

**A STUDY ON ENGLISH TERMS USED BY THE STAFF OF FRONT  
OFFICE DEPARTMENT AT THE GRAND CLARION HOTEL  
MAKASSAR**

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**Abstract**

Register in Sociolinguistics is a form of language used for a special situation in a particular social setting, it also known as variety of language. In hotel industry, there are many kinds of English terms used by the staff both written and spoken. This study was designed to find out the English terms, the lexical meaning and the contextual meaning of the English special terms used by the staff of Front Office department in the Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The subject of this study is the staff of Front Office department. The data were obtained through participant observation, semi-structured interview and review of the documents. The result of the study showed that the majority of terms used in Front Office department were in English. The researcher found that there were many kinds of the English terms used by the Front Office department in the Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. In Front Office department, 85 (eighty five) English terms were found and 36 (thirty six) of them classified as the English special terms. English special terms have different meanings both lexical and contextual. These English terms in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is called register.

**Key words:** english terms, lexical meaning, contextual meaning, register

**Abstrak**

*Register dalam Sociolinguistik adalah merupakan bentuk bahasa yang digunakan untuk situasi khusus dalam lingkungan sosial tertentu, istilah itu juga dikenal sebagai variasi bahasa. Dalam industri perhotelan, ada banyak jenis istilah bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh staf baik lisan maupun tulisan. Penelitian ini dirancang untuk mengetahui istilah-istilah bahasa Inggris, makna leksikal dan makna kontekstual dari istilah khusus bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh staf Front Office departemen di Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah para staf di departemen Front*

*Office. Data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara semi-terstruktur dan dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar istilah yang digunakan di departemen Front Office adalah dalam bahasa Inggris. Peneliti menemukan bahwa ada banyak jenis istilah bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh departemen Front Office di Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. Di departemen Front Office, 85 (delapan puluh lima) istilah bahasa Inggris ditemukan dan 36 (tiga puluh enam) diantaranya diklasifikasikan sebagai istilah khusus dalam bahasa Inggris. Istilah khusus ini memiliki arti yang berbeda secara leksikal dan kontekstual. Istilah-istilah khusus bahasa Inggris ini kemudian dalam English for Spesific Purposes (ESP) disebut register.*

**Kata kunci:** *istilah khusus bahasa Inggris, makna leksikal, makna kontekstual, register*

## **Introduction**

The use of language between one speaker with other speakers varies. The difference is motivated by the situations and the role of speaker as a member of communities, namely in terms of place of birth, residence, education, social groups, work environment and others. Speakers use language appropriate to his needs. For example, the language of hospitality will vary with the medical language. The differences in the use of language can create particularities or special terms on language.

Therefore, the function of English as a common language played a significant role in the hotel business, especially English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The officers of the hotel needed to prepare for English skill usage during working. In the hotel, English language commonly used as a second language not only to communicate with the foreign guests but it is also used in hotel brochures, room names, hotel facilities and other services. In the hotel business, English is used as the lingua Franca and it is the most commonly used languages in the hotel industry worldwide (Blue & Harun, 2003:77).

Vlack (2006:2) stated that different groups are going to use obviously different vocabulary items, but are also going to need to use formulaic expressions as well as maybe even different structural uses of language. The differences in the use of language can create particularities or special terms on language, in other word, people create a special term in a specific situation depends on the residence,

education, social groups, work environment and others. For example, the language of hospitality will vary with the medical language.

This study discussed the specificity of the language used in hospitality. As we currently know, the number of hotel chains in Makassar was increasing significantly. The Tribun Timur newspaper reported that there were twenty six new hotels opened in Makassar during 2012, and there are thirty one hotels in 2013. The International Hotel Association's report on the challenges facing hotels recommends that employers in the industry ensure adequate training at all levels including improving language tuition Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill in Hobson (1998:9). The main concern in the hospitality industry is the quality and availability of staff who can speak English well. This problem can be directly linked to hospitality education institutes and universities involved.

