

SOP Implementation, Language Functions, and English Expressions of Telephone Operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road

Kadek Mery Juliana Dewi¹, Ni Putu Era Marsakawati¹, Desak Ketut Meirawati¹

¹Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha

mery.juliana@student.undiksha.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

The research focused on identifying how telephone operators applied SOPs, utilized language functions, and used English expressions during telephone interactions with guests at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed. The data were collected through direct observations and semi-structured interviews involving two telephone operators from the Front Office Department. The collected data were analyzed through data transcription, classification, interpretation, and descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that telephone operators implemented SOPs systematically in handling incoming calls, guest requests, complaint handling, wake-up calls, call transfers, and guest confidentiality procedures. The study also found that various language functions, such as greeting, asking and giving opinions, giving directions, agreement, disagreement, and complaint handling, were consistently applied during guest interactions. Furthermore, standardized English expressions reflecting politeness, professionalism, empathy, and service orientation were used effectively to support communication clarity and guest satisfaction. Therefore, this study contributes theoretically to hospitality communication studies by integrating the analysis of SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions within the context of telephone operator services.

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INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is one of the service sectors that highly prioritizes communication quality, professionalism, and customer satisfaction in every interaction between hotel staff and guests. In hotel operations, the Front Office Department holds a significant role because it becomes the first and central point of contact for guests during the service process. Within this department, the telephone operator division has a strategic function as the primary communication bridge connecting the hotel with prospective guests, in-house guests, and other departments. Telephone communication often becomes the guests' first impression of hotel service quality; therefore, the effectiveness of communication delivered by telephone operators significantly influences guests' perceptions, satisfaction, and trust toward the hotel (Blue & Harun, 2003). In the current era of global tourism development, communication competence in English has become an essential skill for hotel employees, particularly those working in international hotels. English functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a professional tool reflecting the

hotel's image, service quality, and hospitality values. Telephone operators are required to communicate clearly, politely, and professionally while simultaneously implementing hotel Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

According to Taufik et al. (2022), telephone operators perform various responsibilities such as handling external and internal calls, transferring calls, managing wake-up calls, receiving guest messages, handling complaints, and responding to emergency situations. Telephone operators are in charge of receiving and routing calls as well as communicating crucial information and offering extra services like wake-up calls (Aprilia et al., 2025). The importance of communication skills in hotel services is also supported by multimodal literacy theory. Dewanthi et al. (2024) explain that hotel employees, especially front office officers, must possess multimodal communication competence involving verbal communication, non-verbal communication, gestures, tone of voice, and contextual language use. In hospitality services, successful communication is not only determined by grammatical accuracy but also by politeness, clarity, empathy, and responsiveness (Dewanthi et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have discussed language functions and English expressions used in hospitality services. Suardika (2024) identified eight language functions utilized by front office receptionists in guest interactions, including greeting, offering help, giving information, apologizing, and closing conversations. Similarly, Pramesti (2021) found that telephone operators use various English expressions in handling internal and external calls to maintain professionalism and guest satisfaction. Nugraha (2021) further explains that front office staff frequently apply communication strategies such as paraphrasing, repetition, code-switching, and polite expressions to ensure mutual understanding between staff and guests from different cultural backgrounds. These strategies are considered essential in preventing misunderstandings and maintaining service effectiveness.

Research related to hospitality communication has also been conducted in restaurant and tourism contexts. Nariswari et al. (2024), in their study at Scusa Restaurant, Ayana Resort Jimbaran, identified sixteen language functions and sixteen English expressions used by waiters during guest interactions. Their findings indicate that language expressions play a crucial role in creating service quality, guest comfort, and professional impressions. Similarly, Sudantari et al. (2019) emphasizes that verbal and non-verbal communication greatly influences guest satisfaction because hospitality services rely heavily on interpersonal interaction. In addition, Basalamah et al. (2021) state that multicultural communication challenges in the hospitality industry often affect employee performance, SOP implementation, and service consistency. From the procedural perspective, SOP implementation is fundamental in ensuring service consistency and operational effectiveness in hotel management. Antari et al. (2025) found that proper SOP implementation in the front office department contributes significantly to improving service quality and operational efficiency. Likewise, Hidayana (2024) highlights that front office procedures involve systematic stages such as reservations, check-in, handling guest requests, complaint handling, and check-out procedures. In the context of telephone operators, SOPs become essential guidelines to ensure that every guest interaction is handled professionally, efficiently, and consistently according to hotel standards.

Furthermore, studies related to speech acts and politeness in hospitality communication reveal that hotel employees tend to use formal and polite language to maintain professionalism. Sujana et al. (2014) found that vocational hospitality students commonly use speech acts such as requesting, offering, greeting, permitting, and thanking during receptionist simulations. International studies also strengthen the importance of professional communication in hotel services. Blue and Harun (2003) argues that language competence in hospitality contexts directly reflects institutional image and service quality. Moreover, Nurhikmawati and Puspitasari (2023) explain that effective communication strategies in responding to guest complaints significantly influence customer satisfaction and hotel reputation. In recent hospitality developments, Radović et al. (2025) emphasizes that although digital technology increasingly supports hotel operations,

human interaction through responsive and polite communication remains irreplaceable in creating personalized guest experiences. This finding indicates that the role of telephone operators remains highly relevant despite technological advancements in hospitality systems.

