

Corpus on Complaints

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The corpus contains several texts about complaints related to the field of tourism, such as in the hotels, in the restaurants, letters of complaints and their replies. The first part is taken from the textbook F. Cenesi “*Have a nice trip*” Posedonia, while the second part is made up of several protests of real people who wrote about their negative experience in booking a hotel or eating in a restaurant.

Total number of <i>Words</i>	6353
Total number of <i>Word Types</i>	1329

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The most frequent 100 words used in the corpus

With the help of AntConc 2.4.1. I made up a list containing the most frequent 100 words used in the Corpus. In the first column I put the number indicating its frequency, in the second column the word and in the third column the numbers of times it appears in the corpus.

[1]	the	361
[2]	I	233
[3]	to	182
[4]	and	139
[5]	a	137
[6]	of	115
[7]	you	104
[8]	is + 's	95
[9]	that	93
[10]	have	91
[11]	room	80
[12]	It	76
[13]	in	75
[14]	for	74
[15]	was	68
[16]	we	66
[17]	hotel	62
[18]	Mr	55
[19]	my	53
[20]	on	53
[21]	will	52
[22]	this	51
[23]	they	50
[24]	am + 'm	48
[25]	as	45
[26]	at	41
[27]	your	41
[28]	be	39
[29]	not	39
[30]	with	39
[31]	receptionist	37

[34]	been	32
[35]	manager	31
[36]	but	30
[37]	all	28
[38]	from	27
[39]	do	26
[40]	guest	26
[42]	Sorry	26
[43]	Very	26
[44]	Would	26
[45]	There	25
[46]	So	23
[47]	Staff	23
[48]	Service	22
[49]	Mrs	21
[50]	Are	18
[51]	Our	18
[52]	Them	18
[53]	No	17
[54]	One	17
[55]	Sir	17
[56]	Were	17
[57]	don't	15
[58]	Find	15
[59]	If	15
[60]	What	15
[61]	Like	14
[62]	Well	14
[63]	When	14
[64]	About	13
[65]	Booked	13

[68]	By	12
[69]	Has	12
[70]	Madam	12
[71]	Out	12
[72]	something	12
[73]	Time	12
[74]	Back	11
[75]	Could	11
[76]	Get	11
[77]	How	11
[78]	letter	11
[79]	management	11
[80]	must	11
[81]	told	11
[82]	also	10
[83]	another	10
[84]	card	10
[85]	complaints	10
[86]	double	10
[87]	good	10
[88]	he	10
[89]	hotels	10
[90]	or	10
[91]	reservation	10
[92]	should	10
[93]	then	10
[94]	call	9
[95]	once	9
[96]	other	9
[97]	right	9
[98]	rooms	9

[32]	can	35
[33]	me	34

[66]	Kitchen	13
[67]	An	12

[99]	shower	9
[100]	take	9

Percentages of the most frequent words into grammatical categories

Nouns	23%
Verbs	19%
Prepositions	12%
Adverbs	11%
Pronouns	10%
Adjectives	10%
Conjunctions and linking words	6%
Modals	6%
Articles	3%

In the first 100 words of the Corpus the most frequent items belong to the noun category, in fact there are more nouns than verbs and adjectives. The 23 % of the words are nouns, the 19% are verbs and only the 10% are adjectives. Furthermore there are more prepositions (12%) and adverbs (11%) than adjectives (10%).

List of the most frequent nouns

[1]	room(s)	89
[2]	hotel(s)	72
[3]	receptionist	37
[4]	manager	31
[5]	guest(s)	30
[6]	staff	23
[7]	service	22
[8]	complaint(s)	18
[9]	something	12
[10]	time	12
[11]	letter	11
[12]	management	11
[13]	card	10
[14]	customer(s)	10
[15]	delay(s)	10
[16]	linen(s)	10
[17]	night(s)	10

[39]	steak	6
[40]	wine	6
[41]	work	6
[42]	charges	5
[43]	elevators	5
[44]	food	5
[45]	internet	5
[46]	issue	5
[47]	key	5
[48]	party	5
[49]	person	5
[50]	team	5
[51]	company	4
[52]	confirmation	4
[53]	courtesy	4
[54]	evening	4
[55]	hours	4

