



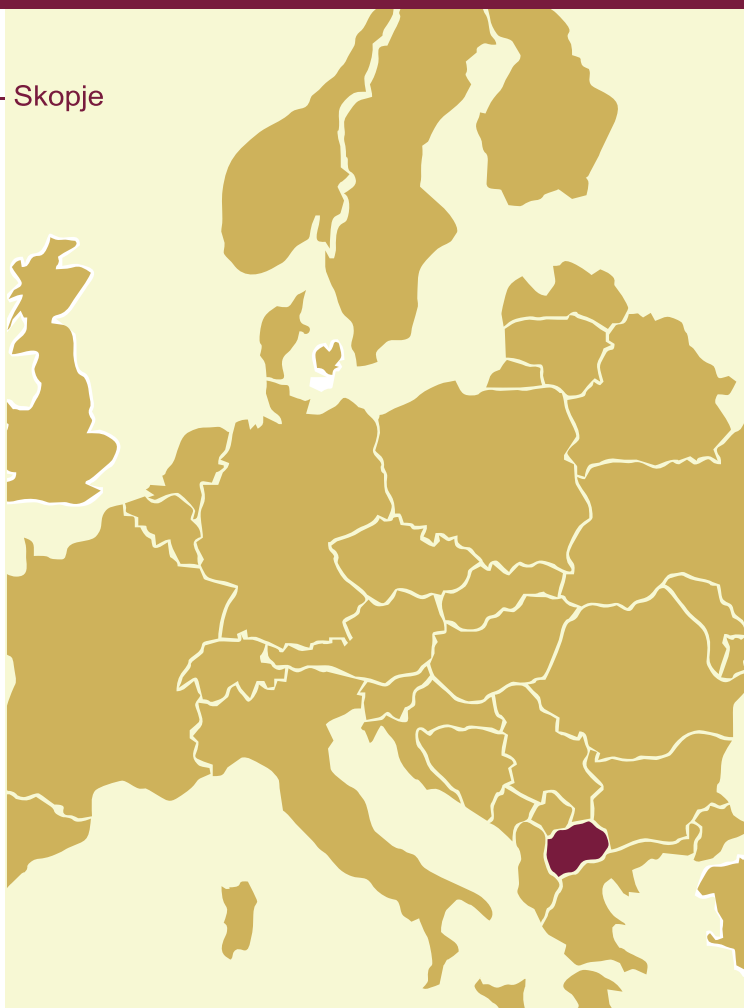
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Dear reader,

“Economic Development”, published by the Institute of Economics – Skopje, is an academic journal in the field of economic development and has been an important medium for 20 years. The main goal of “Economic Development” is to provide intellectual platform to the wider academic and professional publics, and to promote the development of economic thought in the country and the world.

The interest and need for publishing of the journal were continuously increased all these years. It covers theoretical and empirical researches in the field of economic and social development, demography, education, corporate governance, international economics, international management, administrative management, corporate and public finance, economics and tourism management, agricultural policy and agricultural management, marketing and marketing management, entrepreneurial management and other areas in the field of social sciences.

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Skopje, October, 2024

Zoran Janevski, PhD
Editor-in-chief

HOTEL TERMINOLOGY: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION

Abstract

Hotel terminology refers to the specialized terms and phrases used throughout the hotel sector to define services, roles, and operations within a hotel. It contains numerous specific terms that define services and amenities, highlighting various aspects of hospitality management, such as front desk operations to cleaning procedures. These terminologies enhance communication between employees and guests, ensuring efficient operations. However, as hotels evolve with recent technologies and growing guest demands, understanding of this terminology becomes increasingly important and as it elevates guest service, optimizes workflow, and guarantees consistency in service delivery. It facilitates guests' navigation of the hotel surroundings and enhances the convenience of interactions with employees. Being familiar with these terms can enhance the experience of guests and hotel employees, making it more enjoyable and efficient.

Key words: employees, guest, hotel, management, terms, terminology, travelers.

JEL Classification: L83; Z32

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Introduction

The hospitality industry, namely the hotel sector, is fundamental to global tourism, trade, and culture. The constantly evolving hotel sector requires a deep knowledge of sector-specific terms and acronyms, which are crucial for operational efficiency and communication among hotel employees.² Consequently, the sector has developed a specialized vocabulary, referred to as “*hotel terminology*,” to precisely define services, operations, and interactions within hotels. This terminology is not only a compilation of technical jargon but also a functional and historical representation of the sector’s evolution, driven by shifting social³, economic⁴, and technological developments^{5,1}. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the origins and evolution of hotel terminology, by analyzing the mutually beneficial impact of language and the hotel business. From a historical point of view, it will also look at the key terms that have changed over time, explain what they mean, and point out how they continue to change in response to changing cultural norms, technological advances, and global travel trends.

