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THE DISCOURSE OF TOURISM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE ARTICLE "10 BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN UKRAINE"

Summary: The article shows the fact that the concept of scientific discourse is interpreted as a complex phenomenon that consists of participants in communication, communication situations and the text itself. The conclusion is that discourse is an abstract invariant description of structural and semantic features that are realized in specific texts.

Linguists interpret the concept of discourse as a complex communicative phenomenon that includes the speaker and the addressee of the message, the process of proper formation of speech, extralingual factors of communication, social and cultural background.

This article presents a critical reading of the text "10 Best places to visit in Ukraine" and its overlook, research study in the field of online tourism promotion, published online in 2021 by one of the world's largest tourism publishing houses, Touropia. The study aims at revising some of the characteristics of the ongoing tourism discourse through an analysis of the network of people and practices involved in these publications, their textual features and images. The article analyses the way in which various modes to create a virtual brochure with a promotional message from both institutional and commercial positions were combined. In doing this, it studies the organization of the website and its webpage, as well as the lexico-grammatical and visual features of its promotional messages. The analytical framework used includes critical discourse analysis and a corpus-based tool used to interpret different aspects of this tourism discourse. The places advertised as "Top 10" are presented to an all-aged audience that must be interested in discovering new places, appreciated to nature, fond of history and ready to consume national products.

Polyparadigmatic nature has led to the active use of these terms in the field of literature, as a result of which scientific studies address issues of artistic concept, artistic discourse, which will always be open to researchers, while not exhausting its relevance.

Key words: travelling, discourse analysis, tourism, Touropia.

1. Introduction

Not so long ago, because of no internet access, travel agencies (in their limited quantity and doubtful quality) and printed guidebooks were the most common sources of information for travellers while planning their trips. But with the rapid growth of globalization and popularization of information technology through portable devices in the last two decades, people who want to know about places, lodgings, transportation, real time traffic and activities in a given city have at hand a multiplicity of social networking

services and websites that obviously help to plan (or simply imagine) their next trips. One of the most recognized publishing houses in the area of travel websites nowadays is Touropia, which has been producing travel information and electronic books in English all over the world.

Tourism as a social phenomenon has attracted the attention of researchers throughout all stages of its development. Exploration in this area has been particularly active since the second half of the XX century. At the beginning of the XXI century, tourism took the first place among the leading sectors of the world economy. Modern understanding of the essence of tourism overcomes its perception exclusively as a kind of entrepreneurial business. Tourism, in addition to recreational, political, environmental, economic and other functions, performs an extremely important cultural function. It has a well-represented humanistic orientation. After all, a person who travels – a businessman, scientist, athlete, ethnographer – is, above all, a person who seeks to expand their worldview, enrich themselves with new knowledge, wisely use free time for recreation, acquaintance with other cultures and peoples.

Taking into consideration the fact that tourism is an activity as well as the result of the activity and also the fact, that on the basis of successful cooperation between the subjects of tourism cooperation there is a communication, we find it necessary to study tourism through communication and discourse.

The relevance of the chosen research topic is due to the fact that modern linguistic pragmatics considers a wide range of issues related to all modes of language, especially components of human communication: addressee, addresser their relationships, speech and thinking actions of communicators, context, communication situation, channels of communication, cognition, understanding and presentation of the world, etc.

The purpose of this article is to analyse and interpret some features of this ongoing global tourism discourse in its original English context. For this empirical research, a specific text was chosen as a sample to be studied, "10 Best places to visit in Ukraine" taken from Touropia websites in English (2021, September 21). These article is a part of a series of "Best of", published on the Touropia websites every year about different countries as eye-catching readings

that take readers and followers to other products of the company.

In theoretical terms, critical discourse analysis will help us see the development and operation of social structures, through the mediation of social practices, on the people involved in social events (in the present case, the "agents" responsible for the publication of the Touropia text and its understanding. The term discourse is used and described here in a general sense for verbal language (and images), but also as an element of social life dialectically related to other non-discoursal elements (Fairclough, 2003). Discourses can be described as different ways of representing aspects of the world from different perspectives, since "differently positioned social actors 'see' and to represent social life in different ways, different discourses" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 123). A closer look at the texts through a corpus-based study will help us to understand the way the discourse of tourism operates. In the following sections we will present a brief notion of tourism discourse today, a textual analysis (linguistic peculiarities of this discourse) and a description of the visual composition of the texts in their respective websites.

