

English Needs by Hotel Receptionists in Sikka: An Analysis of English for Hospitality

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ABSTRACT

The urgency of this research is to improve the quality of hotel services in the Sikka district by identifying hotel receptionist's needs and challenges in using English. In addition, understanding the English communication needs of hotel receptionists may provide beneficial insight into the industry of hotels and hospitality. This research aims to analyze the English needs of hotel receptionists and identify the importance of using English and the challenges often faced in communicating using English. This research was conducted in several hotels in the Sikka district using qualitative methods. This research employs in-depth interviews with 4 hotel receptionists to gain comprehensive data. The results showed that good English skills are indispensable for receptionists to serve guests more effectively, provide accurate information, handle complaints or special requests from foreign guests, create positive experiences, and support the growth of the hotel business. In addition, this research found that the main challenges faced by receptionists in communicating using English include a lack of technical vocabulary, difficulty understanding different accents and dialects, and constraints in responding quickly and appropriately in emergencies. Solutions to overcome the challenges are continuous and focused English training is essential to overcome these challenges and improve the communication skills of hotel receptionists. In addition, the use of technology such as translator apps can help language obstacles in real-time. In this case, receptionists can be more confident and competent in using English, thus providing better service to international guests.

Keywords: English Needs, Communication Challenges, Hotel Receptionist



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INTRODUCTION

The hotel business is one of the industries very important to the success of the tourism industry. A hotel business cannot be fully successful when the people in this business lack language skills, especially English, which is necessary for providing good and effective hotel service [1]. A hotel and resort is a company or business entity that provides overnight services for people who travel. In the success of the tourism industry, skills in using English are needed in the hospitality business because it can give a good impression to guests even for international guests [2].

The department in the hotel that most often uses English is the front office or hotel receptionist. A hotel receptionist is a person who works in the front office of the hospitality industry where he is responsible for welcoming guests and serving all the needs and needs of guests, also he must be able to give a positive impression of guests who have visited the hotel. As a sector that is highly dependent on tourism, hotels need receptionists who can communicate with guests from various countries using English [3]. In addition, Ref. [4] said that the receptionist is a very important job in the hotel. Therefore, a receptionist must be able to represent the hotel in giving a positive impression to guests, through professionally providing good service. This research is considered important because it helps understand the demands of communication in the work environment, also good language skills can improve service to international guests, create positive experiences, and support hotel business growth. Some of the issues that may arise in this study involve identifying specific English language deficiencies among hotel receptionists, as well as the barriers they face in communicating with guests. With better English communication skills, hotel receptionists can better understand guests' needs and desires and thus provide better services [5].

Based on my primary research, researchers found that the tourism and culture sector in Sikka District is currently being developed by the regional government. With the increase in the tourism and cultural sector in Sikka, the number of tourists coming has also increased. To support all this, facilities and infrastructure include hotels as resting and stopover places for tourists. In this case, the front office officer (hotel receptionist) as the main support is one of the most important factors for the comfort of tourists, because it facilitates service and can give a positive impression to visiting tourists. In addition, researchers found that of the many hotels in Sikka, only a small number of hotel receptionists use English to facilitate their communication with foreign guests. The need for the use of English in hotels in Sikka depends on the foreign guests who visit, how often foreign guests visit then the ability to speak English is needed.

Ref. [4] defines needs analysis as the process of determining the language needs needed by a person or group of students and arranging these needs based on their priorities. Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in analyzing the English Language Needs of hotel receptionists in the Sikka district. Furthermore, the need for analysis is target-centered to find out the tasks that will be carried out in the field, so that by determining what skills, functions, and language expressions are needed students can help carry out the work properly.

Based on the opinions of experts, it can be concluded that needs analysis is a process of determining the language needs needed by hotel receptionists.

Based on the above explanation, researchers are interested in analyzing the English needs of hotel receptionists in Sikka. Based on the results of primary research, the researcher found that several hotels in Sikka require English to communicate with foreign guests and are always visited by foreigners. Therefore, it is important to learn more about the use of English by hotel receptionists. Then, this research aims to identify:

- How important is English for hotel receptionists?
- What are the challenges faced by hotel receptionists in using English?

This research also aims to understand the importance of English in improving hotel service quality as well as providing benefits to the hospitality industry as a whole. With the English communication needs of hotel receptionists, it is hoped that appropriate solutions can be found to improve the quality of services and support the growth of the hotel business in Sikka District.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach that allows an in-depth understanding of the English needs of hotel receptionists in Sikka. Descriptive qualitative research is conducted to explain existing research without providing data manipulation of the variables under study by conducting direct interviews [6]. The research population consisted of hotel receptionists in the area, with a purposively selected sample to ensure adequate representation of the various hotels. The steps in data collection began with the identification of receptionists to be interviewed. Then, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each receptionist, asking structured and unstructured questions to obtain information about their experiences of using English at work. The interviews aimed to find out how important the need for English is for hotel receptionists in communicating in their work environment, including the challenges they face and the solutions they propose. This process generated rich and in-depth data which was then thematically analyzed to identify common patterns in receptionists' responses and experiences related to the use of English. From the analysis, key findings can be formulated to provide better insight into the English needs of hotel receptionists in Sikka.

