

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic sectors that requires effective interaction between staff and guests. In this context, the language used becomes key in creating a friendly and professional atmosphere. Politeness and gendered language have long been central to communication in the hospitality industry, where service interactions shape customer experiences. The study of politeness in linguistics is largely influenced by Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which categorizes politeness strategies into positive politeness (showing friendliness and inclusivity) and negative politeness (showing deference and minimizing imposition).

In hospitality, politeness is essential for creating a welcoming and professional environment, as it reflects respect, courtesy, and cultural sensitivity. The novelty of this research lies in its focused exploration of the intersection between politeness, gender, and communication styles within the hospitality industry, specifically among front office staff where first impressions are crucial for guest satisfaction. By concentrating on this context, the research addresses a gap in the literature that often generalizes findings across various sectors. It integrates Brown and Levinson's politeness theory with Deborah Tannen's Difference Theory, providing a nuanced understanding of how gender influences communication styles and politeness strategies in hospitality settings.

Linguistic values related to politeness and gender in the context of hospitality encompass several key aspects. Politeness strategies are crucial, involving the use of respectful expressions such as "Please" or "Thank you" in interactions within the hospitality industry. The choice of pronouns, whether formal or informal (e.g., "You" vs. "Thou"), reflects the appropriate level of politeness for different contexts. Additionally, variations in language based on gender can be observed, particularly in how men and women may employ different linguistic styles when addressing guests. This includes the use of empathetic language that fosters connections, which may differ depending on the speaker's gender. Furthermore, the distinction between formal and informal language is significant in hospitality, with formal language often demonstrating professionalism. There may also be variations in how men and women use formal or informal language, influencing guests' perceptions. Non-verbal communication, while not explicitly verbal, plays a vital role in politeness and can be influenced by gender as well. Lastly, understanding cultural norms of politeness is essential, as they can vary widely and impact interactions within the hospitality sector.

Politeness is a fundamental aspect of communication in the hospitality industry, particularly in guest interactions at the front office. Front office staff serve as the first point of contact for guests, making their communication style crucial in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction. Different politeness strategies—such as the use of honorifics, indirect requests, apologies, and expressions of gratitude—help create a welcoming and professional atmosphere. However, the way these strategies are employed can vary based on factors such as culture, training, and gender.

Gender plays a significant role in communication styles, with research suggesting that men and women often adopt different linguistic strategies in professional settings. Studies in sociolinguistics indicate that women tend to use more polite, indirect, and empathetic speech patterns, while men may use more direct and assertive language. In the context of hospitality, these differences could influence how front office staff engage with guests, resolve issues, and provide service.

Understanding the politeness strategies used by male and female front office staff is essential for improving service interactions and ensuring consistency in guest experiences. By analyzing these strategies, this research aims to determine whether there are notable gender-based differences in politeness and how these differences impact guest satisfaction. The findings can help hospitality businesses develop more effective communication training programs that promote professionalism and inclusivity while maintaining high standards of politeness in guest interactions.

Deborah Tannen, a prominent sociolinguist, developed the Difference Theory, which explains how men and women use language differently based on socialization rather than biological differences. In her book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990), Tannen argues that men and women have distinct conversational styles influenced by their upbringing and societal expectations. These differences can sometimes lead to miscommunication, especially in professional and service-oriented environments like hospitality.

This research focus on the use of polite language and how gender influences word choice and communication style in the hospitality environment. The research aims to empirically investigate gender differences in real interactions between front office staff and guests, linking these differences to guest satisfaction—a critical metric for hospitality businesses. Additionally, the findings will offer actionable insights for training programs, enabling businesses to tailor their approaches to promote a balance of empathy and efficiency. Finally, the study considers cultural variations in politeness norms, recognizing the importance of understanding both gender and cultural influences in a globally diverse hospitality environment.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the description on the background, then the problem will be discussed of the study are:

1. What politeness strategies do male and female front office staff use in guest interaction
2. How do their communication styles reflect or challenge traditional gender norms.

1.3 Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the politeness strategies used by male and female front office staff in guest interactions.

2. To analyze how the communication styles of male and female front office staff reflect or challenge traditional gender norms.

1.4 Significances of the Study

Hopefully this study will contribute to sociolinguistics and pragmatics by exploring how politeness strategies and gendered language shape guest interactions. It provides insights into language use in hospitality and its role in reflecting or challenging traditional gender norms.

Practically, there are several benefits for research helps learning politeness in hospitality professionals improving english politeness communication practices and how to front liner between male and female talking communication in hospitality realm especially in hotels, ibis Styles Jakarta Mangga Dua Square.

1.5 Limitation of The Study

This research on politeness and gendered language in hospitality has several limitations. It focuses only on front office staff in hotel its applicability to hospitality sectors like front office in ibis Styles Jakarta Mangga Dua Square. Front Office do work communication with guest between male and Female, this research will be conducted on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 7 AM until 6 PM as this timeframe corresponds to the crowded hours in the hotel. During these peak times, the volume of guests checking in and out increases, providing a greater opportunity to collect relevant and representative data. By taking advantage of these busy periods, I can observe the interactions between front office staff and guests, as well as identify

patterns and challenges faced in service delivery. This is expected to provide deeper insights into front office operations and enhance the quality of the research being conducted. The aim of this research is to analyze the quality of front office service by applying politeness theory by Brown and Levinson and gender and language by Tannen, D. The level of customer satisfaction during specified operational hours. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are two politeness strategies in communication. Positive politeness aims to enhance the listener's positive face by giving compliments, expressing solidarity, or using friendly language. On the other hand, negative politeness focuses on avoiding imposition by using indirect language, hedging, or apologizing. In the study of language and gender, Tannen (1990) introduced the concept of genderlects, concept of genderlect refers to the distinct conversational styles of men and women, viewing their communication as cross-cultural. She argues that these styles are equally valid and shaped by cultural norms, emphasizing that understanding these differences can improve communication between genders. Which refers to the different language styles developed by men and women due to socialization and cultural norms. Tannen identified two main communication styles. Report talk, typically associated with men, focuses on exchanging information, is more competitive, and is often used to assert status or dominance. In contrast, rapport talk, more commonly used by women, emphasizes relationships, intimacy, and cooperation in conversation.