

Speech Acts Analysis in Hotel Guest Complaint Interactions: Implications for Hospitality English Training

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of speech acts in hotel guest complaint interactions at Hotel Sriwijaya Raya and explores their implications for Hospitality English training. The study employed a qualitative, pragmatic discourse analysis to examine authentic complaint conversations between hotel guests and staff. The findings revealed that guest complaints were primarily expressed through representative speech acts, while hotel staff predominantly used expressive speech acts, such as apologies and empathy expressions. In addition, commissive speech acts such as promises and solution offerings were frequently used to maintain guest satisfaction during service recovery processes. The study also identified several communication strategies used by hotel staff, including apologizing, clarifying, expressing empathy, offering solutions, and offering compensation. These strategies played an important role in reducing communication tension and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships with guests. The findings indicate that effective hospitality communication requires not only English language proficiency but also pragmatic competence in understanding emotional and social contexts. This research contributes to the development of Hospitality English training by emphasizing the importance of authentic communication practices and pragmatic-based language instruction in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Pragmatics, Hospitality English, Guest Complaint Interaction, Hotel Communication

ABSTRAK

Studi ini menyelidiki penggunaan tindakan bicara dalam interaksi keluhan tamu hotel di Hotel Sriwijaya Raya dan mengeksplorasi implikasinya terhadap pelatihan bahasa Inggris perhotelan. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis wacana pragmatis untuk memeriksa percakapan keluhan otentik antara tamu dan staf hotel. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa keluhan tamu terutama diungkapkan melalui tindakan pidato yang representatif, sedangkan staf hotel sebagian besar menggunakan tindakan ucapan ekspresif dalam bentuk permintaan maaf dan ekspresi empati. Selain itu, tindakan ucapan komisi seperti janji dan penawaran solusi sering digunakan untuk menjaga kepuasan tamu selama proses pemulihan layanan. Studi ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh staf hotel, termasuk permintaan maaf, klarifikasi, ekspresi empati, penawaran solusi, dan strategi kompensasi. Strategi-strategi ini memainkan peran penting dalam mengurangi ketegangan komunikasi dan menjaga hubungan interpersonal yang positif dengan tamu. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi perhotelan yang efektif tidak hanya membutuhkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris, tetapi juga kompetensi pragmatis dalam memahami konteks emosional dan sosial. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan pelatihan bahasa Inggris perhotelan dengan menekankan pentingnya praktik komunikasi otentik dan pengajaran bahasa berbasis pragmatis dalam industri perhotelan.

Kata kunci: Tindakan Pidato, Pragmatik, Bahasa Inggris Perhotelan, Interaksi Keluhan Tamu, Komunikasi Hotel

A. Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the service sectors that relies heavily on interpersonal communication, especially in interactions between hotel staff and guests. In the context of international hotel services, the ability to use English is not only about mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also about pragmatic competence to understand the right intentions, emotions, and communication strategies. Guest complaint interactions are one of the most complex forms of communication because they involve emotional pressure, service expectations, and the need to maintain a hotel's professional image. In practice, many hotel staff can speak English but still struggle to choose the right expressions when dealing with angry, disappointed, or frustrated guests. Sometimes the response sounds too rigid, too defensive, or even lacks empathy, making the service situation worse.

The urgency of this research arises from the hospitality industry's increasing need for human resources who are not only fluent in English but also have strong pragmatic communication skills. Guest complaints are a critical moment in hotel service because they can affect customer satisfaction, hotel reputation, and even future guest loyalty. In many cases, service failures can still be tolerated if handled with proper, empathetic communication. (Purwanto, Marsinah, et al., 2025). On the other hand, a minor language mistake can trigger a larger conflict. This shows that the ability to understand speech acts such as apologizing, explaining, offering solutions, or calming guests down is a very important skill for hotel staff. However, Hospitality English training in various educational institutions and industrial training still focuses more on mastering common expressions and standard conversations, rather than on authentic interaction analysis based on real situations.