In this paper, a narrative review further explores the origins and evolution of hotel terminology by examining historical texts, dictionaries, academic research and industry reports. Literature was collected from databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus, using keywords including “*hotel terminology*”, “*history of hospitality terms*”, “*hotel terms and abbreviations*”, “*evolution of hotel language*”, “*hospitality dictionary*”. Studies and texts were selected and screened based on their relevance in order to prepare a thematic analysis.

2 Petliovana, L. The necessity of teaching English terminology of tourism and hospitality to develop speaking skills. *Knowledge, Education, Law, and Management*, 24(4), 2018. 213-223.

3 Turgunbaeva, T. G. Investigation of tourism terminology in the world linguistics. *European International Journal of Philological Sciences* 3(5), 2023. 63–65.

4 Balmagambetova, Z. T. & Karimbek, E. A. Terminology system as linguistic component of language for special purposes: principles of analysis and systematization. *Bulletin of the Karaganda university - Philology series* 101(1), 2021. 24-31.

5 Morrison, A., & O’Gorman, K. Hospitality studies and hospitality management: A symbiotic relationship. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 2008. 214-221.

1. DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE HOTEL TERMINOLOGY

Definition of hotel terminology

Hotel terminology refers to a set of words and phrases that are exclusive to the daily operations of hotels and the overall hotel sector. This contains terms used in everyday operations like “*check-in*,” “*concierge*,” and “*housekeeping*,” alongside management-related phrases such as “*occupancy rate*,” “*RevPAR*” (Revenue per Available Room), and “*ADR*” (Average Daily Rate).⁶ Additional terminology indicates the layout and facilities of the hotel, such as “*suite*,” “*penthouse*,” “*lobby*,” “*banquet hall*,” and “*front desk*.”⁷ These terms are both descriptive and functional as standardized terminology within the hotel businesses, aiding in clear communication in the increasingly globalized and diverse hotel sector.⁸

Importance of hotel terminology

There are numerous reasons why hotel terminology is of immense significance, among which:

- **Effective communication:** In the rapid, high-stress environment of hotels, direct and clear communication is essential.⁸ A standardized terminology enables employees, regardless of the position they hold as housekeepers, receptionists, chefs, or managers, to communicate effectively and precisely to eliminate misinformation that may impact on the guest’s experience.⁹
- **Consistency in service:** The implementation of standardized terminology guarantees that hotel employees comprehend and provide services consistently¹⁰, without regard to the hotel’s location, ranking, or capacity. The term “*check-in*” universally implies the procedure by which guests register and obtain their room keys, facilitating a seamless and consistent experience for guests at various establishments.⁶
- **Operational efficiency:** Operations-related terms like “*housekeeping*

6 Medlik, S. *Dictionary of travel, tourism and hospitality* (3rd edition). Routledge, 2012.

7 Pizam, A. *International encyclopedia of hospitality management*. Routledge, 2005.

8 Tiansoodeenon, M., Rungruangsuparat, B., & Tarapond, S. Investigating the Needs and Challenges with regard to English Communicative Competencies in the Thai Hospitality Industry. *Journal of Contemporary Social Sciences and Humanities*, 10(2), 2023. 69-80.

9 Cyril, V. F. *The Importance of Management Training in the Hotel Industry*. 2014, Available at: <https://ujcontent.uj.ac.za/esploro/outputs/graduate/The-importance-of-management-training-in/9911118707691>, (29.01.2025).

10 Richards, J., Chillias, S. & Marks, A. Every man for himself: Teamwork and customer service in the hospitality industry. *Employee Relations*, 34(3), 2012. 235-254.

schedule,” “*room turnover*,” and “*guest preferences*” improve workflow by making it easier to manage daily tasks, keep track of performance, and make the best use of resources. Terms such as “*room assignment*” or “*group booking*” assist employees in prioritizing work and delivering personalized service to guests.¹¹

- **Guest understanding:** Familiarity with hotel terminology can enrich the guest experience. Understanding terminology like “*suite*,” “*concierge*,” and “*amenities*”⁶ enables guests to navigate the hotel building with proficiency and assurance.¹² It enables guests to comprehend the numerous services more effectively, resulting in increased satisfaction and more informed decision-making during their stay.
- **Adapting to sector evolution:** As the hotel sector progresses and transforms, its terminology also evolves. New terminology arises with technological progress (e.g., “*mobile check-in*,” “*digital concierge*”)¹³ and as guests requirements evolve (e.g., “*eco-friendly hotels*,” “*leisure travel*”).¹⁴ Remaining informed about these shifting terminologies guarantees that both hotels and guests are aware of the newest trends and developments within the sector.
- **Cultural and historical significance:** The terms and phrases of hotels reflect the cultural and historical context of their origin. Historical origins of terms like “*inn*,” “*hostel*,” and “*motel*” reflect the economic and social contexts of their respective times.³