2. Tourism today and the case of Touropia

The act of travelling has always existed for reasons related to migration, religion, studies, commuting, trade and business. The Greek word tour, which can function as a synonym for travel, means 'making a circle', and has been used for at least 500 years to suggest "a circular trip for pleasure" (Leiper, 2004, p.10). With the development of aviation, mainly from the 1960s and 1970s onward, the era of mass tourism began (Leiper, 2004, p.15) and travelling has become a widespread symbol of social status and started to develop in a rapid pace.

Tourism is an activity which involves the direct contact between cultures and all that this includes (folklore, customs, gastronomy, etc.) and therefore, tourism language is considered here as a joint element between tourists and the place they are visiting and their cultures, In this context, tourist guidebooks become indispensable, since tourists come into contact and get to know a country by reading and consulting tourist texts, such as brochures, tourist guides, adver-

tisements, etc. This fact makes essential the quality of these genres and hence, good quality translations are highly required to guarantee a full comprehension and communication between the destination and real or potential tourists. (Durán Muñoz, I. (2011).

The consequences of global mass tourism today are varied. Through the news media, for instance, off-road small villages can get on the "top best" list of tourist destinations for millions of people who browse the Touropia website, or their Facebook or Twitter profiles, in different languages. Whether directly participating in the activity or not, mass tourism has a direct impact on the lives of people and their communities.

Texts are essential parts of most social events (Fairclough, 2004). It is through the practices of reading and writing, for example, that companies like Touropia interact with their writers and customers in different languages. However, although their website links to seven different languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian), most of Touropia articles are published only in English.

"Top ten" ranking strategy is not new in different spheres: the series 'Best in Travel' has been published for a few years with different titles such as "Top 10 unforgettable castles of Ukraine", "Top 10 wonders of Ukraine", "Top 10 historical places of Ukraine", and a series of other "top" or "best" lists. The "top 10s" reveal contemporary trends as they point out up-to-the-minute tourism products. By including a place in their top ten lists, tourist guidebooks help gentrify or imprint a new higher status to these destinations. As it happens with ordinary food that becomes sophisticated or "gourmetized", well-known world capitals and even off-the-beaten-track destinations become associated with a "cool" travel company. A gourmet product, in a wide sense, can be seen as is an exclusive fetish-like creation, and its concept thus expanded to tourism and the "gourmetization" of places.

As Fairclough states, "all social practices are practices of production-they are arenas within which social life is produced, be it economic, political, cultural or everyday life" (Fairclough 2001, p. 122). In the case of the Touropia website, social life is being produced here through virtual forms of interaction between producers and consumers, under circumstances that reshape traditional ways of reading, writing and translating. The great number of hyperlinks on the computer screen attests to the fact that reading today does not mean a continuous flow from a beginning to an end, but rather a dynamic activity that depends on readers' choices and clicks.

It is possible nowadays to have a wider idea of the network implied in the discourse of tourism by observing some of the myriad of pages that can be originated one from another. The genres or diverse ways of acting through language (Fairclough, 2001, p. 123), present in the Touropia website are those of reading and writing. If in the past writers were professional travel writers and editors, today readers can become writers when they have their posts reposted or when they comment on the company's Facebook posts or photos.

3. Text analysis

As we could see from the examples of Touropia online services, contemporary tourism discourse represents, on the one hand, the process of commoditisation of language (homogenization) and, on the other, a mixture of voices and people, opening a certain space for creativity and differentiation. The company's text style is based on informality, jokes and cultural references, which function as bridges between the company and its readers, leading to different hybridizations and interpretations. Nevertheless, in order to read the website in English, a non-fluent speaker would need to have either a slang dictionary at hand or a deep knowledge of idioms. It is worth noticing that the use of idioms also creates challenges for translators.

