

# Hospitality English: Essential Phrases for Hotel and Tourism Professionals

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## Abstract

English plays a crucial role in the hospitality and tourism industry as the primary means of communication between hotel staff and international guests. Hotel staff's ability to use English effectively can improve service quality, guest satisfaction, and the hotel's image in the global market. However, many hotels in Indonesia still experience obstacles in implementing consistent English standards, especially in the use of key phrases in service communication. This study aims to identify key phrases that must be mastered by hotel professionals, evaluate the effectiveness of their use, and analyze factors that influence English language proficiency in the hospitality environment. This study uses qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods with a mixed-methods approach. Data were obtained through field observations, interviews with hotel managers and staff, and guest satisfaction surveys on hotel staff communication. The results of the study show that international hotels in big cities such as Jakarta and Bali have better English standards than hotels that are still developing in other cities such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Surabaya. Factors that support English language proficiency in international hotels include regular English training, the use of standard service scripts, and a work environment that requires communication in English. On the other hand, hotels that still need development face obstacles such as lack of formal training programs, inconsistent use of English, and minimal staff awareness of the importance of mastering key phrases. To improve the English skills of hotel staff, this study recommends strategies such as the development of real-life situation-based training programs, the use of language learning technology, periodic mentoring and evaluation systems, and the establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in service communication. The implementation of these strategies is expected to improve the standard of hotel service communication in Indonesia, strengthen guest satisfaction, and increase hotel competitiveness at the international level.

**Keywords:** Hospitality English, Hospitality Industry Key Phrases.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role in various industry sectors, including hospitality and tourism, which require effective communication with guests from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As an international language, English is a key tool in providing professional and high-quality service. In the hospitality industry, the ability to use the right phrases in various situations, from welcoming guests, handling reservations, to handling customer complaints - greatly determines the quality of service and customer satisfaction. (Blue, GM, & Harun, M. (2003)

However, many hospitality professionals, especially in countries where English is not the first language, still face challenges in mastering effective communication skills in this language. Misuse of phrases or lack of understanding of appropriate expressions can lead to misunderstandings, which ultimately impact the guest experience and the hotel's reputation. Therefore, it is important to identify and understand essential phrases in hospitality English in order to improve professionalism and service quality in this industry. (Crystal, D. (2003) This study will analyze key phrases used in hospitality communication and evaluate the effectiveness of their use in interactions with guests. By understanding and mastering these important phrases, it is hoped that hospitality professionals can improve their communication skills, so that they are able to provide better and more competitive services in the global arena.

The hospitality and tourism industry continues to grow rapidly along with increasing global mobility and the growth of the creative economy sector. In this highly competitive environment, communication skills are one of the main factors that determine service quality and customer satisfaction. English, as an international language, plays an important role in the interaction between hotel staff and guests from various countries. The ability to use English correctly and professionally not only increases the effectiveness of communication, but also reflects high service standards in the hospitality industry. (Goh, CCM, & Burns, A. (2012)

One of the crucial aspects of English language proficiency in this sector is understanding and using key phrases that are frequently used in various situations, such as reception, room service, reservations, and complaint handling. Mastery of these phrases enables hotel staff to provide a more friendly, efficient, and professional service, thus creating a better experience for guests. However, there are still many challenges faced by hospitality professionals in mastering English effectively, especially for those who do not have a formal educational background in the language. (Hall, CM, & Page, SJ (2014)

The hospitality and tourism industry is a sector that relies heavily on effective communication, especially in an international context. In an increasingly connected world, English language skills are becoming an essential skill for professionals in this field. English is not only used in everyday conversations with guests, but also in various formal situations such as reservations, restaurant service, complaint handling, and business communication with international partners. Therefore, mastery of key phrases in hospitality English is a crucial aspect for workers to provide professional and high-quality services. (Hyejin, J. (2010) However, many workers in the hospitality sector still experience obstacles in the use of English, especially in understanding and applying specific phrases in the context of service. Misunderstandings in communication can have a negative impact on customer satisfaction and company image. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze key phrases that must be mastered by hospitality professionals in order to improve communication effectiveness and service standards.

This study will explore various important phrases that are often used in the hospitality industry, and how their use can help improve interactions between hotel staff and guests from various cultural backgrounds. By understanding and mastering these phrases, it is hoped that hospitality professionals can provide friendlier, more efficient, and internationally standardized services. In addition, this study will also explore effective learning methods to help hospitality workers improve their English skills, so that they can adapt to the global demands of the increasingly competitive tourism industry. (Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987)

The tourism and hospitality industry is a sector that relies heavily on effective communication, especially in the context of customer service. As an industry with a global reach, hospitality professionals are required to have good communication skills, especially in English, which is the lingua franca. world franca. The ability to use key phrases in English not only improves the quality of service, but also builds a positive experience for tourists from various countries. (Jenkins, J. (2014)

