

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The hospitality industry plays an important role in providing services that meet guest expectations, particularly through effective communication between hotel employees and guests. In hotel operations, the Front Office Department becomes one of the main departments responsible for direct interaction with guests. Among front office staff, bellboys have an important role in supporting guest services, especially during arrival and departure processes. Bellboys are responsible for assisting guests with luggage, escorting guests to rooms, and providing necessary information during their stay.

As bellboys frequently interact with international guests, English communication skills become an essential requirement in delivering effective service. According to Ariyati (2022), English proficiency is important for hotel staff because they need to communicate with foreign guests during various service activities. Communication ability involves not only knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to use language appropriately according to social and situational contexts Astriani (2018). Therefore, difficulties in English communication may create misunderstandings and affect the quality of hotel services.

One of the most important moments in hotel service is the check-in and check-out process, as these two processes mark the beginning and end of the interaction between guests and the hotel. According to Busser et al. (2022), the check-in process has an important role because this process can affect guests'

emotions, and become their first impression of a hotel. Before entering the room, guests must go through the check-in process and if in this initial process the guest gets a bad experience then it will affect the guests experience at the hotel, therefore every hotel will always try to improve the good quality to create a positive impression. According to Mulya (2024) service quality is the ability of hotels to provide good service through the delivery of reliable, responsive, and satisfying service to guests. Good service quality will create a positive impression and encourage the loyalty of guests.

Several previous studies have examined the role and performance of bellboys in hotel operations. The study by Kesuma et al (2021) found that bellboys In the handling group guests luggage during check-in have implemented the established standard operational procedure (SOP). But there is a thing that cannot be ascertained in the field that causes the fulfilment of SOPs to meet constraints. There is also a study by Deccasari (2023) findings that bellboys play a crucial role in handling guests luggage and enhancing guest satisfaction at the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel Yogyakarta. The front office also acts as the hotel's information centre and a bridge between management and guests. By providing excellent service, the hotel can create a memorable experience for guests, encouraging them to share their positive experiences with others. Guest satisfaction is key to the hotels reputation and leads to an increase in repeat guests. The results indicate that the bellboy services meet the standards based on service dimensions such as reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. There is also a study from Sulistya (2024) from the discussion on the performance of bellboys at Hotel Horizon Ultima Riss Yogyakarta, the following conclusions are The front office

department plays a crucial role because the first impression guests have of a hotel depends on the professionalism and quality of service provided by the front office staff. To ensure guest satisfaction, bellboys are expected to perform their duties according to the standard operating procedures set by the hotel management of Horizon Ultima Riss Yogyakarta. When handling guests' luggage during check-in and check-out, bellboys must be careful and meticulous, as guests often carry valuable items. This careful handling helps prevent guest complaints regarding damage to their belongings. Bellboys should prioritize speed, accuracy, and the safety of the luggage.

While previous studies have focused on SOP implementation, service quality, and guest satisfaction, limited attention has been given to the English communication challenges experienced by bellboys when handling group guests. The intensive and time-sensitive nature of group check-in and check-out requires clear, accurate, and professional communication. Linguistic limitations such as restricted vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and accent differences may contribute to communication breakdowns, which can affect service effectiveness.

Lovina Beach Club & Resort is a resort that frequently accommodates group travellers, making it an ideal setting for examining these communication challenges. Understanding the difficulties faced by bellboys and the strategies they use to overcome them is important to improve service efficiency and improve the overall guest experience.

In contrast to previous studies that mainly examined the implementation of SOPs or the relationship between bellboys performance and guest satisfaction, limited attention has been given to the English communication challenges

experienced by bellboys and the communication strategies they apply when handling group guests. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights to improve English communication skills and improve service effectiveness in interactions with international guests.

1.2 Problem Identification

In the hospitality industry, bellboys play an important role in assisting guests during the arrival and departure process. Besides handling the luggage and providing guest assistance, bellboys are also required to communicate effectively with international guests using English.

However, several communication challenges may occur during group check-in and check-out processes. Bellboys may experience difficulties related to limited vocabulary, differences in accents and pronunciation, and unclear guest messages, which can lead to misunderstanding. Moreover, busy operational situations, such as handling multiple guests and crowded environments, may affect the effectiveness of communication.