Although numerous studies in the paragraphs above have examined SOP implementation, language functions, English expressions, and communication strategies in hospitality settings, most previous research focuses only on one aspect separately. Some studies primarily analyze SOP implementation, while others discuss language functions or English expressions independently. In addition, research specifically focusing on telephone operators as the main research subject is still limited, especially in international star-rated hotels. There is still little research examining the integration between SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions used by telephone operators during guest handling processes via telephone communication. This gap becomes more significant considering that telephone operators play a central role in representing hotel professionalism through verbal interaction. In international hotels such as Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, telephone operators are required not only to follow SOPs but also to apply effective English communication strategies in handling diverse guest requests and situations. However, studies exploring how SOP implementation aligns with language functions and English expressions in actual hotel communication practices remain scarce.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the application of language functions, and the use of English expressions by telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road in handling guest services. This study offers novelty by integrating three interconnected aspects within the specific context of telephone operator services in an international hotel environment, such as SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions. The innovation of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of how procedural standards and communicative language practices work simultaneously to support effective guest handling and professional hospitality services. Consequently, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to hospitality communication studies and practically to improving communication training and service quality in hotel operations. Thus, the following research questions can be developed for this study based on the research background:

1. How do telephone operators at the Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road apply Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) when servicing guests?
2. How do telephone operators use language functions while handling the guests?
3. What English expressions are used by Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road telephone operators when providing guest services?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies demonstrate that effective communication and proper SOP implementation significantly influence guest satisfaction, professionalism, and service quality in the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry highly depends on interpersonal communication because hotel services involve direct interaction between employees and guests. In hotel operations, the Front Office Department serves as the center of guest services and communication activities. According to Blue (2003), communication competence in hospitality settings reflects the institution's professionalism and significantly affects customer perceptions and satisfaction. In international hotels, English communication skills become particularly essential because employees interact with guests from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, front office staff, especially telephone operators, must be able to use polite, accurate, and contextually appropriate English expressions while simultaneously following hotel SOPs.

One of the important studies related to language functions and expressions in hospitality communication was conducted by Suardika (2024) entitled "Analysis of Language Functions and Expressions Used by Guest Service Officers at Puri Saron Lovina Baruna Beach Cottages" The

study focused on analyzing the language functions and expressions used by guest service officers during guest interactions and identified eight major language functions frequently used by receptionists, namely asking for opinions, giving opinions, asking for directions, giving directions, agreement, disagreement, complaints, and greetings. The findings indicate that front office employees rely heavily on functional language to support effective communication and maintain professionalism in guest services. Similarly, Pramesti (2021), in the study entitled “Language Functions and Language Expressions Used by Hotel Guest Service Agents” examined the language functions and English expressions utilized by telephone operators at Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort. The study found that telephone operators used eight language functions with four dominant expressions in handling external calls and eight language functions with two common expressions in handling internal calls. Also, her study similar with Paramarta (2020) that said the use of language in Bali's hotels and restaurants demonstrates the interplay between centrifugal forces and centripetal forces.

Research concerning SOP implementation in hospitality services has also gained significant scholarly attention. According to Antari et al. (2025), in their study entitled “*Optimalisasi Penerapan Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) dalam Meningkatkan Pelayanan Front Office Department di Four Star by Trans Hotel, Renon, Bali*”. They examined the implementation of SOPs in improving front office service quality. The study found that various front office divisions, including telephone operators, bellboys, reservations, and receptionists, had implemented SOPs to support guest services. A similar study was conducted by Hidayana (2024) entitled “*Penerapan Standar Operasional Prosedur Pelayanan oleh Guest Service Agent pada Front Office Department di The Alea Hotel Seminyak*”. The study analyzed the implementation of SOPs by Guest Service Agents (GSAs) and identified challenges in applying service procedures. The findings showed that SOP implementation covered reservation procedures, check-in and check-out processes, handling group guests, managing long-term guests, and serving in-house guests. Hidayana emphasizes that SOP compliance contributes significantly to improving service quality and minimizing operational errors.

Cross-cultural communication issues in hospitality services were discussed by Basalamah et al. (2021) in their research entitled “Communication Challenges for Foreign Workers within Multicultural Hospitality Working Environment: Case Study of the Front Office of Hotel X in Japan”. The study found that foreign workers experienced significant communication difficulties due to language and cultural differences. Employees often combined Japanese and English to facilitate communication with guests and colleagues. This study highlights the importance of multilingual competence and communication adaptability in multicultural hospitality environments. It also indicates that language proficiency directly affects employees' ability to follow procedures and provide quality services.

Research related to speech acts and language styles in hospitality education was conducted by Sujana et al. (2014) through the study “*Tindak Tutur, Gaya Bahasa, dan Kesalahan dalam Pelaksanaan Tugas Front Office oleh Siswa SMK Pariwisata Triatmajaya Singaraja*”. The study analyzed speech acts, language styles, and language errors made by front office students during receptionist simulations. Using Searle's speech act taxonomy, the researchers identified directives, representatives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives in students' communication. The findings also revealed that most students used formal language to maintain politeness and professionalism, although grammatical and diction errors frequently occurred due to first-language interference. This study supports the idea that politeness and formal communication are essential in hospitality interactions.

In recent years, technological advancement has also become an important topic in hospitality research. Radović et al. (2025) explain that despite technological developments in hotel operations, human communication remains irreplaceable in delivering personalized services. The study emphasizes that polite, responsive, and communicative interactions between front office staff and guests continue to play a central role in shaping guest satisfaction. This finding reinforces

the relevance of telephone operator services in modern hospitality settings, where direct human interaction remains essential despite digital transformation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative research is appropriate for investigating communication phenomena because it allows researchers to explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors in depth. In this study, the qualitative descriptive method enabled the researcher to systematically analyze how telephone operators implemented hotel SOPs, applied language functions, and utilized English expressions professionally while interacting with guests through telephone communication. This approach also allowed the researcher to examine authentic communication practices occurring in real hotel service situations. In addition, this study focused on three main objects of analysis. The first object was the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in handling guest calls by telephone operators. The second object was the language functions used by telephone operators during telephone communication with guests. The third object was the English expressions used by telephone operators in handling guest services.