In her study on the translation of the discourse of tourism, (Durán Muñoz, 2011) affirms that the language of tourism is a "specialized discourse". To her mind, this discourse borrows terminology from other disciplines (geography, economics, history and sport, etc.) and uses:

- positive adjectives
- superlatives
- lexical choices to comply with the tourist's expectations about holidaying (keywords such as adventure, imagination, pleasure, sightseeing)
- psychological themes (romanticism, rebirth, fantasy, socialization)
- foreign and invented words to induce a sense of the exotic

- cultural references (which do not have equivalents in the target language)
- comparison, testimony and humour

Superlative and positive adjectives in particular stand out in the analyzed articles. The word «top» can function either as a noun or an adjective in a text and its translations uncover very different meanings, according to the distinct contexts of use. (Durán Muñoz, I. (2011).

e.g. The top one destination to visit in Ukraine is undoubtedly the capital, located in north-central Ukraine.

Among the superlative and positive adjectives the word "old" is one of the most frequently used, especially describing historic cities:

e.g. Chernihiv is one of the oldest cities in Ukraine.

Explore the cobbled streets of the well-preserved medieval Old Town lined with its pretty pastel-colored houses and admire the excellent street art that tells the tale of the city.

Dating back to 482 AD, Kyiv is one of the oldest cities in Eastern Europe.

The most popular attraction in Kiev however is undoubtedly Kyiv Pecherska Lavra, one of the oldest and most important monasteries in Ukraine.

There also described not only the historical meaning of the city but also its geographical position and possible peculiarities connected.

e.g. While its self-christened title as the 'geographical centre of Europe' may not be true, Rakhiv is certainly the highest city in Ukraine.

High up on the slopes of western Ukraine, Bukovel promises bucket loads of fun for all ages.

We have come across such words as "big", "large", "major" meaning the size of the destination place.

e.g. In fact, it's the largest ski resort in Eastern Europe! Surrounded by three mountains, including the highest peaks of the Carpathians, the views from this luxury alpine ski resort are simply breath-taking.

Recently revisited in an HBO documentary, the Chernobyl exclusion zone – which is currently an eerie ghost town in northern Kiev Oblast – is set to become a major tourist attraction.

Visit the Museum of Folk Architecture and Ethnography, one of the largest open-air museums in Europe.

While describing the nature of Ukraine and its breath-taking views there were mentioned on the pages of the tourist guidebook such adjectives as "magnificent", "picturesque", "prefect".

e.g. Towering over the Smotrych River, the fortress is truly magnificent – it's easily one of the most picturesque fortresses in Eastern Europe!

This may well be the capital of Ukraine, but it is also an extremely green city featuring not one but two botanical gardens that are perfect for strolling around in the afternoons under the iconic horse chestnut trees that line the roads of Kyiv.

It is well known that Ukraine is an ancient country. People lived on its territory many centuries ago. So, on the pages of the guidebook Touropia we can find a lot of proves of this fact. They are represented with the help of described events, which are nowadays reflected in the names of destinations, and the dates.

e.g. Lviv is the largest city in western Ukraine and boasts a historic centre that's well worth exploring. Established in 1240 and named after Leo, the oldest son of the King of Ruthenia, the capital changed hands several times between the Polish and the Russians before finally becoming independent in 1991.

Dating back to 482 AD, Kyiv is one of the oldest cities in Eastern Europe.

First held by the Greeks, then by the Ottomans, and finally the Russians, Odesa in south-western Ukraine has an interesting history – all of which is told through its many excellent museums.

The main speech functions of tourism discourse are informing (informing about and describing a country, for instance), and persuading (also known as the vocative function). Pronoun collocation, syntactic features and speech functions can be examined in the text excerpts presented in the next chart. These are four out of eleven occurrences of the word «you» as a smaller sample.