These problems are directly related to the real needs in the modern hospitality workplace. Hotels today host guests from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds with varying communication styles. In complaint situations, differences in communication cultures often affect how guests express dissatisfaction and how staff respond (Purwanto, Firdaus, et al., 2024). For example, some guests complain directly and firmly, while others use indirect strategies that are still emotionally distressing. If hotel staff do not understand the pragmatic meaning of the speech, the potential for miscommunication increases. Therefore, research on speech acts in guest complaint interactions is relevant to addressing the hospitality industry's need for a more context-based, adaptive, and communication-oriented English language training model (Purwanto & Umar, 2024). Interestingly, it is precisely small aspects such as the intonation of the apology or the choice of simple words that often determine the success of the service.

Several previous studies have discussed speech acts, pragmatics, and service communication in the context of English education and customer service. However, most research still focuses on general communication, classroom interactions, or customer service outside the hospitality sector. Research on speech in hotel settings is still relatively limited, especially that which specifically examines the interaction between international guest complaints and their links to the development of Hospitality English training (M. Bambang Purwanto, 2024). In addition, previous research has generally identified only the types of speech acts, without exploring their pedagogical implications for professional communication training (Purwanto, Despita, et al., 2024). Thus, there is a research space that has not been explored much: an in-depth analysis of speech act patterns in guest complaint interactions, as a basis for the development of authentic, data-driven hospitality English language training materials and strategies.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the types of speech acts in hotel guest complaint interactions, identify the communication strategies used by hotel staff to handle complaints, and explain the implications of the research results for the development of Hospitality English training. The questions of this study include: (1) what types of speech acts are used in the interaction of hotel guest complaints, (2) how hotel staff realize speech actions in responding to guest complaints, (3) what communication strategies are the most dominant used during the complaint handling process, and (4) how the results of this research can be implemented in Hospitality English training. The questions are designed to illustrate the relationship between pragmatic theory and real communication practices in the hospitality workforce.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration between pragmatic analysis based on speech acts and the need for professional English language training in the hospitality industry. This research does not stop at the classification of speech acts, but also seeks to translate the analysis results into pedagogical recommendations applicable to hotel staff training (Komerendo et al., 2025). In addition, using authentic interaction data in complaint situations provides a more realistic picture of communication than artificial dialogue or standard simulations commonly found in Hospitality English textbooks (Vivin Afini, Fitri Nurdianingsih, Ridayani, 2025). This research also offers the perspective that the success of hotel services is not solely determined by operational procedures, but also by staff's pragmatic ability to build empathy and maintain interpersonal relationships through language (K et al., 2025).

In the end, this research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of pragmatic studies and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in the field of hospitality. In practice, the research results are expected to serve as a reference for educational institutions, hospitality trainers, and hotel management in developing communication training programs that are more relevant to the needs of the global industry. This research is also expected to open up further research space on cross-cultural communication, international hotel service strategies, and the development of authentic interaction-based learning models. Thus, this paper is not only an academic study but can also serve as an important reference for improving the quality of professional communication in the modern hospitality industry.

B. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a pragmatic discourse analysis design. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on analyzing language use in real communication, specifically the interaction between hotel staff and guests when service complaints arise. In pragmatic studies, the meaning of speech is understood not only through the structure of language but also through social context, relationships among participants, communication goals, and the situation in which the conversation takes place (Vivin Afini, Fitri Nurdianingsih, Ridayani, 2025). Therefore, pragmatic discourse analysis is considered the most relevant to reveal how speech acts are used in the process of handling hotel guest complaints.

This study specifically analyzed the forms of speech acts that occur in guest complaint conversations, both guest-submitted complaints and responses from hotel staff. The analysis focuses on apologizing, explaining, offering solutions, clarifying, and expressing empathy (Bambang Purwanto & Hidayad, 2022). In addition, the study examines how these communication strategies affect the effectiveness of hotel services in

sensitive situations and the potential to cause interpersonal conflicts (Harpiansi, Anggra Prima, 2025).

The qualitative approach in this study enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication patterns that naturally occur in the hospitality environment. The research does not aim to test statistical hypotheses, but rather to describe and interpret language phenomena contextually. Sometimes in hotel service interactions, a short sentence like *"We truly apologize for the inconvenience, Sir"* has a pragmatic meaning that is far more complex than its grammatical form alone suggests. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the context of speech is an important part of this study.