The study was conducted at the Front Office Department of Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. The hotel was selected as the research setting because it is an international-standard hotel that frequently serves both domestic and international guests, requiring front office employees to communicate professionally in English. The participants of this study consisted of two female telephone operators working in the Front Office Department at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. The participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques because they possessed direct experience and relevant knowledge related to guest handling through telephone communication. The first participant had approximately four years of experience as a telephone operator, while the second participant had approximately two years of professional experience in the same position.

This study used two primary data collection methods, such as direct observation and semi-structured interviews. Direct observation using observation sheet was conducted by observing telephone interactions between telephone operators and guests. The researcher used audio recordings, with permission from the hotel and participants, to capture authentic communication practices during guest handling processes. In addition to observation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two telephone operators. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions. The examples of the open-ended questions related to participants' professional backgrounds, procedures for handling guest calls, language functions frequently used, English expressions commonly applied, SOP implementation, complaint handling strategies, and perceptions regarding professional communication. Then, a mobile phone voice recorder was used to record interview sessions.

The procedures of data collection were conducted through several stages. First, the researcher requested official permission from the hotel management and Human Resources Department. Second, two telephone operators were selected as research participants using purposive sampling. Third, the researcher conducted direct observations of telephone interactions between operators and guests. Fourth, telephone conversations were audio-recorded with permission from the hotel and participants. Fifth, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. Last, all interview and observation data were documented and prepared for analysis. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The analysis process in this study consisted of several stages, such as data transcription, identification of language functions, identification of English expressions, SOP implementation analysis, data coding and classification, interpretation and meaning extraction data, and conclusions.

In addition, this study applied triangulation and member checking techniques to ensure the validity and credibility of the data. This study employed source triangulation by comparing

interview data and observation results, also method triangulation by combining observation and interview methods. Triangulation was conducted to verify the consistency and accuracy of the data obtained from different sources and methods. On the other hand, member checking was conducted by returning interview transcripts and preliminary findings to the participants for verification. Participants were asked to review and confirm whether the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and communication practices.

The research procedure was conducted through three major stages, such as preparation, data collection, and data analysis. In preparation stage, the researchers reviewed theories and previous studies related to hospitality communication, SOPs, language functions, and English expressions. Then, they developed interview guides and observation sheets, also prepared research permissions and ethical considerations. In data collection stage, the researchers conducted direct observations of telephone interactions, recorded communication practices, conducted interviews with participants, and documented all relevant data systematically. In data analysis stage, the researchers transcribed the data, coded and categorized communication patterns, analyzed language functions and English expressions, interpreted findings, and formulated conclusions based on the analyzed data. Through these systematic procedures, the study aimed to produce valid, comprehensive, and credible findings regarding the implementation of SOPs, language functions, and English expressions used by telephone operators in handling guest services at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with the two telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, it was found that the operators generally implemented the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) appropriately during the guest handling process. The findings indicate that the telephone operators consistently followed operational standards in handling various types of guest communication, including external calls, internal calls, guest requests, complaint handling, wake-up calls, message handling, call transfers, and emergency situations. The implementation of SOPs was reflected not only in the procedural stages followed by the operators but also in the use of professional communication styles, polite English expressions, and service-oriented interactions.

The findings revealed that telephone operators implemented SOPs systematically when greeting external, in-house, and internal incoming calls. During external incoming calls, operators consistently used formal greetings by introducing the hotel name and their personal identity before offering assistance. One commonly observed expression was, “Good morning/afternoon/evening, thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, Arik speaking. How may I assist you?” This greeting demonstrates that the operators followed the hotel communication standard by mentioning the hotel brand clearly and offering professional assistance at the beginning of the interaction. For in-house guest calls, the operators personalized the communication by addressing guests using their names. Expressions such as “Good morning/afternoon/evening, Mr./Ms. (Guest Name), thank you for calling At Your Service, Arik speaking. How may I assist you?” were frequently used. This practice reflects the implementation of personalized hospitality service, which aims to create a friendly and respectful atmosphere for guests. Meanwhile, internal incoming calls from other hotel departments were handled using simpler but still professional greetings, such as “Good morning/afternoon/evening, At Your Service, Arik speaking. How may I assist you?”

In addition to greeting procedures, the observation results showed that telephone operators consistently maintained communication standards required by the hotel. The operators pronounced the hotel brand clearly and correctly as “Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road,”

used polite and natural tones of voice, avoided slang expressions, and ensured that communication was clear and understandable. The operators also maintained moderate speaking speed and minimized distracting background noise during conversations. These findings indicate that communication quality and professionalism formed important components of SOP implementation. The implementation of SOPs was also evident in handling calls placed on hold. The operators consistently requested permission from callers before placing calls on hold. Expressions such as “May I place your call on hold for a moment, please?” were frequently observed during interactions. The operators also ensured that calls were not placed on hold for excessively long periods and thanked callers after returning to the conversation. For example, operators commonly stated, “Thank you for holding, Mr./Ms. (Guest Name).” The findings further showed that operators followed hotel procedures by avoiding requests for guests to call back. Instead, operators informed guests that they would personally reconnect the call if disconnection occurred, as reflected in the expression, “I will call you back shortly if the line gets disconnected.”