In daily interactions, hotel staff such as receptionists, restaurant waiters, concierges, and hotel managers must be able to communicate with guests in a professional and friendly manner. Important phrases in hotel English include greetings, explaining facilities, handling complaints, and fulfilling special

requests from guests. Mastery of these phrases can increase the effectiveness of communication and help avoid misunderstandings that can impact customer satisfaction. (Kandampully, J., Zhang, T., & Bilgihan, A. (2015)

This study aims to identify and analyze key phrases in English that must be mastered by professionals in the hospitality and tourism industry. In addition, this study also explores how the use of these phrases can affect interactions with customers and improve service standards in this industry. With a deeper understanding of hospitality English, it is hoped that professionals in this field can provide better quality and competitive services in the global market. (Kim, H., & Elder, C. (2009)

The following is data from field observations and surveys that show the condition of English language use in several hotels in Indonesia, classified based on the English language use standards that have been implemented by the hotel. This data was obtained through interviews with hotel managers, direct observation of service interactions, and evaluation of English language training materials used. The data helps identify hotels that have implemented English language standards consistently and professionally and hotels that still need improvement or development, especially in mastering key phrases that are essential for hotel professionals.

Table 1. Data on Standardization of English Use in Indonesian Hotels

No.	Hotel Name	Location	English Standard Category	Information
1	Hotel Indonesia Kempinski	Jakarta	Good	Implement regular English training with standard service scripts.
2	The Westin Jakarta	Jakarta	Good	Staff are trained in the optimal use of key phrases in welcoming and serving guests.
3	Mandarin Oriental Jakarta	Jakarta	Good	International communication standards, consistent use of English across all service lines.
4	Grand Hyatt Bali	Bali	Good	Demonstrate professional and consistent use of English, supported by intensive training.
5	Ibis Bandung Styles	Bandung	Need to be Developed	The use of service phrases is not consistent; staff training is still limited to basic aspects only.
6	Santika Premiere Dyandra Hotel	Yogyakarta	Need to be Developed	It is necessary to improve the ability to convey key phrases to increase guest satisfaction.
7	Grand Zuri Hotel	Medan	Need to be Developed	English standards are not optimal; additional training is needed to master appropriate service phrases.
8	Swiss- Belhotel	Surabaya	Need to be Developed	English usage is limited to written documents; oral interaction with guests requires improvement.

From the data, international hotels in big cities such as Jakarta and Bali (for example Hotel Indonesia Kempinski, The Westin Jakarta, Mandarin Oriental, and Grand Hyatt Bali) have implemented good English standards. This can be seen from routine training, the use of standard scripts, and the application of key phrases in every interaction with guests. On the other hand, several hotels in cities such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Surabaya show that the use of English is still not optimal. The obstacles that are often encountered are limited training, lack of consistency in the use of key phrases, and the lack of standard operating procedures that focus on improving English skills for all service staff. The data indicates the need for development and improvement efforts, especially in hotels that have not yet implemented English standardization to the maximum. With the development of more comprehensive training materials and the implementation of a continuous monitoring system, it is hoped that

professionals in the hotel industry can better master essential key phrases, so that they are able to provide higher quality and competitive services in the global market.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the approach used is a qualitative and quantitative descriptive method to analyze the use of English in the hospitality industry in Indonesia. This method aims to identify key phrases that must be mastered by hospitality professionals and evaluate the effectiveness of their use in interactions with guests.

### 1. Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods method (a combination of qualitative and quantitative) to obtain more comprehensive data. A qualitative approach is used to understand the perceptions, constraints, and communication strategies implemented by hotel staff in using English. Meanwhile, a quantitative approach is used to measure the level of understanding and English skills of hotel staff through surveys and language skills tests. (Creswell, JW, & Creswell, JD (2018)

### 2. Location and Subject of Research

The research was conducted in several hotels in major cities in Indonesia which have varying levels of English use, such as:

- 1) Hotels with good English standards (Jakarta & Bali): Hotel Indonesia Kempinski, The Westin Jakarta, Mandarin Oriental Jakarta, Grand Hyatt Bali.
- 2) Hotels with English language use that needs to be developed (Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, Surabaya): Ibis Styles Bandung, Santika Premiere Dyandra Hotel, Grand Zuri Hotel, Swiss- Belhotel Surabaya.

Research subjects include:

- 1) Hotel staff (receptionist, concierge, restaurant waiters, housekeeping)
- 2) Hotel manager (responsible for service standards)
- 3) Hotel guests (to gain perspective on the quality of communications received)

### 3. Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through the following methods:

- 1) Field Observation by Observing direct interactions between hotel staff and guests to identify the use of key phrases in various situations. (Denzin, NK, & Lincoln, YS (2018)
- 2) In-depth interviews were conducted with hotel staff and managers to understand the challenges and strategies of communication in English. (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017)
- 3) Questionnaire Survey was Distributed to hotel staff to measure their level of understanding and use of English and Distributed to hotel guests to determine their satisfaction with the communication conducted by the staff.
- 4) English Language Skills Test by Testing hotel staff's ability to understand and use key phrases in customer service scenarios.