[77]	department	3
[78]	details	3
[79]	door	3
[80]	facilities	3
[81]	floor	3
[82]	group	3
[83]	honour	3
[84]	house	3
[85]	inn	3
[86]	leader	3
[87]	luggage	3
[88]	maid	3
[89]	meal	3
[90]	number	3
[91]	office	3
[92]	place	3
[93]	point	3

[17]	night(s)	10
[18]	reservation	10
[19]	mail + email	9
[20]	restaurant(s)	9
[21]	shower	9
[22]	waiter	9
[23]	cit(ies)	8
[24]	credit	8
[25]	price	8
[26]	problem	8
[27]	water	8
[28]	day(s)	7
[29]	morning	7
[30]	porter	7
[31]	bed	6
[32]	change	6
[33]	comments	6
[34]	excuse	6
[35]	matter	6
[36]	people	6
[37]	quote	6
[38]	reception	6

[55]	hours	4
[56]	minutes	4
[57]	mistake	4
[58]	notice	4
[59]	page	4
[60]	reply	4
[61]	sea	4
[62]	system	4
[63]	access	3
[64]	afternoon	3
[65]	amount	3
[66]	bath	3
[67]	booking	3
[68]	bracelet	3
[69]	building	3
[70]	case	3
[71]	check-in-date	3
[72]	communication	3
[73]	contact	3
[74]	cost	2
[75]	date	3
[76]	delivery	3

[93]	point	3
[94]	quality	3
[95]	response	3
[96]	solution	3
[97]	statement	3
[98]	step	3
[99]	table	3
[100]	things	3

List of the most frequent verbs

[1]	have + 've	97	[38]	given	6
[2]	was	68	[39]	offer	6
[3]	will + 'll	52	[40]	think	6
[4]	is	51	[41]	work	6
[5]	be	39	[42]	ask	5
[6]	can	35	[43]	called	5
[7]	been	32	[44]	cancel	5
[8]	do	26	[45]	eat	5
[9]	had	26	[46]	go	5
[10]	would	26	[47]	hear	5
[11]	are	18	[48]	help	5
[12]	were	17	[49]	hope	5
[13]	am	16	[50]	made	5
[14]	find	15	[51]	received	5
[15]	like	14	[52]	said	5
[16]	booked	13	[53]	say	5
[17]	has	12	[54]	sent	5
[18]	could	11	[55]	pay	4
[19]	get	11	[56]	reply	4
[20]	must	11	[57]	run	4
[21]	told	11	[58]	use	4
[22]	should	10	[59]	written	4
[23]	call	9	[60]	apologise	3
[24]	take	9	[61]	appreciated	3
[25]	did	8	[62]	arrived	3
[26]	look	8	[63]	bring	3
[27]	shall	8	[64]	check	3
[28]	thank	8	[65]	clean	3
[29]	charged	7	[66]	contacted	3
[30]	put	7	[67]	cost	3
[31]	see	7	[68]	discovered	3
[32]	wait	7	[69]	explained	3
[33]	want	7	[70]	failed	3
[34]	refund	7	[71]	giving	3
[35]	asked	6	[72]	going	3

[35]	asked	6	[72]	going	3
[36]	complain	6	[73]	haven't	3
[37]	found	6	[74]	heard	3
[75]	leave	3			
[76]	make	3			
[77]	missing	3			
[78]	paid	3			
[79]	promised	3			
[80]	provided	3			
[81]	reserved	3			
[82]	send	3			
[83]	spoke	3			
[84]	tell	3			
[85]	try	3			
[86]	understand	3			
[87]	wanted	3			
[88]	won't	3			
[89]	yet	3			
[90]	accepted	2			
[91]	according	2			
[92]	advise	2			
[93]	appeared	2			
[94]	arrange	2			
[95]	arrives	2			
[96]	asking	2			
[97]	accepted	2			
[98]	advise	2			
[99]	appeared	2			
[100]	arrange	2			
[101]	arrives	2			