Another important SOP implementation identified in this study involved handling requests for incognito guests. Based on observations and interview data, operators demonstrated a strong understanding of guest privacy procedures. Telephone operators ensured that no information confirming a guest’s stay at the hotel was disclosed to external callers. The operators repeated and confirmed incognito requests carefully and updated guest profiles in the OPERA system by adding “INCOGNITO” status. Furthermore, all relevant hotel departments were informed regarding the guest’s privacy request. This finding indicates that confidentiality and guest security were prioritized during communication practices. The implementation of SOPs in handling WhatsApp guest messages was also observed. Telephone operators responded promptly and professionally to guest messages in order to maintain service efficiency and guest satisfaction. Standardized greetings such as “Good afternoon Mr./Ms., warmest regards from Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. How may I assist you?” were commonly used. The operators consistently applied polite and formal written language while ensuring that guest requests were clearly identified and confirmed before further action was taken. Expressions such as “May we know your room number, please?” and “Your request has been forwarded to the housekeeping department” reflected procedural accuracy and communication clarity. Conversations were also closed politely using expressions such as “Thank you for contacting us. Have a pleasant day.”

In handling Do Not Disturb (DND) room status, the findings showed that telephone operators followed internal communication procedures systematically. Operators received information from the Housekeeping Department regarding rooms under DND status at designated times and recorded the room numbers for operational reference. The operators also informed relevant departments regarding the guest’s DND status to avoid service interruptions. Internal communication expressions such as “Please be informed that room 305 is currently on DND status” were commonly used. When communicating with guests, operators politely explained service delays caused by DND activation by saying, “We would like to inform you that your room service may be delayed due to the Do Not Disturb status.” Apologies were also expressed professionally using statements such as “We do apologize for the delay, as the DND sign is currently active in your room.”

The SOP implementation in transferring external calls to the reservation department was also consistently observed. Telephone operators first identified the purpose of the caller before transferring the call to ensure that communication was directed appropriately. Expressions such as “May I know the purpose of your call, please?” were used to clarify guest needs. After identifying the request, operators informed callers before transferring the calls by stating, “I will transfer your call to our reservation department for further assistance.” During the transfer process, operators maintained communication by saying, “Please hold for a moment while I connect your call.” These findings indicate that the operators followed communication procedures carefully to maintain service efficiency and avoid misunderstandings. Another important finding relates to the implementation of wake-up call procedures. Telephone operators recorded all wake-up call

requests in daily reports and confirmed guest details, including room numbers and requested wake-up times. During wake-up calls, operators greeted guests politely using expressions such as “Good morning, Mr./Ms. (Guest Name), this is your morning wake-up call.” Operators also offered additional assistance by asking whether guests required a second wake-up call or further services. These interactions demonstrate that SOP implementation extended beyond procedural accuracy to include personalized and service-oriented communication.

In handling delayed incoming calls, the operators consistently apologized for delays and immediately offered assistance. Expressions such as “Good morning/afternoon/evening, we apologize for the delayed response. This is At Your Service, Arik speaking. How may I assist you?” were frequently identified during observations. Operators also confirmed guest requests to avoid communication misunderstandings before either handling the requests directly or transferring calls to the appropriate department. These findings suggest that operators prioritized responsiveness and professionalism even in situations involving service delays. The study also found that SOPs were properly implemented in transferring in-room dining calls to the restaurant department. Telephone operators first identified whether guests intended to order in-room dining services before confirming room numbers and guest identities. Operators informed guests that the calls would be transferred to the restaurant department and ensured successful call connections. Examples of expressions used included “May I know if you would like to order in-room dining service?” and “I will connect your call to our restaurant for your in-room dining order.” These findings demonstrate procedural consistency and communication accuracy during service coordination between departments.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that telephone operators were trained to handle emergency situations such as bomb threats or threatening calls. Operators were instructed not to panic and to keep callers on the line while collecting important information using bomb threat cards. In emergency situations, operators were required to coordinate with emergency services, hotel management, and security teams according to established procedures. The findings indicate that SOP implementation covered not only routine guest communication but also crisis management and hotel safety procedures.

2. Language Functions Used by Telephone Operators

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with the telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, it was found that various language functions were consistently applied during the guest handling process. The findings demonstrate that telephone operators utilized language strategically to support effective communication, maintain professionalism, and ensure guest satisfaction. The most frequently identified language functions included greeting, asking for opinions, giving opinions, asking for directions, giving directions, agreement, disagreement, and handling complaints. These language functions were accompanied by various English expressions that reflected politeness, professionalism, and service-oriented communication practices.

The findings indicate that greeting functions were among the most dominant language functions used by telephone operators. Greetings were consistently applied at the beginning of interactions to create a polite and welcoming atmosphere for guests. Operators used formal greetings while introducing the hotel name and their identity before offering assistance. One of the most commonly observed expressions was, “Good morning/afternoon/evening, thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. Arik speaking, how may I assist you?” The use of this expression demonstrates that operators followed hospitality communication standards by combining politeness, professionalism, and readiness to assist guests. The greeting function served not only as an opening strategy but also as a way to establish positive first impressions and maintain the professional image of the hotel.

Another frequently identified language function was asking for opinions. This function was commonly used when operators needed to identify guest preferences, clarify requests, or

provide personalized service. During reservation handling and information inquiries, operators frequently asked guests about their preferences regarding room types, facilities, and additional services. Examples of expressions included, “Which type of room do you prefer, Deluxe Room standard with city view or Deluxe Room premium pool view?”, “Would you prefer a queen bed or twin beds?”, and “Would you like to include breakfast with your booking?” These findings indicate that the asking-for-opinions function was important in helping operators understand guest needs and provide customized services. By using polite and structured questions, operators encouraged guests to express their preferences comfortably.

