

EDITORIAL

THE LANGUAGE OF TOURISM: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPICAL ISSUE¹

Tourism is a complex phenomenon with psychological, sociological and cultural dimensions (Urry, 2002). Regarding the latter, tourism involves direct contact between cultures with a particular emphasis on the importance of exchange and sharing among local and foreign cultures. The reproduction of cultural and environmental discourse through tourism is a key characteristic of our modern era. Culture as an educational subject has gone from one aspect of the curriculum to its very centre as more expertise in intercultural communication has become required in interactions of all kinds: travel, business, medical tourism, and migrations, among others (Cocca, Rodríguez Bulnes, & Alvarado, 2016). From a linguistic perspective, the increasing influence of tourism and its recognition as a social practice, the marketization of public discourse and the growing impact of the media, have resulted in a firmer grounding of tourism as discourse (Przeclawski, 1993). Moreover, as claimed by Dann (1996, p. 2), tourism is an “act of promotion” with “a discourse of its own”; indeed, “the language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and, in doing so, convert them from potential into actual clients”. In this context, keywords in promotional texts play a significant role. As pointed out by Cappelli (2008, p. 6) “the importance of keywords is one of the most interesting phenomena for linguists and translators,” because they are essential for tourism promoters who need to be aware of the issues involved in promoting a location in different languages, in an attempt to sell a local product to a national and international clientele (Pym, 2001).

The rapid development of the tourism and hospitality industry can directly influence the English language, which is the most widely used in international tourism. Employees who work in the tourism and hospitality industry are aware of its importance and need to have a good command of English in their workplace. For this reason, English for tourism and hospitality has been categorized under English for specific purposes (ESP), and is an important and dynamic area of specialization within the field of English language teaching and learning.

Language proficiency is essential in all professional fields, perhaps all the more so in the tourism and hospitality industry due to its specific nature and concepts. Thus, it is required that educators understand the practical applications of the ESP approach (Zulqarnain, Abu Bakar, & Saffari, 2017). Teaching ESP in the field of tourism and hospitality means focussing on specific linguistic skills, and this would benefit from a different approach to that normally adopted for pedagogical purposes, which is still heavily based on acquiring vocabulary skills. It requires a shift to a range of specific language skills mostly based on understanding diverse types of

¹ This Introduction has been written by S. M. Maci, M. Sala and Š. Godnič Vičič and their authorship should be considered as follows: Stefania Maci wrote the Introduction incipit – pp. 1-2 (20%); Michele Sala wrote the Introduction body text as well as the resumes of the articles published in this issue – pp. 2-4 (60%); and Šarolta Godnič Vičič wrote the conclusion section of the Introduction – pp. 4-5 (20%).

discourse in varied language situations and contexts. As Staiton (2018) states, unfortunately to date there has been little or no recognition of the link existing between ESP and tourism within the tourism industry or academia. Re-forming educational paradigms of the current subjects to include these sectors should produce favourable results. An attempt in this regard is offered by this issue of *Scripta Manent* in which pedagogical applications and theoretical frameworks are presented. The goal is to raise awareness in both ESP specialists and students of those socio-cultural elements which may disrupt communication in the tourism workplace.

The articles in this topical issue assess in various ways the resources that are typically used (and that can, therefore, also be outlined and systematized for pedagogical purposes) in multimedia tourism discourse, and are here divided into two sections - the first dealing with the representation of 'otherness' and the second with specific communicative strategies for tourism promotion in digital contexts. Tourism discourse is grounded in the concept of 'otherness' (stemming from the interplay or tension between binary concepts such as *here/now* vs. *somewhere else*, private vs. exotic, routine vs. leisure, real vs. ideal, tourists vs. locals, guides vs. prospective users, experience vs. discovery, information vs. persuasion, effectiveness vs. politeness, etc.), and, more specifically, is engaged in both representing otherness, and, at the same time, finding viable ways of bridging the gaps between different concepts.

In this light, the first article, by Mariana Lya Zummo, examines the mechanisms of users' discursive self-construction in Web-mediated tourism communication by investigating webzines authored by and targeting expats. Expats constitute a particular community of users who occupy the grey area between tourists (people visiting destinations over relatively limited periods of time) and immigrants (people moving to different countries mainly for economic or political reasons). Expats are people temporarily (in most cases) living abroad, usually for professional or personal reasons, having an interest in and understanding of the host culture which they aim to experience as locals do. This article focusses precisely on the ways these users construct their own identity as members of this extended community of discourse and how they project this identity onto prospective readers primarily by creating rhetorical dynamics between the first person personal pronouns (to refer to expats, both writer and readers) and the third person pronoun (to point to locals). This analysis considers a corpus of articles published on the *Transition Abroad* webzine over 2015 and, in order to provide a fully-fledged overview of how personal pronouns and other discourse markers are used (in what contexts and with what purposes), it offers a comparative perspective on the subject, comparing entries published on the Europe 2015 issues to those published on the Asia 2015 issues.

Elena Pasquini investigates the potential tension existing in some performative contexts in tourism communication arising from the need to express potentially sensitive meanings (i.e., the representation of people with disabilities, and what they are expected to do or not to do in given situations), and, at the same time, the need to avoid using a language that is (perceived as) stigmatizing for specific groups or face-threatening for the general user. This type of tension, which is common to many communicative scenarios (performative, institutional, professional, etc.), is particularly relevant in tourism settings in that such potentially sensitive information is meant to be useful primarily and specifically to tourists with special needs, who might nonetheless be threatened by the way the information is presented. This article discusses how such a tension may be mitigated through Political Correctness (PC) resources, by

examining how special assistance web-pages of international airports textualize descriptions, instructions, directions or advice for users requiring special assistance, and, more specifically, focusses on the interplay between PC concerns (aimed at softening some lexical and semantic aspects of the propositional content) and the need to maintain informative precision, detail and specificity. The article also provides a comparative overview of how informative effectiveness and PC appropriateness are achieved in different contexts and cultures by comparing special assistance web-pages of two different international airports (Gatwick Airport, UK, and Milan-Orio al Serio, Italy).

A very popular genre in tourism discourse, that of audio guides, is the object of the analysis offered by Maria Elisa Fina. This article detects and fills a gap which is found in most multimodal approaches to tourism research that are mainly concerned with the interaction between text and visuals, explicating the significance of the aural dimension, an element of primary importance in such a genre meant to guide users by orally providing directions and making available contextually relevant information intended to be listened to and easily understood while visiting a destination. Based on a corpus of city audio guides – containing English texts describing both British and American destinations and Italian guides for Italian cities – this study specifically focusses on the dialogical dimension of this genre; that is to say, on how different voices are used to fictively reproduce interactive scenarios. The analysis investigates how, through the manipulation of different voices, listeners are addressed by narrators, how they are given information as if directly by (fictionalized) locals – either experts or ordinary people – solicited by narrators, and also how they may be given the impression of being addressed directly by characters from the past (whose voice are introduced to dramatize historical events).

The second section of this topical issue sheds light on typical discursive and semiotic aspects of tourism communication, and, more precisely, those resources which are used by experts to enhance immediacy, impact and communicative effectiveness when promoting products or destinations. Based on the fact that the Web has become the privileged channel for tourism promotion, in her article, Stefania Consonni assesses the ways in which tourism experts exploit multimodality – a set of resources which are distinctive to and readily available in digital communication – to get messages across, capture the prospective users' attention, convey attitudes – both towards products and addressees – and elicit affective responses on their part. This study offers a thorough systemic analysis of textual-visual strategies aimed at creating audience engagement by considering the way these resources are used in the LEGOLAND theme park web-site. The author draws on the Hallidayan metafunctions as designed within Systemic Functional Grammar (and originally meant for verbal communication) and effectively applies them to the mixed-media texts of the web-site under consideration, illustrating how engagement can be maximized and handled both at the ideational level (through narrative and relational/conceptual representations of the interacting audience), the interpersonal level (by the construction of an ideal and responding audience in terms of closeness, emotional engagement, etc.), and, finally, at the textual level (by considering how various informative pieces are positioned on the screen).

The last article, by Anna Franca Plastina, provides an in-depth analysis of World Heritage Sites discourse, pointing out that the textualization of meaning in such contexts is indeed an articulated process of inter-semiotic and multimodal representation stemming from the

interplay of different systems of signification (words and visuals), and at the same time the referent, or, more precisely, the most appropriate, effective and possibly expected way of representing the site. The immediacy and impact characterizing these texts is achieved by resorting to symbolic, conventional and recognizable images which provide interpretive parameters intended to guide (and indeed influence) the prospective users' perception of a given sight or destination. This analysis focusses on off-sight markers (that is, those resources meant to anticipate the sight of a destination rather than fully represent it) as they are used to convey evidential information and epistemological familiarity. By examining websites describing the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia, this article discusses the meaning-making and effectiveness-enhancing practices produced by combining presentation and interpretation markers as they are realized by both textual and multimodal resources, and determines how interest in the destination can be elicited by lexicalizing the users' experience of the site (be it sensory or conceptual) or picturing it, that is by showing users enjoying their experience or sharing memories, impressions and their appreciation with the prospective visitor.

The papers published in this issue of *Scripta Manent* make yet another important contribution: they aim to enhance the teaching practices of English for tourism – an uncommon feature of research publications in the field of tourism discourse. By addressing the pedagogical implications of their research findings, the authors continue *Scripta Manent's* quest to bridge theory and practice in languages for specific purposes.

The articles by Zuma, Pasquini and Fina in the first section thus also argue that 'otherization' in tourism discourse should be addressed by the syllabi of English for tourism and/or translation courses. Zuma's findings show that by paying careful attention to the use of personal pronouns and the associations they evoke teachers could not only explore the linguistic resources expats use to construct their own identities and those of other tourists and local people in webzines but they could also develop students' critical thinking skills. By claiming knowledge about the three groups, expats create relationships of power and polarize relationships between the in-groups and the otherized out-groups. Understanding the ways in which linguistic resources are used to create power relations in discourse can also assist with the development of students' writing skills. English for tourism syllabi could also be expanded using political correctness strategies. Since political correctness strategies used in communication with travellers with special needs may vary from culture to culture, Pasquini suggests raising students' awareness about the linguistic resources that can empower disabled travellers and create a welcoming ambience as well as those that can help mitigate face-threatening communication acts.

Cross-cultural comparison is also relevant in another context: that of audio guides for tourists. Fina finds this digital genre especially useful for developing students' creative writing skills for oral delivery and the teaching of speaking skills to students interested in tour guiding. Students of translation, too, could benefit from learning to translate audio guides as the act would require them to engage in adaptation, re-writing, and transcreation.

The second group of papers deals with specific communicative strategies that promote tourism in digital contexts; both Consonni and Plastina suggest that their research findings show that multimodal approaches to website analysis should be incorporated into English for tourism syllabi. Consonni's reasoning lies in the fact that understanding audience engagement on tourism websites requires multiliteracy skills. She showed that the use of Systemic Functional

Grammar metafunctions can explain the meaning-making processes that engage visitors through words and visuals and create effective persuasive communication strategies on websites. Therefore, they could help to raise students' awareness and understanding of these processes and strategies.

Plastina's reasons for arguing for the adoption of multimodal approaches rest in her findings that the use of particular linguistic and visual aspects in representation discourse can be discipline specific. They can also help students discover and understand competing heritage representations and help develop their critical thinking skills.

The emergence of new digital genres in the field of tourism is thus delivering new challenges to our understanding of tourism discourse. However, these genres also bring about new opportunities for both research agendas and teaching practice. We trust the papers in this issue of *Scripta Manent* will open up new research questions and at the same time help enrich the syllabi of languages for tourism and translation courses by helping to raise students' awareness and critical understanding of these new genres and empower them in their translation or use.

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ON THE DISCURSIVE SELF-CONSTRUCTION OF EXPATS, BEHAVIOR AND VALUES

Abstract

Considering that learners engage in the creation of new educational scenarios, often using digital media, travelogues have been analysed because they represent the digital development of a well-established genre within tourism discourse. This study focuses on the discursive construction of expats as 1) integrated tourist and 2) travelogue writers. I consider the occurrence of an *Us* as opposed/assimilated with a *Them* in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces by analyzing a corpus made up of articles taken from the most accessed travel webzines for expats at the time of the research. Then I analyse the thematic structures and techniques of this textual typology. The paper may help to address pedagogical issues such as critical genre awareness and identity construction.

Keywords: expat, tourism discourse, otherization, user-generated blog

1. Introduction

1.1. Expats: labels, and communities

Due to the most recent socio-political situation in many countries, the phenomenon of migration is reappearing as a discourse within the mobilities field (Benson, 2011). The connotations of the word “immigrant” are very different from the label “expat”, a term which has come into view to define a new trend in migration, yet the boundaries of its meaning are not fully marked. According to some definitions, an *expat* is someone who is temporarily living abroad, as opposed to an *immigrant* which specifically means someone who has moved to a new country. Others claim an immigrant moves as a result of a want/need to escape something in his own country (poverty, war, lack of education) for something better, whereas expats’ moves are typically more neutral (job related or retirement). In general, the term is used to define British and American emigrants who move to the Commonwealth countries for work. Using Torkington’s (2012) words, these people belong to the middle class and contribute to the discourse on tourism because, when migrating, they engage in the latest “modern, global, elitist, borderless and highly mobile social practices” (p. 71). They contribute to these tourism-related practices by identifying themselves as ‘the best tourists’ thanks to their unique position, which allows them to visit the host country as the locals would. The blogger Hays-Pisani (2015) explains that expats have a greater span of time and a better understanding of the host culture, since they assimilate and integrate better in the context without acting as a tourist (Loftis, 2015). Their behavior is different in that, whereas tourists visiting a place expect everyone to accommodate their needs, expats tend to be more acquainted with traveling issues, such as language, flexibility, respect for other cultures (Hays-Pisani, 2015).

In contrast with the above mentioned definitions, it seems that a different representation of expats has emerged in academic studies (Bains, 2015; Lawson, 2013; Torkington, 2012), in which they are seen as strongly ethnocentric individuals who uphold the ideology of the British/American lifestyle. For example, Torkington (2012) explores lifestyle migration between northern Europe and the Golden Triangle area of the Algarve (Portugal), where people from Northern Europe are not considered immigrants but “resident tourists”, even when they settle permanently in the country. Two of the distinguishing features of resident tourists is that they do not speak the local language and they mostly go to places where they meet their co-nationals, features which are not in line with the adaptation and assimilation process that is emphasized in expats’ self-representation. The term “residential tourist” is also used by Benson (2011), who distinguishes this phenomenon from what she calls “labour migration”. She also suggests that residential tourists are people with sufficient economic security who move to a country in search of a better quality of life after retirement. The representations of the destinations are categorized under three main headings: the rural idyll, the coastal retreat and the cultural/spiritual attraction (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009). This, together with the motivation behind the choice of moving, make residential tourists different from expatriates, who move for job reasons and do not expect to find the ideal place to live. Another label in existing ethnographic studies is “professional migrants”, who are often described as those who have exclusive work and lifestyle conditions and are thus characterized by words

like *privileged* and *elites* (Shimoda, 2014, p. 138). These features are brought to their most extended meaning in the study by Bains (2015), who argues that expats' racialized (white and western) identities allow them to imagine themselves outside of the label "foreigners", and put themselves in a higher social position.

What emerges from academic research and from expats' self-representation is a controversial definition, which is still focused on an anglophone point of view. Another definition includes graduate and postgraduate students who try to widen their job opportunities and increase their incomes by looking for and accepting jobs in other countries, especially in areas such as biology and engineering. These expatriates do not conform to the former definitions. They are young postgraduates of different nationalities, with a basic knowledge of English, who move around within Europe looking for a paid occupation they are qualified to do, which is not necessarily connected to language education or governmental jobs. Their income, contractual benefits and most importantly the kind of job they are offered distinguish them from immigrants moving for unqualified jobs and poor incomes. Their young age makes them more likely to use their time for outdoor activities, such as trips, food and wine experiences, and tourist visits to the local area, of which they are informed by the net. What is confirmed by several studies, in fact, including the one by Lawson (2013), is that expats are offered networking and support through blogs and websites. The online forum appears to be a tool for maintaining ties among the expat community, as well as maintaining symbolic meaning attached to the old life and the new (Lawson, 2013). In Lawson's opinion, the net offers reference to shared (British) culture. She claims that routines such as requests for advice, new member announcements and expressions of support show how the forum is a communal mechanism for supporting "life in France, in English", a claim that is the complete opposite of the expats' self-representation. The point is, in this study, that expats form a community within the communities they live in through the webzines and the blogs that they write to inform and support other expats (Lawson, 2013), and which represent a new genre (Cappelli, 2008).

Genres are essentially defined in terms of typifications of rhetorical actions or consistency of communicative purposes within a specific discourse community, and having a "relatively stable structural form" (Bhatia, 1993, p.181). Alongside traditional genres like the guidebooks, brochures or postcards, weblogs and apps have more recently found their way into tourism communication, becoming texts that differentiate and interact and therefore engender hybrid forms. The expats' websites in particular, give information not only on locations but also about living there, and are therefore designed in both a persuasive and trustworthy way. They are persuasive in that they reassure their readers about the good quality of expats' life, and trustworthy because they write about their own experience of how to deal with the process of transformation from being a foreigner into a new country, to living as an integrated individual enjoying "otherness" in an enthusiastic way. These websites mediate the encounter between expat and destination both at a cultural and at a linguistic level and by selecting what is relevant and what is not, they represent the destination just as a guidebook would. It follows that these websites share common textual and linguistic features with other touristic texts, yet in other ways they are clearly different from them.

