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Promoting Hotels in the Covid-19 Era

An Exploratory Review of UK Hotels' New Challenges

Abstract

The related large-scale travel restrictions ensuing the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have had a devastating impact on the global tourism and hospitality industry. In particular, the hotel industry is proving to be the hardest hit by the pandemic due to reduced tourism and travel along with a slowdown in economic activity (Hoisington 2020). In order to attract potential guests, hotels need to focus on consumers' changing concerns and accommodate their legitimate requests, i.e., health & safety measures and cancellation policies (UNWTO 2020). In light of this, the aim of this exploratory study is to understand to what extent hoteliers are reorganizing hotel stays to satisfy consumers' new demands while restoring travelers' confidence and respecting the strict safety regulations. In particular, this paper explores the crucial role of language in the hospitality sector, focusing on the linguistic devices employed by hotels on their websites to promote their facilities and services, which must now respect the strict new health and hygiene regulations imposed by the pandemic. Specifically, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse a corpus of luxury hotel websites in Central England in order to examine: (i) the content included on the hotels' websites; (ii) the language employed to promote stays during the Covid era. The preliminary findings contribute to an initial understanding of luxury hotel practices and initiatives during Covid-19 within the UK context. The results show that there is a clear effort by luxury hotels to create a positive image as strong companies ready to face the challenges of a global pandemic. Specifically, the findings illustrate how hotels are using particular expressions to provide information related to the actions that they are taking to guarantee a safe environment, while highlighting the important role that visitors must also play in ensuring safety.

Keywords: *language of tourism, promotional discourse, Covid-19, hotel industry, corpus linguistics*

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a disastrous impact on the tourism sector (Gössling, Scott and Hall 2021). In an open letter in March 2020, Gloria Guevara, President and CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council, declared that “50 million jobs globally are at risk” because of the Covid-19 global health crisis, which has dragged the travel and tourism sector into “a

fight for survival” (Guevara 2020). Unfortunately, the related large-scale travel restrictions ensuing the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have had an even greater devastating impact on the global tourism and hospitality industry than first predicted. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report released in January 2021, between 100-120 million direct tourism jobs are at risk (UNWTO 2021), creating the worst economic and social crisis since the Great Depression, as reported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF 2020). In particular, the hotel industry is proving to be the hardest hit by the pandemic due to reduced tourism and travel along with a slowdown in economic activity (Hoisington 2020). In March 2020 the UK, just like many countries in the EU and around the world, placed large parts of its economy in lockdown in the hope of reducing deaths, but these harsh restrictions have inevitably led to substantial negative consequences for national economies, businesses and individual jobs (Parker et al. 2020). In April 2021 the UK government started lifting some restrictions and the accommodation sector began its campaign to get back to business. However, many tourists have been wary of booking trips or stays in hotels due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Tourists’ consumption patterns appear to have changed and, as a consequence, so have business strategies (Toubes, Araújo Vila and Fraiz Brea 2021). A considerable number of studies (see Gössling, Scott and Hall 2021; Streimikiene and Korneeva 2020; Toubes, Araújo Vila and Fraiz Brea 2021) are being conducted on the immediate and short-term effects of the pandemic on the tourism industry worldwide, and all have confirmed that these have been catastrophic. The aim of this work is to gain insight into how the tourism industry and, in particular, hotels are adapting to this new situation in order to attract potential guests, and to examine how they are focusing on consumers’ changing concerns and accommodating their legitimate requests, i.e., health and safety measures and cancellation policies (UNWTO 2021). In light of this, this study focuses on understanding to what extent hoteliers are reorganizing hotel stays to continue to satisfy consumers’ new demands while restoring travelers’ confidence. In particular, this paper explores the crucial role of language in the hospitality sector, focusing on the linguistic devices employed by hotels on their websites to promote their facilities and services, which must now respect the strict new health and hygiene regulations imposed by the pandemic. Specifically, the analysis was conducted on a corpus of Central England luxury hotel (four- and five-star hotels) websites to investigate the content included on their websites and the language employed to promote stays during the Covid era.

