

# **The Perceptions of Petra Christian University Male and Female Students toward the Language used in a Hotel Website and the Hotel Itself**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of the male and female students of Petra Christian University toward the language used in a three-star hotel website in Surabaya and toward the hotel itself. I want to know if the perceptions toward the language will influence the perceptions toward the hotel which writes the website. The respondents of this study are 30 male and 30 female students of Petra Christian University. Here, there are some similarities and differences found between the male and female students' perceptions toward the language used in a three-star hotel website in Surabaya and toward the hotel itself. It seems that the female students usually see language as one important way to know the hotel. On the other hand, it seems that the male students do not really care about what kind of language that is used in a hotel website.

**Keywords:** Perception, Gender, Three-star hotel, Website, Language, Attitude to Language

Now, the use of the internet has been widespread all over the world. It is one of the biggest sources of information in the world. It consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks. The internet is a worldwide communication technology since people from anywhere can write in it and read it.

A website, as a part of the internet, has an important role in the business world. People often take advantage of its popularity to promote their businesses in a website. In several websites, they even do selling and buying activities. So, websites can facilitate costumers to know more about the company and the products, and if they are interested, they can order via the websites. Here, we can see that a company website has an important role both for the company and the buyers.

A hotel provides a website for customers as part of its service. Hotel websites are provided for customers who are likely to verify or get more information through websites rather than phone calls. It seems that the customers may get limited information when they call the hotel since it is difficult to explain small things or every detail of information by phone. Here, a hotel website is useful because it provides complete information for the customers to read or to verify.

In a hotel website, there may be several important things that people pay attention to. It can be the pictures of the hotel, the content of the information, or the language used in it. All of them are provided in order to make the website understandable, interesting, and attractive. Here, by looking at the picture, the readers may know how the hotels look like. Also, information related to the hotel, such as room rates, facilities, etc, is also important to write since they are the important things that the readers look for. Moreover, it seems that a good and clear language is needed to complete a good and likeable hotel website.

It seems that people may have some perceptions toward the language used in a hotel website. Here, different people may have different perceptions toward the same thing. For example, for some people, if the language used in the hotel website is easy to understand and it uses familiar vocabulary, it is good. But, for other people, they may like a hotel website which uses difficult vocabulary because it may seem clever or professional. Here, there is no right or wrong if we talk about people's perceptions since it depends on each person's need, experience, expectations, etc.

Usually, language may be associated with the user of the language. For example, if someone speak using Madurese language, some people may consider them as rude or uneducated person (Yauw, 1999). Therefore, in this case, maybe the language used in the hotel website can be one possible thing that may influence people's perceptions toward the hotel itself.

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the hotel itself. Here, I want to know if the perceptions toward the language may influence the perceptions toward the hotel which writes the website.

### **Perceptions**

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), perception is a process of selecting, organizing, or interpreting stimuli into a meaningful information or message. It gives meaning to people, experiences, pictures, words, or places. In other words, perception is how we see the world around us. Moreover, perceptions can affect people's behavior towards something because people usually act and react based on their perceptions, not based on the reality. For example in marketing, what the consumers think about the product may influence their action: whether they buy it or not. Maybe, in the reality, the product is really good, but if the consumers think it is bad, they may not buy it. So, perception is like a summary that people have in their mind about certain things and it may affect how they react about those things.

### **Language and Attitude to Language**

There are two types of language: spoken and written language. Spoken language is produced directly so it may be 'untidy'. It means that spoken language usually contains many repetitions or unorganized sentences because the speaker tries to think and compose the sentences at very short time. While for written language, the writer has more time to think first about the language so it can be more organized (Willis, 2003). Furthermore, according to Stovall (2009) there are several aspects in written language, such as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.

According to Holmes (2001) in her book, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, our attitudes to language may reflect our attitudes toward the users and the uses of language. It means that our perception to a language may influence our perception toward the user of language. There are two example of attitude to language: overt prestige and covert prestige. Overt prestige is positive attitude toward the standard language. Here, standard language is considered as the 'best' way of speaking in community. Therefore, speakers who use standard language may be seen as people with high education and occupation background. On the other hand, covert prestige is positive attitude toward the vernacular or non-standard form. People who value the vernacular language form may see people who speak using vernacular language as sociable and friendly. Here, we can say that the perception about language may influence our perception about the user of language. Here, people's attitudes to language are formed by social experience, needs, and motives.