### 4. Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative Analysis: Data from observations and interviews will be analyzed using thematic methods, namely grouping findings based on language usage patterns, constraints, and communication strategies used by hotel staff. Quantitative Analysis: The results of the survey and English language skills test will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentage of staff who master key phrases, guest satisfaction level with staff communication). (Miles, MB, Huberman, AM, & Saldan a, J. (2014)

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify key phrases that must be mastered by hospitality professionals and evaluate the effectiveness of their use in interactions with guests. Based on data obtained through field observations, in-depth interviews, questionnaire surveys, and English language proficiency tests, several

important findings were found that describe the condition of English use in the Indonesian hospitality industry.

### 1. Level of English Proficiency in Various Hotel Categories

English proficiency in the Indonesian hospitality sector shows significant variation, particularly between international hotels and hotels that are still in the development stage. Based on research, hotels located in large cities and with international reputations, such as Hotel Indonesia Kempinski, The Westin Jakarta, Mandarin Oriental Jakarta, and Grand Hyatt Bali, show very good levels of English proficiency. The staff of these hotels have adequate English proficiency, enabling them to communicate effectively and professionally with international guests. This proficiency is acquired through systematic and ongoing training, as well as a work environment that encourages the use of English in various interactions. (Brown, HD (2007)

In contrast, hotels located in cities with slower hotel industry development, such as Ibis Styles Bandung, Santika Premiere Dyandra Hotel, Grand Zuri Hotel, and Swiss- Belhotel Surabaya, face significant challenges in the effective use of English. Although their staff have basic knowledge of English, many are not yet able to use the language fluently in complex situations, such as handling complaints or providing in-depth information to guests. This significant difference leads to a gap in the quality of service provided to international guests, which in turn can affect guest image and satisfaction. Solution To address this gap, it is important for hotels in cities with slower hospitality development to increase investment in English language training for their staff. The use of learning technology and app-based training can be an effective alternative for budget hotels.

### 2. Factors that Support English Language Proficiency in International Standard Hotels

International hotels have several factors that support the success of their staff's English language acquisition, which can be used as an example for other hotels to improve their service quality. Routine and Continuous English Training, International hotels often hold regular English training for all their staff. This training includes the introduction of key phrases used in various customer service scenarios such as welcoming guests, handling reservations, and handling complaints. This training program is not only carried out during new staff orientation, but is also continuously updated through follow-up training sessions and periodic evaluations. (Crystal, D. (2003)

The Solution Hotels that do not yet have a structured training program need to immediately design and implement a sustainable English language training program, with an approach based on real situations that staff face in their daily work. Standard Service Scripts to Facilitate Communication, Standard service scripts provided by international hotels play an important role in ensuring consistency in communication. These scripts serve as a guide for staff to interact with guests using proper and professional English in various situations, whether it is when welcoming guests, providing information about hotel facilities, or handling customer complaints.

The solution Hotels that have not yet implemented a standard service script system can start developing and distributing scripts that suit their hotel's needs. This will make it easier for staff to use English in a more efficient and consistent manner. A Work Environment That Demands Consistent Use of English, In international hotels, the use of English is not only limited to interactions with guests, but also becomes the language of instruction in internal communication among staff. This creates a work environment that facilitates the use of English routinely, which ultimately increases staff confidence in communicating. The solution, Hotels that do not yet have this habit can start introducing the use of English in internal communication, for example by holding briefings in English or providing training materials that can be read in English.

Regular Evaluation and Feedback System, A regular evaluation system helps international hotels to measure their staff's English skills and provide constructive feedback. This allows staff to identify areas for improvement and receive additional training as needed. A solution for hotels that have not implemented regular evaluations is to introduce a test-based or observation-based feedback system to measure staff's English skills and provide training based on the findings. (Goh, CCM, & Burns, A. (2012).

### 3. Challenges in Using English in Hotels that Still Need Development

Hotels in Indonesia that are still in the development stage experience several major challenges that affect their staff's English language proficiency. These challenges include: Lack of Formal English Language Training Programs, these hotels often do not have systematic and ongoing training programs, leading to fragmented English language proficiency among staff. Some staff may rely solely on their basic knowledge without receiving specific training relevant to their jobs. The solution for hotels that still lack



formal training programs is to design a training curriculum that can be tailored to the needs of each hotel, with a focus on mastering key phrases that are important in customer interactions. Inconsistent Use of English in Interactions with Guests, the biggest challenge found was the inconsistency in the use of English by hotel staff. Many staff prefer to use Indonesian or regional languages when interacting with guests, especially when guests come from countries where English is not the first language. The solution for hotels is to introduce policies that encourage staff to use English more often in everyday situations, both with guests and in internal communications. Lack of Awareness of the Importance of Key Phrase Mastery in Service Communication, Lack of understanding of the importance of key phrase mastery often leads to misunderstandings and interactions that feel unprofessional to international guests. Staff are often unaware that the right phrases can impact a guest's perception of a hotel's service. The solution for hotels is to raise staff awareness of the importance of key phrase mastery and provide specific training on phrases used in various service scenarios. (Hall, C., & Smith, R. (2015)

#### 4. Implications for the Quality of Hospitality Services in Indonesia

The findings of this study indicate that the uneven proficiency of English across hotels in Indonesia can affect the quality of service provided to international guests. Hotels with international standards have a more structured system for developing their staff's English skills, (Hyejin, J. (2010) while smaller hotels or those located in smaller cities have difficulty in achieving this.