The paper begins with a brief illustration of the theoretical premises to the study, followed by the data and the methodology this work relies on. The core of the paper illustrates the features of the corpus, with a focus on the significance of the node words chosen for the analysis on the

basis of frequency criteria and collocational profiles. The final section summarizes the preliminary results of this on-going project and suggests further lines of research.

2. Literature review

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there have been radical changes in consumption patterns and tourist promotion, and, as a result, companies have had to innovate their marketing strategies in order to survive (Ketter and Avraham 2021). Vargas (2020) claims that although promotion is the only tool that the tourism industry has to awaken from the lethargy imposed by this pandemic, promotion cannot be the same as before. Tourist destination managers need to employ strategies that are not only based on promotion, but on the demands that derive from the new social reality resulting from the Covid-19 disaster. Studies have shown that the effectiveness of advertising on the relaunching of the tourist sector is crucial (Henderson 2002; Dore and Crouch 2003), with some authors underlining the importance of new technologies in tourism promotion, especially when the augmentation is presented in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) guidelines (Streimikiene and Korneeva 2020). It is thanks to digital marketing, which may include various activities and instruments such as websites, apps, blogs, podcasts, online communication, instruments for sale (e-commerce) (Ketter and Avraham 2021), that many companies have managed to gain competitiveness in the market after the changes caused by Covid-19 (Hoyos-Estrada and Sastoque-Gómez 2020).

Turning specifically to the focus of the current paper, i.e., the linguistic devices used by the tourist sector to attract potential tourists, it should be noted that in the field of tourism communication and discourse are crucial concepts which have been the subject of study for many years. In particular, the importance of lexical items in the language of tourism has been dealt with by a number of authors (Manca 2015; Maci 2007; Dann 1996; MacCannell 1989; Cohen 1985). Moreover, the language of tourism is not only considered a specialized discourse, but also a means of making profit. Thurlow and Jaworski (2010, 287-288) defined tourism as a “communicative business” and “a language market,” stating that “language and languages sit at the very heart of the tourist experience, its representation and its realization, its enculturation and its enactment” (2010, 289). Thus, tourism discourse is significant not only for displaying reality as it is, but also for forming it, as well as for making profit.

Furthermore, a fundamental feature of web tourism, which as the name itself says uses websites that attract customers, is direct communication between tourists and the tourism industry (Suau-Jimenez 2019). Research conducted in this field (Austin 2009; Brodie et al. 2011) suggests

that it is crucial for websites to include the co-creation of values that align with the customer in some way. “Their design must be persuasive yet trustworthy. This is partly achieved through discursive strategies that reflect the voice of the institution or business (author), and others that engage the customer (reader)” (Suau-Jimenez 2019, 341). This is particularly true in this historic moment in which the guidelines provided by national governments as well as those provided by the UNWTO are being displayed on hotel websites. In particular, on 28 May 2020, in the midst of the world tourism crisis, the UNWTO published the document *Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism*. The recommendations outlined in the area of destination include planning and management, providing reliable, consistent and easily accessible information on protocols to the private sector and to travelers (send SMS—short messages service—to tourists to inform them of national and local health protocols and relevant health contacts) and defining roles and responsibilities for governments, private sector and travelers. The world of tourism has undergone dramatic changes since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is unsure how it will evolve in the near future. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, no study has yet been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of language in tourism promotion during this period. For this reason, it is necessary to carry out research on the current discourses employed by the tourist sector in order to provide meaningful insights for society.

3. Corpus and methods of analysis

The corpus analyzed is part of a larger project which will include luxury hotels throughout the UK. In particular, forty-three luxury four-star and five-star hotels in Central England were chosen for this exploratory study. Central England is characterized by its numerous charming villages, stunning countryside and many fine churches and historic buildings. The website used to collect data is *BritainsFinest.co.uk*, where users can browse through a selection of accommodations, places to visit, wedding venues and restaurants in the UK. They base their choice on strict selection criteria, special offers, search criteria, and things to do.