Methodologically, this study employs pragmatic discourse analysis to examine the relationships among speech forms, communication functions, and the context of hotel service interactions. The data obtained were then analyzed through several stages: conversation transcription, identification of speech acts, classification of communication strategies, interpretation of pragmatic meanings, and identification of implications for Hospitality English training. With this design, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive picture of hotel service communication practices in guest complaint situations.

This research was carried out at the Sriwijaya Raya Hotel. This hotel was chosen because it serves domestic and international guests with a high level of service, especially in the front office and guest services. In daily operations, hotel staff often face various guest complaints regarding room facilities, reservations, staff services, and the comfort of the hotel environment. This situation makes this hotel a relevant research location for complaint communication in the context of hospitality.

The selection of the research location was also based on the consideration that Hotel Sriwijaya Raya has quite dynamic service activities and allows researchers to obtain authentic interaction data. Authentic data is crucial in pragmatic research because language use in real-world situations often differs from the simulated dialogue found in textbooks or formal training. In addition, hotel service interactions are usually spontaneous, influenced by emotional pressure, and involve certain politeness strategies that are worth analyzing.

The research environment covers the hotel's main service areas, especially:

- Front office
- Reception desk
- Guest relation service
- Reservation service area

The area was chosen because it is a center for direct communication between hotel staff and guests, including when there are service complaints. The research was conducted during a period of active observation to understand the communication patterns that naturally occurred without excessive intervention in hotel service activities.

Participants in this study were hotel staff directly involved in guest service and in complaint conversations that occurred during the service process. The study used a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their involvement in communication interactions relevant to the research focus. This technique was chosen because not all hotel staff are directly involved in handling guest complaints using English.

The main participants of the study include front office staff and guest service officers. Both departments have primary responsibility for receiving, handling, and resolving hotel guest complaints. Front office staff is the first point of contact for

complaints, while guest service officers are usually tasked with providing service follow-up and maintaining guest satisfaction. In practice, these two positions require strong pragmatic communication skills, as they must maintain professionalism while building empathy for guests.

In addition to hotel staff, the research data also involved guest complaint interactions that occurred naturally during the service process. These conversations are the main source for analyzing the form of speech acts and communication strategies of hospitality services. However, the guest's identity is kept confidential as part of the research ethics. The researcher focused the analysis solely on the form of speech and the communication function, without mentioning the participants' personal identities.

Interestingly, in some interactions, guests do not always explicitly convey complaints. Some use subtle but stressful tones, while others immediately show verbal dissatisfaction. This variation in communication styles is one of the important aspects analyzed in pragmatic research because it is closely related to the interpretation, meaning, and response of hotel services.

The unit of analysis in this study is utterances that contain speech acts in interactions among hotel guests. Each speech was analyzed based on pragmatic functions, communication context, speakers' goals, and counter-speech responses. The analysis focuses not only on what is said, but also on the implicit meanings that emerge in the context of hospitality services.

Speech is then classified based on John Searle's speech theory of action, such as:

- Representatives
- Directives
- Commissives
- Expressives
- Declarations

This classification is used to identify the dominant communication pattern in the process of handling hotel guest complaints.

C. Results and Discussion

Result

Types of Speech Acts in Guest Complaints

Based on the results of observations and analyses of conversation transcripts at the Sriwijaya Raya Hotel, it was found that guest complaints were dominated by several types of speech acts that repeatedly occurred in hotel service situations. This form of speech not only conveys information but also serves as a tool for expressing emotions, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and resolving service conflicts. In the context of hospitality, language use is strongly influenced by situational pressures and the need to maintain the hotel's professional image. Sometimes, a simple phrase like "*I am disappointed with the room condition*" can carry strong pragmatic pressure, even when delivered in a calm tone.

The study found that hotel guests generally use *representative speech acts* when submitting complaints. This speech act is used to state conditions, explain problems, or express dissatisfaction with hotel services. The most common complaints are related to room facilities, service delays, room cleanliness, and reservation errors. In some cases, guests submit direct complaints, such as "The air conditioner is not working properly." In contrast, other guests use indirect strategies, such as "I expected the room to be more

comfortable." The differences in delivery indicate that pragmatic strategies vary based on the character and background of the guests.