1.2. Aims and structure of the paper

This paper questions how expats discursively construct their identity as integrated tourists and in relation to an out-group in terms of values, behaviors and spaces. Secondly, taking expats as writers of travelogues, the study considers how these travelogues can be considered as belonging to tourism discourse. First, I consider the occurrence of an *Us* as opposed or assimilated with a *Them* for in- group vs. out-group consolidation and in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces, by analyzing a corpus composed of a number of expats' articles. These texts build group solidarity with other people in the same situation, while at the same time maintaining and building an open channel between the source and host cultures. The us-them polarization thus displays the struggle between oppositional forces, and may reflect not only different identities but also opposing ideologies. In a second passage, I analyze how the writer presents himself as a guide, looking for the strategies used to persuade, seduce and at the same time inform, features that are typical of tourist guidebook genres.

In this article, I describe the corpus under analysis and explain the criteria of choice first, and then I identify and discuss the linguistic means through which identity is construed. I analyze the occurrence of the first pronominal instances, comparing them with the third pronominal instances, and finally I analyse the reciprocal collocations and their polarization toward positive and negative representation of identities. In addition, I look at expats' texts as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies, and search for the linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that are involved in the genre. Finally, I discuss the results and draw some conclusions, considering the pedagogical implications.

2. Corpus description

The corpus consists of a selection of articles taken from Transition Abroad, a magazine that started as a paper publication in 1977 and has been a webzine since 1995. The website has a homepage with some information and a link to their webzine. It specifically aims at

“providing information that would enable open-minded and empathetic travelers to actually meet the people of other countries, to learn about their culture, to speak their language, and to *transition* to a new level of understanding and appreciation for our fascinating world. The title was also meant to suggest the changes in our perspective that result from such cultural immersion travel.” (Transition Abroad, A Brief History of Transitions Abroad Publishing: Our Mission)

According to the sales manager, the webzine has received eight million visits worldwide by readers who are seeking a source of primary information. They have listing and rotating ad banners that are related to teaching and studying centers, volunteering and working abroad. Anyone can become a contributor and submit an article. The webzine is referred to as *TAzine* and it basically has three sections: Europe, Latin America and Asia. By clicking on the *TAzine* cover issue, one can browse current or back issues that include a number of photos of landscapes and portraits. At the end of each article, readers can join the discussion on a board where comments and likes are left. Articles include descriptions of areas visited, both in terms of geographical and cultural aspects, as well as tips about how to find options on a budget.

My corpus consists on the 48 articles taken from the Europe 2015 issue (90,847 words) and on the 59 articles taken from the Asia 2015 issues (113,897 words), for a total of 107 articles (204,744 words in total).

2.1. Data analysis and framework

The articles were downloaded and collected as separate files, which were saved in .txt format in order to be processed by *Antconc 3.4.1*. The articles were then ordered and divided into sub-corpora. Each issue was considered a sub-corpus. For the interpretation of data, I combined a quantitative approach derived from Corpus Linguistics, but with a more qualitative understanding. The first step was to look at collocates in order to see the relationship between the node word and the other lexical items in the corpus. These linguistic choices show how writers engage in the representation of groups (Wodak et al., 2009). As suggested by scholars (e.g. Krzyzanowski and Wodak, 2007; Wodak et al., 2009), research on the construction of identities and belonging has shown that the individual/community negotiates the Self through discourse and, in addition, negotiates his/her/their dichotomy between individual and collective identities (migration as subjective experience and attributed membership). In particular, borrowing Wodak et al.'s words, "the conceptualization of identity results from a combination of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes, of related emotional attitudes and of similar behavioural dispositions" (2009, p.153). The categories involved in the *Us-Them* polarization thus serve to convey meaning and categorize the world. This linguistic strategy is used to construct and express identity through the main narrative voice, the travel guides writer's voice. The analytical framework is consequently based on the assumption that expats imagine themselves as a group-community. This mental construct is produced discursively and implies a complex of conceptions, emotional dispositions and attitudes, and similar behavioral conventions (as in Wodak et al., 2009). This representation reflects the expat identity, which is shared collectively through the webzine. Their narrative voice emerges from the texts that are construed as a sort of intertwined genre (a diary, a guidebook with descriptions of local amenities and a manual of surviving tourist-centred needs such as getting to a specific location, getting a good night's sleep, finding a meal, getting a good bargain in a shop).

The webzines have been looked at in order to study the contents, strategies and linguistic realization of the self-representation to understand if the writer is an integrated tourist, what his/her values and behaviors are from the point of view of polarization versus external identities, and his/her self-positioning towards other cultures. Since the language persuades and seduces (Dann, 1996) through certain discursive techniques that are based on authority and persuasion, certain strategies (namely comparison, testimony, ego-targeting, emotive manipulation, dialogic interaction and invitation) will be analyzed in order to understand how the writer offers him/herself as the perfect travel guide.

In the first part of the analysis I focus on the language related to the in-group and out-group in the European issue. Expressions used to refer to the Us-group are isolated from the corpus wordlist and sorted by frequency and a qualitative aspect is added to the analysis by using concordancing tools. This procedure is applied for the language related to the 'outsiders' as well. The second part of the analysis focuses on the language related to the Us-group and

the 'outsiders' in the Asian issue, and the same procedure of isolating expressions from the wordlist and using concordance is repeated. The final part of the analysis focuses on the discursive construction of the expat as a tourist guide, and analyses the texts for the most prominent markers of tourism discourse.

3. Constructing Us-Them in European contexts

In the first part of the analysis, the focus is on specifying the strategies which the expat writers use in constructing their image, the in-group and the out-group. The expressions used for in-group are isolated from the corpus wordlist. Seven different forms for *Us* appear on the wordlist, in order of frequency per token, *I* (905), *my* (426), *We* (405), *our* (212), *me* (139), *us* (84), and *expat* (27). From the number of tokens, it is obvious that the first person in clippings *I* and *my* are significantly more frequently used than the first plural *we* and *our*. This pattern does not apply to the construction of a group. However, these articles come in the form of a blog diary in which a narrative I discusses what (s)he meets during his/her travels. The narrative I is associated with verbs and predications usually ascribed to discovering, such as: *faced, asked, walked, exclaimed, knew, shuddered, captured, stepped out, thought, enrolled, found, believe*. These verbs are used in narratives and give the idea of becoming aware of a situation or a fact, or being the first to find or observe something peculiar. This use is illustrated in the following example:

- 1) Cruising along the Fjærlandfjord, on our way to the Norwegian Glacier Museum, I *captured* this reflection of Norway's scenic splendor. (E7)

To *we* and *us*, the verbs are associated to the improvement field: *travel, find out, learned, gathered, teaches, explain*. These verbs underline the disposition to learning from the other(s), being helped, as in examples:

- 2) [...] while an older Spanish gentleman *explained* to us the difference between papas, pipits, and patatas (three different words for potato) in hilarious detail. (E13)

Analyzing the word *expat*, it is possible to draw the image these articles offer:

- 3) The expatriates that Istanbul attracts has fluctuated through the years. In the 1970s, for instance, it attracted mostly hippies from the US and Australia. Today it brings in a slapdash assortment of English teachers, drifters, writers, musicians, entrepreneurs, diplomats and especially young freelance journalists [...] (E19)
- 4) They come to me wanting apartments with terraces, large bedrooms, and clothes dryers. I need to be the first person to rein them in and adjust their expat expectations. (E17)
- 5) There will be language and cultural misunderstandings to deal with. You may find your friendship groups perform mitosis, breaking off into two groups, into local friends and expat friends, who will seldom mix together on account of language or cultural complications. You will change roles and

navigate personalities and complain about locals to expats and about expats to locals. (E19)

- 6) [...] you will also find yourself part of a very lively expat scene, with people from manifold disciplines from all over the world, who will help to broaden your mind and build you an international network of friends. (E19)

These examples involve the idea of a different (more stimulating) life that needs adaptation skills.

The *others* are referred to as *they* (174), *them* (91) or with the adjective *their* (228), as *locals* (164) or through markers pointing to their nationality (Italians, Spaniards, etc.). Collocates refer to language, food, culture, locals, friends as in the following examples:

- 7) When *locals* shop at markets *they* take the time to smell, thump, and even taste what *they* are being offered [...]. (E3)
- 8) They speak English better than they speak German [...]. (E5)
- 9) Italians are extremely patient and accommodating when you are trying to learn and will often try to help you any way they can. (E33)
- 10) Fortunately, I have found few people in the world who are as forgiving as Spaniards when you absolutely butcher their language. (E12)

These examples give the idea of an *I* that is incompetent, and a patient and cheerful *other*. Apart from *locals* (118) the word *they* is also used for food (9), accommodation (6), destination (1), services (9), attitudes (2), students (6), other tourists (23). Interestingly, other tourists are construed negatively:

- 11) tourists [...] as they race from destination to destination often appearing stressed and exhausted. (E26)
- 12) I see people buy a lot of things to take home, but they should also be able to enjoy it here. (E11)

In these examples *Them* is idealized as a lovely person/community who knows how to savor life, provides information, speaks a foreign language and is accommodating and patient. The positive polarization goes against the image of *Us*, who moves clumsy and has no skill in languages but intends to discover the world and shows open-mindedness. The *tourist* is at the far end of the negative polarization, worried, under pressure and behaving in the most consumerist way instead of savoring the experience. In terms of values and attitudes, it is evident that the polarization *Us-Them* here involves the in-group of expats versus the other tourists instead of the host people, from whom the in-group attempts to acquire knowledge and living habits.

4. Constructing Us-Them in Asian contexts

As in the European context, seven different forms for *Us* are analyzed on the wordlist in the Asian corpus, and, namely, in order of frequency per token, *I* (1248), *we* (639), *my* (511), *me*

(229), *our* (212), *us* (209), and *expat* (78). The clusters refer to *community, circles, colleagues, destination, expert, family and forum*. The main collocates for *expat* and *I* are associated with verbs and predications usually ascribed to survey, such as: *ranked, classified, earned, shares*, but also *community, condos and loneliness*. These verbs are used in suggestion and advice involving logistical basis, with an eye to emotional states, especially when dealing with the word *expat*. This use is illustrated in the following example:

- 13) naturally one of the most common problems expats run into is loneliness.
(A48)

The examples involving *I* offer an image of self-making, mostly being alone in decisions:

- 14) teaching in Southasia for five years, I realized that if I wanted to open up [...].
(A59)

In relation to *we* and *us*, verbs are associated with adventure (*living, exploring, decided, arrived, found*), which seems to be in line with what has been found in the European issues. Among the verbs, there is *explore* and those suggesting feelings:

- 15) we would explore Thailand and the surrounding regions [...]. (A57)

- 16) we would still call Thailand home [...]. (A57)

However, a closer look reveals different attitudes and feelings as in these examples:

- 17) we have become accustomed to the sticky, humid place [...]. (A59)

- 18) We live in a gated community [...]. (A59)

A different condition emerges here, a discomfort that leads to self-exclusion from the host territory and makes expats closer to their community:

- 19) value living among expats, our family [...]. (A57)

This idea is confirmed when analyzing the occurrences, collocations and functions for *Them*. The out-group are referred to as *they* (348), *them* (154) or with the adjective *their* (372) or as *local(s)* (170). Apparently, locals' habits are described and referred to positively:

- 20) Perhaps the best reason to relocate to China are the people. In our experience, Chinese people are unusually warm and welcoming. They are curious but always kind. We found that even after 14 months of living and traveling around the massive country, we came away with nothing but good experiences with the locals. (A59)

The adjectives *warm, welcoming* and *kind* carry a positive connotation, which is eventually confirmed by the last sentence, which judges meeting locals as a *good experience*. However, in many instances, *they* is used to convey a negative image, explicitly or implicitly, both for local people and by extension for the whole country:

- 21) Men's behaviour toward foreign women is most often immature. They may try to touch you casually in an elevator [...]. (A59)

- 22) [in Singapore] but there does seem to be some resentment for expats who appear to be coming in and “stealing” the most highly paid jobs. (A52)
- 23) We don’t have the same rights as men and far too many crimes against women go unreported or, worse, unpunished when they are reported. (A59)

A very common suggestion as in (24) sounds as an alarm, a distance between *Us/Them* with a very negative polarization for *Them*.

- 24) As such, women need to be particularly alert when traveling to India and, in order to avoid potential issues, must conform to what’s expected by the locals [...]. (A59)

These examples convey a negative image of locals, who are depicted as resentful and whose customs (and maybe values) are at least unpleasant. *Them* is ultimately connected to a distance in habits, customs and languages, which eventually ends in the impossibility to communicate and understand each other:

- 25) The word she gave me, with a gentle smile, was “talat,” or “dadat,” or as close to what she said as I could replicate. (A33)

In these sentences the polarity established by the use of *Them* is very ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a fascination for the differences in habits, culture and food but the writer’s attitude and continuous suggestion is to be alert. The image of Asian locals is definitely not idealized, and language is both a job opportunity and a communication barrier. There is no reference to other tourists, the few might be more involved in the *Us*-group.

5. Travelogues as a “tourism” genre?

There is a contrast between tourist and traveler, which has already been demonstrated. In Francesconi’s words (2014), tourism enacts

a dichotomic discourse, tourism condemnation goes hand in hand with travel celebration. Accordingly, ‘travel’ is a responsible, sustainable, fulfilling activity practiced by independent, curious and refined human being moved by an authentic interest and passion for what is remote, ancient and authentic. (2014, p. 2)

It has also been demonstrated that “travel and tourism texts have the ideological potential to influence and orient perception, ideas, values, and actions” (Francesconi, 2014, p. 3). As seen in section 2, the corpus of this paper consists of expats’ texts, interpreted as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies that are typical of tourist guidebooks, and I look for some linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that are involved, starting from quotes. According to Gartner (1993) the tourist industry constructs a favorable destination image as a recognizable spokesperson’s suggestion. These spokespeople may be rich, famous personalities and, in the digital era, also common people who have tested the experience. Quotes are therefore used as evidence of a quality experience and as a gateway to an ephemeral world created by literature and dreams. At the phrastic and textual level, quotations of famous travel writers/authors appear to play a crucial role in guidebook

representations, as they give support to the information given, in terms of either prestige or discredit. The same strategy can be seen in the corpus of expats' web-texts:

- 26) "Frankly, I believe I am in good company when I proclaim my motto, 'savor the journey as well as the destination!'" Jeff Titelius is a travel writer and publisher of EuroTravelogue.com—chronicles of wondrous journeys throughout Europe. As Jeff says, "Wherever the roads or rivers may lead, I seek out cultural connections with places and people." (E32)
- 27) Whatever I had read or seen about the city had never prompted me to mark it on my travel map. Writers such as Gunther Grass and V.S. Naipaul called it "a city without a future," and Bombay-born Rudyard Kipling referred to it as "The City of Dreadful Night." Rajiv Gandhi once said that it had become a "dying city" after the economic relapse of this once celebrated industrial and cultural center of India. And the description of life in the slums of "The City of Joy" by Dominique LaPierre, later depicted in the famous film adaptation of Roland Joffé, as well accounts of Mother Teresa's life and work amidst the city's most destitute had further contributed to the desperate image I had of this West Bengal capital. (A55)

The second strategy on a lexical level, which insists on the creation of an imaginative world, consists in the use of words belonging to the language of the destination, which are used mainly to confer an exotic flavour to the text and to provide local colour. Linguaging is a way to mediate cognition, shaping knowledge and experience through language. Cappelli (2013) uses the term in the context of tourism discourse as the employment of foreign words (especially the local language) in the discursive negotiation of cultural differences. She argues that linguaging has the function of providing authenticity to the experience of the writer, and also of reducing the gap between two cultures by providing linguistic shortcuts to otherwise difficult language and/or cognitive concepts. In addition, especially in expats' blogs, linguaging has an expressive function and a pragmatic meaning since it allows the reader to experience the cultural gap and the writer's difficulty in closing this gap. It is worth noting that foreign words are sometimes used without any explanation, thus immersing the tourist in the local culture, or accompanied by a translation or a comment, thus giving the reader the instruments to understand it. However, linguaging may be also seen as a sort of 'manipulation' through the use of particular expressions shared by writer and reader, which makes them closer:

- 28) Though I wouldn't know until I returned home, these "bietole," which I thought to be greens related to beets, were actually broccoli rabe, prized in Italian cuisine. (E33)
- 29) People exchange greetings as they run into each other, "新年愉快 · 恭喜发财!" Happy New Year, wishing you happiness and prosperity! (A30)
- 30) Santa plied us with "tiger's milk," a gently fermented maize left to work its magic in a bucket. We moved on to "tongba" (millet beer) then "rakshi" (pronounced "roxy"), a hot version of schnapps, before falling into bed [...].(A28)

Alongside the use of exoticism, great emphasis is placed on words such as genuine, historical, real, authentic, originally, unique, typical, traditional, etc. Rather than referring to specific attributes of the destination, these emotive words appeal to tourists' expectations about it or about the tourist experience in general (namely through expressions such as *undiscovered, adventurous, romantic, authentic, magic* etc).