List of the most frequent adjectives

[1]	sorry	26	[38]	rated	3
[2]	well	14	[39]	representative	3
[3]	good	10	[40]	able	2
[4]	right	9	[41]	accepted	2
[5]	please	8	[42]	cheapest	2
[6]	sure	7	[43]	concerned	3
[7]	worry	7	[44]	disturbing	2
[8]	fast	6	[45]	raw	2
[9]	glad	6	[46]	ready	2
[10]	interested	6	[47]	recent	2
[11]	better	5	[48]	sufficient	2
[12]	dry	5	[49]	tasteless	2
[13]	issued	5	[50]	total	2
[14]	kind	5	[51]	tough	2
[15]	nice	5	[52]	unable	2
[16]	noisy	5	[53]	unreasonable	2
[17]	dear	4	[54]	upset	2
[18]	disgusting	4	[55]	vacant	2
[19]	hot	4	[56]	valuable	2
[20]	responsible	4	[57]	whole	2
[21]	ridiculous	4	[58]	worst	2
[22]	several	4			
[23]	short	4			

[23]	short	4		
[24]	slow	4		
[25]	standard	4		
[26]	wrong	4		
[27]	clear	3		
[28]	corked	3		
[29]	different	3		
[30]	late	3		
[31]	legal	3		
[32]	little	3		
[33]	missing	3		
[34]	most	3		
[35]	new	3		
[36]	original	3		
[37]	possible	3		

List of the most frequent adverbs

[1]	once	9
[2]	soon	8
[3]	far	7
[4]	first	7
[5]	certainly	6
[6]	immediately	6
[7]	now	6
[8]	quite	6
[9]	still	6
[10]	only	5
[11]	just	4
[12]	rather	4
[13]	again	3
[14]	extremely	3
[15]	later	3
[16]	terribly	3
[17]	too	3
[18]	already	2
[19]	directly	2
[20]	even	2
[21]	faithfully	2
[22]	hardly	2
[23]	however	2
[24]	indeed	2
[25]	obviously	2
[26]	particularly	2
[27]	properly	2
[28]	really	2
[29]	unfortunately	2

Core Vocabulary

This is the **core vocabulary** of the target specialised language for the four word classes of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives that I have analysed.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
room	find	sorry	once
hotel	book	right	soon
receptionist	call	please	far
manager	take	sure	first
staff	look	worry	certainly
guest	thank	afraid	immediately
service	charge	better	still
complaint	put	best	just
letter	see	bad	rather
management	wait	cold	again
card	want	dear	extremely
customer	ask	disgusting	later
delay	complain	hot	terribly
linen	give	responsible	too
reservation	offer	ridiculous	directly
mail + email	cancel	standard	faithfully
restaurant	eat	wrong	hardly
shower	check	clear	however
waiter	hear	corked	indeed
credit	help	different	obviously
price	hope	late	particularly
problem	make	legal	properly
change	receive	little	unfortunately
quote	refund	missing	
reception	sent		
porter	pay		
confirmation	reply		
amount	apologise		
booking	appreciate		
charge	refund		

Minimal core vocabulary

It is a limited number of items that are essential in the target variety of language. It is the final outcome of the quantitative analysis carried on so far. It tells you what is used, but not how it is used. In the following chart there are the smallest number of words our students should know are:

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
receptionist	book	disgusting	immediately
manager	charge	responsible	extremely
staff	complain	ridiculous	terribly
guest	cancel	standard	unfortunately
service	check	wrong	faithfully

complaint	refund	corked	
management	apologise	legal	
customer		missing	
delay			
reservation			
price			
confirmation			
porter			
booking			

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This kind of analysis is useful to understand in what way English for tourism, in particularly related to complaints, is different from everyday language. In this analysis I will take into consideration several aspects such as: technical words, nominalizations, compound words, concordances verbs and so on.

COMMON AND TECHNICAL WORDS:

In this corpus there are many general words that have a high frequency in this specific field. Some of these very frequent common words are **room, hotel, find, call, want**.