The findings also revealed that telephone operators frequently applied the language function of giving opinions or providing recommendations. This function was mainly used when operators explained hotel facilities, room types, hotel locations, nearby attractions, or additional services. The operators used descriptive and informative expressions to assist guests in making decisions regarding reservations or hotel services. For example, operators explained hotel facilities by saying, “We offer several types of rooms, including Deluxe Room (City View), Deluxe Room (Pool View), Deluxe Premium Pool Room, and Deluxe Corner Room, all designed for guest comfort.” In recommending room options, operators stated, “The Deluxe Corner room is more spacious than the Deluxe Premium Room and offers additional comfort and better amenities”. In addition, operators provided detailed information regarding hotel facilities and nearby attractions. Expressions such as “Our hotel provides various facilities, including a swimming pool, fitness centre, restaurant, and complimentary Wi-Fi” and “Our hotel is conveniently located near several popular attractions and shopping centres such as Mal Bali Galeria, Krisna Oleh-Oleh, and Trans Studio Mall Bali” were frequently identified. These findings demonstrate that operators functioned not only as communication mediators but also as information providers and hospitality representatives who promoted hotel services and surrounding tourism attractions.

The study further found that asking for directions and giving directions constituted important language functions during guest interactions. Guests often requested information regarding hotel locations, nearby facilities, tourist destinations, restaurants, supermarkets, and transportation access. Operators responded by providing clear, polite, and informative directions. Examples of guest questions included, “Could you please tell me where the hotel is located?”, “What tourist attractions are located near your hotel?”, and “Could you recommend a place where I can have dinner tonight?”. In responding to these requests, operators used detailed explanatory expressions such as, “Our hotel is located at Jalan Merdeka Raya No. VII, Abianbase, Kuta, Bali, which is a strategic area close to the airport” and “A money changer is located near the hotel, approximately a five-minute walk away, and is easily accessible.” The operators also provided recommendations regarding dining and shopping locations by stating, “You may enjoy dinner at our restaurant or dining areas around Kuta such as Dewi Sri Food Center.” These findings indicate that the operators demonstrated strong knowledge regarding hotel surroundings and tourism information, which contributed positively to guest convenience and satisfaction.

Another significant finding relates to the use of agreement language functions. The operators frequently used agreement expressions to confirm guest requests, reassure guests, and demonstrate willingness to assist. Expressions such as “Yes, that is correct,” “Certainly, I will assist you with that,” “Of course, we can arrange that for you,” and “Absolutely, I understand your request” were commonly identified during observations. These agreement expressions created positive communication interactions and strengthened guest confidence in the hotel’s service quality. The findings show that agreement language functions played an important role in maintaining smooth communication and ensuring that guests felt acknowledged and supported during interactions.

In contrast, disagreement language functions were also identified in situations where operators needed to refuse requests, explain hotel policies, or inform guests about service limitations. The findings indicate that operators handled disagreements carefully by using polite

and empathetic expressions to avoid offending guests. Commonly used expressions included, “I apologize, but the request cannot be fulfilled,” “I’m sorry, but the reservation is non-refundable,” and “I understand your concerns; however, this is our hotel policy”. In situations involving unavailable services or fully booked rooms, operators used softening expressions such as, “I’m afraid that option is not available at the moment” and “I apologize, but we are fully booked on that date”. The findings demonstrate that disagreement functions were implemented professionally and diplomatically. Instead of directly rejecting guest requests, operators combined apologies, explanations, and empathetic responses to maintain positive communication and minimize guest dissatisfaction. This communication strategy reflects the importance of politeness and emotional sensitivity in hospitality interactions.

The study also identified complaint handling as one of the most important language functions used by telephone operators. Complaint handling required operators to demonstrate empathy, professionalism, responsiveness, and problem-solving abilities. During complaint situations, operators consistently used apologetic and reassuring expressions to calm guests and show concern regarding the problems experienced. One example of a complaint-handling expression identified during the observations was: “I sincerely apologize for the inconvenience, Sir/Madam. I understand how uncomfortable this must be for you. I will immediately inform our engineering team to check the issue. Please rest assured that we will resolve this as soon as possible. Would you like us to arrange a room change in the meantime?”. This finding indicates that complaint-handling communication involved several important elements, including apologizing, showing empathy, offering solutions, and reassuring guests regarding service recovery. The operators not only acknowledged guest complaints politely but also provided immediate follow-up actions to maintain guest satisfaction and trust. The use of empathetic language and solution-oriented responses reflects professional hospitality communication practices.

3. English Expressions Used in Guest Handling

Based on the findings obtained through direct observations and interviews with telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, it was found that the operators consistently used standardized English expressions during the guest handling process. The findings revealed that these English expressions were applied in various communication situations, including responding to incoming telephone calls, handling guest requests, transferring calls, providing information, placing calls on hold, managing wake-up calls, handling incognito requests, and responding to guest complaints. The use of standardized English expressions contributed significantly to maintaining professionalism, consistency, communication clarity, and service quality in hotel operations.

The findings demonstrate that greeting expressions were among the most consistently applied English expressions by telephone operators. Greeting expressions were used when answering external guest calls, internal guest calls, and calls from other departments within the hotel. During external incoming calls, operators used formal and standardized greetings that included the hotel name, personal identification, and offers of assistance. Common expressions identified during observations included “Good morning, thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. Arik speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good afternoon, thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. Arik speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good evening, thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. Arik speaking, how may I assist you?”. These expressions demonstrate that operators followed hospitality communication standards by maintaining politeness, professionalism, and brand representation. The use of complete greetings helped create positive first impressions and established professional communication with guests from the beginning of the interaction.

For internal guest calls, the operators applied slightly modified greeting expressions while still maintaining politeness and professionalism. Expressions frequently used included “Good

morning, thank you for calling At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good afternoon, thank you for calling At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good evening, thank you for calling At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”. Meanwhile, for calls originating from other hotel departments, operators used shorter but still formal expressions, such as “Good morning, At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good afternoon, At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”, “Good evening, At Your Service, Shania speaking, how may I assist you?”. These findings indicate that telephone operators adjusted their English expressions according to communication contexts while maintaining service professionalism.