- 31) But there is definitely much more to Bali: the various arts and crafts, the typical dances, gamelan music, and Wayang Kulit theater, the Hindu temples with their many rites and festivals, the impressive cremation ceremonies, and of course, the magic food with its intriguing spices, sambals, and secret touches. (A58)

Emotive words also imply the writer's involvement. Very often, touristic text writers make personal judgments or use emotive registers through specific linguistic choices. Words such as interesting, unmissable, worth are used in self-committed sentences to trace what 'must' be seen.

- 32) A completely blue sky, the warmth of the sun mitigated by a gentle breeze, calm waters, comfortable lounge chairs, a cool drink, and that swooning feeling that, although it took us more than two full days and nights to get here, it *surely* is going to be worth it. (A12)
- 33) [...] the most beautiful dzong of Bhutan can be seen in Punakha; and the spacious Bumthang valley with its friendly villages and numerous monasteries further to the east is *definitely* worth a visit as well. (A34)

This strategy engages readers through the writer's authority, based on an implication that the writer more or less explicitly recommends the experience. Directives and the verbal action recommend are used in this unbalanced dialogue:

- 34) If you have a free weekend, I also recommend you take a train to Córdoba and check out the cathedral built smack in the middle of a mosque. (E39)
- 35) Be sure to ask "Servis var mi?" to the driver after you arrive and he will point you in the right direction. (E26)

The link with the reader is assured by the use of the pronoun *you*, which is frequently employed along with a rather colloquial language and a conversational style, which aims to address the tourist in a direct way and make him/her feel at home. This involvement becomes especially relevant when authors and readers belong to the same society or culture, as they usually share the same knowledge, attitude and even ideologies. Additionally, the use of *you*, which is often found both in advertisements and tourism discourse, turns the reader into a 'subject'. In the corpus, *you* occurs 1252 times and is used to engage the reader in the narration or has the function of an exhortative marker:

- 36) If you are a foodie like me, you might want to plan a series of trips from region to region trying out the local drink. (E17)

The last linguistic strategy uncovered is the use of comparisons by means of simile and metaphor (Dann, 1996, p. 17). Comparison is a verbal technique which is employed to soothe

the effects of strangeness and to manage the unfamiliarity of a destination. Destinations are thus treated as something special yet quite close to one's usual experience:

37) You'll never find encounters like this on any itinerary in the world! (E3)

38) In Turkey, as in other places, [...]. (E26)

In the corpus, comparison is often used to express (the desired) integration with the context, both in terms of foreign customs and values, a desire which is often explicitly expressed:

39) Our weekly games of fútbol made me feel like a real Spaniard [...]. (E12)

40) Like many locals, on weekends we dine on curry and som tam at riverside restaurants or take a short boat ride to Koh Kret [...]. (A57)

41) [...] the frustration of always being treated like an outsider by locals even when I adopted Indian customs [...]. (A59)

6. Conclusions

Whilst previous research has examined migration in terms of flows, habits and lifestyles, this paper sees it as a mobile practice in which a better lifestyle is constructed according to expectations, and where identity is reformulated (Lawson, 2013; Shimoda, 2014; Torkington, 2012) in terms of opposition between the *I* (or in-groups) and out-groups. Expatriates give advice to other expatriates-to-be in weblogues, telling them their stories of traveling, difficulties and good results when approaching different countries, cultures and people. In order to explore the discursive construction of the expat as an integrated tourist and a travel guide writer, two issues of an online webzine were considered, and the construction of an in-group and an out-group (in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces) were analyzed. The analysis is based on the assumption that expat webzines are rightfully included among the new genres of tourism discourse by providing a form of reliable living testimony and exploiting the same rhetorical mechanisms used in promotional tourism material, as already suggested by Cappelli (2008), who includes them as on-trip informational materials.

By analyzing a corpus of reports from the most accessed travel webzines for expats, the paper suggests that these articles promote different images of expats' identity and tourism. On the one hand, European areas are positively represented as authentic and warm, with ideal hosts. A narrative *I* emerges and it is associated with predications usually ascribed to discovering, and underlines a disposition to learning from the other(s), in a stimulating environment. References to locals always have positive connotations. *They* are more than happy to talk with expats, who try their best to savor their new life and to be involved in the context, bitterly despising other tourists who cannot enjoy the experience. On the other hand, being an expat in Asia offers a different perspective. Texts are mostly suggestions and tips about how to move in a totally different culture. The analysis shows that the language related to the *Us*-group is associated with an image of self-making; predications are usually ascribed to suggestions and pieces of advice about how to face different attitudes and feelings, which leads to self-exclusion from the host territory. A polarization between *Us* and *them* exists, which is in line, yet does not totally conform, with what was found by Torkington (2012),

according to whom expats refuse to integrate, do not speak the local language and mostly go to places where they meet their co-nationals. Perhaps these results support what Lawson (2013) suggests, which is the idea that there is an ideology within western lifestyle migration, or a 'right way' for westerners to live in Asia.

One contrast between the expat facing a 'comfortable' difference and the one facing a totally different culture is the construction of the in-group. The European *Them* (locals) emerges as a lovely person/community, eager to offer their help even in a foreign language. The positive polarization goes against the image of *Us*, who moves clumsily and has no skill in languages but wants to discover the world with an open-mind. On the far end of negative polarization is the other tourist, worried, under pressure and following the most consumerist habits instead of savoring the experience. In terms of values and attitudes, it is evident that the *Us-Them* polarization involves the in-group of expats versus the other tourists instead of the host people, from whom the in-group attempts to acquire knowledge and living habits. On the other hand, the Asian issue offer a totally different opposition. Analyzing the occurrences, collocations and functions for *Them*, the paper shows that *I* is in a state of alert against dangerous behaviors and distances between *Us* and *Them*. In these sentences *Them* (locals) is very ambivalent: on the one hand there is a fascination for the differences in habits, culture and food, but the writer's attitude is to be alert because of the differences in the those habits, customs and languages. While the European issue offers mostly reports of journeys and experiences, the Asian issue contains suggestions and advice to cover the distance between *I* and the local customs/people. This might be due to the fact that, while Europe falls under Benson & O'Reilly's (2009) categories, namely the rural idyll, the coastal retreat and cultural/spiritual attraction, the Asian issue seems to offer a fourth category: 'the land of job opportunities'. The destinations in this category are characterized by a choice made more because of the new economic constraints than bohemian lifestyle choices. The idea of the land of opportunities suggests a need for further research into the world of expats, broadening the scope to non-anglophone expatriates.

The second part of this study considers the corpus of expats' texts interpreted as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies that are typical of tourist guidebooks, and I therefore looked for linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that were involved in this sub-genre. The two issues certainly support and confirm the idea that expats' talk (articles in this case) is rightly included among the new genres of tourism discourse (Cappelli, 2008), and that it contributes to tourism discourse itself by providing a form of reliable living testimony and exploiting the same rhetorical and cultural mechanisms used in promotional material related to tourism. I found the same textual features in guidebooks, from quotes, directives, and emotional words, to exoticism and the you-involvement strategy as an advertisement and emotional tool. Comparison deserves a special mention since it is used differently in expats' texts than in guidebooks. In fact, comparison is known to be a powerful instrument in the representational process as it can be employed in opposite ways depending on the aim of the writer. It can reduce the gap between the destination culture and that of the tourist or increase it by stressing distance in space and time. This approach is particularly useful in revealing the influence of imageries associated to other places and people, which may be different from a different (e.g. expats') angle.

In conclusion, travelogues are understood in this paper as the natural evolution of travel guidebooks in digital contexts, since they make use of digital motifs (openness, directness and interactivity), have a wide audience and are produced by non-professional writers. The analysis of the thematic structures and techniques belonging to this textual typology helps to address pedagogical issues such as critical genre awareness as well as identity construction. Considering that learners engage in the creation of new educational scenarios (often using digital media technology), digital texts may serve to develop their linguistic and cognitive outputs. Travelogues are a form of collaborative knowledge construction offered by non-professional writers (user-generated content) in digital media. By understanding how expats provide a description of identities, included otherness (out-group, Wodak et al., 2009) in terms of environment and culture, the paper provides a starting step towards critical thinking for policy-making, teaching and learning, and identity research. In addition, considering travelogues as the digital development of a well-established genre within tourism discourse, the paper addresses the issue of genre descriptions in digital contexts, which can feed into pedagogy in the form of syllabus and materials design, addressing multiple approaches. The new (digital) frames imply a focus on genre awareness (helping students experimenting new practices, e.g. the ability to use online resources, ability to identify echoes in the digital genres, ability to use multimodality to understand a message) and on their potential influence on the organization of knowledge, thus involving them into the questioning of audiences and authorships, new meanings and language repertoires as well as providing them with the possibility of new conceptualizations of notions like identities.

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POLITICALLY CORRECT TOURISM DISCOURSE IN AIRPORT WEBSITES GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE TRAVELLING

Abstract

This work attempts to investigate inclusive discursive practices on the official websites of two European airports – namely Gatwick Airport and Orio al Serio International Airport – in order to explore how political correctness (PC), i.e. a contemporary sociolinguistic phenomenon pointing at transparency and inclusiveness in texts addressing disadvantaged categories, may influence tourism discourse. Chiefly, the analysis concerns online guidelines illustrating facilities for passengers with ‘special needs’, so as to shed light on whether and how undiscriminating language is employed to convey in the most neutral, accessible and thus persuasive way information to and about customers with ‘specific requirements’ within the realm of tourist communication. On this basis, the present study will be especially useful for pedagogical purposes, for professionals and students approaching the domain of tourism discourse and its discursive practices.

Keywords: political correctness, tourism discourse, airport website guidelines, inclusive travelling, passengers with special needs, unbiased language

1. Introduction

This work offers a linguistic analysis of the way political correctness (PC) – a supposedly inclusive social and discursive practice which has been influencing contemporary vocabulary and language usage – and tourism discourse mutually intertwine, especially within the realm of web communication. The main focus will be on guidelines for customers with special needs available on airport websites, wherein language neutralisation, transparency and inclusiveness do play a major role. The purpose is to provide evidence as to how ‘sensitive’ meanings are handled and codified in professional tourism contexts, which will be especially useful for pedagogical aims, for professionals and students approaching discourse usage in such contexts to effectively convey relevant information and, at the same time, mitigate possibly face-threatening acts.

Hughes (2010) has claimed that politically correct metalinguistic strategies and neutral referential lexis are mainly and primarily associated with academic discourse and specialised language meant for expert audiences. Tourism discourse, whose pragmatic function may vary according to the context, is also characterised by degrees of either specialisation or persuasiveness; despite targeting laymen, it is found to resort to strategies that are typical of specialised language (Maci, 2010, 2013), especially at the level of lexis and syntax. Among such resources, which typify specialised discourse both in terms of quantity and distribution, it is possible to list lack of emotion, conciseness, semantic evolution and premodification (Gotti, 2003). These are also distinctive features of the so-called politically correct language (Halmari, 2011; Hughes, 2010).

The industry of tourism, which has increasingly been boosting European and global economies, is widely associated with persuasive linguistic practices, especially when targeting the general public (Maci, 2010); yet, besides its inherently persuasive aspects and market-oriented aims, this economic sector has also been fostering more sustainable fair-minded responsible policies and strategies. The UN’s World Tourism Organization¹ aims at promoting tourism education and ethics to make the latter an instrument to encourage inclusive and accessible development and economic growth worldwide. Moreover, the social impact of ‘inclusive’ tourism, as both practice and discourse, has certainly been encouraged by digital communication, since the Net represents a source of information for ‘self-catering’ tourists, thus enhancing accessibility and dismantling ‘architectural’. As a matter of fact, the industry of tourism has been seizing and exploiting the wide range of possibilities provided by the web (Maci, 2010, 2013), targeting more independent and demanding potential visitors, who have become increasingly familiar with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its potential, as Mansfield (2006) and Mattiello (2014) claim, to gather information. Such sustainability and wide accessibility may even be reflected in the selection of ‘sensitive’ language referring to the holiday and travel experience of tourists belonging to target groups of people in need of special assistance, in order to avoid the risk of stereotyping, which might be perceived as an instance of discriminatory language.

This study investigates inclusive discursive practices employed on the official web-sites of two important European airports, namely Gatwick Airport and Orio al Serio International

1 Retrieved from <<http://www2.unwto.org/content/who-we-are-0>> (15/03/2017).

Airport, to explore how PC may shape tourism discourse and, by extension, the tourist experience. More specifically, the analysis concerns those hypertexts meant to provide guidelines illustrating facilities and services for passengers with 'special needs'. The purpose is to evidence whether and how undiscriminating unbiased vocabulary is used to convey in the most neutral, accessible and thus persuasive way information to and about customers with 'specific requirements' and/or disabilities within tourism settings.

This is particularly interesting in that, in such contexts travellers may need to be given guidelines for safety in airports so as to receive special assistance, and these texts, besides providing relevant information, should at the same time mitigate the threatening potential of expressions addressing or describing 'sensitive' categories. On the other hand, resorting to more neutral fair-minded lexical and discursive devices to refer to disadvantaged users is nonetheless likely to bring about ideological implications by merely presenting target groups with 'special needs' as being different from those with no such needs.

For this reason, highlighting linguistic and metadiscursive strategies which are used in practical tourist contexts to convey and mitigate such meanings can be profitable for an effective pedagogy of such resources and to shed further light on tourist communication. This is also particularly relevant in that, promoting 'inclusive' fair-minded practices by means of PC lexis and metalinguistic elements may aim to help foster entrepreneurship in tourism discourse and, by extension, in the tourism industry, a sector that has been planning new strategies and seizing novel profitable realms of investment in order to deal with the recent financial crisis (Maci, 2010).

2. Premises and study background

2.1. Discourse and tourism

Jaworski and Prichard (2005) state that the domain of tourism has only recently become a fully fledged field of enquiry rather than being just one branch of specialised communication (Gotti, 2003). In recent years tourism studies have proliferated (Hollinshead & Jamal, 2001) and drawn attention from social sciences and discourse analysis, also owing to a greater emphasis on service economy and the accelerated processes of globalisation. Hence, exploring the realm of tourist may pave the way for further investigation on complex and multiple interpersonal relationships, identities and representations in this domain.

The development of tourism discourse is also related to the availability of the new forms of web communication, which have contributed to shape a new hybrid type of discourse in terms of degrees of specialisation, attention-seeking and regulatory objectives (Maci, 2010). Indeed, tourism e-communication caters independent demanding customers that have become more and more familiar with ICT and circumscribes as much as possible the risk of misunderstanding. Said level of persuasiveness or domain specificity may vary according to the pragmatic function of the texts that are taken into consideration (Gotti, 2003) and the target of such (hyper)texts, i.e. the general public or specialists, but it is indeed an aspect to be taken into consideration for an in-depth analysis of this form of communication. As a matter of fact,

the advent of the internet has deeply influenced discursive practices and genre conventions in the domain of tourism, since text types mutually and constantly intertwine (Bhatia, 1993). Therefore, the aforementioned field represents an important source of investigation from a linguistic and metalinguistic standpoint.

The present work intends to analyse regulatory digital guidelines targeting laymen with special needs with the purpose of demonstrating that various degrees of political correctness and specialisation – two aspects that, as anticipated above, share linguistic and metalinguistic practices, such as conciseness and denotativeness – play a major role in stereotyping and misinterpretation avoidance.

2.2. Political Correctness Language Usage

According to *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA), especially in the light of the contributions of Fairclough (1995, 2014), Fairclough and Wodak (1997) and Van Dijk (1989), language is both the reflection and the basis of social interactions and power roles in society, the very process of defining actions, actors and roles conveys in itself a representation of the world which is by no means unbiased. Hence, ideological implications are inherent in politically correct language usage, for instance in the selection of lexical elements to replace ‘improper’ ones or in the creation of novel ‘special’ sensitive vocabulary. Yet, as Garzone and Sarangi state (2007), in the specific case of tourism discourse, besides more overtly expressed ideological messages, other more covert contradictory ideologies may interweave in the very same discourse, be it concerned with tourism matters or PC targeting ‘disadvantaged’ groups.

PC refers to a sociolinguistic phenomenon of language sanitisation and ‘sensitive’ linguistic orthodoxy that has influenced different realms, from academic to professional and political, especially from the 1990s onwards, even though it originated within the domain of American politics in the 1960s, utterly marked by the cultural revolution, and feminist and racial debates (Minogue, 2005). PC further developed in American campuses, especially at Stanford University, at the end of the twentieth century, and was originated by the debate on whether to complement the canonical traditional curriculum of *Western Civilization* with a more ‘inclusive’ course of foreign literatures, *Culture, Ideas and Values* (CIV), characterised by a broader religious, racial and political perspective. According to some critics, such as D’Souza (1992), CIV multicultural approach represented a political attempt to introduce radical left-wing philosophy. Conversely, Rothenberg (1992) claimed that the traditional curriculum aim embedded gender-class-ethnic dynamics (Apple, 1982) to politicise knowledge (Buckingham, 1998; Carey, 1992).