In the hotel business, English is used as the lingua Franca and it is the most commonly used languages in the hotel industry worldwide (Blue & Harun, 2003:77). Therefore, it is important to do field research related to particular English language in hotel industry, the findings could be used as a guideline or reference, information and material for ESP practitioners, curriculum designer and especially for those who are interested in English for hotel staff and for those who will be or are currently having a career in the hotel industry.

### **Register in ESP**

The register has a different meaning to different people and different field of study use different perception. The concept of register comes under the larger concept of language variation in applied linguistics. According to some applied linguists there are two main types of variation in language, i.e. variation based on the user of language and variation based on the use of language (Gregory 1967). According to Hudson (1980:48), the term register is widely used in sociolinguistics to refer to '*varieties are according to use*'. The term register was first used by the linguist Thomas Bertram Reid in 1956 and brought into general currency in the 1960s by a group of linguists who wanted to distinguish between variations in language according to the *user* (defined by variables such as social background, geography, sex and age) and variations according to *use*, in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and choices between them at different

times (Halliday in Hudson, 1980 ). The focus is on the way language was used in particular situations, such as the language of a biology research lab, of a news report, or of the bedroom.

Language varies according to the situation in which it is used and these varieties of language can be referred to as registers. If we examine a text we can make guesses about the situation; on the other hand, if we are in a particular situation we make certain linguistic choices based on that situation. In other words, the language we use needs to be appropriate to the situation in which we use it.

Language could be a powerful interface, uniting a group of social communities and could develop the language itself. The use of language between one speaker with other speakers varies. The difference is motivated by the situations and the role of speaker as a member of communities, namely in terms of place of birth, residence, education, social groups, work environment and others. Speakers use language appropriate to his needs. For example, the language of hospitality will vary with the medical language. Thus, the differences in the use of language that creates a quirk or special terms on language.

Moreover, the differences between general and particular language could be seen by the meanings. Every word in English has lexical meanings, but not contextual meanings, the word or phrase that has a contextual meaning then called special language or particular language. The list of particular words then called register in ESP.

In line with the above explanation, the basic idea behind register analysis is that in different situations people will shift into different registers. In the 1960s researchers began to become more interested in social aspects of language and what they found was that a single individual in the course of a day would change the way they spoke many, many different times. Ellis & Johnson in Vlack (2006:2) said that “register analysis is research of such changes”.

Register analysis is a necessary first step in an analysis of the linguistic needs of students in ESP Courses. Register analysis can guide teachers in the selection and preparation of materials that should by their content validity

motivate students to learn. Register analysis thus helps ensure appropriateness of content.

Register analysis is not a new idea the idea of actually teaching different registers for. Johnson & Ellis in Vlack (2006:2) describe one of the main goals in developing a particular curriculum in ESP, that is by teaching students in the lines they will actually need (a particular register) in a specific situation or group in which they might need to work or function.

The development of related books in a particular situation, such as a training book for hotel staff, computer engineers and even academics are closely related to the basic idea of a register. In ESP practitioner needs to get a fairly good idea of how the register which they will be trying to teach is actually composed (Vlack, 2006).

Register analysis has benefited greatly from new developments in linguistics. Compared to analyses in the past which were based on a limited amount of spoken and/or written data, we can now analyze millions of words from any register to determine the characteristic linguistic and discourse features.

### **English for Hotel**

Communication skill in English language is important in the hotel industry. The language of this industry is quite clearly English in an international context, but it is also the language of meeting needs, of providing high levels of service, of understanding people, of delighting people, of solving problems. In the hotel, English language commonly used as a second language not only to communicate with the foreign guests but it is also used in hotel brochures, room names, hotel facilities and other services. “In the hotel business, English is used as the lingua Franca and is the most commonly used languages in the hotel industry worldwide” (Blue and Harun, 2003:77).