### **Gender**

According to Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2004), women usually use more standard form language compared to men. It is shown by some studies that women usually use more standard grammar than men. Here, men are more likely to value nonstandard language because that kind of language may show masculinity and rebellion. So, men may be seen as strong and brave men if they use nonstandard language. Furthermore, according to Holmes (2001), in her book *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, there are four reasons why women use more standard language rather than men:

- A. Women are more status-conscious than men
- B. Women seen as guardian of society's values
- C. Women are often seen as subordinate group in society
- D. Some women are better educated than men

### **METHOD**

Types of research methodology that I used in this research were descriptive and quantitative research. Here, the respondents of this study are male and female students of Petra Christian University from six different faculties. The instrument of this research was the questionnaire. It contains the print out of the hotel website and some questions regarding the readers' perceptions toward the hotel website. Here, the questions are divided into three parts. The first one is several questions about the background of the respondent. The questions of the second part are about the language used in the website. And the last part is the questions about people's perceptions toward the hotel itself.

Here, there are several steps in collecting the data. First, I looked for a hotel website that would be used for my research object. The criteria of the hotel website was a website which its language is not really good compared to the other three-star hotel website. Here, it is because I wanted to know people's perceptions toward the hotel website which its language is not really good. If I chose the hotel website with good language, maybe most of people would say it is good. There would be nothing to discuss. Therefore, I chose a hotel website which has a not really good language to be used in this research so that people can give their opinion toward this kind of website. After finding a right website, I printed it out. Here, I tried to be as close as possible to the real website hotel. But I could not use the real website in the internet because it would be more difficult to collect data if I had to bring my laptop. To make it more flexible to collect the data but still close to the real website, I just printed out the hotel website. Next, I started to make some questions for the questionnaire. I tried to make questions that can reflect the readers' perceptions toward the hotel website and the hotel itself. After that, I looked for the respondents from six different faculties in Petra. First, I asked them to read the print out of hotel website. Here, after reading the hotel website, I asked them to fill in the questionnaire. Then, the data were counted and separated into tables.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here, there are three sections of the findings. The first is the male and female students' perceptions toward the language used in the hotel website. The second is the male and female students' perceptions toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself. The last is the male and female students' perceptions toward the hotel itself.

### The male and female students' perceptions toward the language used in the hotel website

In order to know the perceptions of the male and female students toward the language used in the hotel website, first, they were asked about the importance of language in it. The table below shows the perceptions of male and female students about the importance of language.

Table 4.1.1 the male and female students' perceptions about the importance of language

	YES				NO			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%
Importance of language	30	100%	29	97%	-	-	1	3%

Here, all of the male students think that the use of language is important in the hotel website. For the female students, there are twenty nine people who think that the use of language is important and only one person who think that it is not important.

Then, to know deeper about their perceptions toward the language used in the hotel website, they were asked about their perceptions toward the grammar, the vocabulary, and the spelling.

Table 4.1.1 the male and female students' perceptions toward the grammar, the vocabulary, and the spelling.

	Male						Female					
	Bad		So-so		Good		Bad		So-so		Good	
	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%	$\Sigma$	%
Gr	7	23%	18	60%	5	17%	9	30%	14	47%	7	23%
Vc	3	10%	18	60%	9	30%	8	27%	17	57%	5	16%
Sp	3	10%	15	50%	12	40%	5	16%	14	47%	11	37%

From the table above, we can see the perceptions of the male and female students toward the grammar, the vocabulary, the spelling, and the overall language used in the website. For the grammar, there are 18 male students (60%) and 14 female students (47%) who chose 'so-so'. Then, 7 male students (23%) and 9 female students (30%) chose 'bad'. And there are 5 male students (16%) and 7 female students (23%) who chose 'good'. So, it means that most of the male and female students chose so-so for the grammar. Moreover, for the vocabulary used in the hotel website, most of the male and female students chose 'so-so'. There are 18 male students (60%) and 17 female

students (57%) who think that it is so-so. The other 3 male students (10%) and 9 female students (30%) think that the vocabulary is bad. Then, there are 9 male students (30%) and 4 female students (13%) who think that it is good. Furthermore, there are 15 male students (50%) and 15 female students (50%) who chose 'so-so' for the spelling used in the hotel website. Then, 12 male students (40%) and 10 female students (34%) chose 'good' for the spelling. The other 3 male students (10%) and 5 female students (16%) chose 'bad'. Here, we can see that most of the male and female students chose 'so-so' for the spelling used in the hotel website.

Then, to conclude their perceptions, I asked them about their perceptions toward the language in general.

Table 4.1.1.the perceptions of the male and female students toward the language used in the hotel website

	Language						
	Bad		Good		So-so		
Male	5	16%	7	24%	18	60%	
Female	9	30%	5	16%	16	54%	
Σ	14		12		34		
At VS Nat	Relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself						
	Yes			No			
Male	14		47%		16		53%
Female	21		70%		9		30%
Total	35			25			

This finding is about the male and females students' perceptions toward the language in general. Here, there are 5 male students (16%) and 9 female students (30%) think the language in general is bad while 7 male students (24%) and 5 female students (16%) think it is good. Then, 18 male students (60%) and 16 female students (54%) think that it is so-so.