On this basis, Wilson (1995) introduced a distinction in terms of *conservative correctness*, intended to maintain the ideological *status quo*, and anti-discriminatory *progressive political correctness*, aimed to sweep away prejudices. Dunant (1994) and Hughes (2010), however, have highlighted the contradictions of such a distinction and the related ideological implications, since the process of selection of discursive and behavioral practices is inherently subjective, culture dependent and necessarily biased. As a matter of fact, on the one hand, PC has been recognised as a decent-minded intervention to sanitise prejudicial language, on the other hand, the phenomenon may involve linguistic and behavioral proscription (Lessing, 2002).

The phenomenon of PC has progressively developed into a sociolinguistic attempt of language sanitisation (Andrews, 1996) to prevent sensitive categories from stereotyping, especially in the Anglophone culture, inherently and ideologically molded by the concept of democracy and equality. The term PC entered the American lexicon and mind-set in the 1990s to refer to inclusive discursive practices intended to avoid language and behavior “that might offend egalitarian political sensibilities in matters of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental capability and so on” (Allen 1995, p.111).

PC literature review has been quite enlightening in order to identify ideological perspectives, when it comes to resorting to a supposedly more inclusive vocabulary, and non-discriminatory linguistic and metalinguistic aspects. According to Hughes (2010) PC is always concerned with language neutralisation at different levels. As for the pragmatic level,, politically correct language is primarily characterised by rife euphemism to mitigate the illocutionary power of a statement, phrase or term; instead, from a lexical viewpoint PC tends to resort to neologisms or circumlocutions to avoid stereotyping or discriminatory language, which, however, according to Hernández (2008) and as Halmari (2011) has suggested, may lead to shine “extra light on what it seeks to conceal” (p. 13).

Nonetheless, discourse ideological covert and overt messages do not necessarily imply that all discourse is ideologically charged to the same degree (Fairclough, 1995). In this light, the present analysis examines the extent of ideological bias as well as the level of neutralisation that PC discourse may entail in the realm of tourism digital communication targeting ‘special’ categories. The aim is to identify possible distinctive traits and trace both linguistic and metalinguistic resources which may eventually be used for an effective pedagogy of sensitive matters and sensitive language in tourism communication.

As a matter of fact, as Haegele and Hodge (2016) have pointed out, diverse conceptualisations of disability are chiefly influenced by professional organisations and authorities within a particular realm and such forms of communication may shape the way abilities and disabilities are perceived even by the very same ‘sensitive’ categories. Despite the complexity of the framework of disability discourse (Mitra, 2006), over the past 50 years this discursive domain has been shaped by two prime models, i.e. the medical and the social. The former tends to create objective ‘non-PC’ categorisations by overtly associating individuals with their own disability, since these labels clarify the medical profile, type of impairment and, as a consequence, the patient’s needs. On the other hand, according to the more ‘inclusive’ social model of disability discourse, disability is considered a disadvantage worsened by societal restrictions, barriers and misconception of individuals with an impairment as ‘being less able’ (Goodley, 2001). Therefore, at the very least, owing to the limited corpus object of investigation, this study may also attempt to shed light on the ‘prevailing’ model of discourse disability in the analysed airport online guidelines.

3. Research and methodology

The present work covers a linguistic analysis of airport website guidelines provided by Gatwick Airport and Orrio al Serio international airport for customers with special needs, at linguistic and metalinguistic level. The selection of these sources is motivated by the need

to evidence whether there is a different approach towards PC discursive practices in English and Italian cultures, especially when targeting 'sensitive' groups. On the one hand, we have selected a major international British airport, thus possibly having to deal with high numbers of customers with special needs; on the other, we have chosen a smaller Italian airport (yet quite important, being located near Milan), primarily relying on low cost flights and catering a remarkably inferior number of potential travellers. The selection of this second site was mainly due to the fact that Orio al Serio Airport can indeed be considered as an English as a lingua franca context, since guidelines addressing customers with special needs, despite being written in English, may not be produced or primarily read by native speakers of English. The hypothesis guiding the present study is that the range of realisations of PC language is likely to be noticeably different in such markedly diverse contexts.

The analysis of the way and extent PC language usage is employed to avoid stereotyping and to create a positive, caring context on the two websites will focus on both the referential and the metadiscursive level of its realisations. The referential level of the analysis concerns the ideological and sociocultural implications, in both Italian and British cultural contexts, and will focus especially on instances of pre- and postmodification employed in the lexical representation of people with special needs. Premodification, that is the strategy of combining adjectives/nouns to nouns (or, in morphological terms, modifiers to the head of the phrase) is a non-euphemistic way of presenting meanings in that the modifier has a labeling function with respect to the associated noun, i.e. *disabled people*. According to Halmari (2011) this is a potentially face-threatening and discriminatory instrument, especially when the modifier carries negative meanings or strong semantic connotations. Particularly, in adjectives referring to people with special needs premodification attributes 'negative' qualities to the referent rather than framing them with respect of a given group, i.e. *disabled people* vs. *people with disabilities*. However, this strategy, although 'non politically correct', seems to be the most frequent collocation found in everyday use and, in some cases, also in media discourse, in order to achieve conciseness and transparency especially in attention-seeking advertising and headlines.

On the other hand, postmodification, that is the strategy consisting of adding relative clauses or prepositional phrases to a noun, can be defined as a euphemistic way of expressing meaning in that specific words or phrases are used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression (Allan, 2001). For this reason, this is considered to be the privileged way of expressing problematic meanings (Halmari, 2011) in that stemming from an inclusive and comprehensive attitude towards the referent (cf. *people with special needs* vs. *disabled fliers*) in order to avoid stereotypes and stigmatisation.

The focus on such resources depends on the fact that both appears to be particularly strategic for the guidelines under investigation here, in that their pragmatic effectiveness stems from the conciseness of the information presented and the avoidance of discriminatory language in the wording of the meaning. As a matter of fact, in digital guidelines, information is meant to be displayed in a short and clear way to customers looking for 'special' assistance. Moreover, digital communication relies on conciseness also for the purpose of search engine optimization. Thus, said inherently contextual characteristics should be taken into account when investigating the level of PC lexical usage and discursive practices in the aforementioned context.

The second level of analysis will focus on some of the metadiscursive aspects singled out by Hyland (2005) that seem to be relevant in order to measure PC contribution, namely personalisation and epistemic modality markers, especially used to express deontic meanings. Personalisation refers to the use of first and second person pronouns (*I, me, we, you*, etc.) and possessives (*my, mine, our, your*, etc.), which is useful in order to determine or convey interpersonal meanings, for instance, by either increasing or downtoning the level of inclusion. In the specific case of airport guidelines, this resource may have the function to reduce the level of formality and detachment, which is implicit in performative regulatory genres, and emphasise solidarity and “audience-sensitivity” (Hyland, 2005, p. 4), thus favouring PC verbal behaviour.

Epistemic markers are expressions – namely, modals (*can, may, could, should* etc.), modifiers (*possible, probably, certainly*, etc.), phrasal expressions (*according to, what is important here*, etc.) – which are exploited to stress either certainty, validity and commitment, or uncertainty and possibility with respect to a given claim. More specifically, *hedges* are used as inclusive – hence PC oriented – strategies to mitigate the writer’s position towards given meanings and involve the reader in a potential open dialogue (Hyland, 2005). Conversely, *boosters* are used to “close down alternatives” (Hyland, 2005, p. 52), stress certainty, maximise the role of the writer and marking the passive role of the reader with respect to a given claim, which is the standard way of expressing deonticity (Gotti, 2003).

Deontic modality – the typical function of airport hypertexts addressed to disadvantaged travellers – conveys the degree of obligation, the way people are expected to behave and the speaker’s authority in terms of permission or necessity (Maci, 2010), thus entailing a certain level of face-threatening illocutionary force in a statement. Obligation is typically obtained by means of modals such as *must, have to, will, cannot*, etc. or the unmitigated use of imperative forms. However, through the use of epistemic markers, deontic meanings can be reformulated in order for them to be acceptable in PC terms, and may take the forms of permission, through formulations like *can, may, to be permitted, to be allowed*, etc., by which ‘orders’ are presented as ‘possibilities’ for the reader to do something. Necessity is also communicated through expressions like *should, it is necessary*, or *if*-clauses – meant to soften the force of a statement by framing it with respect to a given condition (Hyland, 2005; Sala, 2008). In this case the focus is switched from the reader to the action, i.e. from a direct appeal to perform a given action to the action which needs to be carried out. Recommendation is conveyed through verbs like *advise, recommend, suggest*, etc. or imperative forms preceded by expressions of the maxims of tact (Leech, 1983), like *please, if you do not mind*, etc., by which an order is presented as a polite invitation.

As we see, the balance of hedges and boosters in a text determines the extent to which the writer is willing to negotiate a specific meaning and is indicative of the writer’s consideration for the readers. This has been largely proved to be also crucial in politically correct language usage, whose aim (Hughes, 2010) is to reflect a certain degree of sensitivity towards the reader or listener.

4. Data and analysis

4.1. Gatwick Airport

The present section focuses on hypertexts devoted to catering potential travellers with special needs with assistance and facilities as they were found on the Gatwick Airport official web-page (see figure 1 below), the second largest airport in the UK. As already observed, the analysed hypertexts are primarily informative and regulatory; yet, they pertain to the domain of tourism discourse as they target potential travellers. Thus, the pragmatic aim is to promote and offer ‘special’ aid as well as direct customers to follow safety regulations and provide informative practical details and recommendations, such as contact numbers, how to book in advance, how to receive special assistance, walking distances, etc.). Furthermore, information is delivered in a concise and swift way in compliance with the discursive practices and conventions typical of digital communication (Maci, 2010; Mansfield, 2006).

Figure 1 below, illustrates the web-page that directs to eight different sections, i.e. ‘request assistance’, ‘mobility assistance’, ‘help at the airport’, ‘other assistance’, ‘public transport’, ‘assistance dogs’, ‘disabled parking’, ‘special assistance.’

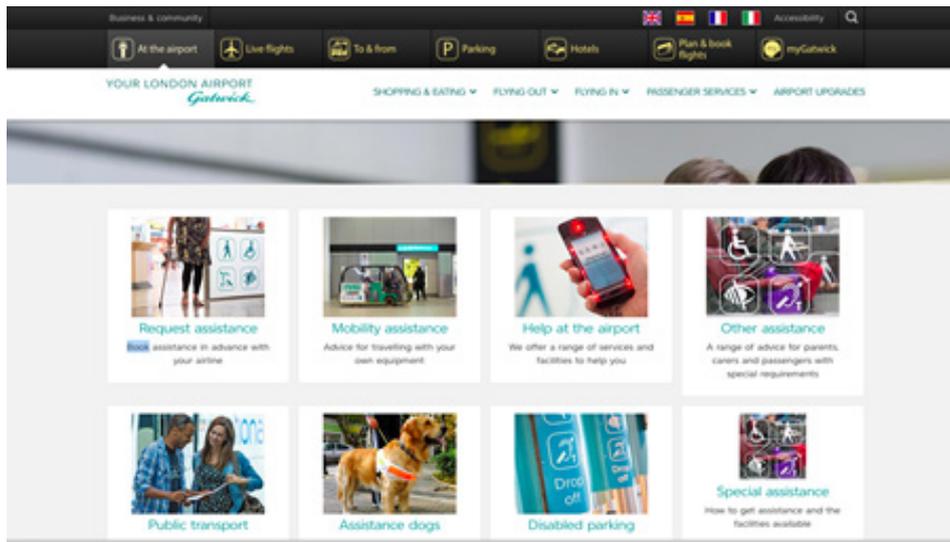


Figure 1. Web-page devoted to ‘Special assistance’ on the Gatwick Airport website².

As can be easily observed from the lexical material employed in the web-page, the term ‘assistance’ is remarkably frequent (5 out of 8 headings) and directs potential travellers to choose the type of help they need rather than directly address the ‘special categories’ of travellers, thus preventing from stereotyping or labeling.

From a linguistic and referential viewpoint, instead, we can see that ‘special’ customers are varyingly referred to on the eight different sections, as shown in table 1:

² Available at <www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance> (6/06/2017).

Premodified nouns	Postmodified nouns
Special assistance passengers (3)	Passengers with special needs (1)
Autistic people (1)	Children or adults with autism (1)
The partially sighted (1)	All those with disabilities or mobility difficulties (1)
Nervous fliers (1)	Passengers / A passenger with reduced mobility or disability (3)
Vulnerable passengers (1)	People with ADHD (1)
Vulnerable adults (1)	People affected by/with dementia (2)
8	9

Table 1. Frequency of premodified and postmodified nouns in the eight sections of Gatwick airport web-page.

By observing the data reported in the table above it can be noticed that both postmodification (9 postmodified nouns) and premodification (8 premodified nouns) are at stake when addressing 'sensitive' categories of travellers. On the one hand, premodification is mainly employed for the sake of brevity and owing to the attention-seeking pragmatic aim of the texts analysed, besides being the typical way for modifying noun phrases in standard English (Ballard, 2007). On the other hand, however, this tendency seems to be counterbalanced by 'PC' postmodification and the use of the preposition 'with' to refer to disabilities that people may have (as in *passengers with special needs*), rather than to how the disability itself affects and identifies them (as in *special assistance passengers*). As already observed, these linguistic devices prevent from creating a 'labeled' disadvantaged referent, as Halmari has suggested (2011).

As far as personalisation is concerned, the recipient is directly referred to by means of the 'inclusive' pronouns 'you' to imply potential travellers' autonomy as to whether to choose certain airport facilities or not, and, by so doing, it promotes passengers' self-confidence and responsibility on selecting travel options. The pronoun 'we', instead, always used in its exclusive function, provides customers with a greater sense of reliability and self-commitment of airport staff, as well as implying mutual collaboration when catering with special assistance (as in expressions like "We offer a range of services and facilities to help you").

As for the metalinguistic level of the current analysis, deontic modality has been taken into consideration, especially focusing on the way deonticity is conveyed either in terms of obligation, necessity and . The former appears to be rife especially in technical and instruction texts concerned with regulations and safety, as well as tourist guides when urging customers to identify and select what they may need among the facilities and services offered (Maci, 2010). In the eight different sections of Gatwick Airport website the use of modals expressing obligation and necessity – such as *will*, *must*, *need to*, imperatives and expressions like *to be necessary* – can be noticed, owing to the attention-seeking regulatory informative purpose of the text. Yet, *must* is used only twice, as can be seen in able 2 below.

Deonticity				
	Obligation	Permission	Necessity	Recommendation
Will	(2)			
Must	(2)			
To be necessary to				
Need to			(5)	
Should			(3)	
Recommend				(3)
Can		(12)		
May		(2)		
If-clauses			(29)	
Please + imperative				(16)
Imperative	(21)			
	25	14	37	19

Table 2. Frequency of mitigated and unmitigated deontic expressions on Gatwick Airport online guidelines addressing customers with special needs.

As table 2 illustrates unmitigated obligation – especially when expressed through imperatives, for the sake of brevity and clarity – even if quite frequent, is not the preferred resource employed to convey deontic meanings. In fact, modals such as *may*, *can*, and *should*, as well as *if*-clauses, adverbial expressions like *please* or the semantic verb *recommend*, all function as hedging devices, softening strong obligation. Overall, Gatwick Airport guidelines tend to resort to a high number of ‘sensitive’ politically correct forms, varyingly marking necessity (37 occurrences), which is a detached and depersonalised – yet tactful – way of signaling deonticity, or recommendation (19 occurrences) and permission (14 occurrences), both of which are more personalised and inclusive ways of conveying performative meanings, so as to create a positive welcoming context. Said pragmatic aim is also fostered by a certain degree of personalisation, owing especially to the use of the pronoun *you*, addressing customers directly, and by means of the extensive use of *we*, thus highlighting the idea of reliability and expressing a greater sense of commitment of the staff.

4.2. Orio al Serio International Airport

Orio al Serio International Airport is located in Italy, east Lombardy, and primarily deals with low-cost air transport, hence accommodating a more limited number of users than Gatwick Airport, thus having to cater even fewer potential travellers requiring special assistance. The hypertexts analysed are in English and allow us to see how politically correct tourism discourse is realised in lingua franca contexts.

Figure 2, below, shows the section of the airport’s website with information concerning ‘special’ assistance.

