalism and ensure guest understanding. Nevertheless, the study focused more broadly on communication strategies rather than specifically analyzing real-time telephone handling practices.

Other studies have focused on the implementation of SOPs in hospitality services. Antari et al. (2025) examined SOP implementation in the Front Office Department and found that SOPs were generally implemented effectively to improve service quality. Hidayana (2024) also discussed procedures related to reservations, check-in, check-out, and guest handling in the Front Office Department. However, both studies focused on Front Office operations in general and did not specifically analyze telephone communication practices or the linguistic aspects involved in telephone interactions. In addition, Sudantari (2021) emphasized the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in ensuring guest satisfaction, while Basalamah et al. (2021) highlighted communication challenges faced by hospitality staff in multicultural environments. Although these studies discussed communication in hospitality contexts, they did not specifically examine how telephone operators apply SOPs and language expressions simultaneously during telephone interactions with guests.

International studies also emphasize the importance of communication competence in hospitality services. Blue (2003) states that language skills in hospitality are professional competencies that influence institutional image and guest satisfaction. Nurhikmawati and Puspitasari (2023) found that hotel staff

responses to guest complaints significantly affect guests' perceptions of service quality. Furthermore, Radović (2025) argues that technological developments in hospitality cannot replace the importance of responsive and polite human interaction in guest communication. These studies demonstrate that communication quality remains a central aspect of hospitality service. However, previous studies have not specifically explored how telephone operators integrate SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions during real-time guest telephone handling, particularly in international star-rated hotels.

Based on the previous studies above, it can be seen that most researchers tend to discuss SOPs, language functions, and English expressions separately. Research focusing specifically on telephone operators as the main subject of analysis remains limited, especially in the context of international hotels such as Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. In addition, previous studies have not comprehensively examined the integration between SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions in real-time telephone handling practices. Therefore, this study is important to fill the existing research gap by analyzing how telephone operators implement SOPs while simultaneously using appropriate language functions and English expressions in handling guest calls. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the implementation of SOPs, language functions, and English expressions used by telephone operators in handling guest calls at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.

1.2 Problem Identification

Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road is a business hotel that emphasizes professional and efficient service, particularly in the Front Office Department. One position that plays an important role in creating a first impression for guests is the telephone operator, as they serve as the main link between the hotel and guests through indirect communication. Based on preliminary observation conducted during the researcher's field experience at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, several differences were identified in the way telephone operators handled guest calls. Some operators consistently used complete greeting formulas and reconfirmed guest requests before transferring calls, while others tended to shorten greetings or omit certain communication procedures during telephone interactions. Variations were also found in the use of English expressions and language functions, particularly in greeting guests, offering assistance, clarifying requests, confirming information, and closing conversations professionally. In several situations, some expressions used by operators were not fully aligned with the hotel's communication standards and international hospitality practices. These conditions indicate that the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), English expressions, and language functions among telephone operators has not always been applied consistently in real-time guest handling. Therefore, it is important to analyze how telephone operators implement SOPs, use English expressions, and apply language functions during telephone communication with guests in order to maintain service quality in accordance with international hotel standards.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research background, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. What Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are implemented by telephone operators during guest call handling at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road?
2. What language functions are used by telephone operators during guest call handling at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, and how are they applied in different communication contexts?
3. What English expressions are used by telephone operators during guest call handling at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, and how accurate are those expressions in terms of grammatical and professional telephone communication?

1.4 Purposes of Study

Based on the aforementioned problems, the objectives of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. To identify the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) implemented by telephone operators during guest call handling at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.
2. To identify and analyze the language functions used by telephone operators during guest call handling in different communication contexts at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.

3. To identify and analyze the English expressions used by telephone operators during guest call handling, including their grammatical accuracy and appropriateness in professional telephone communication.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the development of theory in the field of hospitality and tourism management, specifically in the area of guest handling through telephone communication. By analyzing the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), language functions, and English expressions used by telephone operators in the Front Office Department at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, this study enriches existing knowledge related to front office communication practices. It also provides a deeper understanding of the communication strategies and interpersonal skills required by telephone operators in handling guest inquiries and requests professionally. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of language proficiency and structured service procedures in shaping guest perceptions and satisfaction, particularly in indirect communication within the hospitality industry.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

This research provides practical insights into the implementation of SOPs, language functions, and English expressions used by telephone operators in handling guest calls. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for developing telephone handling training materials, hospitality English phrasebooks, standardized call handling guidelines, and evaluation checklists for

telephone operator performance. In addition, the results of this research may assist hotel management in creating more consistent and professional telephone communication practices that align with hospitality service standards. This study may also be used as a reference for future researchers who are interested in hospitality communication, English for Hospitality purposes, and guest handling practices in hotel operations.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Guest Handling

Guest handling refers to the process of managing and assisting guests in a professional manner, starting from the initial contact, such as answering inquiries, providing information, and fulfilling guest requests. In this study, guest handling specifically focuses on how telephone operators in the front office department interact with guests at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.

1.6.2 Telephone Operators

A telephone operator is a member of the Front Office staff who is responsible for managing the hotel's internal and external communications. They handle phone calls, provide accurate information, and provide services such as wake-up calls. As the hotel's communication hub, telephone operators play an important role in shaping the hotel's professional image and influencing guest satisfaction through their voice, tone, and quality of service.

1.6.3 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) refers to a structured set of service guidelines and instructions that telephone operators must follow to ensure effective, consistent, and professional guest service. In this study, the SOP outlines how telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road should handle guest calls in accordance with hotel service standards.

1.6.4 Language Functions

Language function is the communicative role or purpose of every utterance used by telephone operators in dealing with guests, such as greeting, offering assistance, providing information, directing guests, or responding to complaints during the process of communication over the telephone.

1.6.5 English Expressions

English expressions refer to the standard English phrases and vocabulary used by telephone operators when communicating with guests, especially international guests. These expressions are based on the SOP and are essential for delivering clear, courteous, and professional service at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.