In order to build the corpus, the website homepage of each individual hotel plus all sections that refer to Covid-19 were considered. The sections consisted mainly of external links that contained Covid-19 information, while in some cases (18/43) the information was found in the sections dedicated to ‘Food and drink’ and ‘Business/meetings.’ In ten hotels, specific information on the pandemic and measures taken by the hotel were included in ‘Spas,’ ‘Weddings’ and ‘Special occasions.’ It is worth noticing that many hotels have received their accreditation by different schemes, thus ensuring compliance with the risk assessment, safety measures and staff training required by the UK’s respective Government and trade association guidelines. The three

accreditation schemes that recur in the corpus are *We're good to go*, *Safe travels*, and *AA Covid-19 confident*.

The Central England Luxury Hotels Corpus, henceforth CELH Corpus, includes 43,824 tokens. When considering the relatively small size of the corpus under investigation, it is important to keep in mind that a corpus is not merely a random collection of texts but, rather, a collection that has been compiled according to specific criteria. These criteria are determined by the researcher's needs and the goal of their own project (Baker 2006; McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2005). As a consequence, in many cases, "the quality or content of data takes equal or more precedence over issues of quantity" (Baker 2006, 29).

Specifically, this research project adopts both a quantitative and qualitative approach. By incorporating both approaches, this study examines how Central England luxury hotels are promoting their facilities in such difficult times, during which it is important for organizations to display resilience and use adaptive strategies that effectively respond to the changing environment (Brown, Seville and Vargo 2017). In particular, this study follows the approach employed by Manca (2016) in her study on persuasion in tourism discourse to discuss the linguistic persuasive patterns in the corpus; specifically, the AIDA Model (Strong 1925), along with the methodological approach of Corpus Linguistics, will be applied. The quantitative, corpus-based approach provides insights for describing collocational and other recurrent patterns associated with specific lexical items across the corpus, while the AIDA Model will be applied to understand to what extent the hotel promotion is effective (Manca 2016). In order to reach the final goal of promotion, i.e., persuading tourists to choose the destination advertised, verbal strategies need to be successfully employed (Manca 2016). These include informing consumers about the product especially by highlighting its qualities and benefits.

The AIDA Model includes four steps:

- Attention: creating a captivating image that can grab the reader's attention.
- Interest: keeping attention is the second step. Ads should give information and persuade the consumer of the quality and the efficiency of the product.
- Desire: stimulating the desire to buy by communicating the uniqueness of the product.
- Action: pushing the consumer to buy the product.

The corpus was analyzed with the help of LanksBox, a specific software package developed at the University of Lancaster for language and corpus analysis (Brezina, Weill-Tessier and McEnery 2020). The tools used to investigate the promotional discourse contained in the

websites, in particular to reveal any linguistic strategy used by the text writers, are Wordlist and N-grams. As highlighted by Scott and Tribble (2006, 12), a wordlist “changes the object radically from a text which can be read linearly to some other form which will give rise to important insights, pattern recognitions, or teaching implications.” When analyzing the wordlist, this study will disregard grammatical words—in fact, despite being the most frequent, they do not carry meaning on their own. The focus will be placed on content words, namely nouns, verbs and adjectives, as “they carry most of the lexical content, in the sense of being able to make reference outside language” (Stubbs 2002, 40). Multi-word expressions are very important when describing language (McEnery and Hardie 2012), hence the next step of the analysis involves concordances and n-grams—corpus aids deliberately designed to allow for words (or groups of words) to be studied in their more or less immediate environment. As highlighted by several researchers (Gablasova, Brezina and McEnery 2017; Brezina, Weill-Tessier and McEnery 2015), multiword expressions can be referred to as collocations, n-grams, lexical bundles and p-frames. For LancsBox the user guide specifies that n-gram type multi-word expressions in LancsBox represent contiguous lexico-grammatical patterns (#LancsBox 4.0 manual).