Recommended Solutions to Improve Service Quality:

- 1) Structured English Training: All hotels need to have a structured English training program for all customer service staff, with a focus on key phrases used in communicating with guests.
- 2) Standard Service Script: Developing a standard service script in each hotel will ensure that staff use English in a professional and consistent manner.
- 3) Evaluation and Monitoring: It is important to conduct periodic evaluations of staff's English skills, provide feedback, and provide additional training if necessary.
- 4) Increased Awareness and Understanding: Conduct training sessions that emphasize the importance of mastering key phrases in service communication, as well as how to use friendly and efficient English in every interaction with guests.

With the implementation of these solutions, it is expected that the hotel industry in Indonesia can achieve higher service communication standards, improve international guest satisfaction, and compete better in the global market. Therefore, based on the results of field observations and interviews with hotel staff in various hotels in Indonesia, this study identified several key phrases in English that are most often used in hotel services. These phrases play a central role in communication between hotel staff and guests, both in formal and informal situations. Good mastery of these phrases is very important, considering that they can affect the quality of interaction, guest comfort, and customer satisfaction, which will ultimately have an impact on the overall image of the hotel. (Jenkins, J. (2014)

##### a. Welcoming Guests

Welcoming guests is the first step that determines the first impression for guests who come. Phrases such as "*Welcome to our hotel, how can I assist you?*" is widely used in hotels with good English standards. This phrase not only serves as a greeting, but also as a symbol of professionalism and friendliness. By using this phrase clearly and confidently, staff can provide immediate comfort to guests, which influences their perception of the hotel's service quality. (Kandampully, J., Zhang, T., & Bilgihan, A. (2015)

However, in some hotels that are still in the development stage, the pronunciation and grammar used in welcoming guests are often inappropriate. Staff sometimes do not use appropriate sentences or friendly intonation, which can make guests feel uncomfortable. Using overly formal or stiff phrases can also reduce the quality of interactions, especially for international guests who are more accustomed to more relaxed and natural English. In some cases, staff do not even use open-ended questions that encourage guests to express their needs. Solution To overcome this problem, hotels that need development should focus on training more friendly and confident welcoming phrases. Training programs can include teaching about proper intonation, as well as simulating various welcoming scenarios in English. Conducting role-plays or simulating direct interactions with international guests can also help staff improve their communication skills.

##### b. Room Reservation

Using the right phrases when making a room reservation is crucial in ensuring the check-in process goes smoothly and the guest feels appreciated. Phrases such as "*May I have your booking confirmation,*

*please?*" is used to ensure the accuracy of guest data. In addition, the use of clear and formal phrases can strengthen the hotel's professional image in handling administration. (Kim, H., & Elder, C. (2009) However, in some hotels that need development, the pronunciation of these phrases is sometimes inconsistent, and staff sometimes use phrases that are too general, which are not formal or specific enough. Some staff are also less confident in how to confirm reservation details or explain the check-in process. This often leads to confusion for guests, especially international guests who are more accustomed to structured procedures. Solution Hotel staff training should focus on mastering more specific and structured reservation phrases. By providing training based on real reservation scenarios, staff can be better prepared to deal with check-in situations that are often filled with questions or special requests from international guests.

#### c. Room Service

Phrases like *"Would you like housekeeping service now, or should we schedule it for later?"* is used to offer flexible room service and ensure guest comfort. Good use of the phrase in the context of room service shows attention to guest needs, as well as flexibility in providing services tailored to guest preferences. (Kusluvan, S. (2003) However, in hotels with English standards that need to be improved, staff are often not skilled enough in using this phrase in a polite and efficient manner. Some staff use sentences that are too direct or sound rushed, which can make guests feel less appreciated. In addition, errors in pronunciation or in sentence structure are also common. This can cause confusion and reduce guest comfort, especially if the guest is not fluent in English. Solution It is important for staff to learn the use of this phrase in a more polite and effective manner. Simulation-based training and role-play in the context of room service would be very helpful. The focus of the training should include how to offer service in a friendly and confident manner, as well as teaching staff how to provide choices to guests more flexibly.