The thematic analysis of the interview data aims to formulate significant conclusions related to how important the English needs of hotel receptionists are and the challenges faced

in the context of the hospitality industry. It is expected that the findings of this study can make a valuable contribution to stakeholders in the hospitality industry, including hotel management and receptionists, in the development of appropriate training strategies and programs. Investment in English skills development of receptionists in Sikka is expected to improve service quality, strengthen the hotel's reputation, and increase overall guest satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of English for Hotel Receptionists

This research expands the understanding of the importance of English skills for hotel receptionists to communicate with foreign guests with a focus on the hospitality industry in Sikka. With 1-11 years of work experience in the hospitality industry, receptionists in Sikka are required to have adequate English skills to serve guests more effectively. The findings of this study are in line with previous research [7]-[10]. Collectively, these findings confirm that hotel receptionists' English proficiency plays an important role in improving service quality, guest satisfaction, and overall hotel image and career for hotel receptionists. Each of the previous studies highlighted that guests served by receptionists with good English skills tend to be more satisfied with hotel services, more likely to return to the hotel and have a more positive image of the hotel. This research makes an additional contribution by demonstrating the relevance of such findings in the context of the hospitality industry, particularly in Sikka. Thus, the results of this research reinforce the belief in the importance of English skills in improving the quality of hotel services and supporting the sustainability of the hotel business.

The findings in this research highlight the important role of English skills for hotel receptionists in Sikka. A receptionist who is fluent in English can fluently welcome guests, provide information about hotel facilities, and assist guests with reservations or special requests. They are also more flexible in handling emergencies or unexpected requests. The ability to speak English instills a high sense of professionalism and increases guest confidence in hotel services. Research confirms that English skills are not only a necessity but also an important aspect of providing effective service to guests, especially international guests. By understanding and mastering English, receptionists can communicate more fluently with guests, provide clear information, and handle requests or complaints more efficiently. This finding is in line with Ref. [4] who emphasizes that understanding and mastering the use of English greatly affects success in communication, so by having language skills, good service will be easier to provide.

Mastery of English is also crucial to the success of the hospitality industry, especially for hotel receptionists. In an environment that often serves guests from different countries, English becomes the main language of communication that allows for smooth interaction between receptionists and international guests. With good English skills, a receptionist can easily understand and fulfill guests' needs and requests, be it in the booking process, confirmation, or handling of queries or complaints. More than just a communication tool, mastery of English also reflects professionalism and enhances the hotel's image in the eyes of guests. This ability is crucial in supporting hotel business growth. In this era of globalization, hotels not only serve local guests but also guests from various parts of the world.

English proficiency is critical to the success of hotels and the hospitality industry [11], as English is a universal medium of communication and essential for delivering quality service. A receptionist who is proficient in English can fluently communicate with international guests, ensuring that their needs and preferences are well understood. This not only increases guest satisfaction but also opens up opportunities to expand the hotel's business network with local and international partners. In the business world, English, as an international language, plays an important role in consistent communication to support successful cooperation in various companies [12]. In addition, the reputation of the hotel can also be improved by having staff who can communicate in English. International guests tend to favor hotels that have staff who are competent in English, thus increasing the hotel's overall footfall and revenue. Thus, good English proficiency is not only an important aspect in providing effective service but also acts as a strategic key in driving the hotel's business growth to a higher level and can also benefit the hotel receptionist.

A hotel receptionist who is proficient in mastering English in the workplace gains various positive benefits that help improve their overall performance and work experience. This is in line with Ref. [13] who stated, that mastering English is important for hotel receptionists to communicate effectively with guests and complete various tasks. The ability to communicate well with international guests is one of the main advantages, allowing them to provide more effective services and can also increase hotel business growth. In addition, mastery of English also opens the door to wider career opportunities in the hospitality industry, by increasing the chances of promotion. Mastering English is essential for a hotel receptionist's career [14]. Multitasking ability is also enhanced, as receptionists can seamlessly handle multiple tasks at once, such as answering phone calls, processing reservations, and responding to guest complaints quickly and accurately. Aside from these practical benefits, English proficiency also

reflects professionalism and enhances the image of the receptionist as well as the hotel as a whole in the eyes of guests and the industry.

Challenges Faced by Hotel Receptionists in Using English

Hotel receptionists often face challenges when communicating in English, which can impact their service to guests. The difference between accent and dialect, mastery of vocabulary, the ability to handle complaints quickly and appropriately, and confidence in communicating are some of the various challenges faced by hotel receptionists.