In addition to guest complaints, the study also found the dominance of expressive speech acts by hotel staff, specifically apologies (*apology expressions*). An apology is the initial response that almost always comes up when staff receive a guest complaint. Expressions such as "*We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience*" or "*We are very sorry about the issue*" show empathy and ease communication tensions. Interestingly, hotel staff often use a combination of formal expression and an interpersonal tone to make the apology sound more sincere. In a pragmatic context, this apology is not just a service formality, but also a strategy to maintain social relations between hotels and guests.

This study also found the use of *commissive speech acts*, such as promises and service solutions. After delivering an apology, hotel staff usually make a commitment to take action to resolve the guest's issue. Statements such as "*We will change your room immediately*" or "*Our technician will check it within ten minutes*" demonstrate the hotel's institutional commitment. This form of speech is very important in hospitality communication because it functions to rebuild guest trust in the quality of hotel service. If the appointment is made clearly and quickly, guests are more likely to respond cooperatively during the complaint-handling process.

In addition, the use of directive speech acts was found in the form of requests for clarification and explanation. Hotel staff often use polite questions to get additional information about the problems that guests are experiencing. Examples such as "*Could you please explain the problem in more detail, Sir?*" or "*May I know when the issue started?*". This strategy helps staff understand the core of the problem while showing concern for guest complaints. In some interactions, overly direct questions can create a defensive impression, so word choice and intonation are important factors in the effectiveness of service communication.

Table 1. Types of Speech Acts Identified in Guest Complaint Interaction

Speech Act Type	Example Utterance	Communication Function
Representative	"The room was not clean."	Expressing complaint
Expressive	"We sincerely apologize."	Showing apology
Commissive	"We will fix it immediately."	Promising solution
Directive	"Could you explain the issue?"	Requesting clarification

Table 2. Dominant Complaint Topics

Complaint Topic	Frequency Trend	Example Situation
Room Facilities	High	Air conditioner problem
Reservation Issue	Medium	Incorrect booking data
Staff Service	Medium	Slow response
Cleanliness	High	Untidy bathroom
Hotel Amenities	Low	Missing toiletries

Table 1 shows that guest complaint interactions in hotels are dominated by four main speech act types: *representative*, *expressive*, *commissive*, and *directive*. Guests most commonly use representative speech to convey dissatisfaction with hotel services, such as problems with room cleanliness or damage to facilities. This shows that guests tend to

use language that is informative but still contains a certain emotional pressure. On the other hand, hotel staff are more likely to use expressive speech acts, such as apologies, as an initial response to guest complaints. The consistent use of apologies reflects staff's efforts to maintain civility, lower communication tensions, and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with guests. In addition, the emergence of *commissive speech acts*, such as promises and solutions, shows that hotel service communication does not stop at acknowledging problems but is also followed by a commitment to concrete action to resolve guest complaints.

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows that the most common complaints concern room facilities and hotel cleanliness. The high frequency of complaints about air conditioning, room conditions, and cleanliness indicates that the quality of physical facilities remains the main factor affecting hotel guest satisfaction. In addition, there were complaints about staff service and reservation errors, albeit at a lower frequency. These findings show that the interaction of complaints in hospitality is not only triggered by technical problems but also by the quality of service communication received by guests. In some cases, minor issues can develop into major complaints when staff responses are perceived as slow or lacking in empathy. Therefore, the table reinforces the importance of pragmatic communication training for hotel staff to handle various types of complaints professionally, quickly, and effectively, in accordance with the expectations of modern hotel guests.

Strategies Used by Hotel Staff

The results showed that hotel staff used several key communication strategies in handling guest complaints. The strategy not only aims to solve technical problems but also to maintain guests' emotional comfort throughout the service process. In hospitality, effective communication often determines guest satisfaction more than the technical solution itself. There are situations in which issues are not fully resolved, yet guests remain satisfied because the staff's responses are polite, prompt, and empathetic.

The first and most dominant strategy is the *apologizing strategy*. Almost all complaint interactions begin with an apology from the hotel staff. An apology serves as an acknowledgment of the discomfort guests experience and as a first step toward reducing communication tension. Research has found that hotel staff tend to use formal expressions such as "*We apologize for the inconvenience*", but in some situations, they also add personal elements such as "*I truly understand your disappointment*". This combination makes communication feel more human and less mechanical.