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE HOTEL TERMINOLOGY

The history of hotel terms is linked to the growth of hotel accommodation, reflecting societal, economic, and cultural transformations.¹⁵ Although hotel terminology, as we know it today, began to take shape in the 19th century, the hotel sector itself dates back much further. With the expansion of travel during the Renaissance, terms such as “*inn*” and “*hostel*” emerged¹⁶, signifying

11 Beaver, A. *A dictionary of travel and tourism terminology*. CABI, 2005.

12 Edghiem, F. *The Nature and Impact of Service Employees' Innovative Behaviour; a personal-interactive services perspective*. 2015, Available at: <https://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/4408/>, (29.01.2025).

13 Stringam, B. B., & Gerdes, J. H. Hotel and guest room technology. In C. Cobanoglu, S. Dogan, K. Berezina, & G. Collins (Eds.), *Hospitality & tourism information technology* (pp. 1–58). USF M3 Publishing, 2021.

14 Wood, C., R. *Hospitality management: a brief introduction*. Sage, 2015.

15 Lynch, P., Germann Molz, J., McIntosh, A., Lugosi, P., & Lashley, C. Theorizing Hospitality. *Hospitality and Society*, 1, 2011. 3-24. 2

16 Kümin, B. A. & Tlustý, B. A. *The world of the tavern: public houses in early modern Eu-*

the initial accommodations for merchants and visitors, while the term “*hotel*” itself originated in France in the late 18th century, indicating big townhouse facilities intended for hosting visitors.¹⁷

Afterwards, the arrival of the Industrial Revolution transformed hotels into commercial enterprises, signifying an important change toward service, luxury, and a broader clientele. This period also introduced terms such as “*conciierge*” and “*front desk*,” indicating a more systematic approach to managing guest services and assignments in hotels⁵. But as the modern concept of hotels emerged, there was a need for specific language to describe the numerous services, roles, and operations involved. Then again from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, standardized terminology was established to provide consistency in an expanding worldwide business, a practice that persists today.¹⁸ That being the case, a detailed timeline of the evolution of hotel terminology below demonstrates that as travel progressively started concentrating on business, the terms used began to incorporate more specialized expressions.

- **Pre-19th century**

Inns, hostels, and taverns were the main types of accommodation available to travelers, each having its own unique terms that represented the social, cultural, and economic norms of the period. The initial accommodation for travelers, especially in Europe, were “*inns*” and “*taverns*.”¹⁵ These were typically plain establishments, commonly situated along principal trade routes or within urban areas, providing food, beverages, and accommodations for sleep. The terminology linked to these establishments - such as “*innkeeper*,” “*tavern*,” and “*stables*” - reflects a pragmatic orientation, highlighting essential services like food, a place to stay, and animal care.^{10,19}

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the expansion of European cities required the development of more organized and refined accommodations, especially for people involved in trade, diplomacy, and tourism, leading to the creation of terms associated with hotel services to begin. The term “*hostel*” emerged in the 17th century to denote establishments providing affordable accommodations for travelers, typically at a cheaper rate than inns. As for the word “*hotel*”, it

rope. Aldershot; Burlington, 2002.

17 Opria, B. & Opria, I. Development of hospitality in historical retrospective: European and Ukrainian context. *Geography and Tourism*. 2022. 9-15.

18 Bowie, D. Innovation and 19th century hotel industry evolution. *Tourism Management*, 64, 2018, 314-323.

19 Goldstein, B. D. & Piana, M. *Early Modern Hospitality*. Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2021.

was developed prior to the 19th century. The term, originating from the French word *hôtel* (which refers to “a big house” or “a big building”), began to be used in the late 18th century to define larger, more formal establishments that provided both accommodation and a broad variety of services to guests.¹⁶ Therefore, this transition signified the inception of modern hotel services as we know them today, and the term “*hotel*” became increasingly linked to luxurious establishments that welcomed elite guests. And from then on, hotels were typically more spacious and expensive than inns or taverns, frequently offering rooms with more privacy and more luxurious services.