*e.g. Inside Chernobyl, **you'**ll be able to witness the destruction for yourself – the demolished buildings and abandoned possessions of those who had to escape for their lives.*

*Plus, it's still totally underrated, so **you** won't find many tourist traps here!*

*If **you** love green spaces, you'll love Uman.*

*If **you** enjoy opera or ballet, then Lviv is also famous for its classically trained performers and opulent performances in regular rotation.*

The declarative mood is recurrent in the English version of the website, associated with modal verbs that express suggestion, possibility or probability, as in «If you like it then you should» or «Go now. You'll have a ball. These selected fragments also show an attempt to include different readers by giving them alternatives that they can identify with.

e.g. Chernivtsi can be found at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine.

 When you're not out testing the powder, hang out at the Snow Park and Bicycle Park or learn some new tricks at the ski school.

As for cultural references, they remain one of the biggest challenges in the texts. Difficulties in this sense lie in the translation of proper names, typical dishes, place names, etc. Problems are solved through different strategies, such as we see in the use of additions to the target text (in italics).

It is worth noticing that the target text is just a small part of the source text; to be more precise, the target text is a selection of the first paragraph of each city on the list in English, which suggests either that the cost of translation is high, the storage of a long text online is problematic.

Images around tour

However meaningful words seem to play a secondary role in new multimedia texts like the ones we studied here. Persuasion, attraction and seduction, «often considered to be the trigger elements to tourists when deciding where to go or what to visit before and during the visit» (Durán Muñoz, 2011,p. 36), are frequently achieved through pictures. Images should not be undervalued when writing and translating tourism genres. Moreover, computer screen images should be given special focus since, as (Kress, 2004, para. 19) suggests, «the screen is the site of the image and the logic of the image is shaping the order and the arrangements of the screen». From this position, writing is now subordinated to the logic of the image.

In the Touropia pages, differences in images in the source and target texts are noticeable in every screen. In https://www.touropia.com/best-places-to-visit-in-ukraine/, readers have to browse through one page per city, seeing a big picture of the place on the back, a small paragraph, and two options to click on: a «see the map» link and an arrow to skip to the next place on the list. The « see the map» link opens to a Google maps with detailed information such as « Road map»,

«Classic restaurant», «Best shopping» and «Classic place to stay», all in English and Ukrainian version.

The screen size pictures behind the title, heading and first paragraphs show cities with buildings or landscapes with the sky behind them but no people on close up shots. In fact, all the pictures are with human figures, whose images show different entertaining, which can be occurred in the very destination. Though most of the tourist guidebooks prefer to avoid pictures with human figures, Touropia makes an emphasis on a large number of visitors.

Natural elements and architecture are part of the imagery of tourism. In Touropia website pictures usually do include human presence. Most of these images are also historical in the sense that they can represent time in the past. In terms of distance, images on the webpage in English occupy a great space on the screen. They are thus closer to their readers, an effect that suggests a call to participation. It is more pleasant, after all, to do some virtual travelling through larger images than from afar, with small ones. Seduction is an element that seems to be more current in the original website because of its colourful design, size and number of pictures. (Carvalho Figueiredo, (2016).

4. Conclusions

Having made an analysis of the examples in this article, we could see that the tourism discourse of Touropia is marked by a whole set of changes in text, images and web layout. From the texts selected for analysis we can see that the text producers cut a long story short, added images and altered their disposition on the screen to impress a reader. Nonetheless, the presence of people is a common characteristic of the pictures of the article.

Textual analysis has shown that the source text presents an informal style through the use of idioms and abundant cultural references, which are typical of tourism discourse as a whole. The idea that the texts are speaking directly to their readers is reinforced by the number of occurrences of «you» in English. An informal tone prevails, which is that of a conversation with readers-tourists-customers, bringing the company closer to their clients.

This discourse seems to be directed to people from higher economic classes, the same ones who can afford accessing, interacting and buying these and other «gourmetized» products as symbols of successful consumer identities. Participation in the social practices of accessing and sharing travel experiences requires digital literacy and reflects a present-time form of control, since internet sites are heavily monitored by enterprises, friends and followers.

The international discourse of tourism and its translation is thus a fertile ground for a critical understanding of our current practices as producers and consumers of leisure. If we want to go further on the study of global tourism discourse, however, a larger multilingual corpus would be necessary. Registering and analyzing website movements can also reveal more about the dynamics of this global multilingual discourse.

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