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PERSUASIVE LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES IN TOURISM DISCOURSE

The verbal message that advertisers chose to deliver to their target markets is so important that it could determine whether the entire course of advertising succeeds or fails. The verbal content could determine whether a message was attention-getting, memorable for the consumers to recall, and able to influence consumers to take a positive attitude towards the product or service advertised.

Language of tourism is a part of tourism discourse. This language is a «highly organized and encoded system which employs many devices to express, indicate, exchange messages and information, represent and so forth» [1, p. 465]. In advertisements, we can find the special features that characterise the language of tourism. The vocabulary employed is important, but the structures used are also crucial when trying to understand the advertisement intention. As Goti [2] highlights, textual patterning is something we have to pay attention to. The analysis of discourse advertising in the tourism sector can reveal interesting issues in the use of language in tourism.

According to Bhatia [3], advertising has turned the process of writing into an art form, where writers constantly compete for attention getting by not only innovative use of language but also by the creative use of traditional expressions and clichés, which are often shunned by good writers in other forms of discourse. Advertisement writing could then be considered as art, where the persuasive function this kind of text has should be highlighted.

Specialized discourse does not mean a different subordinated language, but, as Gotti [2, p. 19] claims, «an actual language enclosing a mixture of combined more or less specific features coexisting in a quantitatively different degrees as compared to general language». Specialized discourse possesses all the lexical, phonetic, morphosyntactic and textual resources

of general language. It exploits colloquial language, idiomatic expressions, jokes, every day speech language.

In the case of tourism advertisements, language is an important tool. It does not only send a message or some information, but it also attempts to persuade or even manipulate the reader. The language of tourism attempts to seduce people into becoming tourists and subsequently to control their attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, the language in tourism advertisings has to be extremely convincing to achieve its materialistic goal and it is always open to interpretations.

Verbal techniques refer to the way language is manipulated in tourism discourse to serve the targeted objectives. Verbal techniques are, in turn, of different types. Referring to the persuasive force of the message conveyed by this kind of discourse, there are many discursive features that have to be taken into account.

Slogans are essential since people tend to glance over slogans or headings of advertisements rather than to read the texts, which is one of the reasons why advertisements are usually quite visual, trying to use catchy slogans and appealing words in order to attract potential customers. Slogans are associated to the company logo; in fact, the slogan usually appears beside or beneath the logo of a specific company and it usually stands out from the rest of the text in some way. Sometimes, different typefaces are used to highlight it from the rest.

In general, all types of advertising slogans usually consist of a group of catchy words, short phrases, or sentences which can be grouped into syntactic categories and structures. From a syntactic point of view, a simple and shortened structure imitates the form of spoken language which is considered a close relative of advertising language [4]. It is realised that the importance of syntactic functions becomes a significant linguistic technique employed to fulfill a specific purpose for tourism advertising.

If one quickly sets an eye on some randomly chosen advertisements, they would definitely notice that the majority of the *verbs* used are either at present tenses or in the imperative form. Therefore, simple verbal forms are used in order to deliver a clear message, to satisfy the customers' needs and nevertheless to express timeless and universality of the message embodied. The verbs are common, used in everyday life, however the

tourist destinations are the ones that make them profuse, special and worth taking into consideration. Verbs as enjoy, experience, try, choose, offer go beyond their common usage and invite the reader into a «magical» world where everything receives connotations.

The use of the present simple tense makes the time of the holiday seem still and everlasting [5]. The present is also the tense used to convey the idea that something is true, which is what all destinations are looking for: they want to transmit the idea that to a certain extent, they can make your dream come true.

Imperatives and directives are among the grammatical choices commonly found in tourist texts, whose function is to urge the addressee to do something (or not to do something) [6]. Imperatives are used in order to make tourist avail him/herself of the opportunities which are on offer (e.g. to taste genuine food, go to one of the local open-air street markets). They give suggestion and impulse to tourists to take advantage of the offer. The use of imperative is not rude in these cases since its function is not to give order but to stimulate to buy or hire the products and services that are offered.

Modal verbs are really essential in promotional texts which include expression of necessity, possibility, probability or negation. For example, «can» and «will» convey the idea of possibility and certainty, whereas «must» give advice and is usually used as a noun (must-see attraction). It indicates a necessity, something tourist cannot miss. When travellers consider a possibility, which means that it can come true and when we deal with the idea of certainty, the service offered will satisfy the real traveller.

The tourism texts often use the first person singular or plural in order to give greater authenticity to the account. *Personal pronouns* are often strategically used to influence sender-receiver relationships. The use of personal pronouns is meant to break down any boundary that may exist between the addresser and the addressee. By the constant use of the second person «you», the advertisers establish a dialogue with the readers, trying directly to persuade them that what is being advertised is actually worth trying. These are markers of familiarity between the product and the possible consumer, as the former is aimed at meeting the latter's needs and desire. «Interaction is one of the primary techniques of involvement,

through which the enunciator tries to persuade the enunciatee of the tourist brochure. There are two main enunciative strategies. The objective strategy consists in the occultation of both the enunciator and enunciatee». «The result is an impression of objectivity» [7, p. 158]. Therefore under the mask of a false objectivity, the advertiser claims to know the tourist's needs and promises to fulfill them.

Textual descriptions are rich in *adjectives* and *adverbs*. They have to be expressive, persuasive, convincing, out of the ordinary and give a clear image of the heavenly like destination. The tourist destination is more than often depicted as beautiful, breath-taking, spectacular, magnificent, perfect, extraordinary, unspoiled, seclude, unique, stunning and the list can go on. Therefore, the persuasive and manipulative force of the adjectives is high as it is meant to construct and envisage another world, authentic, magical and special, nothing like the one we are used to. Thus, adjectives are of utmost importance in tourism slogans, being the most notable feature of the language in advertising. It is, therefore, an inescapable fact that the language of advertising relies on the heavily use of adjectives and on exaggerations.

In tourism discourse, as in other promotional discourses, the lexis exploited is, to a large extent, emphatic and evaluative, and it often highlights the positive features of the places and services being promoted. To provide idyllic views of destinations, persuasive expressions often contain emphasizees, comparative and superlative forms. These are common structures in tourism advertising. This use is also associated with evaluative adjectives as well as with nouns with positive connotations.

The use of foreign words and expressions confers an exotic and sophisticated flavour to the text or also a sort of formal importance through the presence of unknown and particular foreign terms. The use of loan words and its related wide range of functions and stylistic effects represent an important linguistic feature in tourism discourse. The presence of loan words and expressions guides «the reader's attention to the extra meaning attached to the foreign words chosen, or to writer's choice to use them» [8, p. 360]. In fact, through a precise selection of foreign terms and expressions a writer of tourist texts provides a specific view of the culture and features of a destination by simultaneously

catching the reader's attention and making him/her reflect on the implied cultural value of the terms.

Touristic destinations should be presented as different from our everyday problems, that is, as something enjoyable, relaxing, with no stress at all: in short, something similar to paradise. To get this effect, the marketers have at hand a large number of diverse options at linguistic level which should be carefully organized within promotional space.

References:

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