- **19th century – The rise of modern hotels**

The 19th century represented a significant transformation in the hotel sector. A more formal and sophisticated structure emerged with the development of modern hotels, which led to standardized services and specialized terminology. The terms established during this period - such as “*conciierge*,” “*room service*,” “*suite*,” and “*front desk*” - remain essential to modern hotel operations to this day⁵. The term “*front desk*,” along with the terms of a job position of “*front desk clerk*” or “*receptionist*,” was essential for guiding the guest experience and represented the start of a more systematic approach to guest registration. The official terms for hotel “*check-in*” and “*check-out*” were defined in the 19th century as well⁵, which refer to the processes of registration and departure, respectively.

The 19th century established the foundation for the modern hotel sector, introducing novel hotel categorization, employee responsibilities and guest expectations.¹⁷ The evolution of hotel terminology throughout this period indicates the growing importance of professionalism, luxury, and specialized services within the hotel sector.¹⁷

- **20th century – Standardization of hotel terms**

The hotel sector saw significant changes throughout the 20th century, which was a time of fast technological advancement, changes in travel, and varies in cultural expectations. These changes not only affected how hotels operated, but they also played a significant part in the standardization of hotel terminology. The demand for standardized terminology and procedures increased as the sector became more international and formalized. In addition to the formalization of the sectors’ standards and the introduction of more specialized services like “*room service*,” “*minibar*,” “*fitness center*,” “*business*

center”, and “Wi-Fi”^{13,20}, the 20th century saw the rise of major hotel chains like Hilton (founded in 1919), Marriott (founded in 1927), and InterContinental (founded in 1946).²¹ Technology also had an impact on how hotel terminology was specified. For example, the terms “air-conditioned room,” “elevator service,” and “direct dial telephones” were among the most used terms in the 20th century.¹³

Hotels started to implement more formalized management practices, and organizations like the American Hotel & Lodging Association, which was founded in 1919²², the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, which was founded in 1946²³, and the World Tourism Organization, which was established in 1975²⁴, played an important role in creating standards and procedures for the hotel sector. The establishment of a formal star rating system was one of the most important advancements in hotel terminology throughout the 20th century²⁵. Later, in the 20th century, the development of reservation systems resulted in the widespread usage of terms such as “booking”, “check-in”, and “check-out”.²⁶ Additionally, the emergence of new types of hotels because of the diversification of the hotel business has led to the development of specialized terminology. The terms “boutique hotel,” “resort,” “airport hotel,” and “extended-stay hotel” became popular for describing diverse types of hotels.¹³

- **Late 20th century to present – Modern hotel terminology**

The hotel sector has seen enormous changes since the late 20th century because of globalization, technological advancements, and changes in guests’ preferences¹⁶. Consequently, the appearance of digital platforms, innovative accommodation types, and specialized markets such as wellness and retreat hotels have all created a more dynamic and diversified terminology within the hotel sector.

Modern technology has had a major impact on the hotel sector during the late 20 Bilgihan, A., Smith, S., Ricci, P., & Bujisic, M. Hotel guest preferences of in-room technology amenities. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 7, 2016. 118-134.

21 Đorđević, D. & Jankovic, M. Modern distribution and development of hotel industry in the world. *Ekonomika*, 61, 2015. 99-110.

22 AHLA. About us. Available at: <https://www.ahla.com/about>, (29.01.2025).

23 IHRA. History. Available at: <https://www.ih-ra.org/about-ihra-history.php>, (29.01.2025).

24 UNWTO. Management. Available at <https://www.unwto.org/management>, (29.01.2025).

25 Sufi, T. & Singh, S. Hotel Classification Systems: A Case Study. *Prabandhan: Indian Journal of Management*. 11, 2018. 52.

26 Almeida, A. S. The Evolution of Hotel Room Reservation Systems, from Pencil and Paper to Online Reservation System. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology*, 2(4), 2022, 358-360.

20th and early 21st centuries. Booking hotels, checking in, and using services while travelling have all altered as a result of the internet, online travel agencies, and an increasing number of mobile applications. Terms like “IoT-enabled rooms,” “digital check-in/check-out,” “self-checkout” and “self-service check-in” have become common.¹²

The late 20th century also witnessed the rise of budget-friendly hotel chains and alternative accommodations, including hostels, holiday rentals, and serviced apartments. Terms such as “budget hotel,” “low-cost accommodations” and “economy class” have become popular, indicating a transition towards more economical and adaptable alternatives for travelers²⁷. In the 21st century, the rise of businesses like Airbnb has expanded the range of possibilities for accommodation and brought in ideas like “home-sharing,” “short-term rental,” and “peer-to-peer accommodation”.²⁸ Additionally, a number of hotels are starting to employ eco-friendly procedures and sustainable designs as a result of growing awareness of environmental issues and sustainable tourism. Terms such as “green hotel,” “eco-friendly accommodations,” “sustainability certifications,” and “carbon footprint reduction” also became widespread.²⁹

3. REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN HOTEL TERMINOLOGY

Due to linguistic, historical, and cultural variations³⁰, hotel terminology can vary greatly between locations. Standardized terminology has become necessary as the hotel sector has become more globalized, yet historical traditions, local customs, and regional preferences continue to influence hotel words and the services they offer.³¹

Such can be seen in hotel services, where despite the universal understanding of hotel services, regional variations in terminology might result in differences in the presentation and perception of these services. It is commonly known

27 Rahimi, R., & Kozak, M. Impact of Customer Relationship Management on Customer Satisfaction: The Case of a Budget Hotel Chain. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34, 2016. 1-12.

28 Guttentag, D. Progress on Airbnb: a literature review. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 10, 2019.

29 Papallou, E., Katafygiotou, M., & Dimopoulos, T. Emerging Sustainability Trends in Tourist Facilities: A Comparative Assessment of Multiple Hotels and Resorts. *Sustainability*, 16, 2024. 3536.

30 Gaballo, V. A touch of color: A linguistic analysis of the use of color terms in the language of tourism. Tourismskommunikation. In *Spannungsfeld von Sprach- und Kulturkontakt* (pp.119-140) Edition: Series “Arbeiten zur Sprachanalyse”, Series editor Konrad Ehlich Chapter. Peter Lang Editors: Doris Höhmann, 2013.

31 Rahayu, A. English Hotel Terminology Equivalence in Other Language. *World Journal of English Language*, 13, 2023. 88.

around the world that the “*conciierge*” is the member of the hotel employee who helps guests with their needs, but in countries such as Japan, this position can include delivering hyper-localized and personalized services, including the organization of personal cultural experiences.³² Next, the term “*bellboy*” is primarily used in the United States, while “*bellhop*” tends to be used in the United Kingdom.³³ Also, the term of “*room service*” is common; but, in specific countries, the types of services offered may vary. In European hotels, room service is usually regarded as a premium service, but in certain regions of the United States, it is seen as a typical service at mid-range and higher-end hotels.³⁴

Language also may generate diverse terminologies, even for fundamental hotel operations³⁵, whereas in European nations, the term “*reception*” is the popular term for the front desk where guests check in and check-out. However, in the United States, the term “*front desk*” is more widely used³⁶. Additionally, where most countries implement a star rating system (1 to 5 stars) to indicate hotel quality, some countries have other classifications. In the United States, the AAA Diamond rating system is commonly used, categorizing hotels from 1 to 5 diamonds.²⁴ Even by listing just a few examples, it is evident that the hotel terminology is rich in regional variations. By these regional variations, it is obvious how hotels tailor their services to local customs, languages, and consumer expectations.² However, ultimately wherever guests are, the goal is always to ensure comfortable and seamless experience for them.

Conclusion

As the hotel sector grew, hotel terminology evolved as well. The language changed to accommodate the demands of guests and employees, and operations as travel became increasingly widespread and the hotel sector became structured. After becoming increasingly standardized in the 19th

32 Bellini, N., & Convert, L. The Concierge. Tradition, Obsolescence and Innovation in Tourism. *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management*, 17, 2016.

33 Setiawan, E. *The role of bellboy in improving service quality in lor in hotel business resort and spa*, 2010. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/12347626.pdf>, (29.01.2025).

34 Zhang, Z., Li, H., & Law, R. Differences and Similarities in Perceptions of Hotel Experience: The Role of National Cultures. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32, 2015. 1-13.

35 Alsudairi, M., & Kamal, M. ICT policy for ICT service management - Role of business organisations in National Reforms Agenda for services sector. Proceedings of the European and Mediterranean Conference on Information Systems, EMCIS 2009.

36 Jagmohan, N. *Hospitality Reception and Front Office (Procedures and Systems)*. S. Chand Publishing, 2013.

century, terminology now includes a broad range of terms including anything from financial performance measures to guest services.

It is also a valuable tool in that it guides hotel employees through a sometimes-confusing language to better understand how to communicate the best practices in hospitality management. As discussed in this paper, these terms are essential in employees, managers, and guests working together to create superior service and satisfaction for the guests. Besides, it is also important to know how these terms are changing as it helps understand how the sector may change with new trends and technologies. It is evident how terms have evolved from mere operating terms to more complex phrases reflecting the growth of the sector across the globe and its technological development. Considering the hotel sector is always developing, it will be necessary to update this terminology on a regular basis to ensure that it meets the demands of a more global market and remains current and effective in professional as well as academic environments.

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