English for Hotel is designed for students who plan to take a course in the area of hotel industry entirely or partly in English. The principal aim of English for Hotel is to teach students to cope with input texts, i.e., Listening and reading, in the discipline. The syllabus focuses on key vocabulary for the discipline and on words and phrases commonly used in academic and technical English. It covers

key facts and concepts of the discipline, thereby giving students a flying start for when they meet the same points again in their faculty work. Grammar will be important, but, as with most ESP (English for Specific Purposes), grammar should be treated as the slave not the master. Based on the researcher experience in the hotel industry, all stages in the hotel are usually integrated with a certain public understanding of the language used. For example, arrival is associated with greetings and departure with farewells. Between these two stages, there might be light-humorous exchanges or serious conversation, covering a whole range of communicative activities.

Language at the hotel is often formal and polite; this is known as 'Hospitality Language'. The hospitality here refers to the cluster of activities oriented towards satisfying guests. 'Hospitality language' refers to all linguistic expressions which relate to and represent hospitality concerns" (Blue & Harun, 2003:74). In addition, they said that "hospitality language covers at least four discernible stages: arrival, familiarization, engagement and departure". The hospitality industry is the relationship between guest and host, or the act or practice of being hospitable. Even though in Indonesia there is a tendency to use the Bahasa Indonesia when communicating with those from the same linguistic background, English is still regarded as important in multi-ethnic contexts such as hotels.

English for hotel industry can be viewed as an area of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) there is a substantial overlap with General Purpose English (GPE). In the hotel industry, verbal and non-verbal messages are conveyed and exchanged and both staff and guest conform to certain predictable behavior when addressing each other. For hoteliers, eye contact in communication means being attentive and thus caring for the customers. It also indicates politeness. According to Blue & Harun (2003:87), there are a wide variety of terms dealing with hospitality in most cultures; the hospitality register for the English language is quite extensive. Due to the rapid growth of tourism and the hotel industry, it is important to consider offering relevant courses to students, for two reasons. Firstly, there is a need to equip those seeking entry into the service industry, particularly those who will be operating through a foreign language, as

employees are required to have a good command of this language. Secondly, it is arguable that everybody ought to know hospitality language because at some stage in our life, we may all have to be a host or a guest in a variety of cross-cultural situations (Blue & Harun, 2003:87).

### **Findings and Discussion**

Front Office is an office usually situated in the lobby of the hotel, whose primary function is to control the sale of guest rooms, maintain guest accounts, render bills, receive payments as well as providing information to other departments within the hotel. The following data obtained through observation, interview and review of documents from the several sections that exist in the Front Office (FO) department such as Reservation, Receptionist, Concierge (Bell Boy/Girl), Guest Relation Officer (GRO) and Telephone operators.

All staff in Front Office (FO) department used *Bahasa Indonesia* in daily communication both to co-workers and local guests. However, in FO department the ability of the staff in speaking English much better, especially for them who in charge as *front liners* such as receptionist, Guest Relation Officer, Operators and the Supervisor. Moreover, most of the terms used in the Front Office department were similar or interconnected with the terms used in the Housekeeping department because both departments were strongly associated with each other as the room division.

The researcher found that the majority of the staff in the Front Office department used English terms to mention the name of the services and rooms. From observation, interview and review the documents, the researcher found 85 (eighty five) varieties of English terms used by the staff of the Front Office department included the general and special terms.

There were several of English special terms found when the researcher observing the activities of the staff in the Front Office department. First, the researcher observed the Guest Service Agent (GSA) or receptionists. Here, some English special terms were found such as check in, check out, concierge, single room, double bed, walk in guest, guest in house, skipper, double occupancy, double locked, morning call, long stay etc.

The researcher heard the Operator staff mentioned the term *morning call* after receiving a guest call from the room. Based on the information from the Operator staff who said that the guest asked to be woken up at 5 am and the term used for this service called the *morning call*, the staff also explained that the term *morning call* in several hotels called *wake up call*.