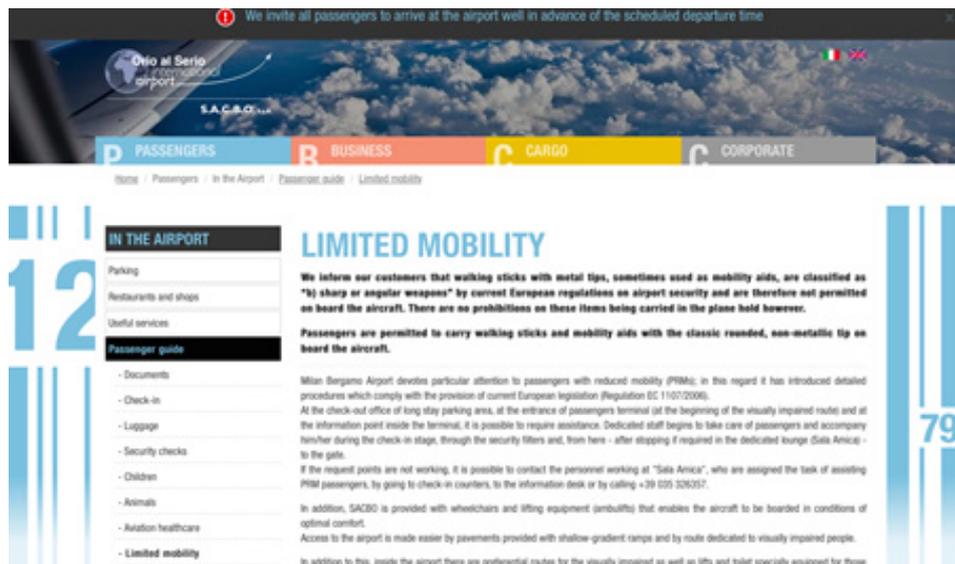


Figure 2. Web-page concerning 'Limited Mobility' on the Orio al Serio Airport website³

By observing the microlinguistic aspects of the text, we can see that, as far as lexis is concerned, the expression *limited mobility* is used in the headline of the aforementioned section; such lexical item seems to be at odds with politically correct sensitive language usage, even though the adjective 'limited' refers to mobility in general, without overtly making reference to potential travellers with special needs. Table 3 below reports how customers requiring special assistance are referred to:

Premodified nouns	Postmodified nouns	Acronyms
PRM passengers (1)	Passengers with reduced mobility (2)	PRMs (6)
Visually impaired people (1)	Those with walking difficulties (1)	
The visually impaired (1)	Passengers who need to be accompanied (1)	
Disabled drivers (1)	People with disabilities or reduced mobility (1)	
Departing PRMs (1)	Passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility (1)	
Arriving PRMs (1)		
6	6	6

Table 3. Frequency of premodified and postmodified nouns and acronyms on Orio al Serio Airport web-page for passengers with special needs.

3 Available at <www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance> (6/06/2017).

It can be noticed that both premodification (6 items) and postmodification (6 items) are high frequency linguistic devices, as in the case of Gatwick Airport website analysed in the previous section. Yet, in Orio al Serio Airport guidelines the acronym 'PRMs' (Passengers with reduced mobility) is extensively used (6), alone or with premodified nouns, in compliance with International Air Transport Association's classification of special assistance, which relies on a range of acronyms. Thus, in such cases, PC language usage appears to be disregarded for the sake of clarity and conformity to regulations, with clear reference to the current European and Italian legislation.

As for the use of pronouns, customers in need for 'special' care are not directly engaged but rather referred to by means of third person pronouns (*him/her, them*). The pronoun *we* is used only once with an exclusive function ('*we* inform our customers'), therefore said hypertexts lack a high degree of personalisation.

The frequency and distribution of the expressions of deonticity are shown in table 4 below.

Deonticity				
Modal/expression	Obligation	Permission	Necessity	Recommendation
Must	(4)			
To be permitted		(2)		
It is possible to		(2)		
Can		(1)		
May		(2)		
If-clauses			(2)	
Require/to be required	(5)			
Please + imperative				(1)
	9	7	2	1

Table 4. Frequency of mitigated and unmitigated deontic expressions on Orio al Serio online guidelines addressing customers with special needs.

As we can see, deontic meanings in Orio al Serio Airport guidelines are formulated predominantly in terms of obligation (9 occurrences) and permission (7 items) which tend to prevail and be prime to politically correct hedging expressions of necessity (2) and recommendation (1). Indeed, customers are for the most part urged to prescriptively follow regulations, for safety reasons, by means of *must* and the verb *to require*, either in the passive or active form. The use of formulations softening strong obligation is instead remarkably less frequent, with only very few occurrences of modals like *may* and *can* and the expression *it is possible* to codify the regulatory function in terms of permission given to customers by the airport staff. Necessity is also mitigated and conveyed by means of *if-clauses* (2) and recommendation, by the expression *please* followed by an imperative (1).

By comparing the data in table 1, 2, 3 and 4, it can be observed that Orio al Serio Airport's special assistance e-guide resorts to a higher degree of depersonalisation and prescriptive

discursive practices if compared to Gatwick Airport's web-pages targeting sensitive referents. In the former, PC linguistic and metalinguistic strategies are mostly disregarded, as can be noticed also in the overtly face-threatening expression *will be persecuted by law* used on Orio al Serio Airport guideline in order to urge customers to respect safety regulations. Conversely, on Gatwick Airport special assistance web-pages European or local legislations are not mentioned and the use of institutionalised formulations such as acronyms to address potential travellers is avoided. Since English is used on Orio al Serio Airport website in a lingua franca context (i.e. primarily produced and read by non-native speakers of English) adherence to a more institutional language can stem from the necessity to avoid any form of misunderstanding, for the sake of clarity when delivering regulations.

5. Conclusion

Given the limited corpus analysed in this work, at least the results may point to the conclusion that, in the light of what has been observed in the current analysis concerning Gatwick Airport's and Orio al Serio International Airport's special assistance web-pages, digital tourism discourse appears to draw from diverse discursive practices and conventions, particularly when addressing sensitive referents. Learners and researchers on this type of hypertexts should be aware of the fact that brevity of digital communication, informative attention-seeking pragmatic aims and PC language usage are very much interwoven. Moreover, we need to bear in mind that, whereas brevity and impact can be achieved in similar ways in different cultural settings, the realisation of PC is very much dependent on contextual and cultural parameters concerning how 'sensitive' contents are expected to be codified and what emphasis is to be conferred to such meanings with respect to others (such as formality, deonticity, performativity, etc.) which are typical of a given genre.

When teaching and learning the textualisation of deontic meanings addressing/concerning 'sensitive' referents in native language contexts, where English is the primary if not the sole language for communication, pragmatic effectiveness can be achieved, on the one hand, through conciseness, directness and semantic unambiguity; on the other, the emphasis on PC language to mitigate face-threatening act is especially vital when targeting people with special needs.

The need for immediacy, as we see in Gatwick Airport's hypertexts, legitimises the use of unmitigated resources like premodification or the expression of strong obligation, when such meanings are crucial. However, such directness, perceived as potentially threatening in English speaking cultures, especially in the UK and USA, should always be compensated by PC oriented strategies, also in compliance with the social model of disability discourse (Haegele & Hodge, 2016).

Three of such discursive strategies seem to be helpful for this purpose. The first is personalisation, both referred to second person – targeting potential customers as independent decision-making (Maci, 2010) – and the first person – the pronoun *we* conveys a greater sense of reliability and self-commitment of airport staff, thus giving the idea of mutual cooperation and creating a more welcoming context. The second PC strategy is postmodification, by which people with special needs are 'described' (*people with disabilities*)

rather than 'labeled', hence stereotyped (*disabled people*). The third resource that learners should be aware of is the rhetorical diversification of the expression of deonticity; this can be effectively conveyed also through alternative forms, that is mitigating strong obligation (*do this / you must do this*) by expressing the same meanings in terms of necessity (*you need to/ should do this*), as permission (*you may do this*) or recommendation (*please, do this*).

In lingua franca contexts things are drastically different, in that, as evidenced in Orio al Serio's hypertexts, pragmatic effectiveness seems to stem primarily from the precision and unambiguity of the message, irrespective of the threatening potential of its formulation, whereas PC appears to be considered as a purely stylistic concern. Learners have to keep in mind that when writing for such contexts, the most concise and straightforward ways of conveying meanings are to be preferred. Therefore, premodification is not at all problematic and deonticity is best and unambiguously expressed as strong obligation rather than its mitigated variants. The redressing of face-threat remains a major concern, but in lingua franca contexts the most impactful way of softening the threat, rather than through PC formulations, is by resorting to fixed model or accepted and conventionalised ways of expressing meanings, namely, institutional and (pseudo)legal language. As a consequence, the problem of possible stereotyping related to premodification (and, marginally, also to postmodification) is bypassed by using formally accepted acronyms (like PRM). Such acronyms cannot be perceived as non PC in that, first, they are 'indicative' rather than semantically full (negative or problematic meanings are not wholly lexically represented since only the first letter of words referring to them is used), and, secondly, this is the way official regulations and laws use to express such referents. For the same purpose, references to norms and articles of the law and the avoidance of personalisation can be used to enhance the sense of an official and institutional communication.

The difference between the textualisation of the two web-pages under investigation here might be due to a variety of reasons which need to be assessed for an effective pedagogy of PC language in tourism contexts. One possible reason may be related to the level of linguistic competence of both producers and target users of such texts. Actually, in contexts where the semantic, rhetorical and stylistic properties of the language are accessible to all users, the pragmatic effectiveness of a text might benefit considerably by its linguistic richness and stylistic variation. Conversely, in non-native settings, semantic transparency and referential immediacy are likely to be better achieved by resorting to a limited and (relatively) circumscribed vocabulary, with few linguistic choices but associated to clearly recognisable referents, and where denotation (even when face-threatening) is preferred over connotation, mitigation or the expression of nuances of meaning. Learners have to remember that in such contexts a variety of expressions with similar meanings may be perceived as being possibly ambiguous rather than rhetorically refined, and will be effort-consuming for interpretation.

Another possible reason for such a differentiation concerns the concept of PC itself. PC, as we have seen, originated and eventually developed as a sociolinguistic phenomenon in Anglophone academic, professional and cultural realms. Therefore, PC language is easily recognised as an effective way to convey a wide range of meanings (from informative to promotional, to performative or normative ones) in countries where English is the native language. In addition to that, we must remember that, as far as normative language is concerned, in Anglophone cultures even specialised domains tend to adapt their way

of communicating and simplify intricate content in order to make specialised texts more accessible. The Plain Language Movement (PLM) was typically meant for this purpose, being mainly intended to reduce the complexity of legal documents (Mellinkoff, 1963; Sala, 2014), in which transparency is key, thus allowing non-experts to understand and use said documents. In Italian culture, instead, specialised texts or even institutional texts targeting laymen are expected to maintain a certain degree of depersonalisation and assertiveness, not only to avoid ambiguity, but also, and especially, for their specific pragmatic function (be it informative, normative, performative) to be easily recognised as such.

This is what makes the two texts under investigation effective in their own way (in semantic, pragmatic and also in PC terms), despite their noticeable differences. Gatwick airport's discursive practices tend to align to Anglophone PC standards, and are more inclusive, user-friendly and customer-focused, whereas on Orio al Serio Airport's website regulations are meant to be conveyed in the most precise and institutional way, in compliance with safety rules and legislation. The respect of such conventionalised standards even when expressing 'sensitive' meanings – i.e. by resorting, for instance, to acronyms rather than using euphemistic formulations – can be seen as an acceptable and appropriate way to avoid stigmatising people with special needs

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PLAY!

Fun, facts, and the construction of engagement in the LEGOLAND theme parks website

Abstract

As digital communication has been challenging traditional monomodality, and as tourist offer has been increasing over the last decades, the language of tourist promotion in the Web has progressively been evolving into a multilayered and multiliteracy model, bridging verbal and visual language in a new semiotic integration code, which includes impactful, highly persuasive mass and multimedia products, such as tourist promotion websites. As a consequence, LSP students are nowadays confronted with increasingly complex semiotic artefacts. The pedagogical significance of multimodal analysis to the work/practice of learners/teachers of LSP, tourism discourse and Web communication thus comes into focus. This paper addresses the mixed-media strategies constructing the LEGOLAND theme park website as a recreational destination on the Web as a significant case study for multiliteracy communication. Drawing from the metafunctions (i.e., ideational, interactional, textual) of Systemic Functional Grammar, from socio-semiotic multiliteracy analysis, and from multimodal genre analysis of tourism and communication discourse, the paper will investigate the textual/visual strategies through which audience engagement is created in the LEGOLAND website. In particular, at the ideational level, the paper will analyse the key role played by the representation of informative meanings in the website's promotional purposes; at the interactional level, the metadiscursive strategies maximizing audience involvement will be investigated; and at the textual level, the thematic structure and Information Unit patterning of the LEGOLAND website will be explored, in order to examine the specialized meaning-making resources which should be made accessible to tourism and communication discourse learners.

Keywords: theme parks; multiliteracy; multimodal/semiotic analysis; SFG metafunctions; word-image interactions; Web 2.0; engagement strategies

1. Introduction: I-do vs. I-see entertainment

This paper addresses the multimodal strategies constructing the LEGOLAND theme park chain as a recreational attraction on the Web (Cohen, 1984), by designing its audience as a transgenerational community of building brick lovers and potential tourists,¹ as well as the educational significance of such visual/textual strategies in the context of LSP studies. As digitisation has been increasingly challenging monomodality in many cultural practices, a semiotic revolution – first introduced by Avantgarde experiments in word-image interaction, and, later on, accomplished by multimedia products and events such as cinema, videoclips, videogames, etc. – has eventually led to Web 2.0 communication as an integration code among different semiotic modes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). By bridging verbal and visual language, along with spatial and temporal paradigms, digital communication has given birth to a multilayered and multiliteracy discourse model, especially in the tourism domain (Francesconi, 2014, 2017). As LSP students are nowadays faced with more and more complex artefacts, bridging and confronting different sign systems, the pedagogical significance of multimodal analysis, with respect to both LSP theory and practice, increasingly comes into focus. This paper aims to offer insights into such perspective by means of a significant case study for multiliteracy communication, i.e., the LEGOLAND theme park website. As the showcase of a manifold semiotic experience, the LEGOLAND website provides both visual and textual interpretation patterns,² stimulating in particular the following research questions:

- (a) To what extent and with what persuasive/promotional effects do the website's different semiotic features interact to generate a multimodal profile of LEGOLAND's target consumer?
- (b) What pedagogical implications do such dynamics have with respect to the study of Web 2.0 tourism discourse as global communication practice for LSP learners?

Since tourist offer has dramatically increased over the last decades, linguistic/semiotic analysis has been focussing on potential clients' decision-making processes (Cho & Fesenmaier, 2001; Hudson, Snaith, Miller, & Hudson, 2001), and on the changes in genre triggered by Web 2.0 resources, which have proved a crucial tool for clients who may use the Internet to gather

1 Founded in Billund (Denmark) in 1932 by carpenter Ole Kirk Christiansen, LEGO has become over the decades the world's top brand in toy and family entertainment products. From the first wooden version to the 1949 prototypical "automatic binding brick", to the 1963 ultimate impact-, heat- and ultraviolet-resistant ABS plastic brick, different generations of consumers have indeed identified LEGO with more than a commercial brand. The brightly coloured plastic LEGO brick has become the symbol of the world's largest toy company by revenue: with over \$2 billion sales in 2015, LEGO has eventually beaten former market leaders such as US Barbie and Hot Wheels producer, Mattel. It is estimated that 20 billion bricks are produced every year, which makes an average production rate of over 2 million pieces an hour. Books and magazines, short and feature films, music videos, videogames, design and animation softwares, amusement parks, and an increasing number of art works are produced each year as both LEGO merchandise and the result of the brand's influence on popular culture and lifestyle, in what may be considered as a process of corporate cannibalisation of contemporary culture. In January 2017 a new social network was launched, LEGO Life, providing an Instagram-inspired, parent-invigilated digital environment where children can exchange LEGO-related pictures and experiences.

2 Run by the British Merlin Entertainment group, and marketed to families with children aged 2-12, LEGOLAND parks offer attractions of different sorts, including themed areas such as LEGO Miniland, where models of international tourist landmarks, made from millions of bricks, are displayed. Other facilities include water parks, aquariums, restaurants, shops, 4D theatres, videogame and laboratory spaces, and family hotels.

information on products unavailable for scrutiny before the actual experience occurs (Maci, 2013; O' Connor, Buhalis, & Frew, 2001; Osti & Pechlaner, 2001). Tourism discourse has for this reason elicited a number of cross-disciplinary studies that examine multiple aspects of its significance. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to account for critical literature on tourism discourse, this paper draws from studies investigating its convergence with marketing (Giordana, 2004), advertising (Cogno & Dall'Ara, 1994), anthropology (Leed, 1991), socio-cultural processes (Van den Abbeele & Fodde, 2012), the cultural industry (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010), and multimodality (Francesconi, 2014, 2017; Maci, 2010, 2013).