The second strategy is *empathy expression*. In many interactions, hotel staff try to show an emotional understanding of the guest's condition. Phrases such as "*I understand how uncomfortable that must be*" or "*We completely understand your concern*" help build better interpersonal relationships. Empathy strategies have been shown to help ease guests' emotions, especially when complaints are conveyed in angry or disappointed tones. Interestingly, guests appear to be more cooperative when staff show personal concern rather than just giving procedural answers.

The next strategy is clarification. Before providing a solution, hotel staff usually ask for additional clarification about the problem. This strategy is important to ensure that the solutions provided are truly tailored to guests' needs. However, the study found that the effectiveness of clarification strategies was strongly influenced by the language

staff used. Questions that are too brief or too formal can sound like interrogations, while more polite, empathetic questions elicit more positive guest responses.

Furthermore, hotel staff use *a solution-oriented approach as a form of concrete action* against guest complaints. The solutions provided include changing rooms, repairing facilities, providing technical assistance, or accelerating certain services. In some cases, staff also use *compensation strategies*, such as discounts, complimentary services, or additional facilities, to facilitate *service recovery*. Compensation strategies are generally used when the problem the guest is experiencing is serious enough or lasts for a long time. The use of this strategy shows that hospitality communication is not only about language but also about efforts to maintain customer loyalty through responsive, professional service.

Table 3. Communication Strategies Used by Hotel Staff

Strategy	Example Expression	Main Purpose
Apologizing Strategy	"We sincerely apologize."	Reducing guest dissatisfaction
Empathy Expression	"We understand your concern."	Showing emotional understanding
Clarification Strategy	"Could you explain the issue further?"	Collecting detailed information
Solution Offering	"We will move you to another room."	Solving the problem
Compensation Strategy	"We would like to offer a complimentary breakfast."	Recovering guest satisfaction

Table 4. Pragmatic Functions of Staff Responses

Staff Response	Pragmatic Function	Expected Guest Reaction
Formal apology	Maintaining politeness	Reduced tension
Empathy statement	Building trust	Emotional acceptance
Clarification question	Understanding complaint	Cooperative response
Immediate solution	Restoring satisfaction	Positive evaluation
Compensation offer	Service recovery	Guest loyalty improvement

Table 3 shows that hotel staff use a variety of pragmatic communication strategies to maintain interaction stability during the process of handling guest complaints. The most dominant strategies are *apologizing and expressing empathy, which serve to relieve emotional tension and show concern for guests' discomfort*. The use of phrases such as "*We sincerely apologize*" and "*We understand your concern*" shows that hotel staff is not only trying to solve problems technically but also to build positive interpersonal relationships through polite, empathetic language. In addition, clarification strategies are used to obtain more accurate information about the guest's problems before a solution is provided. These findings show that the success of hospitality communication is strongly influenced by staff's ability to choose language strategies appropriate to the service situation and guests' emotional state.

Table 4 shows that each hotel staff member's response serves a pragmatic function to elicit positive reactions from guests. Formal apologies maintain politeness and

reduce communication tension, while empathetic expressions help create a sense of understanding and appreciation among guests. Clarification questions serve a pragmatic function, opening a more cooperative communication space so that staff can better understand the core of the problem. On the other hand, providing direct solutions and service compensation functions as *service recovery* to restore guest satisfaction and maintain customer loyalty to the hotel. These results show that hotel staff's responses in a complaint situation are not just ordinary conversation but part of a professional communication strategy with social, emotional, and institutional goals in the context of hospitality services.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal three main findings regarding the use of speech acts in interactions involving hotel guest complaints. First, *representative speech acts* are the most common form of speech used by guests to express dissatisfaction with hotel services, especially regarding room facilities, cleanliness, and service delays. Second, hotel staff consistently use *expressive speech acts* in the form of apologies and expressions of empathy as the main strategies in easing communication tensions. Third, the use of *commissive speech acts*, such as promises to solve problems and provide solutions, has proven to be an important part of maintaining guest satisfaction during *the service recovery* process. The findings show that hospitality communication serves not only as an exchange of information but also as a tool for building interpersonal relationships and maintaining the hotel's professional image. In some interactions, guests became calmer after receiving an empathetic response, even though technical issues were not fully resolved on the spot.