The following extract got from the conversation transcript in observation shows the contextual situation and contextual meaning of the terms bell boy and concierge which used by the staff of the Front Office department.

**Extract 6 (Front Office-recording 4)**

This conversation occurred in the Front Office counter between Receptionist (R) and Guest (G).

16. R :Ibu, kamarnya di lantai sembilan, kamar 981/*sembilan delapan satu*/  
ya Ibu. Ini *key cardnya* /*ki kad*/, kunci kamarnya Ibu.  
Transl: ‘Ma’am, your room is in the ninth floor, room number 981.  
This is your key card’.
17. *Bell boy* /*belboi*/ kami akan mengantar Ibu ke kamar. Mohon ditunggu  
Transl: ‘Our bell boy will show you the room’
18. G :Iya...makasih  
Transl: ‘Yes, thank you’
19. Say, telpon dulu *conciierge* /*konsierj*/minta satu orang kesini. (*Talking to another receptionist*)  
Transl: ‘Say, could you please call the *conciierge*, please ask one of them to escort the guest’.

In the extract (6) above, after the check-in process, the receptionist asked her co-worker to call concierge, in line 17 she said ‘*Bell boy kami akan engantar Ibu ke kamar. Mohon ditunggu*’ and then in line 18 she said ‘*Say, telpon dulu conciierge minta satu orang kesini*’. In this case the receptionist implied one of the duties of the concierge. The extract (6) also shows the contextual situation of concierge in the hotel. There were two kinds of English terms mentioned in the extract (6) namely concierge and bellboy. *Conciierge* was a word in which derived from France language. The lexical meaning of these terms in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as follows:



Concierge : a hotel employee who assists guests by booking tour, making theatre and restaurant reservation.

Bellboy : a porter in a hotel or club.

Whereas, the contextual meaning of *concierge* was a section in the Front Office consisted of *bellboy/maid* or *doorman/girl* which in charge of delivering the guests' luggage to the room and also providing information for the hotel guests.

Another English term obtained through observation and interview in the Front Office department was *guest in house*. This term also found in the Housekeeping and F&B department. The Lexical meaning of *guest in house* discovered from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as follows:

Guest : a person staying in a hotel or boarding house.

In : inside (a room)

House : a building for human habitation.

In the interview with the staff the researcher found the contextual meaning of this term, as follows:

'Guest in house *yaitu staff atau orang hotel sendiri yang menginap dan kamarnya tidak di charge.* (Guest in house is the hotel staff who stayed in the rooms without payment or free....)'

(Source: FO-reservation staff)

Corresponding to the interview result above, the contextual meaning of guest in house was "a hotel staff that stayed in the rooms without payment or free". The staffs who stay as the guest in house usually were the hotel Manager which on duty or sometimes the owner of the hotel. The following observation transcript shows the contextual situation of guest in house in the hotel.

#### **Extract 7 (Housekeeping-recording 5)**

This conversation occurred in Pantry 9 among Room Attendant (R), Mini Bar attendant (MB) dan Room Supervisor (SPV).

1. MB :Ki..(nama) kamar 1017/sepuluh tujuh belas/ sama 1020 /sepuluh dua puluh/ siapa tamunya...ONL/o en el/ ki kah?

Transl: 'Ki..(name) room 1017 and 1020 who are the guests...is it ONL?

5. SPV :Beeuh..1017 tidak *ONL /o en el/* itu...*guest in house/ges in haus/* Chef /syef/ di dalam.

Transl: 'Well...1017 is not ONL room...that room is guest in house room...the Chef is occupying that room'

8. SPV : 1020 /*sepuluh dua puluh/* MOD/*em o de/* sebentar malam itu...belum na tempatı memang.

Transl: 'Room 1020 is MOD's room for tonight but he has not occupying his room yet'.