However, the specificity of family amusement parks seems to deserve further investigation, especially when LEGOLAND's marketed originality comes into focus. LEGOLAND's recreational philosophy challenges the stereotypical unreality of destinations such as Disneyland, which are openly marketed to a different kind of family tourism, pivoting on young children and possibly infantilised grown-ups. While the inspiring principle of traditional parks seems to be 'imagination roaming free' – which makes them a world of pure wonder, cartoon characters and fanciful settings – LEGOLAND resorts are presented as an intellectually stimulating destination, where the key tourist experiences are education-related pleasures such as the popularisation of scientific and technological knowledge and the importance of fun-based learning interactivity.³ LEGOLAND's key promotional strategy lies in the construction of a self-conscious, receptive audience, extending across different age cohorts and ready to respond in a creative, personal way to the stimuli provided by the park's structure and attractions. The purely visual experience of traditional entertainment seems to be integrated by LEGOLAND with intellectual engagement, as if mixing Bruno Munari's pedagogy of creativity ("If I see, I learn. If I do, I understand", 1992, p. 36) with a pinch of thought-provoking, MIT-inspired innovation discourse.⁴

2. Materials and Method

As all LEGOLAND parks bear resemblance to one another,⁵ regardless of local infrastructure and culture, they present themselves as tourist "non-places" (Augé, 1992), that is, places which are not endowed with either anthropological or historical meaning, offering transnational/transcultural/transgenerational fun in the form of creative entertainment. The main showcase for such issues is therefore not to be identified with a particular physical location, but with a digital one: the LEGOLAND website is in fact a complex multimodal device, where texts and visuals work as parallel and yet intertwined semiotic systems, carrying two different and complementary sets of meanings. Perusing the website's general structure and appearance

3 For instance, visitors are encouraged to build dams in water flow channels using bricks, and thus to learn about turbulent fluid flows; they are invited to play LEGO-themed interactive musical instruments, such as musical fountains or a hydraulophone, and are thus exposed to rudimentary laws of physics.

4 MIT is in fact behind LEGO Mindstorms Robotics Invention System, which integrates traditional Technics building brick sets with modular sensors and motors and a software, which allows users to create computerized robots.

5 Since the first park opened in Billund (Denmark) in 1968, six other resorts have been created in Europe (Windsor, UK, 1996; Günzburg, Germany, 2002), the United States (California, 1999; Florida, 2011), the Middle East (Dubai, 2016) and Asia (Malaysia, 2012). More destinations are currently under construction – China, India, Japan and South Korea, scheduled to open 2017-2022 – adding up to LEGO's leading global chain of amusement structures.

– where a brightly coloured general homepage⁶ works as a gateway to seven twin websites, each devoted to one of the parks – it is immediately noticeable that conspicuous verbal text is only to be found in third-level webpages (only reachable via sub-menu links). Here, parents can find practical information on ticket prices, discount and other policies, available facilities, opening hours, FAQs, and other know-before-you-go details. While such texts are addressed to an adult audience, visuals produce a wider transgenerational appeal. The upbeat colours, captivating pictures and LEGO-themed graphics stimulate the pleasure of not only the main audience segment, but that of parents, too, who may enjoy the website as they perform their parental mediatory function. The instantaneous apprehension of wonder typical of childhood, along with a reiterated invitation to visit the parks and have fun, seems to be the communicative and promotional purpose of the website’s engaging visuals throughout first- and second-level pages.



Figure 1: The LEGOLAND website homepage, <http://www.legoland-com> (accessed 01/02/2017)

This may be further evidenced by a closer inspection of the general LEGOLAND homepage, which is almost entirely taken up by the picture of a young boy (aged 8-10), whose gesture of surprise and amusement – he touches his forehead and smiles to himself, eyes shut, as if he could not believe his senses – creates an oblique visual vector pointing to the brand name of the park, depicted (albeit with maximum salience) in the background (Figure 1). A double literacy process takes place in the LEGOLAND website, as two semiotic modes are simultaneously activated in an engagement-oriented meaning-making process that encodes a complex, multifaceted, global tourist audience. Far from being apart, as the infantilised rhetorics of traditional recreation would have it, fun and facts, entertainment and information, creativity and directions contribute to a semiotic interplay in which the verbal and the visual modes are assigned a defined and equal role to play.

On the basis of such observations, this study aims to investigate the multimodal construction of play, fun, and creativity – an aspect advertised as LEGO’s 2.0, cutting-edge, art-as-communication aesthetics – as a key promotional strategy in a particular section of the LEGOLAND website, i.e., the California Resort homepage.⁷ This provides an interesting

6 The general LEGOLAND website is available at <https://www.legoland.com/>

7 The LEGOLAND California Resort Homepage is available at <https://www.legoland.com/california/>

case study as concerns the development of innovative, highly impactful, mixed-media visual/verbal languages, thereby offering useful materials to students/teachers of both specialised tourism discourse and Web communication.⁸ It is from within the epistemological framework suggested by building-brick language, which highlights the relationship between LEGO's visual entertainment and the functional laws founding its systemic dimension, that the following analysis will be conducted. Stemming from multimodal research on tourism discourse (Francesconi, 2014, 2017; Hiippala, 2007; Kvåle, 2010; Maci, 2010, 2013), which focuses on lexical-grammatical strategies as intertwined with the accompanying images, the theoretical background against which the analysis will be conducted is intended as a conflation of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday, 2002, 2004) and a socio-semiotically oriented reading of visual grammar (Bowchen, 2012; Elleström, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004, 2001; Mitchell, 1980).

Against such methodological background, it may not seem unmotivated to notice that the LEGO construction system can, in itself, be taken as a fully accomplished linguistic system. Any brick in the LEGO system is interlockable with any other element, both synchronically and diachronically. Besides providing an example of transgenerational entertainment – i.e., parents and children kneeling down to play together, with ascending levels of intellectual reward –, this aspect suggests LEGO as a language where elements can be mixed-and-matched following construction rules. Which might explain, on the one hand, why LEGO has symbolically evolved into a way of seeing, assembling, and constructing the world, and, on the other hand, LEGOLAND's success, since a total of 5.66 million people visited the Billund, Windsor, California and Deutschland resorts in 2004.⁹ Construction toys, as a matter of fact, can be a simplified metaphor of the representative process, that is, of how meaning-making processes are enacted. Each combination may be read as a constellation of form (signifier) and meaning (signified), in which the meanings that the sign-maker conveys are articulated in apt, plausible, motivated configurations – in any medium that is at hand (be it painting, sculpture, architecture, music, or building bricks). There is a clear epistemological stance in playing with building bricks. A full bucket may well be the langue through which the player construes his/her parole, that is, a personal representation of the world, “an individual utterance that is a particular realization of the potential of langue” (O' Sullivan et al., 1983, p. 127). The LEGO system may be said to have a functional grammar of its own: a single brick configuration may be compared to an act of speech, that is, “a simultaneous selection from among a large number of interrelated options”, involving the “creative and[/or] repetitive exercise of options in social and personal situations and settings” (Halliday, 2002, p. 174). A full bucket may represent instead the meaning potential of language, “the system of available options [that] is the grammar of language”, which is actualized “in the context of speech situations” (Halliday, 2004, p. 29). Building bricks may turn players of any age into sign-makers acting through the semiotic mode most plausibly suiting their representative ambition in a given context. (Which is why to play with construction toys is to entertain oneself with some kind of epistemological bric(k)olage.)

8 It should however be kept in mind that such strategy is accompanied by a whole set of instructions and regulations, addressing an adult-only audience, to be found in less visible, third-level webpages.

9 Attendance statistics retrieved from <http://cache.lego.com/upload/contentTemplating/LEGOAboutUs-PressReleases/otherfiles/download81656C799226F7BB7E042D0E589A526E.pdf> on 01/02/2017.

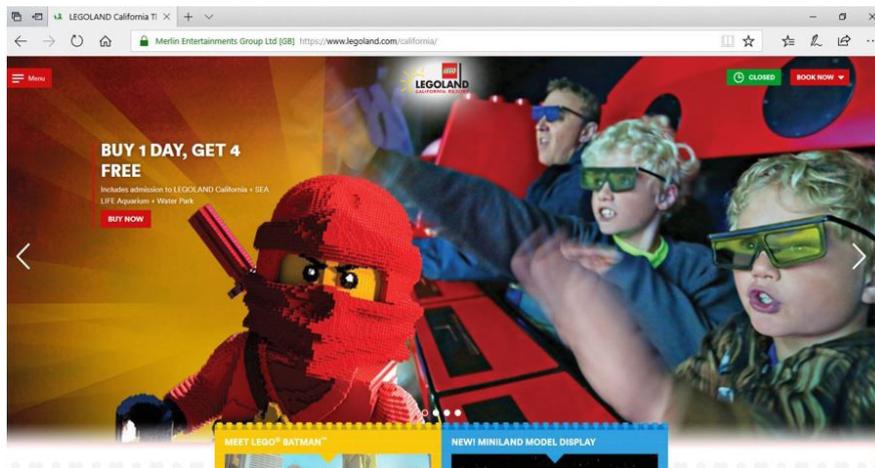


Figure 2: The LEGOLAND California homepage, <https://www.legoland.com/california/> (accessed 01/02/2017)

As mentioned above, although the LEGOLAND general homepage leads to seven twin websites, each devoted to one of the parks, for the purpose of the present analysis the California website has been taken in consideration, as it provides the most extensive contents, in terms of both visuals and written texts. The California homepage can be seen in Figure 2: it displays a mix of real and imaginary represented participants, engaged in an interactive play context. Adopting the theoretical framework of M.A.K. Halliday's metafunctions (2002, 2004), and following multimodal/intermedial modelizations (Bowchen 2012; Elleström 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996/2004, 2001; Mitchell 1980), a multimodal analysis of this digital artefact will be carried out on three different and intertwined levels:

(a) The ideational level, dealing with how a visual (and partially textual) construct can represent the 'real' world, that is, the one which stands outside of sign systems, thus structuring a model of human experience (Halliday, 2004). The analysis will take into consideration three different Narrative processes (Transactional vs. Reactional vs. Mental), along with three different Representative processes (Classificational vs. Analytical vs. Symbolic), which would allow the viewer to perceive the page's impact in terms of representative contents.

(b) The interpersonal level, accounting for any social relation of contact and/or engagement between the homepage's participants (not only the represented ones, but the producer and viewer as well). The specific term 'interactional' (Hyland, 2005) will be employed to describe the processes performed by language in terms of social relationships (Halliday, 2004, p. 29). The homepage's patterning along different markers will be analysed to account for its interactional significance: Contact (Demand vs. Offer), Size of frame (Close-up vs. Medium- and Long-shot), Perspective (Frontal vs. Oblique horizontal angle, Low vs. Eye-level vertical angle), and Modality (Colour saturation, differentiation, modulation; Contextualization and Representation; Illumination and Brightness).

(c) The textual level, describing the compositional arrangements which structure meaning-making processes in the homepage, i.e., the “enabling and facilitating function” whose purpose is to “build up sequences of discourse organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along” (Halliday, 2004, p. 30), as well as providing discourse – be it verbal or visual in nature – with a situationally relevant and consistent texture. The following markers will be taken into consideration to investigate textual patterning: Information value (Left vs. Right, Top vs. Bottom), Salience, and Framing.

The present analysis is an attempt at showing how a multimodal artefact such as a webpage can be read in systemic functional terms, investigating how it visually/verbally realizes “a number of meanings, or semantic options, related to the interpersonal, ideational and textual functions of language; and how these are expressed through various configurations of structural roles” (Halliday, 2002, p. 178). Intertwining both visual and verbal language, the California LEGOLAND homepage may represent a useful stimulus for those studying/teaching both the linguistic and the communicative specificity of tourism language as specialised discourse.

3. Results: A multimodal/functional analysis of the LEGOLAND California homepage

3.1. Ideational level: The narrative/conceptual promotion of *I-do* entertainment

There are four represented participants (henceforth RPs) in Fig. 2. Three of them are people: two children (boys, aged 6-8, with blond hair and fair complexion) and a grown-up. The boys’ physical resemblance may suggest they are brothers, and that the man in the background may be their father. The three RPs plausibly form a family group. There is a fourth, solo RP: the anthropomorphized, high-modality, 3D sculpture of a LEGO Ninjago warrior minifigure, made from a large number of bricks.¹⁰ A number of intertwined visual dynamics, both narrative and conceptual in nature, link the four RPs in a chain of multidimensional meaning-making processes that constructs both LEGOLAND’s identity as a 2.0 tourist destination and its ideal/potential audience’s identity in terms of *I-do* creative engagement.

3.1.1. Narrative representations

As clarified by visual narratology (Mitchell, 1980; Bal, 1991), action (both doings and happenings; Halliday, 2004: 42) can easily be represented by images. Three narrative processes can be detected in the California homepage (Figure 3).

(i) A Transactional process builds a major visual narrative proposition across the picture, similar to the linguistic expression of action inside a transitive clause, which

¹⁰ It is in fact a meta-LEGO figure, as the representative and representational levels coincide (Dällenbach 1977).

is made up of a Process (usually a verbal group) and structural roles, i.e., Actors and Goals, generally represented by noun groups (Halliday, 2002). The RPs are connected by way of a diagonal vector (the Process), corresponding to the boys' waving arms and hands, as they seem to be playing some interactive game inside a 4D theatre. (The latter elements correspond to the "circumstantial functions" usually expressed by way of adverbial groups of time, place and manner; Halliday, 2002, p. 180). The vector points in the direction of the Ninja (and is also emphasised by the diagonal pattern of his *katana*). The boys are the picture's Actors, for they instigate the vectorial pattern which brings out the Ninja (the Goal), who in turn looks directly at the picture's viewer. What is the narrative meaning of such representation? It is the foregrounding of an ultimate entertainment experience: the boys are experiencing interactive fun, and their lively body configuration appears to link such experience to the Ninja.

(ii) A second process, Reactional in nature, takes place within the picture's dynamics of gaze, as the Ninja's (the Reactor's) eyeline shapes a second vector, pointing at the picture's viewer (the Phenomenon). This is a visual marker of audience engagement: whoever comes across this picture on the Web is turned into the *you* the Ninja is addressing his vector to. The potential visitor is what is being looked at by the Ninja, who in turn is being pointed at by a family having fun. An interactional second-person viewer pronoun is created by the Ninja's gaze, as we will see in 3.1.2 below.

(iii) A third, Mental process can be identified, similar to a clause where the inherent roles are an animate being "whose consciousness is impinged upon" and "some phenomenon which impinges upon it" (Halliday, 2004, p. 198). A textual protrusion, in fact producing a third vectorial pattern in the image, can be spotted to the left of the Ninja. Similar to the thought balloons in comic strips, as suggested by a vertical red line looking like a stylised box, it encloses a verbalization which the viewer/reader must immediately connect to both previous (Transactional and Reactional) processes. This Mental process device links the Ninja (the Processer, or, better still, Sensor) to a projective structure which conveys – as in some kind of reported mental process – the promotional message of the whole homepage:

BUY 1 DAY, GET 4 FREE

Includes admission to LEGOLAND California + SEA LIFE Aquarium + Water park

BUY NOW

From a lexical, syntactic and textual point of view, the contents of this message obey the linguistic features of tourism specialized discourse (Gotti, 2006; Maci, 2013), mainly conciseness (ellipsis of definite articles and the sentence's subject, use of the graphic device + instead of the lexical item *and*), premodification (also emphasised by the use of block capitals for nouns conveying the most relevant pieces of information), the use of present tense and the imperative mood, and the use of repetitions (*BUY*).

Considering the California homepage as a whole, it can be observed that the narrative processes just described – a Transactional, a Reactional and a Mental process – actually build a chain of transactional processes. This may be labelled a Conversion process, and it is interesting to notice that the Ninja performs a multiple Relay role, as the Goal in process (i), the Reactor in process (ii) and the Senser in process (iii). From the point of view of narrative significance, the Ninja thus presents himself as the ideational core of the picture.

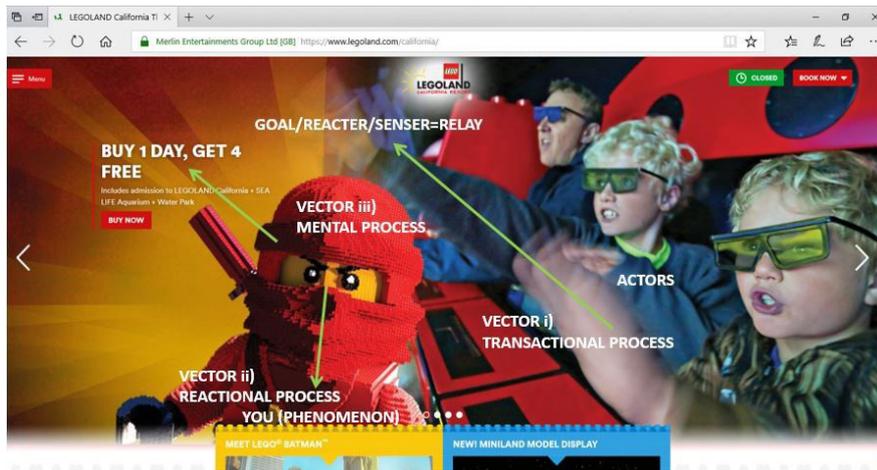


Figure 3: Ideational processes in the California homepage: narrative processes

3.1.2. Relational representations

Embedded in such Conversion process are three supplementary Relational representations, that is, conceptual processes conveying the equivalent of relational clauses, where “the process is a form of relation between two roles” (Halliday, 2002, p. 211). The semiotic purpose of a conceptual process is to define the picture’s RPs in terms of their generalised essence, i.e., in terms of respectively class, structure and meaning, as shown in Figure 4.