Therefore, it is important to identify the English communication challenges experienced by bellboys when interacting with international group guests during the check-in and check-out process.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What English communication challenges do bellboys face while handling group guests during check-in and check-out processes?
2. What communication strategies are employed by bellboys to overcome the English communication challenges during group check-in and check-out processes

1.4 Purposes of Study

1. To identify the English communication challenges faced by bellboys during group check-in and check-out processes at Lovina Beach Club & Resort.
2. To analyse how bellboys overcome English communication challenges in the use of English during the group check-in and check-out process.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the analysis of communication challenges in English use faced by bellboys during the group check-in and check-out process at Lovina Beach Club & Resort. The study was limited to two bellboys who were directly involved in assisting with the arrival and departure of the group. It specifically examines the communication challenges experienced by the participants, namely English proficiency, including limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding spoken English, and poor comprehension, as well as accent differences, unclear or incomplete guest messages, cultural differences, and environmental noise. Furthermore, this study investigates the communication strategies employed by bellboys to overcome these challenges, including simplifying language, repetition and confirmation, clarification, communication style adaptation, and the use of verbal and non-verbal communication in real hospitality service situations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to make a contribution both theoretically and practically. The theoretical and practical significance of this research is explained as follows.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study discusses the challenges of English communication faced by bellboys in hotel operations during the group check-in and check-out processes. This study also provides a deeper understanding of communication challenges that often occur in interactions between hotel staff and international guests. Therefore, this study is expected to enrich the study of communication in the hospitality industry and support further analysis of communication strategies in hotel services.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The practical significance of this research is expected to provide useful contributions to several parties related to the hospitality and academic fields. The benefits of this research can be explained as follows:

1) English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Students

This research helps ESP students understand the challenges of English communication in hotel operations. It also helps them prepare better communication skills when interacting with international guests.

2) For Bellboys and Hotel Staff

This study provides valuable insights into the communication challenges often faced by bellboys during group check-in and check-out processes. The results of this study are also expected to help improve communication effectiveness and service quality in hotels.

3) Further Research

This study can serve as a reference for future researchers interested in studying communication challenges in the hospitality or tourism industry. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of further studies related to communication challenges, strategies, and language use in hotel service interactions.

1.7 Definition of Key Term

The following definitions are provided to clarify important terms and ensure consistency in the interpretation of this study.

1.7.1 English Communication Challenges

The term English communication challenges, as defined by Janyam and Sinwongsuwat (2023) refer to the challenges faced during communication with people in real life situations, especially in the hotel industry, using English as the medium of communication. These English communication challenges may include English proficiency, fast speech, difficulty in understanding accents, and high rates of miscommunications between foreigners and hotel staff. For example, in the case study conducted among Thai hotel staff, it was observed that one of the English communication challenges faced by the staff was the hearing difficulties caused by the varying English accents. The staff had to resort to using strategies such as clarification and repetition to overcome the difficulties faced during communication.

1.7.2 Communication Strategies

Communication strategies refer to techniques used by individuals to

overcome communication challenges and maintain effective communication when difficulties occur during interaction Canale and Swain (1983). In the hospitality context, communication strategies are important for hotel staff because they interact with guests from different linguistic backgrounds. These strategies may include verbal and non-verbal strategies, such as clarification, repetition, simplification, gestures, and other supportive communication techniques to ensure that messages are understood clearly by guests.

1.7.3 Group Guest

Group guests refer to hotel guests who travel and stay together as part of a group arrangement or organized booking. According to Hayes and Ninemeier (2007), group guests are a segment of hotel customers who make reservations collectively and require specific arrangements related to accommodation, services, and coordination during their stay. Unlike individual guests, group guests usually involve a larger number of people arriving and departing at the same time, which requires effective planning and coordination from hotel staff. In this study, group guests refer to international guests who stay as part of an organized group and require assistance from bellboys during the check-in and check-out processes.

1.7.4 Bellboy

A bellboy is a front office employee who assists guests during the arrival and departure processes, particularly by handling luggage, escorting guests to their rooms, and providing basic hotel information, according to Kijpoonphol (2019) Bellboys are the front staff of a hotel who help with guests luggage during the check-in and check-out process. Proficiency in speaking English will be essential for informing and communicating with guests.