In the extract (7) the Supervisor in line 5 said '*Beeuh...1017 tidak ONL itu...guest in house...Chef didalam*'. Here, it can be seen the contextual situation of the term *guest in house* which refer to the status of the guest who occupying the room. The supervisor said that the room status was not ONL (Occupied No Luggage) but *guest in house* room because the Chef is occupying the room. Chef is the head of F&B department and the hotel staffs who stay as the guest in house usually the manager or department head that was on duty, this was in line with what the supervisor said in line 8 '*1020 MOD sebentar malam itu...belum na tempatı memang*', here the MOD was the abbreviation of Manager on Duty or in other word MOD was the staff of the hotel.

Other terms used in the Front Office department was *walking guest* and *Guest Relation Officer*. The Lexical meaning of *walking guest* based on the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as follows:

Walk (ing) : move at a regular pace by fitting and setting down each foot in turn.

Guest : a person staying in a hotel or boarding house.

The contextual meaning of walking guest based on the answered of the informant in interview session above was the guest who checks-in without an advance reservation. This term also used by the staff of Food & Beverage department to describe the outside guests who come to eat at the restaurant or Cafe. Walking guest was the guests who are not registered in the expected arrival form of the reservation staff. The following transcript shows the contextual situation of walking guest in a hotel.

**Extract 8 (Housekeeping-recording 9)**

This conversation occurred via HT (Handy Talkie) between Receptionist (R) and Housekeeping staff (HK).

5. R :Resky (*nama*)...ada tamu mau *showing room* /'sowing rum/  
Transl: 'Resky (*name*)... there is a guest would showing room'
6. HK :*Floor/flor*/ berapa?  
Transl: 'In what floor?'
7. R :Lima.. 522 /*lima dua-dua*/ dan 533 /*lima tiga-tiga*/ dia mau lihat *Deluxe* /*de 'laks*/ sama *Honeymoon* /'hani, mun/  
Transl; 'In the fifth floor..room 522 and 533, she want to see Deluxe and Honeymoon rooms'.
8. HK :Tidak ada di *list/lis*/ ku *showing Honeymoon* / *sowing 'hani, mun*/ hari ini...  
Transl: 'There is no in my list for showing Honeymoon today'
9. R :Iya, say...*walking guest*/ 'walkIng gest/ itu, ada *event wedding* /*I'ven wedIng*/ nya akhir bulan nanti.  
Transl: 'Yes, you're right, she is the walking guest and will hold a wedding ceremony at the end of the month'.

In the extract (8), the Housekeeping staff (HK) in line 8 said '*Tidak ada di listku showing Honeymoon hari*', it can be interpreted that the room was not booked in advance. Then in line 9 the receptionist said '*Iya, say...walking guest itu, ada event weddingnya akhir bulan nanti*'. Here, the receptionist clarified the status of the guest as the walking guest.

The lexical meaning of *Guest Relation Officer* in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as follows:

Guest : a person staying in a hotel or boarding house.

Relation : the way in which two or more people or things are connected or related.

Officer : a person holding a position of authority

In the interview the staff explained the meaning of the terms GRO and walking guest, as follows:

‘*Guest in house* yaitu staff atau orang hotel sendiri yang menginap dan kamarnya tidak di charge (*Guest in house* is the hotel staff who stayed without payment or free)’

‘*GRO* itu *guest relation officer* tugasnya melayani tamu yang mau showing room atau keperluan tamu yang lain (*GRO* is the guest relation officer, her job is serving guests in showing room or other purposes)’

‘kalau *walking guest* itu tamu yang check in tanpa reservasi dulu (if..the *walking guest* is the guests who check in without reservation in advance)’

(Source: FO-Reservation staff)

The contextual meaning of *Guest Relation Officer (GRO)* based on the response from the informant in the interview above was a term refers to an officer in the Front Office department who in charge serving guests who want showing room, the delivery guest in the room and other purposes like giving information to the guest associated the hotel facilities and services.