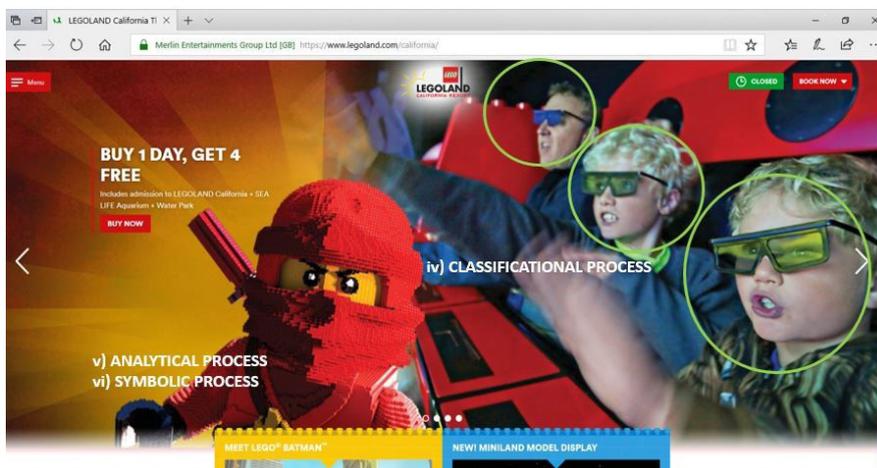


Figure 4: Ideational processes in the California homepage: conceptual processes

(iv) A Classificational process, similar to the structure of attributive clauses (Halliday, 2002), is to be detected in the representation of the boys-and-dad group. They are related to one another in taxonomical terms. More precisely, they form a Covert taxonomy (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004): in the absence of a superordinate figure as overarching category, the three figures obey symmetrical composition, are placed at the same distance from one another, share the same orientation along the picture's diagonal pattern, are all given the same perspectival size, and all fall within the same colour palette. The purpose of such an attributive process is to express class inclusion by way of a Role attribute (Halliday, 2004). In terms of semiotic class, this taxonomy may obviously be labelled "a family" – albeit a modern, non-conventional family, given the absence of an adult female figure. As this conceptual representation is associated with the narrative process described in (i) above, a clear socio-semiotic message is conveyed, playing a key role in the promotional construction of both tourist destination and expected audience: this is a portrait of "family fun".

(v) A multilayered Analytical process emerges, triggered once again by the Ninja.¹¹ From a structural point of view, he presents himself as the Carrier of a number of Possessive attributes (Halliday, 2004: 223), which obey criterial representation, i.e., are singled out as contextually relevant, while others are ignored as non-essential. This figure may be labelled "a Ninja" because its attribute system simultaneously presents us with a *katana* and some guerrilla gear, including a belt going across the shoulders and a *tenugui* fabric mask. The semiotic purpose of such configuration is to allow scrutiny of the Carrier's possessive attributes, so as to identify it. On the one hand, the Ninja presents the viewer with some degree of low modality, that is, lesser credibility as socially shareable truth: he is not a real creature, for he is made of rectangular building bricks, in what appears as a striking attempt at curvilinear biomorphism. On the other hand, however, the purpose of the image is far more interactional than representational; the Ninja's somewhat low modality is outbalanced by the high modality conveyed by his direct gaze at the viewer (similar to the use of second-person pronouns in advertising copy). The Ninja's efficacy as a conceptual system has thus more to do with persuasion than with information/instruction.

(vi) A third process, Symbolic in nature, is once again to be detected in the Ninja's figure. A persuasive figure, he is endowed with symbolic meaning provided by Suggestive mood markers (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004): he is foregrounded and exaggeratedly sized, represented in extreme detail (single bricks can be spotted, in almost hyperrealistic fashion) and in very sharp focus, and through conspicuous primary colours like red and yellow. Everything – including the suggestive golden beams of light which provide a stylised, energetic mood to the background motif – identifies the Ninja as the picture's central symbolic figure.

11 Due to its clearly anthropomorphised distinctive features, the Ninja will be referred throughout this paper by way of masculine pronouns.

As the viewer gradually proceeds in decoding the six ideational processes, which are embedded in one another, and as s/he becomes gradually aware of their intertwined relationship in terms of Actions, Relations and Symbolic meanings, s/he will work out the overall ideational significance of the California homepage. A combined reading of the chained narrative processes, along with a scrutiny of the further embedded conceptual representations, clarifies that the Ninja and the boys-and-dad group are linked by a semiotic bond stronger than expected: as the 3D glasses they are wearing reveal, the family members are taking part in some interactive experience; the vehemence of their movements suggests that such interactive experience is not simply watching a film, for this would not elicit any emphasized motion response. It may be instead an interactive game they are enjoying; a fight-themed one, as the lively waving of their arms and hands suggests. While the boys-and-dad group are engaged with some digital interactant, the sharp focus and conspicuous colours of the Ninja's figure clarifies that what they are looking at and reacting to is exactly him: the Ninja. The somewhat lowered modality of his figure, standing out of the picture as hyperrealistic, is a consequence of him being a digital character perceived through the enhanced vision of 3D lenses.

3.2. Interactional level: The visual construction of the second-person viewer pronoun

On the interactional level, as Figure 5 shows, a whole set of attitudinal meanings can be inferred from the picture's structural pattern, the purpose of which is to encode specific social relations between three different categories of actors, i.e., between RPs, between RPs and IPs (interactional participants, including the figures in the picture and both the picture's producer and viewer), and between IPs (the producers and viewers, who interact by means of the picture itself). Such relations are embedded by way of engagement markers, such as the RPs' gaze, size of frame, perspective, and modality, which all concur in a picture's social/psychological significance in the same way that a clause's interpersonal patterning

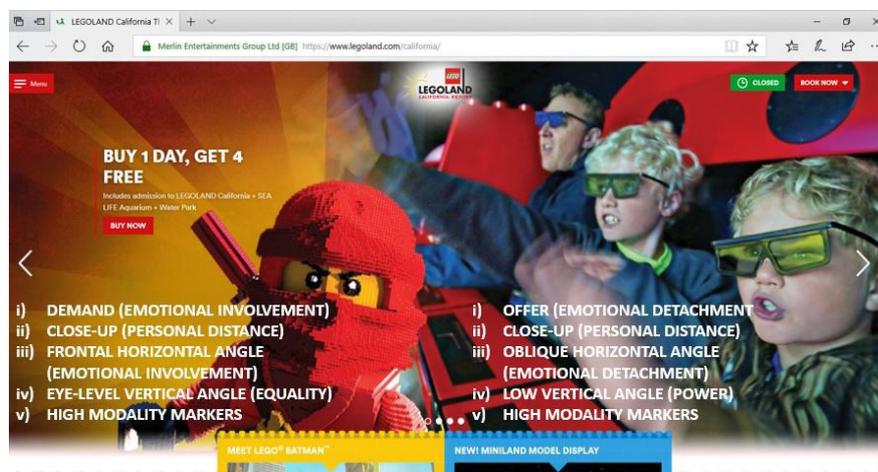


Figure 5: Contrasting interactional configurations in the California homepage

may express a whole world of attitudinal meanings (Halliday, 2002). For the purpose of the present analysis, the term 'interactional' will be used to label the encoded ways in which texts – regardless of their verbal or visual nature – conduct a dialogue with their recipients, “allowing them to respond to the unfolding text” (Hyland, 2005, p. 49) and producing conjoint meaning-making strategies. As can be easily imagined, the interactional level plays a prominent role in deploying the California homepage’s promotional purposes.

3.2.1. Contact: Demand vs. Offer

Two opposed – and yet intertwined – interactional configurations are displayed, depending on the degree of contact established between the IPs encoded in the image. This in turn depends on the dynamics of the RPs’ gaze, which works as an attitudinization device (Halliday, 2002).

(i) The Ninja is looking directly at the viewer. His is a Demand image. His anthropomorphised gaze builds an interactional vector establishing contact between the inside and the outside of the picture. A form of address towards a visual *you* is created, pulling the viewer into the discourse in the same way that engagement markers in verbal communication “explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants” (Hyland, 2005, p. 53). The picture’s producer is engaging the viewer by means of an encoded second-person viewer pronoun. As a consequence, the recipient’s presence and function in the text is highlighted. The image’s producers are using the Ninja’s visual attitude to demand that the viewer build a social relationship with them. What kind of relationship is exactly elicited? One that matches LEGO’s global self-image. The Ninja is not smiling at the viewer, which would suggest social affinity or amiable paternalism, i.e., a strategy compatible with traditional amusement parks, where Disneyesque characters invariably smile at visitors. The Ninja is staring at the viewer instead, with air of defiance: some emotional response is commanded from the viewer. Also, the Ninja’s stare helps define LEGOLAND’s understanding of its target audience: while a big, open smile would imply an infantile recipient, one that would maybe be intimidated by a less-than-friendly attitude, a defying gaze entails a more sophisticated interlocutor, one who is able to decrypt the ironical stance encoded in self-conscious coolness, and who enjoys being metadiscursively represented in the text. The Ninja’s stare is meant to reach an intergenerational audience, his message probably sounding like: “HEY YOU! I mean, you! I am now summoning you to some serious fun”. While a Mickey-Mousey figure would be in contrast with LEGOLAND’s promotional identity, the overall effect of the Ninja’s gaze is one of emotional (if second-degree) involvement – intellectual engagement being the key to this prominent aspect of the picture.

(ii) The boys-and-dad figures address the viewer in a different, indirect manner. They form an Offer image, that is, an image without direct contact between the RPs and the viewer, who is thus free – as an invisible onlooker – to scrutinise the RPs at leisure. What such a seemingly engagement-free image does from a pragmatic

point of view is to generate emotional detachment (absorbed in their fun world, the RPs seem to ignore the viewer), which in turn produces an illusion of spontaneity, as if the RPs did not know that they are being looked at, and were caught in a casual moment of their intense experience. The psychological effect of such an image is however to instigate the viewer to want the same experience, producing a persuasive 'ethnographic' effect, i.e., the illusion of unmediated, genuine observation of real human experience. In promotional contexts, alleged real-life authenticity, devoid of any clearly visible engagement markers, can perform an even deeper persuasive function – as is testified by the success of user-generated contents and pictures in TripAdvisor or other tourism-oriented applications.

As the viewer eventually connects the Ninja's Demand image with the family's Offer image, and finds him/herself being the interactional pivot of such visual triangulation, an articulate promotional message emerges:

- (a) Potential visitors are metadiscursively invited to join in an ultimate entertainment experience by a cool, charismatic, ironical LEGO spokesperson;
- (b) At LEGOLAND fun is so real and intense, so concrete and tangible, that visitors become fully absorbed in their experience, so as to forget about anything and anyone else. As the history of Western tourism illustrates, from the 18th-century Grand Tour on (Brilli, 1995), the escapist motif is always lurking behind the promise of happiness being there, just waiting to be discovered.

3.2.2. Size of frame: Social distance

Both the Ninja and the boys-and-dad group are portrayed in close-up shots. As the implied social meaning of close-up images is one of contact and proximity – the “close personal distance” at which one can hold or grasp another person or object, the distance of personal relationships, of ‘being in touch’ with someone (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004, p. 130) – both groups are presented so that the viewer may feel engaged, either from a demand or an offer perspective. From a promotional point of view, the encoded message implies that both the family's entertainment experience and the Ninja's cool charisma are just a few clicks away, which is again related to the link built on the ideational level between actual and potential LEGOLAND visitors (as seen in 3.1.2 above).

3.2.3. Perspective: Emotional and social engagement

The selection of an angle, or point of view, from which to depict the RPs is another interactional feature that contributes to the images' attitudinization: it may express different degrees of subjectivity vs. objectivity of the represented situation, and/or elicit different emotional responses from the viewer. In functional terms, perspective seems to work in visuals as attitude markers do in verbal communication, revealing the producer's affective attitude to propositions (Hyland, 2005), as well as the encoded viewer's elicited response.

Horizontal angle: Emotion vs. detachment

The horizontal angle corresponds to a visual stance on the ideal viewer's emotional involvement with the world of the RPs. It may be direct (frontal) or indirect (oblique), depending on whether or not the RPs' vanishing points fall within the vertical boundary of the image. Two contrasting angles, along with two opposed affective attitudes, are displayed in the California homepage:

(i) The Ninja is depicted from a frontal angle. Frontal is the angle of involvement (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004), objectivity, transitiveness, conveying the viewer's maximum engagement, as if the RP said, "What you see here is part of *your* world, something *you* are involved with". Once again, the Ninja is the pivot of visual engagement.

(ii) The boys-and-dad group is portrayed from an oblique angle, as the vanishing points of their figures converge outside the picture's frame. Oblique is the angle of detachment (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004). The image seems to suggest to the viewer that the world of ultimate entertainment is still "*their* world", something s/he is not yet affectively involved in. (But may be just a few clicks away.) The pragmatic effect of an oblique angle is to instigate the viewer to come closer to an as-of-yet-unknown entertainment experience, that is, to enter the picture as the refracting vertex of a triangular, mimetic desire structure (Girard, 1961). From a promotional point of view, this appears as yet another – albeit *ex negativo* – call for engagement.

Vertical angle: Equality vs. power

Depending on whether the RPs are portrayed from a high, low or eye-level angle, different sets of social relations are encoded in the image, and different degrees of audience engagement are produced. Two opposite stances are conveyed in the California homepage:

(i) The Ninja is displayed at eye level, i.e., at neither higher nor lower level than the viewer's eyeline. The point of view is one of equality with the viewer; the suggested social relationship between the Ninja and the potential visitor implies no power difference between IPs. This counterbalances the Ninja's severe and yet ironical stare at the viewer (as seen in 3.2.1): the selected vertical angle clarifies that the Ninja is not actually supposed to be a frightening or dominating figure, but a dialogical one, with whom the viewer is fully entitled to interact. From a psychological point of view, this can produce a reassuring, flattering – that is, even more engaging – effect on the potential visitor.

(ii) The boys-and-dad group is portrayed from a low angle. This codifies lack of reciprocity, which goes in concert with the detached attitude conveyed by oblique horizontal angle. It may be tagged as the angle of power, i.e., power of the RPs over the viewer: a possible, near equivalent of low angle in verbal communication would be the use of stance markers, providing "an attitudinal or evaluative frame for an entire proposition" (Hyland, 2005, p. 31), whereby emotional states and reactions referring to the world are encoded.

3.2.4. Modality: The construction of epistemic credibility

From a socio-semiotic point of view, modality markers are visual cues that encode the credibility of an image, as established by the social and cultural milieu where the image is produced and consumed. As the grammar of modality pivots on a number of epistemic markers which accord specific degrees of modality to statements – such as auxiliaries and related nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, which Hyland (2005) divides into hedges (i.e., downtoners), and boosters (i.e., emphatics) – visual modality can be measured along a set of markers which contribute to produce shared truths between an image's producer and its viewer, aligning (or distancing) the viewer with the truth statements encoded in the image. A community-shared belief (or disbelief) in the social/cultural credibility of the image is thus established. In Western aesthetics, high modality – that is, epistemic credibility – is associated with the standard 35mm photographic naturalism, suggesting in turn a correspondence between the visual representation of an object and what we normally see of it with the naked eye. High modality is usually associated with the perception of concrete, detailed, naturalistic, thought-of-as uncoded, unmediated representation. This is the culture-biased rhetoric of standard holiday catalogues, which are produced in order to “persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and, in doing so, convert them from potential into actual clients” (Dann, 1996, p. 2). Low modality, i.e., hedged credibility, can instead be suggested by any significant distancing – either up or down – the perceived balance of visual modality markers, which include colour, background, representation, depth, illumination and brightness.

Colour saturation, differentiation, modulation

As concerns colour parameters, both the Ninja and the family are portrayed in high modality. They all fall within credible degrees of colour saturation (the scale running from full colour to black and white). On the one hand, the boys-and-dad group matches perfect standard-naturalism saturation, which is neither too low nor too high, and allows strong identification on the part of the potential visitor, who is encouraged to subscribe to the veracity and desirability of the depicted experience. On the other hand, the Ninja is depicted with higher saturation, as it happens with typical tourist images, where the sea is deep blue, the sky is strikingly cloudless and the sand is white or golden, as the whole landscape has to provide the viewer with a sense of spectacle (Urry, 1990). This, however, does not convey low modality, as it obeys sensory coding orientation (Bernstein, 1981): in contexts where visual pleasure is dominant, such as advertising, fashion, cooking, tourism and the toy industry, higher saturation is perceived as a source of emotional meaning – hence performing a boosting function. Vibrant colours, such as the Ninja's red and yellow, are therefore to be read as markers of high modality.¹²

Colour differentiation (the scale running from maximally diversified colour range to monochrome) also denotes high modality, as the somewhat cold palette of the family group (mainly green, brown and grey) is balanced off by the Ninja's warm palette (red and yellow). Colour modulation (the scale running from fully modulated to flat colour) also suggests high modality, as both the Ninja and the family group display the uneven colour modulation of naturalistic representation.

12 Interestingly, in 2004 LEGO introduced a colour palette cleanup, deleting low-use brick colours, which nevertheless built the original palette – like light grey, brown and light purple – and adding new statement colours, like 'bley' (a greyish hue of blue) and reddish brown.

Contextualization and representation

As far as contextualization is concerned (the scale running from the absence of to a fully detailed background), the lack of a recognisable physical setting behind the Ninja somewhat hedges the picture's credibility. Such digitally produced stylized contextualization is however counterbalanced by high-modality representation (the scale running from abstraction to pictorial detail), as the Ninja is portrayed in full detail, with maximum 3D sharpness of focus, so that the viewer is even able to perceive the huge amount of bricks he is made from in full detail. Conversely, the family group shows high modality in contextualization (a theatre is clearly recognisable as the picture's setting) but lower modality in representation, as they are portrayed in blurred focus – their waving arms and hands being completely out of focus.