As regards the technical words for example for the verbs there are **book, charge, complain, cancel check, refund apologise**. This verbs have a specific use, because they are the typical verbs used by workers and customers when they are talking about a topic related to complaints in tourism.

TYPICAL LINGUISTIC PATTERN AND THEIR FUNCTIONS:

SUGGEST THAT

There is only one occurrence of this pattern and it occurs at the first person. This pattern is used in occasions when the waiter for example needs to give an advise with kindness, without hurting the costumer's sensibility. Moreover this pattern is accompanied with the use of the modal "may", which has the function of to express possibility and give suggestions.

- ❖ May I **suggest that** *another time, you try the*

NOMINALIZATIONS

Unfortunately in the corpus there aren't many nominalizations. Nominalization is a process which transforms verbs, adverbs or adjectives into nouns to shorten the discourse. Some example of nominalization are **booking** (noun from verb), **productivity** (noun from verb), **cleanliness** (noun from a verb), **business** (noun from adjective), **courtesy** (noun from adjective), **decency** (noun from adjective).

- ❖ A complaint about a **booking**.

COMPOUND WORDS:

In the corpus there aren't many of compound words: **check-in-date, e-mail**.

Among the compound words there are the **compound nouns**, in which the word (adjective, verb...) that appears before the noun modifies and specifies the meaning of the noun, for example **kitchen staff, housekeeping staff, hotel staff**.

CONCORDANCES:

Modals:

The whole corpus is characterized by an extensive use of modals. Generally their use is the same than in general English. It is worth noting that English for tourism needs a wide use of modals, because while workers of this field deal with their costumers need to be polite, to suggest, but also to indicate what they can and can't do. Using modal workers and clients establish the right co-ordinates for a clear understanding.

Can

Can occurs 35 times in the corpus. Its use is not different from general English. It is used to express possibility and ability.

- ❖ I booked it a week ago. You **can't** have let it to somebody else.
- ❖ I do hope you **can** arrange something for us.
- ❖ Perhaps he **can** suggest something.
- ❖ **Can** I help you sir?
- ❖ **Can** I speak to the manager?

May

May occurs only 2 times in the texts belonging to the corpus. Its use does not seem different from general English. It is used to express possibility and give suggestions.

- ❖ ... **May** I suggest that another time,
- ❖ ... and **may** be put me in touch with them.

Should

This modal occurs 10 times in the corpus. It's use is not different from general English. It is used to give to the costumers suggestions and recommendations.

- ❖ You **should** have left any valuables with.....
- ❖ Housekeeping **should** have checked your room.
- ❖ The waiter **should** have changed it.
- ❖ Your brochure stated that we **should** be accommodated in first class
- ❖ I think your company **should** consider giving a refund...
- ❖ ... rated premises as a minimum **should**: oOffer Local information to a
- ❖ ... pricing and conditions **should** also be made clear prior to ..
- ❖ as a minimum these wishes **should** be catered for.

Would

This modal occurs 26 times in the corpus, in fact it has a very important function in a corpus about tourism. First of all, it is the modal of courtesy. It is also used as a conditional and in hypothetical clauses.

- ❖ **Would** you like something else?
- ❖ If you **would** like to take them into the...
- ❖ If you **would** give me the number of your firm...
- ❖ I **would** like to express my concern at...
- ❖ ...simple courtesy of a response **would** be nice. A right of reply let...
- ❖ First and Foremost I **would** like you to put yourselves in...
- ❖ I **would** assume that your staff would have developed their.....
- ❖ I had been told the hotel **would** take care of it.
- ❖ During a shower the water **would** run cold and then we had to..

Will

This modal occurs 25 times in the corpus. It is not only used for the future, but also to indicate a quick adjustment of the problem, namely that the complaint of the customer would be immediately resolved. Finally it is used as a kind of recommendation.