The findings further revealed that operators used various English expressions when handling guest requests and identifying guest preferences. These expressions were particularly common during reservation handling and room inquiries. Operators frequently asked questions to clarify guest preferences regarding room types, facilities, and additional services. Examples of commonly used expressions included “Which type of room do you prefer, Deluxe Room standard with city view or Deluxe Room premium pool view?”, “Would you prefer a queen bed or twin beds?”, “Do you prefer a quiet room or a room closer to the facilities?”, “Would you like to include breakfast with your booking?”, “Would you prefer airport pick-up/drop service?”. These expressions reflect the operators’ efforts to provide personalized services and ensure that guest preferences were properly identified before completing reservations or requests. The findings indicate that the use of questioning expressions helped improve communication accuracy and guest satisfaction.

In making offers of assistance and providing recommendations, operators used descriptive and informative English expressions to explain hotel services, facilities, and room categories. The findings showed that operators frequently introduced hotel facilities and promoted hotel services using formal and persuasive language. Common expressions identified included “Our hotel is located at Jalan Merdeka Raya No. VII, Abianbase, Kuta, Bali, which is a strategic area close to the airport.”, “We offer several types of rooms, including Deluxe Room (City View), Deluxe Room (Pool View), Deluxe Premium Pool Room, and Deluxe Corner Room, all designed for guest comfort.”, “Our hotel provides various facilities, including a swimming pool, fitness center, restaurant, and complimentary Wi-Fi”. The operators also provided comparative recommendations regarding room types, such as “The Deluxe Corner room is more spacious than the Deluxe Premium Room and offers additional comfort and better amenities”. These findings indicate that English expressions were not only used for communication purposes but also functioned as marketing and promotional tools to encourage guests to utilize hotel services and facilities.

Another important finding concerns the use of English expressions in providing information and giving directions. Telephone operators frequently responded to guest inquiries regarding hotel locations, nearby attractions, restaurants, supermarkets, and transportation access. Guests commonly used expressions, such as “Could you please tell me where the hotel is located?”, “What tourist attractions are located near your hotel?”, “Could you recommend a place where I can have dinner tonight?”, “Where can I find a money changer near the hotel?”. In responding to these inquiries, operators provided clear and informative explanations using standardized English expressions, including “If you are staying at our hotel, you can visit several nearby attractions, shopping centers, and entertainment areas in Kuta.”, “A money changer is located near the hotel, approximately a five-minute walk away, and is easily accessible.”, “The coffee shop is located near the hotel, approximately a two-minute walk away.”, “It takes approximately five to ten minutes to reach the nearest supermarket from the hotel by car”. These findings demonstrate that telephone operators possessed sufficient knowledge regarding local tourism information and hotel surroundings, enabling them to assist guests effectively during their stay.

The study also identified several English expressions used when placing calls on hold.

Telephone operators consistently requested permission politely before placing guests on hold. Frequently observed expressions included “May I place your call on hold for a moment, please?”, “Would you mind holding for a moment while I check the information?”, “Could you please hold the line for a second?”, “Please hold for a moment while I connect you to the Reservation Department”. These findings indicate that politeness strategies were consistently maintained during communication interruptions. The operators ensured that guests remained informed during waiting periods to prevent confusion or dissatisfaction. Another important communication practice identified in this study involved establishing the purpose of guest calls. Telephone operators used English expressions to clarify guest inquiries and identify the nature of requests before providing assistance or transferring calls. Examples of expressions used by guests included “I’m calling about a reservation at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road.”, “I had a booking there last night, but there was an issue with my reservation. I would like to speak to the manager to file a complaint”. In response, operators used professional clarifying expressions, such as “Thank you for calling Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. May I have your name and booking reference, please?”, “I’m sorry to hear there was an issue with your reservation. I’d be happy to assist you”. The operators also offered alternative assistance by asking “Would you prefer me to connect you directly to the Front Office Manager, or would you like me to check your reservation details first and see how I can help resolve this for you right away?”. These findings reveal that operators used empathetic and solution-oriented language to manage guest concerns effectively.

The findings further demonstrate that confirming information formed an essential part of telephone communication practices. Operators repeated reservation details, room information, and guest requests to ensure communication accuracy and avoid misunderstandings. Common expressions included “Is that for a room reservation or for one of our dining outlets?”, “Is your inquiry regarding accommodation, or would you like assistance with services such as airport transfer or local tour arrangements?”, “Thank you for booking with Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road, Mr. Thomas. I have reserved a Deluxe Room for you, check-in on Tuesday, 15th March, and check-out on Wednesday, 16th March”. These findings indicate that confirmation expressions helped improve communication clarity and minimized operational errors during guest service processes. The study also found that telephone operators used professional English expressions when transferring calls to other departments or managers. One commonly identified expression was “Mr. Watts, I’m sorry I’m unable to assist you further with your inquiry. However, I would like to transfer your call to our Front Office Manager, who will be able to assist you better”. This finding demonstrates that operators used polite and reassuring language to maintain guest confidence during call transfers.

In handling requests for incognito status, telephone operators applied highly professional and confidentiality-oriented English expressions. Frequently used expressions included “Certainly, we would like to reconfirm that you would like your stay to remain confidential, correct?”, “Please be assured that no information about your stay will be disclosed.”, “Your request for incognito status will be noted in our system”. These findings indicate that operators demonstrated strong awareness regarding guest privacy and confidentiality procedures. The findings also revealed that wake-up call services involved standardized English expressions for both recording requests and conducting wake-up calls. Expressions commonly used when recording wake-up requests included “Certainly, I will record your wake-up call request.”, “May I know what time you would like your wake-up call?”, “Just to confirm, your wake-up call is scheduled for tomorrow at 6:00 a.m., correct?”. Meanwhile, during actual wake-up calls, operators used expressions such as “Good morning, Mr. Andrew, this is your morning wake-up call.”, “Would you like a second wake-up call?”, “Please let me know if you need any further assistance”. These findings indicate that wake-up call communication was conducted professionally while maintaining personalized service approaches.