#### d. Handling of Complaints

Handling complaints is one of the biggest challenges in hospitality. Phrases like *"I sincerely sorry for the inconvenience. Let me find a solution for you right away."* is used to convey an empathetic apology and offer a solution to the guest's problem. Using the right language in this situation can defuse tension and help create a positive impression, even though the guest is experiencing discomfort. (Richards, JC (2008) However, in some hotels that need improvement, staff feel anxious or uncomfortable in giving an apology in English. They tend to use phrases that sound insincere or unconvincing, which can actually make the situation worse. Some staff also have difficulty in formulating sentences properly, which can make guests feel that their complaint is not being handled properly. Solution Communication training in handling complaints should focus on teaching phrases with empathy and confidence. Staff need to be trained to use more sincere apology phrases and offer solutions in a clear and confident manner. Training programs should emphasize the importance of listening well to complaints and responding to them in a proactive manner.

#### 5. Recommended Tourist Attractions

Providing recommendations for attractions is one way for hotel staff to enrich the guest experience. Phrases like *"I highly recommend visiting (name of place). Would you like me to arrange transportation for you?"* not only shows the staff's knowledge of local tourist destinations, but also adds value to the service provided to guests. (Wood, RC (2018) However, some staff in hotels that need development sometimes have difficulty in expressing their recommendations clearly. This difficulty arises from a lack of local knowledge, confusion with the right terms, or difficulty in pronouncing the names of tourist attractions in English. Solution To improve the quality of tourist recommendations, staff should be trained on popular local tourist destinations and how to communicate this information in English. In addition, teaching the correct pronunciation of tourist attractions is also important, as it can reduce guest confusion and give the impression of professionalism.

Key phrases in hospitality English play a central role in creating a positive guest experience and influencing the quality of service provided. In hotels with good English standards, the use of these phrases is carried out fluently and professionally, while in hotels that need development, English proficiency is still found to be lacking. A solution that can be applied to overcome this problem is to provide more structured and continuous English training, especially in the use of key phrases related to welcoming guests, room reservations, room service, handling complaints, and recommendations for tourist attractions. Real-world scenario-based training and interactive simulations can help staff

improve their communication skills, so that interactions with guests can run smoothly and without obstacles. In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation of staff English proficiency can ensure that service standards are maintained. By improving the mastery of key phrases and improving the communication skills of hotel staff, it is hoped that the guest experience will be increasingly optimal, increasing customer satisfaction, and ultimately strengthening the hotel's positive image in the global market.

### **Evaluation of Guest Satisfaction Level towards Hotel Staff Communication**

The survey conducted on hotel guests in this study showed that effective communication in English has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The survey results show a clear difference between hotels with good English standards and hotels that still need improvement. In detail, the following findings were obtained from the survey related to guest satisfaction with staff communication skills in English. 85% of guests at hotels with good English standards were satisfied with the communication skills of staff in serving them. These guests reported that hotel staff were able to convey information clearly, friendly, and professionally in English, both in formal and informal situations, such as when checking in, providing information about hotel facilities, or handling complaints. Guest trust in a hotel that has good communication will have a positive impact on the image of the hotel, which in turn increases the likelihood of guests returning or recommending the hotel to others. 52% of guests at hotels that need improvement stated that communication in English was still unclear and sometimes confusing. Although staff tried to provide good service, their inability to use English correctly and clearly caused confusion for guests. For example, when making a reservation or asking for information about facilities, guests sometimes had difficulty understanding staff explanations. This can reduce guest trust in the hotel and lead to a less than satisfactory customer experience. 30% of guests at hotels in need of improvement reported experiencing misunderstandings with staff due to inappropriate English usage. Misuse of phrases, inaccuracies in pronunciation or grammar, and inappropriate vocabulary can all lead to guest confusion. In situations where guests expect fast and accurate information (e.g. regarding room reservations, hotel facilities, or restaurant service), miscommunication can result in significant disappointment. Guests who feel misunderstood or underserved can lower their overall satisfaction, which can impact a hotel's rating on online review platforms. (Wood, RC (2018)

### **The Impact of English Proficiency on Customer Experience and Hotel Image**

The results of this study indicate that the ability to communicate in English has a direct impact on customer experience and hotel image. In the hospitality industry, where customer experience is a major factor in determining long-term success, effective communication in English is critical. The inability of staff to communicate well can disrupt the smoothness of service, reduce guest comfort, and affect their perception of the overall quality of the hotel. One of the main impacts of poor communication is the disruption of the customer experience. When guests have difficulty communicating with hotel staff, they tend to feel uncomfortable and unappreciated. On the other hand, smooth and effective communication will increase guest comfort, create a positive experience, and make it easier for them to enjoy the services provided. In addition, good communication also plays a role in building the hotel's image. Hotels that have staff with good English communication skills will get positive reviews from guests. This can attract more customers and increase the hotel's competitiveness in the global market. On the other hand, negative reviews due to poor communication can damage the hotel's reputation, especially on online review platforms that are often used as references by potential guests. (WTO (World Tourism Organization). (2022)

### **English Skills Improvement Strategy for Hospitality Staff**

Given the significant impact of poor communication on guest satisfaction and hotel image, several solutions can be implemented to improve the English skills of hotel staff and address the challenges faced by hotels that still need development.