**The male and female students' perceptions toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself**

Here, I present the findings about the differences and/or similarities between the perceptions of the male and female students toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself in a table below

4.4. the perceptions of the male and female students toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself.

**The male and female students' perceptions toward the hotel itself**

Here, I compare the male and female students' perceptions toward the three-star hotel in the table below.

Table 4.5. the perceptions of the male and female students toward the three-star hotel

The table above shows that there is no male students who chose 'bad' for their perceptions toward the hotel while 6 female students (20%) chose 'bad' for their perceptions toward the hotel.

	The three-star hotel							
	Bad		Good		So-so		Does not matter	
Male	—	—	7	24%	21	70%	2	6%
Female	6	20%	4	14%	18	60%	2	6%
Σ	6		11		39		4	
At vs Nat	17				43			

Then, there are 7 male students (24%) and there are 4 female students (14%) who chose 'good'. Here, there are 21 male students (70%) and 18 female students (60%) who chose 'so-so'. Then, there are 2 male (6%) and 2 female (6%) students who chose 'does not matter'.

Here, there are little differences and similarities between the male and female students' perceptions toward the hotel itself. The difference between the male and female students' perceptions is the order of the second most chosen answer to the last. For the male students, 'good' comes as the second most chosen answer and 'does not matter' follows as the third. Here, 'bad' is in the last place as there is no male students who chose it. For the female students, 'bad' is the second most chosen answer and 'good' comes as the third. The last place is 'does not matter'. Then, the similarity is most of the male and female students think that the hotel is so-so. Here, out of 30 male students, 21 of them (70%) chose 'so-so'. Then, there are 18 (60%) female students who also chose 'so-so'. So, the first most chosen answer is 'so-so' for both male and female students.

Furthermore, I want to compare the total of the students who show their attitudes and the others who do not show their attitudes. Here, the students who show their attitudes are the students who chose 'good' or 'bad'. Then, the students who does not show their attitudes are the students who chose 'so-so' and 'does not matter'. The table above shows that there are 17 students who show their attitudes while the other 43 students do not show their attitudes. Here, we can see that there are more students who do not show their attitudes compared to the students who show it.

### **Interpretation on the Findings**

In this part, I explain the findings described above. Here, the data shows that most of the male and female students did not really show their attitudes by choosing 'so-so'. But still, I want to compare the perceptions of those students who show their attitudes by choosing 'bad' or 'good', to answer the research questions.

First, in the first table (table 4.1.), the fact that almost all of the male (100%) and female students (97%) agree that the use of language in the hotel website is important may mean that language can be one thing in a hotel website that people pay attention to, besides the pictures or the information in the website. Maybe, language is important because it can help to describe the pictures and it also can deliver the right information to the readers.

Second, as shown the table 4.2, the fact that more male (23%) and female (30%) students chose 'poor' rather than 'good' for the grammar used in the hotel website may mean that some of the male and female students realized that there are some grammatical mistakes in the hotel website. As I have stated in scope and limitation, there are some grammatical mistakes in the hotel website, such as 'Welcome Oval Hotel Surabaya', 'city of Surabaya Heroes', etc. Maybe, some male and female students realized the mistakes, so they chose 'bad' for the grammar used in the hotel website.

Third, the fact that more male students (30%) chose 'good' for the vocabulary while more female students (27%) chose 'bad' may mean that female students have higher expectations toward the use of vocabulary compared to the male students. Maybe for the male students, they are satisfied only by understanding the information or the message of the website. While for the female students, maybe the vocabulary used in the hotel website does not meet their expectation. So, they think that the vocabulary is not really good or poor.

Fourth, the fact that more male (40%) and female students (37%) chose 'good' for the spelling used in the website may mean that the spelling used in the hotel website is really good. Here, it seems that there is no mistakes found in the hotel website. That is why some of the respondents chose 'good'.

Fifth, as shown in the table 4.3., the fact that more male students (24%) chose 'good' while more female students (30%) chose 'bad' for the language used in the hotel website may mean that the female students are more critical about the use of language compared to the male students. This fact is consistent with the female students' perceptions about vocabulary, in which they chose 'bad' while more male students chose 'good'. Maybe it is because the female students like to care more about the use of language. For them, language may be one thing that is important since it may reflect their status or personality. That is why women usually like to value standard language more because they may want to look polite, kind, and smart. Here, women may think that the better language that they use, the better image that they get. Moreover, Holmes (2001) also stated that women like to use more standard language to show that they have high social status. Therefore, the female students might have higher expectation about the use of language in the hotel website. So, when the female students read the hotel website and they found several mistakes in the hotel website, they chose 'bad' for the language. On the other hand, it seems that men usually do not care about the language details.