Finally, the findings revealed that complaint handling involved the use of empathetic and

apologetic English expressions. Telephone operators consistently acknowledged guest dissatisfaction politely and assured guests that solutions would be provided. Commonly observed expressions included “We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience.”, “I understand how you feel.”, “I completely understand the situation.”, “I will inform our Engineering team immediately.”, “We will resolve this issue as soon as possible”. These findings demonstrate that complaint-handling communication emphasized empathy, reassurance, and responsiveness in order to maintain guest satisfaction and trust.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) appropriately and consistently during guest handling processes. The implementation covered various operational communication procedures, including greeting incoming calls, handling calls on hold, managing incognito guest requests, responding to WhatsApp messages, handling Do Not Disturb (DND) requests, transferring calls, recording wake-up calls, and responding to emergency situations such as bomb threats. The implementation of SOPs in greeting incoming calls demonstrates the importance of standardized communication in hospitality services. Telephone operators consistently introduced the hotel name, identified themselves, and offered assistance politely at the beginning of each interaction. Furthermore, the implementation of SOPs in handling calls on hold reflects the operators’ awareness of communication etiquette and guest comfort. Operators consistently requested permission before placing calls on hold and informed guests regarding the reason for temporary interruptions.

The findings are consistent with the study conducted by Taufik et al. (2022), which stated that telephone operators play an essential role in ensuring effective, professional, and secure communication between guests and hotel departments through the implementation of SOPs. Similar to the present study, Taufik et al. found that SOP implementation contributes significantly to maintaining operational efficiency and service quality in hospitality communication. The consistency identified in this study suggests that telephone operators relied heavily on procedural standards to ensure that all guest interactions followed the expected hospitality service protocols.

Another important finding concerns the implementation of SOPs related to guest privacy and confidentiality, particularly in handling incognito guest requests and DND room status. Operators ensured that confidential guest information was not disclosed to external callers and systematically updated the guest profile system to maintain privacy protection. The findings also revealed that SOP implementation supported effective interdepartmental coordination within hotel operations. Telephone operators transferred calls systematically, confirmed guest requests accurately, and informed relevant departments regarding guest needs or operational updates. This reflects the role of telephone operators as communication coordinators within hotel operations. In addition, the implementation of SOPs during wake-up call services and emergency situations demonstrates that telephone operators were trained not only to perform routine communication tasks but also to respond appropriately during urgent situations. The use of confirmation procedures in wake-up calls reflects communication accuracy and operational accountability, while emergency communication procedures demonstrate preparedness and crisis management awareness.

However, despite the effectiveness of SOP implementation, the findings also indicate that most telephone interactions relied heavily on standardized communication expressions. Although standardized communication supports consistency and professionalism, excessive dependence on scripted expressions may limit communication flexibility when handling complex guest requests or emotionally sensitive complaints. This condition suggests that operators may require stronger adaptive communication skills to personalize interactions according to guest situations and emotional conditions. Compared to the previous study conducted by Taufik et al. (2022), the present study provides additional insights regarding how communication expressions, politeness

strategies, and procedural language practices support the practical implementation of SOPs in hotel telephone operations. This study emphasizes that successful SOP implementation is influenced not only by procedural compliance but also by the operators' ability to communicate professionally, empathetically, and contextually during guest interactions.

Next, the findings of this study indicate that telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road applied various language functions during guest handling processes, including greeting, asking for opinions, giving opinions, asking and giving directions, agreement, disagreement, and handling complaints. These language functions were realized through different English expressions used during telephone interactions with guests. The findings demonstrate that language functions played important roles in facilitating communication effectiveness, identifying guest needs, maintaining professionalism, and ensuring smooth service interactions. The greeting function was consistently observed at the beginning of telephone interactions. Operators greeted guests formally while introducing the hotel identity and offering assistance. This finding supports the study conducted by Suardika (2024), which found that greeting functions dominate front office communication in hospitality services. Greeting expressions are considered important because they establish positive first impressions and create professional relationships between hotel staff and guests.

In the hospitality industry, greetings are highly significant because service quality is often evaluated through the first interaction between guests and hotel staff. Therefore, the consistent use of greeting expressions by telephone operators demonstrates that communication professionalism forms an important component of hospitality services. The findings also indicate that greetings function not only as opening expressions but also as service branding strategies because operators consistently mentioned the hotel name during interactions. The functions of asking for opinions and giving opinions were also frequently identified during guest interactions, particularly during reservation handling and service recommendations. Operators used questions to identify guest preferences regarding room types, facilities, and additional services before providing recommendations. This finding is consistent with Suardika (2024), who argued that asking and giving opinions are essential communication functions in front office interactions because they help staff understand guest needs and provide personalized services.

The use of asking-for-opinions functions reflects guest-centered communication practices in hospitality services. By asking guests about their preferences, operators allowed guests to participate actively in decision-making processes related to their accommodations and services. This communication strategy supports personalized hospitality experiences and contributes positively to guest satisfaction. The findings further revealed that giving-opinions functions were used when operators explained hotel facilities, room categories, nearby attractions, and additional services. Through informative and descriptive explanations, operators acted not only as communication mediators but also as hospitality representatives who promoted hotel products and services. Meanwhile, the use of complaint-handling language functions reflects emotional communication competence in hospitality services. Operators were required not only to solve operational problems but also to manage guest emotions effectively. Expressions of empathy and reassurance helped reduce guest frustration and demonstrated service accountability.