1. Difference between Accent and Dialect

The challenge of accent and dialect differences in communication by hotel receptionists in Sikka, particularly between receptionists and guests from different English-speaking countries, is an issue that has been widely studied in the context of the hospitality industry. From the interview results obtained, hotel receptionists have difficulty understanding the accents and dialects of foreign guests. For example, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and India have different accents and dialects. These accents make it difficult for receptionists in Sikka to understand what guests want because they sound different or have different meanings in the context of the conversation which can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. If guests feel that their communication is not well understood, this can reduce their overall level of satisfaction with the hotel. Ref. [15] found that accent and dialect differences in hotel receptionists in China can affect hotel service quality. They found that receptionists who have better communication skills in various accents and dialects can improve hotel service quality.

2. Vocabulary Mastery

Hotel receptionists in Sikka often struggle with a lack of vocabulary to provide proper information about hotel facilities, handle complaints, and fulfill guests' special requests. Adequate vocabulary mastery is key to providing effective and satisfying services to guests in the hospitality industry. Hotel receptionists in Sikka often face challenges when they do not have a sufficient understanding of the vocabulary used in explaining hotel facilities, handling complaints, or fulfilling guests' specific requests. The lack of vocabulary among hotel receptionists in Sikka results in receptionists providing incomplete or even incorrect information, which in turn can decrease guest satisfaction and damage the hotel's reputation. Ref. [16] found that lack of vocabulary mastery can affect hotel service quality. They found that receptionists who lack vocabulary mastery can have difficulty in providing accurate

information to guests and increase errors in hotel services. Research shows that continuous training in vocabulary development is important. As such, investing in the language skill development of hotel staff will not only improve the overall guest experience but also help build the hotel's reputation as a welcoming and professional destination for all their guests.

3. Barriers to Responding Quickly in Emergency Situations

Language limitation is also a barrier for receptionists in Sikka in responding quickly and appropriately in emergencies. This is a serious challenge faced by hotel receptionists in Sikka, especially when it comes to language barriers. In emergency conditions such as fires, accidents, or urgent medical emergencies, the ability to provide instructions and information in a clear and timely manner becomes crucial for guest safety and effective management of the situation. Inadequacies in good communication can hinder proper response and lead to slow, potentially even life-threatening treatment. Ref. [17] conducted a study on hotel receptionists in Korea and found that barriers to responding quickly and appropriately can affect hotel service quality. They found that receptionists who have barriers to response can have difficulty providing accurate information and increase guest concerns.

4. Confidence in Communication

Confidence is also an important factor in communicating with guests in English. Some hotel receptionists in Sikka have a low level of self-confidence that hinders them in performing their services. Confidence in communicating in English is a key factor in maintaining service quality and positive guest impression in the hospitality industry. Confident receptionists tend to be better able to handle interactions in a friendly and effective manner, reducing the risk of miscommunication or misunderstanding that could negatively affect the guest experience. A lack of confidence can affect guest satisfaction and difficulty in answering guest questions and increasing guest concerns [18]. Ref. [16] also said a lack of confidence can affect the quality of hotel services cause difficulty in providing accurate information and increase errors in hotel services. To address this issue, intensive training is conducted by several hotels in Sikka which includes simulation exercises of real situations and daily conversation practice between employees in the hotel. Thus, investment in the development of receptionists' English communication skills not only improves the services provided but also strengthens the image of professionalism and hospitality of the hotel in the eyes of guests.

CONCLUSION

The research emphasizes the importance of English skills for hotel receptionists in Sikka and the hospitality industry as a whole, which are key in improving foreign guest services, foreign guest satisfaction, and hotel image. Communication challenges, such as accent differences, lack of vocabulary, barriers to quick responses, as well as lack of confidence, highlight the need for attention in English skills development. Strong English skills not only improve guest service, but also affect the hotel's image, business opportunities, and the receptionist's career. Lack of English skills can lead to decreased guest satisfaction as well as damage the hotel's overall reputation. To overcome this challenge, intensive training in English is required to improve receptionists' communication skills. Hotels can provide additional resources, such as online courses, as well as encourage regular English practice in the workplace. Providing intensive training and proper support to hotel receptionists can improve their ability to communicate with guests, increase guest satisfaction, and strengthen the hotel's overall reputation. Investing in the development of employees' English language skills is crucial to the long-term success of the hospitality industry in Sikka. The implications of these findings for the hospitality industry in Sikka are significant. Hotels in Sikka can take concrete steps by increasing investment in English training for their hotel receptionists. In this way, hotels can directly improve the quality of service they provide to guests, as well as increase the level of guest satisfaction and perception of the hotel as a whole. In addition, a deeper understanding of the importance of English proficiency needs can also inspire the development of more effective and focused training programs, which aim to improve the communication skills of hotel staff in interacting with guests and can overcome the challenges faced during communication with foreign guests.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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