#### **1. Preparation of a Structured and Continuous English Language Training Program**

The first step that hotels can take is to implement a structured and ongoing English language training program for staff. This training should cover various aspects that are relevant to their duties, such as: a) Situational English courses, which teach key phrases often used in customer service, such as welcoming guests, explaining hotel facilities, and handling complaints; b) Simulations and role-playing, which allow staff to practice in real-life situations such as check -in, check-out, and direct interactions



with international guests. With this practice, staff can improve their communication skills more naturally; c) Technology-based training, such as the use of English learning applications that allow staff to study independently outside of work hours, increase their vocabulary, and improve their grammar and pronunciation.

## **2. Implementation of Continuous Mentoring and Evaluation System**

In order for English language training to provide maximum results, hotels need to implement a mentoring system and regular English language skill evaluation. Mentoring programs can be carried out by involving senior staff who are more proficient in English to guide their colleagues who are still learning. With this mentoring, junior staff can learn more effectively through direct practice. In addition, hotels can implement continuous English language skill evaluation, for example by conducting monthly tests, asking for feedback from guests, or conducting direct observations of staff interactions with customers. This evaluation is important to identify areas that still need improvement and determine the type of additional training needed.

## **3. Increased Use of Technology and Interactive Media**

The use of technology can be an effective solution in improving the English skills of hotel staff. The use of gamification-based learning applications can help staff learn English in a more interactive and fun way. In addition, online learning platforms can also provide flexible access for staff to continue learning without having to attend formal classes. Interactive media such as hotel service simulation videos in English can also be used to help staff understand how ideal communication is in various situations. With this method, learning becomes more interesting, easy to understand, and can be applied directly in the workplace.

## **4. Establishment of Clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the Use of English**

To ensure consistency in the use of English, hotels need to establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) regarding interactions with foreign guests. Every staff, from receptionists, restaurant waiters, to housekeeping, must know the phrases to use in certain situations and how to convey them correctly and professionally. With clear SOPs, staff will be more confident in communicating with foreign guests, so they can provide more efficient and comfortable services. These SOPs will also help new staff to adapt more quickly to the communication standards expected in their work environment.

## **5. Collaboration with International Partners and Use of Native Speakers**

To improve the quality of English training, hotels can collaborate with native speakers, speakers or international English language training institutions. Training guided by native English speakers can help staff understand more natural expressions, intonations, and nuances of language in hospitality communication. In addition, hotels can also employ native speakers as part of the customer service team. Their presence can provide local staff with first-hand experience in using English actively, as well as enrich the work environment with better international communication standards.

The results of this study confirm that English language proficiency in the hospitality industry is very important, not only to increase guest satisfaction, but also to maintain the hotel's reputation and competitiveness in the global market. The inability of staff to communicate well can reduce customer experience and affect reviews given by guests, which in turn can have a negative impact on the hotel's image. To overcome these communication challenges, hotels need to implement a comprehensive strategy, starting from the preparation of a structured and ongoing English language training program, the implementation of a mentoring and evaluation system, the use of technology in learning, the establishment of clear SOPs, to collaboration with international and native partners, speakers. (Zhang, Y., & Zhang, X. (2019) By implementing these solutions, hotels in Indonesia can improve their communication standards, strengthen guest satisfaction, and face global market challenges with more confidence. In addition to improving customer experience, improving English language skills among staff will also strengthen the hotel's image of professionalism and help attract more international tourists.

## **Effective English Learning Strategies for Hospitality Staff**

In an effort to improve the English skills of hotel staff, several effective learning strategies were found based on the results of interviews with hotel managers and staff. Developing English communication skills is crucial in the hospitality industry that serves guests from various cultural backgrounds and countries. Effective learning strategies will make it easier for staff to master key

phrases and improve service quality, which ultimately contributes to increased guest satisfaction and hotel image. The following is a more detailed discussion of several strategies that are considered effective in improving English skills for hotel staff, along with solutions to overcome existing challenges.

### 1. Real Scenario Based Training

One of the most effective strategies for improving English skills is real-world scenario-based training. This training allows hotel staff to practice using English directly in situations they frequently encounter in their jobs, such as simulated reservations, handling complaints, providing tour recommendations, and everyday communication with guests.