The functions of asking and giving directions were also frequently identified during interactions involving requests for tourism information, transportation guidance, nearby facilities, and hotel locations. Guests often relied on telephone operators to obtain accurate information regarding surrounding attractions and local services. This finding is also consistent with Suardika (2024), who identified asking and giving directions as common communication functions in hospitality interactions. The findings demonstrate that telephone operators functioned as local information providers and tourism facilitators for guests. This role is particularly important in international hospitality settings where guests may not be familiar with local environments. By providing clear and informative directions, operators supported guest convenience and contributed positively to the overall travel experience.

The functions of agreement and disagreement were identified when operators responded to guest requests or explained hotel policies and limitations. Agreement expressions such as “Certainly, I will assist you with that” demonstrated service willingness and reassurance, while disagreement expressions such as “I apologize, but the reservation is non-refundable” were used to explain policy restrictions politely. This finding aligns with Suardika (2024), who found that agreement and disagreement expressions are important for maintaining professionalism during service interactions. The use of disagreement functions politely demonstrates the operators’ awareness of face-saving strategies during communication. Another important finding concerns the function of handling complaints. Operators consistently responded to complaints using apologetic and empathetic expressions while offering solutions and reassurances. This finding supports Suardika (2024), who emphasized that complaint handling is one of the most important communication functions in hospitality industries because service failures may affect guest satisfaction and hotel reputation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that telephone operators at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road used various standardized English expressions during different telephone communication situations, including answering incoming calls, greeting guests, providing information, placing calls on hold, transferring calls, confirming information, and handling guest complaints. The findings indicate that the use of standardized English expressions contributed significantly to maintaining communication consistency, professionalism, operational clarity, and positive guest experiences.

The use of greeting expressions during incoming calls supports Hickman’s (2012) theory, which emphasizes that welcoming expressions are essential components of professional hospitality communication. Greeting expressions function not only as conversation openers but also as indicators of service professionalism and institutional identity. The findings indicate that operators consistently used complete greeting formulas including hotel identity, personal identification, and offers of assistance. Such structured greetings helped establish professional communication patterns and reinforced the hotel’s brand image. In addition, the use of English expressions during call-on-hold situations also reflects communication etiquette and service politeness. Operators consistently requested permission before placing callers on hold using polite expressions such as “May I place your call on hold for a moment, please?” This finding aligns with Hickman’s (2012) argument that requesting permission before interrupting communication is necessary to maintain guest comfort and communication professionalism. Such expressions demonstrate respect toward guests and reduce negative perceptions during waiting periods.

Also, the findings revealed that operators used English expressions systematically when establishing the purpose of guest calls and confirming information. Operators asked for reservation details, clarified requests, and repeated important information to ensure communication accuracy. This finding supports Hickman’s (2012) theory that information confirmation is essential in minimizing communication errors within hospitality services. Confirmation expressions function as operational safeguards because misunderstandings in reservations or service requests may lead to guest dissatisfaction and operational complications. The study further revealed that operators used explanatory expressions before transferring calls to other departments or managers. This finding supports Hickman’s (2012) view that guests should receive clear explanations regarding call transfers in order to maintain transparency and trust during communication. By informing guests about the reason for transferring calls, operators reduced communication uncertainty and reassured guests that their concerns would be handled appropriately. Another significant finding concerns the use of English expressions in complaint handling. Operators consistently combined apologies, empathy, reassurance, and solution-oriented expressions when responding to guest dissatisfaction. This finding aligns with Hickman’s (2012), who emphasized that empathetic communication is essential in resolving complaints and maintaining customer trust. Complaint communication in hospitality industries requires emotional sensitivity because dissatisfied guests expect not only technical solutions but also emotional

acknowledgment from hotel staff.

In addition, the use of standardized English expressions contributed to communication consistency across different service situations. Standardized expressions helped operators maintain professionalism and ensured that communication followed hotel service standards. However, similar to the findings regarding SOP implementation, excessive dependence on standardized expressions may potentially reduce conversational flexibility in handling highly personalized or emotionally complex guest interactions. This condition suggests that although standardized English expressions are necessary for maintaining operational consistency, operators also require communicative adaptability to adjust their language according to guest personalities, emotional conditions, and situational demands. Therefore, effective hospitality communication requires both procedural standardization and interpersonal adaptability.

The results show that effective telephone-based guest management is greatly aided by the integration of SOP implementation, language functions, and suitable English expressions. English expressions serve as the verbal reality of professional engagement, language functions regulate communication flow, and SOPs give the procedural foundation for service delivery. These components work together to support the Front Office Department's efforts to maintain professionalism, good communication, and high-quality service. Also, this study also contributes theoretically to hospitality communication studies by integrating the analysis of SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions within the context of telephone operator services.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the use of language functions, and the application of English expressions by telephone operators in handling guest services at Fairfield by Marriott Bali Kuta Sunset Road. The implementation of SOPs contributed significantly to maintaining communication consistency, operational efficiency, guest confidentiality, and service professionalism within the Front Office Department. Also, the language functions enabled operators to manage communication smoothly, identify guest needs accurately, provide information clearly, and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with guests. Furthermore, the use of English expressions contributed positively to communication clarity, operational effectiveness, and the professional image of the hotel. However, the study also suggests that excessive dependence on standardized expressions may limit conversational flexibility in highly personalized or emotionally sensitive communication situations. Meanwhile, improving communication competence may help operators respond more flexibly to diverse guest needs and unexpected service situations. This study also contributes theoretically to hospitality communication studies by integrating the analysis of SOP implementation, language functions, and English expressions within the context of telephone operator services. Despite its contributions, this study has limitations like the study involved only two telephone operators from one international hotel, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other hospitality contexts. And also, the research focused on identifying how telephone operators applied SOPs, utilized language functions, and used English expressions during telephone interactions with guests. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct broader studies involving larger participant groups, different hotel categories, and various hospitality departments in order to obtain more comprehensive findings regarding hospitality communication practices.

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