4. Results and discussion

The results illustrated in the following tables are discussed in an attempt to shed light on the discourse used by hotels in Central England to promote their facilities during Covid-19, focusing on lexical items and collocations as well as linguistic strategies.

4.1 Frequency lists and verbal strategies

A preliminary analysis was conducted on the corpus in order to identify its main features and select potentially interesting items to be investigated in detail. First of all, in order to sketch a general picture of the corpus and to obtain a list of meaningful lexical items, a wordlist was generated. The wordlist gives us a general idea of what words and concepts the hotels focus on and what type of persuasive strategies are preferred. A first analysis of the lists led to the decision to choose content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) as meaningful items for this study, since they can provide useful insights into the investigation of linguistic strategies. Table 1 shows the top thirty content items of the CELH Corpus.

Rank	Term	Frequency
1.	guests	234
2.	spa	203
3.	house	112
4.	dining	112
5.	stay	103
6.	safe	103
7.	use	100
8.	covid-19	94
9.	arrival	94
10.	rooms	92
11.	team	91
12.	welcome	91
13.	distancing	90
14.	safety	90
15.	areas	89
16.	booking	86
17.	experience	83
18.	staff	83
19.	time	83
20.	place	83
21.	room	81
22.	government	75
23.	measures	74
24.	day	72
25.	ensure	72
26.	restaurant	70
27.	new	67
28.	guidelines	65

29.	take	64
30.	open	63

Tab. 1: Top 30 content words in the CELH Corpus

As Table 1 shows, the focus on coronavirus guidance and how to behave during the stay at the hotel are noticeable, as the term *safe* is used 103 times while *covid-19* appears 94 times. Further down in the list, we find words that have become common in our everyday vocabulary such as *distancing* (90) and *safety* (90), and there is a clear reference to the measures adopted by the government through the use of the words *government* (75), *measures* (74) and *guidelines* (65). Interestingly enough, *open* is a top content word in this list, with 63 occurrences and, as we will see further in this paper, *open* recurs often to announce that the hotels are open again and are back to business. At the time of the research, the UK Government was starting to slowly lift restrictions, and the accommodation sector was allowed to reopen. While many hotels decided not to reopen because of the measures that needed to be taken, those that did appear to have carefully followed the coronavirus guidance for England. In fact, there is clear reference to the hotels' priority to guarantee the safety and security of their customers and employees, as suggested by the lexical items *guests* (234), *team* (91), *staff* (83) and the verb *ensure* (72). To gain more insight into the features of the promotion and the strategies of persuasion, multi-word expressions were then analyzed.

4.2 Multi-word expressions analysis

Masini (2005, 145) defines multi-word expressions as “lexical units larger than a word that can bear both idiomatic and compositional meanings. [...]he term multi-word expression is used as a pre-theoretical label to include the range of phenomena that goes from collocations to fixed expressions.” A more detailed definition is provided by Sprenger (2003, 4), who indicates that they are fixed expressions which “refer to specific combinations of two or more words that are typically used to express a specific concept.” Table 2 shows the 3-word expressions found in the corpus. To ease the reading only the top 50 expressions will be displayed, but all 139 expressions found were analyzed.

Rank	Multi-word expression	Frequency
1.	be able to	29
2.	to welcome you	25

3.	to ensure that	23
4.	the heart of	23
5.	hotel & spa	22
6.	are delighted to	21
7.	welcome you back	20
8.	we are delighted	20
9.	look forward to	20
10.	in the heart	18
11.	in line with	18
12.	hotel and spa	17
13.	are now open	16
14.	the number of	16
15.	we look forward	16
16.	heart of the	16
17.	have their temperature	14
18.	wear a face	14
19.	for more information	14
20.	we use cookies	14
21.	will be required	13
22.	prior to arrival	13
23.	test and trace	12
24.	measures in place	12
25.	will be available	12
26.	the nhs covid-19	12
27.	areas of the	12
28.	are required to	12
29.	all public areas	12
30.	to give you	12
31.	other guests and	11