GRO was a job title for a staff of the Front Office department who in charge as a marketing of the Front Office. The GRO staff usually was a girl and she must have a good communication skill both in *Bahasa Indonesia* and English language by the reason that their duty as the guest relation.

In the interview above, the informant also described the contextual meaning of *skipper* as the guests who check out without reporting and sometimes they did not pay the room bill. While the Lexical meaning of *skipper* discovered from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary was a person or thing that skips or a captain of a ship. In the hotel, this term refer to the status of the guest that already checks out.

The analysis above clearly shows the difference between the lexical or dictionary meaning and the contextual meaning of the English terms used by the staff in the Front Office department.

The following table was the variety of the English special terms found in the Front Office department.

Table Varieties of the English Special Terms in Front Office

No.	English Terms	No.	English Terms
1.	Check in (v)	19.	Family Suite Club (n)
2.	Check out (v)	20.	Executive Suite (n)
3.	Concierge (n)	21.	Executive Suite Club (n)
4.	Guest Relation Officer (GRO) (n)	22.	President Suite (n)
5.	Guest Service Agent (GSA) (n)	23.	Room Status (Adj)
6.	Double Room (n)	24.	Expected Arrival Sheet (n)
7.	Single Room (n)	25.	Expected Departure Sheet (n)
8.	Twin Room (n)	26.	Extend (Adj)
9.	Superior room (n)	27.	Morning call (v)
10.	Deluxe room (n)	28.	Do not Change (Adj)
11.	Deluxe pool room (n)	29.	High Season (Adj)
12.	Deluxe Junior Room (n)	30.	Low Season (Adj)
13.	Deluxe Junior Pool (n)	31.	Skipper (n)
14.	Junior Suite (n)	32.	Compliment (n)
15.	Deluxe Pool Side (n)	33.	Walking Guest (n)
16.	Junior Suite Club (n)	34.	Long Stay (Adj)
17.	Guest history (n)	35.	Guest comment (n)
18.	Double Occupancy (Adj)	36.	Double-locked (Adj)

The table above shows the kinds of English special terms used by the staff of the Front Office department in the Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. The English terms found consisted of noun, verb and adjective. There were twenty five terms in the form of Noun, three terms in the form of Verb and eight terms in the form of Adjective. The researcher concluded that most of the English special terms used by the staff of Front Office were also in the form of Noun. The terms above commonly used by the staff in day-to-day work, such as in the reservation process, check in and checkout process, room name, kinds of forms and any kinds of services.

Nevertheless, the researcher also collecting data through review of the documents. The kinds of documents used by the staff of the Front Office department such as the registration form, this form were used when the guest checks in at the hotel. Then, the reservation form and Reservation of confirmation letter these forms used when the guest wants to book or request for the room by phone or directly, this form was filled by the reservation staff, after that the reservation staff filled the reservation slip. Other forms used in this department such as guest history, meal coupon, welcome drink, welcome letter, any kinds of receipt, Arrival list, Departure list, VIP list, Guest in House list, Change room form etc.

In conclusion, the researcher found that in Front Office department there were 85 English terms and 36 of them were identified as the English special terms. The majority of the terms used in Front Office department are in the form of Noun. Segreteria (2013:4) writes that “the abbreviations can often be found in more informal registers”, this was in accordance with what the researcher found in Front Office department at the Grand Clarion Hotel Makassar. Commonly the staff used abbreviation in English terms, for example, they said VD to for Vacant Dirty, VR for Vacant Ready, DND for Do not Disturb, ONL for Occupied no Luggage, OC for Occupied, etc. The English terms used by the staff in the GCHM have become a habit which was spoken in daily communication. Consequently, sometimes they do not realize that the word they uttered was the English term. The staffs also have no difficulty in recognizing the meaning of the terms, although most of the staff mentioned the English terms were not in accordance with the Standard English pronunciation.

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