- ❖ ...arranged for transport to take you all and your luggage, it **will** be here in about ten minutes.
- ❖ A lot of our guests **will** be leaving tomorrow. I **will** find you a very nice room. Don't worry
- ❖have been a mistake when your room was reserved. I apologise and **will** change your room as soon as I possibly could.
- ❖ ...a hotel quite near here can accommodate your party. I'm sure you **will** be very comfortable there for tonight and we look forward to...
- ❖ I **will** personally make enquires about this matter.
- ❖ I do apologize, madam. The housekeeping staff **will** clean everything up
- ❖ ... but the hotel is quite full at the moment but a lot of guests **will** be leaving the day after tomorrow and then I can you give the room...
- ❖ ... mistake. You won't forget to change my room as soon as possible, **will** you?
- ❖ Well, I do hope you'll find them. Porter: I'm sure, we **will**, madam.
- ❖ I hope your service improves soon. Manager: Don't worry, Mrs... It **will**.

Shall

This modal occurs 8 times in the corpus. It is used mainly in the first person both singular and plural. It is used to convey a future meaning and to when it is in the form "I/we shall have to + verb" it means that an imminent action that is strongly recommended to do.

- ❖ We are afraid we are fully booked for tonight. I **shall** have to ask the manager. Perhaps he can suggest something.
- ❖ ... I can you give the room you wanted. Guest: Well, I suppose I **shall** have to wait. It was a very careless mistake.
- ❖ Well, madam, we'll do all we can but if it is missing, we **shall** have to call the police.
- ❖ And it's been stolen by one of your people, so I **shall** expect the hotel management to pay me for it...
- ❖ ... to advise them to be more careful in future or we **shall** have to withdraw our custom.
- ❖ I await your comments with interest and shall be interested to learn how and if you intend to restore my faith.

Must

This modal occurs 11 times in the corpus. It is used to express obligation, certainty and supposition in the past.

- ❖ I **must** say that it's the least you can do but thank you all the same.
- ❖ I'm sorry, but there **must** be some mistake, sir.
- ❖ I am sorry, sir. There **must** have been a mistake when your room was reserved. I apologise.
- ❖ I do apologise. We have been rather short of staff but there **must** have been a misunderstanding.
- ❖ You're quite right .It **must** have been a bottle that was not properly corked.
- ❖ I am sorry to say that I **must** write to complain as it was, in my opinion, very badly organized.
- ❖ The food came so quickly that it simply **must** have been cooked earlier and reheated in a microwave oven.
- ❖ Incidentally, I **must** also point out the appalling condition and ridiculous location...

Cause effect: Because, therefore and as a result of.

The analysis of the collocation of "because," "therefore," and "as a result of" are done in order to help us to identify cause and effect relationships in ESP texts, but in this corpus there isn't a large use of these terms.

First of all In this corpus there is no use of "as a result of".

Furthermore, the term "therefore" is used just once.

- ❖ I was forced, as we could barely eat any of the "food" supplied, **therefore**, to purchase a meal for my friends later in the evening...

The term that is mostly used to express a cause effect relationship is because. It appears 8 times.

- ❖ ...we have to involve the police **because** you people can't control your...
- ❖ Some people complaint **because** they can.
- ❖ .. would take place the next day **because** the billing person was not...
- ❖ ...hotel was also selected **because** it had internet access ...
- ❖ ... that I didn't have a room **because** I booked with....

The use of "because" and "therefore" in this area of ESP isn't different from its use in general English.

Other connectors and adverbs:

In the corpus there are connectors and adverbs such as "but", "however", "even though", "although" used as concessive conjunctions or clauses to express contrast.

Firstly, "but" occurs 30 times in the corpus. This adversative conjunction is used many times, because in dialogues is very common and because it naturally occurs when we talk about problems and complaints.

- ❖ I'm sorry to trouble you , **but** I don't like my room.
- ❖ I must say that it's the least you can do, **but** thank you all the same.
- ❖ I'm sorry, sir. The rooms with a sea view are all taken.
- ❖ **But** I booked two weeks ago. And we wanted a bath not just a shower.

Secondly, “even” occurs only 1 in the corpus, “while even though” never occurs. Thirdly, “however” occurs only twice.

- ❖ ... always been very satisfied. **However**, I have recently returned from...
- ❖ ... the issue was taken care of. **However**, upon return to my home I found...

Finally, “although” occurs 3 times in the corpus.