32.	forward to welcoming	11
33.	to help you	11
34.	will be able	11
35.	guests will be	11
36.	find out more	11
37.	terms and conditions	11
38.	our guests and	11
39.	of your stay	11
40.	a face covering	11
41.	during your stay	11
42.	good to go	11
43.	of our guests	11
44.	be required to	11
45.	our teams and	11
46.	that we have	11
47.	of your booking	10
48.	at the time	10
49.	now open and	10
50.	it is mandatory	10

Tab. 2: Top 50 multi-word expressions in the CELH Corpus

The findings immediately show that the recurring patterns included in the CELH Corpus can be classified into specific semantic fields. The semantic fields are: *Reopening*, *Booking*, *Covid-19 measures*, and *People involved*. The semantic field of *Reopening* includes expressions that refer to welcoming the guests back to the hotel as well as the actions taken by the hotels in order to be able to reopen, such as *to welcome you*, *welcome you back*, *look forward to*, *now open and*. The semantic field of *Booking* consists of nouns that all refer to reservations, including terms of cancellations, guests' obligations prior to and upon arrival, such as *of your booking*, *prior to arrival*, *making a reservation*. All the expressions that refer to the various measures taken by hotels in accordance to the Government's guidelines are included in the semantic field of *Covid-19 measures*; examples of this field include: *have their temperature*, *wear a mask*, *social*

distancing measures. The last field identified includes all references to the different stakeholders involved in the hospitality sector, i.e., guests, staff and government, and is defined as *People involved*. The following table shows the percentage of frequency of the semantic fields. Each multi-word expression was analyzed within the context; therefore, the expression was not always necessarily classified into only one semantic field, but in some cases was assigned to two or more. Hence, the percentages reported do not refer to the total multi-word expressions extracted from the corpus but to how many times these expressions were categorized into semantic fields.

Semantic field	%
<i>Reopening</i>	26%
<i>Booking</i>	85%
<i>COVID-19</i>	28%
<i>People involved</i>	17%

Tab. 3: Semantic fields of multi-word expressions in the CELH Corpus

As Table 3 illustrates, the most frequent semantic field is *Booking*, followed by *COVID-19*, *Reopening* and *People involved*. It is not surprising that most of the multi-word expressions were classified in the booking field, since hotels are persuading potential guests to book as soon as possible, considering all the measures that need to be taken into consideration. *COVID-19* and *Reopening* are strictly connected, since the reopening of the hotel depends solely on how the pandemic is evolving and on what guidelines the government is issuing.

In order to draw some tentative conclusions on the persuasive strategies used by hoteliers a further step in the analysis is necessary. The AIDA Model aims at studying the promotional impact of the discourse used in the websites by taking into consideration the consumer's changed behavior and requests. In order to establish which expressions are components of the four steps of the model, a closer look at the concordances containing the multi-word expressions is necessary. The promotional strategies employed on the websites do not obviously relate only to the description of the beauty and comfort of the place but, as expected, also focus on health and safety. In addition, the websites inform on what hotels are doing to protect their guests and teams. Enhanced standards of hygiene and cleanliness, together with safety measures, are tourists' main priorities, without renouncing to any of the facilities of a luxury hotel. The Attention step is clearly highlighted in the expressions that the hotels use to directly address guests about reopening the location while focusing on their wellbeing and enjoyable stay.