Maybe, when they were asked to read the hotel website, they were just scanning it. Since they did not really pay attention to the details of language, they chose 'good' or 'so-so'. Moreover, men may have less expectation about the use of standard language because they like to use vernacular form (Eckret & McConnel-Ginnet, 2004). So, maybe they think as long as the language in the website can be understood, the language does not really matter.

Sixth, the fact that more male students (53%) think that there is no relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself while more female students (70%) think there is relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself may mean that those female students see language as something important while the male students do not really think it is so. Here, as we can see in the female students' perceptions toward the language used in the hotel website, female students usually are more critical about the use of language. They may not be satisfied only by understanding the information there. The way to know the information is important. Here it seems that they are process oriented. Process oriented means the way to do something is important (Caruso, n.d.). In this case, process oriented may mean language is an important instrument by which their perceptions about the hotel are formed. Maybe, they think that the important thing is not only the hotel but also the language as the way to know the information about the hotel. For men, it seems that language may not be an important thing to see the hotel. It may be because they are goal oriented. Goal oriented means the results is the priority or the most important thing in doing something. The way you do it is not really important (Lacoma, n.d.). So, goal oriented means they just focus on the hotel as the main object. Maybe for them, language is just a tool to describe the hotel. As long as the information about the hotel is delivered, the language does not matter.

Seventh, the fact that more male students chose 'good' while more female students chose 'bad' for their perceptions toward the hotel may mean that most of the male and female students did overgeneralization. Here, in the hotel website, there are many things that are shown to the readers to help them perceive some images or perceptions toward the hotel. It can be the pictures, language, layout, information, etc. Those things are given so that the readers can know what kind of hotel it is. However, sometimes the readers still cannot know the quality of the hotel because the hotel website (pictures, information, language) cannot really represent the real hotel. So, maybe it is hard to know the quality of the hotel just by looking at the hotel website, although here are pictures and complete information in it. Here, the question part III number 2 in the questionnaire is 'based on the language used in the hotel website, what is your opinion towards the hotel itself?' Actually it is difficult to decide the quality of the hotel only based on the language used in the hotel website because there are other factors that can help the readers understand more about the hotel. Maybe, sometimes people do overgeneralization in the real life, only based on the language. For example in Yauw Siu Li's study (1999), some respondents see the speakers of Madurese language as rough people. Actually, there are other factors that can determine whether those people are rough or not. Maybe they can say that the speakers of Madurese are rough after meeting them and see their rough attitudes. But they just judge them based on the language that they hear.

Last, there is a similarity for the male and female students' perceptions. Here, most of the male and female students chose 'so-so' for the language used in the hotel website and the three-star hotel itself. This fact may mean that most of them do not want to show their attitudes toward the hotel. It may be because they felt unsure about the 'correct' answer, so they just chose the middle response. Here, it is like an act of face-saving. They are afraid that their answer will be wrong, so to be safe, they just chose 'so-so'. Another possibility can be three-star hotel is identical with middle quality. So, when they know that the hotel website is three-star hotel, they simply chose 'so-so' because they believe that three-star hotel is neither bad nor too good. Furthermore, the reason why the students did not really show their attitude may be because collectivism culture in Asia, especially Indonesia. Here, collectivism culture means they are afraid to show their own opinion. In the east culture, it is impolite to disagree to someone's opinion or say something bad to other people ("Individualism versus collectivism," 2013). Therefore, the students chose 'so-so' to be safe. Last of all, it is also possible that for several of them, the topic given is not really interesting. So, they just chose middle response to be neutral.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this research, I observed the male and female students' perceptions toward the language used in the hotel website, toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself, and toward the three-star hotel itself. Here, I compared the differences and/or similarities between the perceptions of the male and female students of Petra Christian University.

From the research, I found out several differences and similarities between the male and female students' perceptions. First, there is a little difference between the male and female students' perceptions toward the language used in a hotel website. Here, the fact that more male students chose 'good' while more female students chose 'bad' for the language used in the hotel website may mean that the female students are more critical about the use of language compared to the male students. Second, there is also a difference between the male and female students' perceptions toward the relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself. Here, more male students disagree that there is a relationship between the language used in a hotel website and the hotel itself while more female students agree about it. Third, the fact that more male students chose 'good' while more female students chose 'bad' for the three-star hotel itself may mean that both of the male and female students did overgeneralization. Furthermore, there is also a similarity between the male and female students' perceptions. Most of the male and female students chose 'so-so' for the perceptions toward the language used in a hotel website and toward the three-star hotel.

In conclusion, we can see that different people have different perceptions. Here, gender may be one thing that can influence people's perceptions toward language and toward the three-star hotel itself. It seems that women care more about the use of standard language compared to men.