- ❖ ... we have little or no control, **although** we will certainly take the...
- ❖ ... enquires about this matter. **Although** we can accept no legal....
- ❖ ...I had to pay for my own cab, **although** I had been told the hotel would...

VERBS

Simple present , **past simple** and future are very common. In particular there is a high frequency of the **future tense**, which indicates that the problems will be solved as soon as possible.

There is also a high frequency of **perfect forms** used with some modals since workers (receptionists, waiters, chefs) use this tense in order to make sure if there has really been a mistake and of what has happened and the extent of it.

- ❖ You **should have left** any valuables with reception.
- ❖ misunderstanding. Housekeeping **should have checked** your room.
- ❖ The waiter **should have changed** it.
- ❖ Yes, I booked a room three weeks ago and I was told that **I could have** one with a double bed and a balcony There **must have been** a mistake when your room
- ❖ I sure it **must have been** a misunderstanding.
- ❖ I’m so sorry, sir. You’re quite right. It **must have been** a bottle that was not properly corked.

USE OF THE PASSIVE FORM

In the corpus there isn’t a large use of the passive form.

LETTERS OF COMPLAINTS AND THEIR REPLIES.

It is worth noting that in the corpus there are:

- ❖ some **formal letters of complaints and their answers** taken from the textbook “Have a nice trip”, with important elements such as the proper lay-out, presentation, clarity in describing the situation, clarity in stating requests, opinions, greetings and so on. Some typical sentences and patterns are:
 - I am sorry to say that I must write to complain as it was, in my opinion, very badly organised.
 - In the circumstances, I think your company should consider giving a refund and I shall be glad to have your comments in due of course.
 - Thank you for your letter of....., I am extremely sorry that you of the service provided on....
 - I am sure you will appreciate that...
 - I regret that...
 - I will personally make enquires about this matter.

- With renewed apologies for the inconvenience you have suffered, yours truly...
 - Yours faithfully
- ❖ some **informal letters** taken from internet, with important features: clarity of the situations, conciseness in the presentation of the complaint, request of an immediate answer in order to solve the problem. For example:
- I have been forced to take legal action against the Star Hotel, after they refused to honour a refund they promised me.
 - I am afraid to say, we attempted and failed to eat what was probably the worst meal I have ever seen served in.
 - Please find enclosed copies of the bill for the "food" that you supplied and for our meal at... . I await your comments with interest and shall be interested to learn how and if you intend to restore my faith in the.... 's Restaurants group.
 - We were very disappointed with the room and the service during our stay on September.

CONCLUSIONS

Part of the conclusions have been already drawn in the qualitative analysis. There are some points that have to focus on:

- ❖ **nouns** and **verbs** constitute the most used word class categories.
- ❖ the **high frequency of modal verbs**. In the corpus are used the majority of modals and with a high frequency. Modals are very useful, because they have the function to define the situations and the role between the staff and the clients.
- ❖ **Simple present, past simple** and **future** and **perfect forms** used with some modals are very common.
- ❖ The **personal pronouns** in the first singular person (233 times) and in the second person (104) are the most frequent. This means that problems and complaints are managed directly and instantaneously.

The **outcomes of my investigations** will be very useful for the shaping of an ESP syllabus dealing with Tourism. The identification of some of the distinctive features of English for tourism is essential to understand what is to be taught. In fact, through this analysis, I have found out some important elements, which I am going to include in the syllabus, that will become the linguistic objectives of my syllabus:

- ❖ **Vocabulary** acquisition (**common** and **technical vocabulary**) is fundamental for this ESP course, because the knowledge of specialised vocabulary is a necessary prerequisite for reading comprehension, oral performance and so on. What is important is that, besides being familiar with the meaning of a particular item, the student should also have enough knowledge about the use of that item in terms of its position in the sentence, collocations and so on.
- ❖ **Modals**.
- ❖ Some **frequent verb forms** of the ESP for tourism

- ❖ Some **typical linguistic patterns** of the ESP for tourism.
- ❖ Some **typical linguistic patterns and structures** of the ESP for letters of complaints.

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