Moreover, the expression *to ensure that* is used to gain the guests' trust and attention in order to persuade them that they are in safe hands.

essential. We look forward to welcoming all	of our guests	following Government Guidelines. New measures will be
Hands For the health, safety and wellbeing ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing	of our guests, of our guests,	health club members, partners and our team, teams, suppliers and local communities remained our
government criteria. The health, safety and wellbeing	of our guests,	teams and visitors is our number one
for up to 30 delegates. The safety	of our guests	and teams is our number one priority
At De Vere we put the wellbeing	of our guests	first. We always have. It's just one
BURNSIDE HOTEL Covid-19 Update We look country house hospitality and service. We look	forward to welcoming	you back to our Award-winning hotel
New Booking and Thank you! We look our doors again and very much look	forward to welcoming	you to Hartwell House soon.
and healthy stay for everyone. We look latest Government announcements. We look	forward to welcoming	you to a Hand Picked hotel very
We are delighted to announce that we Hotel We're pleased to announce that we note before you travel. ENGLAND * Our hotels & TREATMENTS Our Spa & Fitness facilities to ensure we are following all Government guidelines	forward to welcoming	you. We currently have a limited team you once again. The De Vere Team *
guidelines provided by The World Health Organisation,	forward to welcoming	you to Nottingham very soon.
having reshaped certain aspects of our business and out. Seating times will be pre-arranged from our expert health and safety partner at the forefront of everything we do time allocated to clean our guest bedrooms have implemented a number of small changes limit each guest's time in the facilities is appropriate to do so. * Floor markers guest spaces, and we have taken steps our food safety management systems during closure	are now open	and are excited to welcome you back
our hotel. * Staffing levels have been set and check-in, to housekeeping and room service housekeepers will have taken care and time where necessary, rearranged equipment and furniture	are now open	for alfresco dining and drinks from Monday
all the reassurance you need before and the highest standards of safety and hygiene. you back, you'll be in safe hands your part in ensuring a safe environment	are now open	for overnight stays and indoor dining.
	are now open!	We are delighted to have re-opened
	are now open	and are excited
	to ensure that	the highest possible hygiene standards are maintained
	to ensure that	you can enjoy your Hand Picked experience
	to ensure that	we have a manageable number of guests
	to ensure that	we meet or exceed government criteria.
	to ensure that	you have a memorable and enjoyable stay
	to ensure that	rooms are cleaned thoroughly after guests depart,
	to ensure that	we can safely maintain sanitisation and hygiene
	to ensure that	we can adhere to social distancing measures
	to ensure that	guests stay 2m apart at Reception &
	to ensure that	our employees observe social distancing too. * The
	to ensure that	they fully incorporate the required COVID-19 prevention
	to ensure that	public spaces can be continuously cleaned and
	to ensure that	even whilst keeping their distance, our team
	to ensure that	your bedroom has been meticulously cleaned and
	to ensure that	social distancing requirements can be adhered to.
	during your stay.	De Vere Latimer Estate is located in
	During Your Stay	Our number one priority is the health
	during your stay.	Take a look below at the steps
	during your stay.	We've also created a digital companion that

Tab. 4: Attention Step

Expressions that provide further details about the measures taken and actions expected by the guests are components of the Interest step. In this case the hotels want tourists to be aware of how the Government's restrictions on Covid-19 may affect their stay and what Covid-19 health and safety measures are in place at the hotels. Expressions such as *in line with*, *test and trace*

and *prior to arrival* belong to this step as they provide useful information aimed at persuading visitors about the safety, and hence quality, of their services.

anyone outside of their family group, except	in line with	government guidance. OTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURES
self-isolation or household isolation remain at home	in line with	the government advice, and contact us to
continuously cleaned and disinfected throughout the day,	in line with	our enhanced cleaning programme. * We have removed
cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in place	in line with	guidance. We have taken all reasonable steps
reception areas for the safety and comfort to have a system to collect NHS	of our guests. Test and Trace	Guest bedrooms will be completely sanitised after data. Our hotels will be displaying a
take all contact details for the NHS	Test and Trace	program. We ask that all guests visiting
we take every guests' details for the NHS	Test and Trace	Programme and all our guests will be required to
required to complete a digital health questionnaire	prior to arrival.	In order to adhere to the

Tab. 5: Interest Step (1)

Another expression that regards the Interest step is *good to go*, which refers to the *We're Good to Go* Industry Standard, a free UK-wide industry standard and consumer mark introduced to reassure customers that the business adheres to government and public health guidance. Other accreditation schemes, such as the *AA Covid-19 Confident* accreditation, are present in the corpus.