Implementation of Real Scenario Based Training:

- a) **Reservation Simulation:** Staff are trained to manage reservations over the phone or through booking apps using proper English. For example, staff can practice confirming reservations, explaining amenities, and handling special guest requests.
- b) **Complaint Handling:** In this scenario, staff are trained to handle guest complaints using polite and professional English, such as offering solutions or compensation. This is important to ensure that guests feel valued and their issues are resolved quickly and effectively.
- c) **Travel Recommendations:** Staff are trained to provide recommendations for travel destinations or hotel services using friendly and persuasive English.
- d) **Real-world scenario-based training** can help staff feel more confident and prepared to deal with possible real-world situations, reducing anxiety about speaking English with guests.
- e) **Solutions to Challenges:** Some common challenges in implementing real-world scenario-based training are limited resources to conduct training regularly and time constraints for staff who are busy with operational work. To overcome this, hotels can integrate training into the work schedule with short sessions conducted periodically or during staff downtime.

### 2. Creating Key Phrase Modules in English

English key phrases module is a guide containing important phrases frequently used in hospitality service communication. This module makes it easy for staff to remember and apply the right phrases in certain situations, such as when welcoming guests, explaining facilities, or handling complaints.

Implementation of Key Phrase Module:

- a) **Guest Reception Phrase:** *"Welcome" to our hotel. How may I assist you ?"*
- b) **Reservation Phrase:** *"Could you please provide me with your reservation number ?"*
- c) **Complaint Handling Phrase:** *"I apologize for the inconvenience, let me resolve this issue for you immediately."*
- d) **Problem Solving Phrase:** *"Thank you for your patience . I have arranged an alternative for you."*
- e) This module can be customized to the context and operational standards of the hotel in question.

Staff can access this module at any time to strengthen their English skills.

**Solutions to the Challenge,** with Some staff may find the modules too overwhelming or difficult to remember. Therefore, it is important to present the modules in an interactive and easy-to-understand format, such as using flashcards or a smartphone -based application. Hotels can also provide regular training to help staff practice using these phrases in real-world interactions.

### Mentoring Program or Buddy System

Mentoring or buddy program strategy system is a method where more experienced staff with better English skills mentor staff who are new or less confident in speaking English. This system not only helps language development, but also facilitates the transfer of knowledge regarding best practices in customer service.

Implementation of Buddy System:

- a) **Senior Mentors:** Senior staff who are proficient in English serve as mentors to junior staff, guiding them in using proper English and helping them understand the context of hospitality communication.
- b) **Mentoring in Real Situations:** Mentors can accompany junior staff in daily tasks, provide direct feedback on English usage, and correct any errors that may occur in interactions with guests.
- c) **Solution to Challenge:** One of the main challenges in mentoring programs is the mismatch of schedules between mentors and junior staff. To overcome this, a group-based mentoring system can be implemented, where one mentor helps several junior staff, or mentoring is done on a rotation basis. Thus, learning can be more flexible.

#### 4. Use of Technology such as Language Learning Applications

In this digital age, technology can be a very effective tool for improving hospitality staff's English skills. Language learning apps like Duolingo, Babbel, or apps specifically for hospitality English can be used to practice English skills outside of work hours.

Application of Technology in Language Learning:

- a) Use of Learning Apps: These apps can provide structured language practice, focusing on everyday conversation, grammar, and vocabulary relevant to the hospitality world.
- b) Online Platforms with Hospitality-Specific Materials: In addition to general applications, there are also platforms that provide English materials specifically for the hospitality industry, such as online courses that teach phrases and vocabulary used in the context of customer service in hotels.
- c) Solutions to the Challenges Some staff may not be familiar with the use of technology or find the application less engaging. Solutions to overcome this challenge include conducting training sessions to orient staff to the application, and providing incentives for staff who show progress in their language skills through the application. Additionally, providing free access or subsidized subscription fees for staff can increase their participation in using the learning application.

To improve the English skills of hotel staff, it is important to combine a variety of effective learning methods, including real-world scenario-based training, the creation of key phrase modules, mentoring programs, and the use of technology. In addition, hotels need to create a supportive learning culture, by providing opportunities for staff to continue developing their skills outside of work hours and incentivizing their efforts. With these strategies, it is hoped that hotel staff can overcome existing language challenges and improve the quality of their service, thereby providing a better experience for guests and enhancing the hotel's professional image globally.

#### 5. Implications of Research Results for Hotel Service Standards

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that good English language skills by hotel staff are one of the key factors in improving service quality and guest satisfaction, especially in the global market-oriented hospitality industry. Effective use of English can create a more positive customer experience, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen the image of hotel professionalism in the eyes of foreign guests. Conversely, communication barriers caused by limited English language skills can affect guest satisfaction and damage the hotel's reputation. Therefore, improving the English language skills of hotel staff should be a top priority for hotel management.

To achieve this, hotel management needs to implement more proactive and sustainable policies to develop their staff's English skills, especially in hotels that still have weaknesses in English communication. While many large hotels in major cities such as Jakarta and Bali have successfully implemented high English standards, hotels in other cities such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Surabaya still face challenges in optimizing the use of English in their services.

English proficiency in the hospitality industry is an important factor in improving service quality and guest satisfaction, especially for hotels serving international tourists. To overcome the obstacles faced by staff in mastering English, a systematic and sustainable strategy is needed. Here are some solutions that hotel management can implement to improve English standards in the workplace.