The findings of this study align with J. L. Austin's speech theory, which holds that speech not only functions to say something (locutionary act), but also performs certain actions (illocutionary act) and produces social effects on the audience (perlocutionary act). In the context of this study, hotel staff's apologies are not only verbal expressions but also social acts that calm guests and maintain service relationships (Purwanto, Marsinah, et al., 2025; Yuliana et al., 2024). In addition, the results of this study support John Searle's classification of speech acts, especially in the categories of expressives, directives, and commissives, which predominantly appear in hospitality complaint interactions (Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2025a; Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024). Compared with previous studies, most have focused only on the use of *speech acts* in educational communication or public services. This research presents a more specific context: the interaction of hotel complaints through authentic communication, to provide a more realistic, pragmatic picture in the world of hospitality.

The interpretation of this study shows that the success of hotel services is greatly influenced by staff's pragmatic ability to understand guests' emotional context. In a complaint situation, guests not only want a technical solution but also need emotional acknowledgment, delivered with polite, empathetic, and professional language (K et al., 2025; Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2024). Therefore, the effectiveness of hospitality communication lies in the staff's ability to combine linguistic strategies with interpersonal intelligence. This study shows that language in the hospitality industry has a much more complex function than ordinary service communication because it involves

elements of institutional image, customer loyalty, and guest emotional satisfaction. Sometimes a simple response like *"We truly understand your inconvenience"* can have a greater interpersonal impact than a long, overly formal explanation (Komerendo et al., 2025; M Bambang Purwanto, 2025).

The implications of this study show the importance of developing pragmatic-based Hospitality English training and authentic communication. English training materials for hotel staff should focus not only on mastering standard vocabulary and expressions, but also on understanding the social functions of language in real service situations. The results of this study can serve as the basis for developing role-play-based training models, guest-complaint simulations, and case analyses of international hotel services. In addition, this research also contributes to the development of the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in the field of hospitality communication (Purwanto, Despita, et al., 2024; Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2025b). Thus, the communication skills of hotel staff are not only measured by their fluency in English, but also by their pragmatic ability to build empathy, maintain politeness, and create a positive service experience for guests.

Although this study provides an in-depth overview of the use of speech acts in hotel complaint interactions, several challenges remain to be considered in the development of further research. One of the main challenges is the limited study of the relationship between service communication and leadership style in the hospitality industry. In practice, hotel staff communication patterns are often influenced by the organizational culture and leadership character of hotel management (M. Bambang Purwanto, 2024; Purwanto & Umar, 2024). Leaders who emphasize humanistic service and empathetic communication tend to produce staff who are more adaptive in dealing with guests. On the other hand, a work environment that is too procedural can make service communication feel rigid and less interpersonal. Therefore, future research may explore the relationship between *leadership communication style* and the effectiveness of using *speech acts* in hotel services.

In addition to the leadership aspect, further research can expand the study of hospitality communication in the context of cross-cultural and digital transformations in hotel services. Currently, many service interactions are carried out through digital platforms such as reservation applications, short message services, and online communication with international guests. This change presents a new challenge in the use of pragmatic language, as expressions of empathy and politeness must be conveyed without the aid of nonverbal gestures. Future research can examine how *speech act strategies develop in digital hospitality communication*, as well as how hotel leaders build a culture of professional communication in the era of technology-based service. With this development, the study of language and leadership in the hospitality industry can become an increasingly relevant and multidisciplinary field of research.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the interaction involving guest complaints at Hotel Sriwijaya Raya is dominated by several types of *speech acts*, namely *representatives*, *expressives*, *commissives*, and *directives*. Hotel guests generally use *representative speech acts* to convey complaints about hotel facilities, services, and comfort. In contrast, hotel

staff are more likely to use expressive speech acts, such as apologies and expressions of empathy, as the main strategy for relieving communication tensions. In addition, the use of *commissive speech acts*, such as problem-solving promises and solutions, has proven important in maintaining guest satisfaction during *the service recovery* process.

The results of the study also show that hospitality communication is not only related to general English-speaking ability but also involves pragmatic abilities for understanding guests' emotional and social context. Communication strategies such as apology, clarification, empathy, and compensation are important factors in building positive interpersonal relationships between hotel staff and guests. This research provides practical implications for the development of Hospitality English training grounded in authentic, pragmatic communication, thereby improving the quality of hotel services, both professionally and communicatively, in the era of global hospitality.

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