can do in the local area. 'We're	Good To Go'	is the official UK mark from VisitBritain
have achieved the AA Covid-19 Confident accreditation,	GOOD TO GO	industry standard mark and WWTC Safe Travels
have achieved the AA Covid-19 Confident accreditation,	GOOD TO GO	industry standard mark and WWTC Safe Travels
reservations@spreadeaglethame.co.uk The 'We're	Good To Go'	industry standard and supporting mark means businesses
have achieved the AA Covid-19 Confident accreditation,	GOOD TO GO	industry standard mark and WWTC Safe Travels
proud to have been awarded the 'We're	Good To Go'	certificate from Visit England; the official mark
House of Daniel Thwaites Safety Guide We're	Good To Go	Industry Standard We're proud to have been
proud to have been awarded the 'We're	Good To Go'	certificate from Visit England; the official mark
have achieved the AA Covid-19 Confident accreditation,	GOOD TO GO	industry standard mark and WWTC Safe Travels
have achieved the AA Covid-19 Confident accreditation,	GOOD TO GO	industry standard mark and WWTC Safe Travels
hospitality industry and have received the VisitBritain	"Good to Go",	and The AA "COVID Confident" awards.

Tab. 6: Interest Step (2)

The text producers are clearly attempting to create Desire when referring to all the facilities that a luxury hotel can offer, and their intention is to prove that a guest can enjoy the comfort of a luxury hotel despite Covid. The following expressions are components of this step, as illustrated in Table 7:

taken to enforce social distancing guidelines amongst	guests and staff.	Where social distancing is not possible-and the
mandatory in the hotel public areas for	guests and staff.	Symptoms Please do not travel if you

Tab. 8: Action Step

The findings illustrated underline how hoteliers are reorganizing hotel stays in an attempt to meet consumers' new demands and restore their confidence in travelling. Moreover, it would appear that hoteliers are promoting their facilities and services while respecting the strict new health and hygiene government regulations.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this exploratory study contribute to an initial understanding of luxury hotel practices and initiatives during Covid-19 within the UK context. The results suggest that Central England is trying to set a good example in dealing with COVID-19 by strategically focusing on health and hygiene, workforce and training, and marketing. The aim of the present study was to uncover the representation of promotional discourse found on the websites of forty-three hotels by exploring the discursive and linguistic strategies employed in an attempt to relaunch their business. The analysis conducted shows that there is a clear effort by luxury hotels in Central England to create a positive image as strong companies ready to face the challenges of a global pandemic. In particular, the hotels are using persuasive yet at the same time quite informative language to convince travelers/potential customers that it is safe to stay at their hotel. Indeed, the findings illustrate the use of particular expressions to provide information related to the actions taken by the hotel to provide a safe environment (e.g., *social distancing measures, to ensure that, in line with, test and trace*), while highlighting the important role that visitors must also play in guaranteeing safety (e.g., *wear a mask, be required to, prior to your arrival*). The conclusions of this small exploratory study need to be investigated in wider research projects that focus on the language used by the hospitality sector to persuade tourists to start travelling again. In particular, further research will include luxury hotels throughout the UK to build on the results of the current study. Indeed, the preliminary results illustrated in the present study are not sufficient to draw general assumptions on persuasive and informative strategies used by hotels in the Covid era. Nevertheless, the study provides insights into the discourse used by hotels when promoting their offers and facilities during a global pandemic and may be used by hoteliers to analyze their communication strategies. It may also be of interest to compare how hoteliers have dealt with this health emergency with how

they might deal (or have dealt) with other emergencies such as other pandemics or natural disasters, which are unfortunately becoming more frequent.

Note: although the authors have collaborated in the research work and in writing the paper, they have individually devoted specific attention to the following sections: Ruffolo – sections 3, 4, 4.1, 4.2; Jimenez – sections 1, 2, 5.

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