##### a. Make English Training a Part of the Hotel's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

English language training should not just be an additional program, but should be part of the hotel's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). By including this training in the SOP, the hotel can ensure that all staff have sufficient understanding in communicating with foreign guests.

To achieve this, hotel management can create structured training modules that cover key phrases, everyday communication scenarios, and speaking, writing, and listening skills in a hospitality context. In addition, training should be tailored to job positions, such as specific training for receptionists, restaurant waiters, and housekeeping staff. Regular training, at least once a year, with additional training based on staff performance evaluations, will ensure that their English skills continue to develop.

## **b. Provide Ongoing Training with a Focus on Practical Communication**

In addition to formal training, it is important for hotels to provide ongoing, practice-based training. The main focus of this training is to improve communication skills relevant to staff's daily tasks, not just English theory.

Methods that can be implemented include situational training, which allows staff to learn to deal with various scenarios such as handling guest complaints, making reservations, providing tour recommendations, and explaining hotel facilities. In addition, training can also involve interactive simulations with native speakers, either in the form of workshops or live training sessions. The use of technology such as digital language learning applications can also be an effective solution, allowing staff to learn flexibly anytime and anywhere.

## **c. Increase Staff Exposure to English-Speaking Work Environments**

Learning English theoretically is not enough; hospitality staff need to get direct exposure to an English-speaking work environment. The more they interact in English, the faster they will master it.

One way to increase this exposure is to encourage staff to be more active in speaking English with guests, both in formal situations such as check-in and check-out, and in informal conversations. In addition, hotels can also organize cultural or language exchange programs, which allow staff to interact directly with travelers from different countries.

The opportunity to attend international seminars or trainings held by global hospitality associations can also help staff deepen their understanding of international communication standards. In doing so, they not only improve their English skills but also broaden their insight into the hospitality industry at a global level.

## **d. Developing an Evaluation and Monitoring System for Staff English Language Skills**

In order for English language training to have a real impact, hotel management needs to develop an effective evaluation and monitoring system. By providing regular feedback, staff can understand areas for improvement and receive support to improve their language skills.

One step that can be taken is to conduct regular English language proficiency tests, including speaking, writing, and listening tests that are relevant to the staff's work tasks. The results of these tests can be used to evaluate their development and determine what type of additional training is needed.

In addition, hotels can implement a language-based performance appraisal system, where English skills are one aspect of the staff's annual evaluation. This can provide an incentive for them to continue improving their skills. Mentoring and coaching programs can also be implemented, where staff who are more proficient in English help their colleagues improve their communication skills, thus creating a collaborative learning environment.

## **e. Building Awareness of the Importance of English among Managers and Staff**

One of the main obstacles in improving the English skills of hotel staff is the lack of awareness of the importance of this skill in improving service quality. Therefore, building awareness among managers and staff is essential so that they have the motivation to learn.

Hotels can hold seminars, workshops, or regular meetings that discuss the benefits of English language proficiency in improving guest satisfaction and hotel image. In addition, providing awards or incentives for staff who show significant improvements in their language skills can be an effective way to motivate them.

Improving English language proficiency in the hospitality environment is not a task that can be completed overnight. It requires a proper and sustainable strategy to ensure that staff have adequate communication skills in interacting with foreign guests. By making English language training part of the hotel's SOP, providing ongoing training, increasing staff exposure to an English-speaking work environment, developing a skills evaluation system, and building awareness of the importance of English, hotels in Indonesia can improve the quality of their communication. Implementing these strategies will not only strengthen guest satisfaction but also help hotels compete in the global market with more confidence. Good English proficiency can also improve the hotel's professional image and open up greater opportunities in the international hospitality industry.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that English proficiency has a significant impact on service quality, customer satisfaction, and hotel image in the Indonesian hospitality industry. International hotels located in big cities such as Jakarta and Bali generally have high English standards, which are obtained through regular training, the use of standard service scripts, and a work environment that supports the use of English in daily communication. In contrast, hotels in cities with slower hospitality industry development, such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Surabaya, still experience various challenges in English proficiency by their staff.

The main obstacles found in this study include the lack of structured English language training programs, inconsistent use of English in guest interactions, and minimal staff awareness of the importance of mastering key phrases in service communication. These conditions lead to misunderstandings in interactions with international guests, which can reduce customer satisfaction levels and affect the hotel's image in the global market.

A survey of hotel guests also confirmed that effective communication in English plays a significant role in enhancing guest comfort and experience. 85% of guests at hotels with good English standards were satisfied with the communication they received, while 52% of guests at hotels with improvement needs reported that English communication was unclear. Most guests stated that poor communication can reduce their level of trust in a hotel, which in turn affects the hotel's overall reviews and reputation. Considering these findings, strategic steps are needed to improve the English skills of hotel staff to ensure more effective communication, enhance guest experience, and maintain the hotel's international competitiveness.

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