Illumination and brightness

As concerns illumination (the scale running from full to null contrast of light and shade), the Ninja appears in somewhat lowered modality, since he is not shown as being affected by any particular source of illumination; his figure shows functional shading – probably digitally created so as to suggest the protruding volumes of his head and shoulders – rather than proper shadow. Regardless of the logic of natural illumination, he is shown as a figure “shining in its own light”, which also connects to his symbolical meaning, as seen in 3.1.2 above. Conversely, the boys-and-dad group is affected by a physically recognisable source of illumination, that is, the light coming from the silver screen they must be looking at. This helps in constructing the IPs' identification chain described in 3.1.2.

3.3. Textual level: The construction of multimodal engagement

The ideational and interactional levels are integrated by the textual metafunction, which establishes cohesive and situationally relevant relations “from one sentence to another in a discourse” (Halliday, 2002, p. 175). From a socio-semiotic point of view, the textual level is responsible for the composition of multimodal texts, whose meanings are realised through more than one code, as the whole visual/textual artefact is the result of all the levels interacting with (and affecting) one another (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004). The textual level has to do with the meaning-making processes encoded in the composition patterning of a text, regardless of its visual, textual or visual/textual nature. While in language the textual metafunction is to be identified with both Thematic structure (the distribution of Theme, i.e., the message's point of departure, which in English unmarked clauses is usually put in first position, and Rheme) and Information structure (the distribution of Given, i.e., the point of contact with what the interlocutor knows, and the mandatory New element; Halliday, 2002), in visual grammar it operates on three different and yet interrelated systems, depending on the standard Western visual perception modality, which obeys a specific Z-pattern – from left to right, from top to bottom, from centre to margins (Maci, 2013). As a consequence, different informative values are attached to different positions of any visual/textual element in various zones of the picture, in the same way that Theme-Rheme and Information Unit patterning can influence the “clause-as-message” dimension (Halliday, 2004, p. 65). Additional textual value is produced by salience, i.e., the scale against which the RPs' visual impact on the viewer

can be measured (including fore- or backgrounding, relative size, colour or tone contrast, sharpness, etc.), and by framing, i.e., the presence of framing devices inside the picture (such as dividing lines), which connect or disconnect elements of the image, creating or disjoining a whole set of compositional meanings. Such dynamics can be perused in Figure 6.

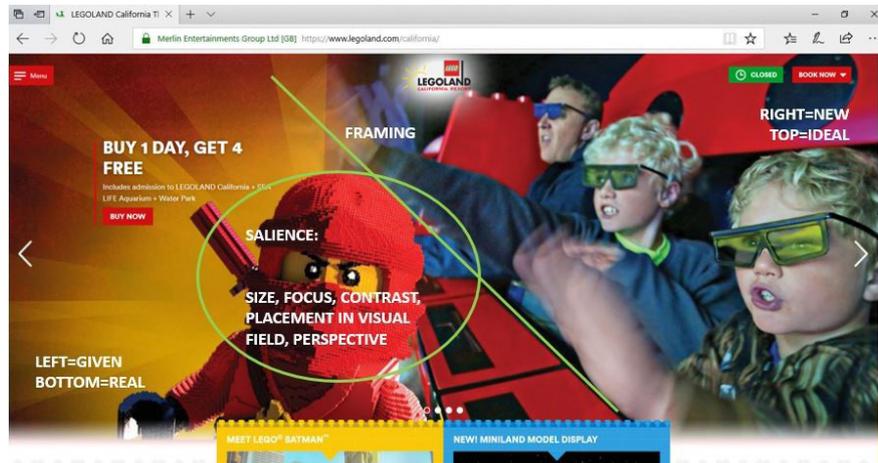


Figure 6: Textual composition patterns in the California homepage

3.3.1. Left vs. right, top vs. bottom: Information value

Following the left vs. right and top vs. bottom textual polarization, which conveys specific information values (namely, “Given vs. New” and “Ideal vs. Real”), the RPs in the California homepage follow a precise pattern.

(i) The Ninja is placed to the left of the visual Information Unit, that is, the side of the Given, something that is not at issue in the picture, which the viewer “is not being expected to derive for himself from the text or the situation” (Halliday, 2002, p. 192) but to know beforehand, as part of his/her knowledge background. The encoded viewer of this promotional image is expected to be aware that LEGO is an intellectually stimulating game, where everything is possible, time and again. The Ninja’s cool and engaging stare is construed as the message’s agreed-upon point of departure. The Ninja is also placed at the bottom of the picture, i.e., the side of the Real, the portion of the image which carries practical information and informative/instructive appeal (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996/2004). As an element placed in the Real position, the Ninja seems to show the viewer “what LEGOLAND actually *is*”. It sets the truth standards of the image, by providing a visual statement sounding like “This is fun – *for real*”.

(ii) The boys-and-dad group is placed to the right of the Information Unit, i.e., the side of the New, the mandatory key information, the promotionally relevant part of the message, what the viewer must pay particular attention to. What is at issue here is that real people, including families, can indeed be as cool and adventurous as the Ninja; the conveyed message might be something like “*YOU can be like this, too*” – where the choice of modal would intentionally involve little hedging. The family

group is also placed at the top of the picture, on the Ideal side, the section visualizing the promise of the tourist product, the experiential fulfilment it can provide the visitor with. The top position conveys the picture's emotional appeal, presenting the viewer with "what might be". As a visual/verbal transition between top and bottom, leading from "what might be" to "what is" (if only a few clicks away), is the *BUY NOW* red button in the Ninja's thought balloon, providing the viewer with verbal instructions as to how to achieve an ideal state of things.

3.3.2. Saliency

In order to provide coherence among items in a multimodal composition, the textual level also ascribes different degrees of saliency to a picture's various elements. A hierarchy of visual weights is thus created, contributing to the viewer's decoding of the picture's meaning. In the California homepage the Ninja carries maximum saliency, due to the balancing of a number of markers, some of which have already been taken into consideration, such as size (it occupies approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the picture's surface area), sharpness of focus, tonal contrast (his saturated colours are particularly marked off by the softer colours of the boys-and-dad figures; in addition, the red margin on the right handside of his figure is in contrast with the dark blue of the boys' sleeves), heavy placement in the visual field (elements are heavier inasmuch as they are placed towards the left, in standard Theme of Given position, as this emphasizes the Western Z-reading pattern), and perspective (foregrounded objects obviously being more salient). Due to all this, the Ninja presents himself as the balancing textual core of the composition, catalyzing the viewer's attention and providing the whole structure with a coherent meaning texture.

3.3.4. Framing

As their being weakly or strongly framed influences their textual relevance, elements in a composition may be connected or disconnected, marked off from or neutralized by each other, according to the degree of visual framing they present. In the California homepage, the Ninja carries maximum framing degree, enclosed as he is between a black-and-red diagonal pattern to the right (represented by the game console in front of the boys-and-dad group, which is continued by the middle boy's blue sleeve in the picture's upper section), and a golden-yellow background to the left. The Ninja does not stand isolated in the composition, though, as he reconnects to the rest of the picture by means of the middle boy's waving hand, providing a moving diaphragm which crosses the imaginary dividing line between the dark theatre scene to the right and the luminous scene to the left, protruding into and almost touching the rightmost golden beam of light surrounding the Ninja.

4. Concluding remarks

This paper has aimed to present the LEGOLAND family theme park website as a significant case study for multiliteracy communication, and to describe the visual/textual features

that cooperate in structuring a multifaceted semiotic experience from the viewer/reader's (and prospective visitor's) part. Bridging socio-semiotic multimodal analysis with Systemic Functional Grammar, the study has investigated the strategies through which audience engagement is conveyed in the LEGOLAND California homepage, designing both the park's unconventional identity as a tourist destination and its encoded transgenerational audience, and the website's significance as a showcase of multiliteracy in the context of LSP studies. The educational significance of such innovative, highly impactful, mixed-media, visual/verbal languages to the work and practice of learners/teachers of both specialised discourse and Web communication should now come into sharper focus, for the LEGOLAND California homepage provides tourism discourse and Web 2.0 communication specialists with a variety of strategies which can be successfully used to elicit highly structured, persuasive effects. LSP learners and teachers should in particular be aware of the pragmatic role played by Systemic Functional Grammar metafunctions, which interact with one another in the construction of effective promotional meaning-making processes. The resources which are available to tourism experts and which should be made accessible to tourism discourse learners can be realized at different levels.

(i) At the ideational level, the representation of informative meanings plays a key role in the picture's promotional purposes; in the specific case of the LEGOLAND California homepage, for instance, a non-conventional family is playing an interactive game based on the Ninjago-Masters of Spinjitzu theme, and the fun is so real that the interactant literally jumps off the screen and into the real world. The Ninja's figure works as a Relay in a multidimensional process, which finds a departure point in the family group, reaches the pivotal element, and is in turn projected outside the picture's frame, i.e., into reality and onto the viewer. A double semiotic link is thus built:

(a) Between the family group and the viewer, whose predictable reaction will be one of projective identification with the boys-and-dad group, that is, with the non-conventional, anti-Disneyesque representation of actual LEGOLAND visitors – which might actually prompt the potential visitor to “BUY tickets NOW”.

(b) Between the imaginary world of building bricks and the real world, that is, the world outside the sign system, where the prospective visitor is perusing the website in search for motivation to purchase an entertainment experience.

From such an observation it becomes evident that it is not only the interplay between words and visuals – as is often thought in pedagogical contexts – but also the design and articulation of purely visual elements that plays a major role in making promotional texts effective. Students should be made particularly aware of the fact that the most impactful effects are the result of two other metafunctions, entailing a direct emotional/intellectual response from the viewer/reader:

(ii) At the interactional level, viewer involvement can be achieved and maximized by a strategic handling of metadiscursive markers, as we have seen in the LEGOLAND

California homepage, where a whole set of modality markers seem to perform a boosting, rather than hedging function, enhancing the central picture's credibility. Such expression of epistemological certainty, along with the narrowing down of conflicting opinions and/or different views (Hyland, 2005), produces two main promotional effects:

(a) It presents the LEGOLAND tourist experience as indisputably worth the family's attention, trust, and money – ticket pricing ranging from \$87.00 (children 3-12) to \$93.00 (adults).

(b) It creates common knowledge between the whole interactional community (the family group, the Ninja, the picture's producer and viewer), emphasizing the trustworthiness of their mutual experience and attributing shared social authoritativeness to the views encoded in the promotional message.

(iii) At the textual level, several resources are available to construct and emphasize audience engagements, and in the California homepage the different levels of the message are arranged so as to attain this purpose, and, more precisely:

(a) The Theme/Given role visually played by the Ninja (and emphasized by salience and framing parameters) acts as an identity-making strategy with respect to the targeted audience, emphasizing the potential client's feeling of belonging to a recognizable intellectual community: the prospective visitor sees his/her ongoing knowledge of the LEGO language as being topicalized, i.e., foregrounded, as a Real, crucial identity trait.

(b) The Rheme/New role played by the family group acts as a further promotional strategy, by presenting the potential visitor with a further Ideal/New social identity token, i.e., the possibility of physically joining the LEGO international recreational club. (And thus adding their individual, personal salience and framing to the family sample portrayed in the homepage.)

On the basis of these observations it is possible to claim that while suggesting Web 2.0 tourism communication as an interesting example of how complex and self-conscious multimodal artefacts can be, the simultaneous actualization/juxtaposition of the three metafunctions also indicates the LEGOLAND website as an indisputable source of materials for different members of the educational community. On the one hand, it provides a whole catalogue of engagement strategies for those who study/teach how to create impactful promotional materials and/or investigate the pragmatic and promotional implications of tourism language in the context of LSP studies. On the other hand, it shows how the textual/visual fascination of LEGO language can be turned into a multimodal experience, eliciting both sensory and intellectual response from its encoded audience, thus providing a thought-provoking case study in mixed-media and communication discourse. If play is childhood's dream (and adulthood's chimera), LEGOLAND is constructed as the Utopia of play, the Promised Land of fun-based creativity and interactivity; and, in turn, the LEGOLAND website is presented as a catalogue – or better still, a 'building instructions book' – providing both consumers (of all ages) and specialised discourse professionals (at all educational levels) with inspiration as to

where and how to *play* in a creative, that is, rewarding, satisfactory way.

As a matter of fact, the LEGO brand name itself seems to suggest such semiotical ambition. Created from the Danish *leg godt*, a directive meaning “play well”, it is also reminiscent of the Latin verb *ligare* (to ‘bind’, ‘fasten’, ‘unite’), which is often mistakenly thought of as the name’s etymology. It joins the semantic domain of childhood, fun and entertainment – the wonder of *play* as the key experience of creativity – with the imperative mood (which in turn conveys the idea of adulthood, conventions and rules), and with a specific evaluative direction given by the adverb: LEGO players are invited and/or expected to “play well”. LEGO consumership is constructed as a community who is supposed to play in an intellectually correct and pleasurable way, within the representative strategies and boundaries provided by the LEGO functional language. The inspiring principle is one of creative freedom inside the functional rules that shape personal creativity. Players are designed to be playing ‘by the book’ – which from the point of view of the present analysis is doubly interesting, as instructions booklets started to be included in LEGO boxes since 1964, i.e., since the very inception of the passepartout ABS plastic brick, as if to introduce some guidance protocols in the creative revolution of universal mix-and-match possibility. *Langue* and *parole*, meaning potential and speech act, convention and creativity, adulthood and childhood, social repertoire and individual interest: it all seems to be there in the *leg godt* philosophy. And it is there to be purchased and sold – as well as learned and taught – via the LEGOLAND website.

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THE USE OF MARKERS IN WEB-BASED TOURISM DISCOURSES OF WORLD HERITAGE: A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Abstract

Markers are important semiotic devices of tourism discourse in the creation of images of World Heritage Sites (WHS) as tourism attractions. However, they display information and explain its significance according to the discourses and social assumptions about heritage that govern their use. As alternative discourses emerge alongside mainstream tourism discourse, these introduce new dynamics in the use of markers, which may give rise to competing images of a same WHS attraction. This largely under-investigated issue is at the core of the present paper, which focuses on a multimodal discourse analysis of markers in sample web-based tourism and indigenous discourses. While the main aim is to unfold the evidential-type of information and the epistemic-type of evidential information markers provide of a same WHS across these discourses, the ultimate goal is to highlight the practical implications the quantitative and qualitative results of the study may have for ESP learners of tourism discourse.

Keywords: markers, tourism and indigenous discourses, evidentiality, epistemicity, ESP, world heritage.

1. Introduction

The recent exploitation of the UNESCO label as a destination brand (Ryan & Silvanto, 2010) has transformed World Heritage Sites (WHS) into “‘must see’ symbolic attractions” (Evans, 2001, p. 81), which can be defined by the “empirical relationship between a *tourist*, a *sight*, and a *marker*” (MacCannell, 1999, p. 41; original emphasis). Markers appear to be the most important element as they allow a tourist to recognize a sight and the sight itself to exist (van den Abbeele, 1980). Not only do they “instruct what to see”, but more importantly, they indicate “how to see it and value it” (Larsen, 2006, p. 246) so as to transform tourists’ initial mental constructs into distorted destination images for promotional purposes (Plastina, 2012). Markers can thus be considered an integral part of tourism discourse, understood as “a semiotic system, be it textual-linguistic, visual-pictorial or [...] any other system of signification” shaping tourism (Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005, p. 2).

Nowadays, websites are easily accessible resources of WHS information, where “off-site markers” (Culler, 1988; MacCannell, 1999) appear to play a key role in “image formation processes” (Gartner, 1994: 197) as they anticipate the sight, demanding some involvement with their use in web-based tourism discourse. They can thus be considered “superior to the sight” (Dann, 1996: 9) due to their inherent capability of arousing tourist motivation for visitation. In spite of their importance, off-site markers have been so far generically defined as “any kind of information or representation that constitutes a sight as a sight” (Culler, *ibid.*, p. 5), and as “information separated from its sight” (MacCannell, *ibid.*, p. 111). From a linguistic perspective, however, a more refined categorisation is needed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how off-site markers rely on tourism discourse, and more specifically, how they operate in multiple web-based discourses competing for heritage presentation and interpretation, which lies at the core of the present study. This paper therefore proposes two broad categories, namely *presentation* and *interpretation* markers and their related subcategories, which may allow for a more fine-grained analysis of off-site markers in WHS discourses. Such categorisation may also account for the selection of off-site markers, which largely depends on the discourses and underlying social practices authorizing their use. In this sense, “authorized heritage discourse” appears to use markers which mainly point to “aesthetically pleasing material objects” (Smith, 2006, p. 29). This longstanding discursive practice has, in fact, been legitimated by the traditional Western assumption that world heritage is *tangible* heritage of “outstanding universal value” (UNESCO, 1972, p. 2). Yet, heritage is essentially a dynamic construct, “defined by the needs of societies in the present” (McDowell, 2016, p. 37). Accordingly, world heritage has been more recently redefined in the light of the expertise offered by indigenous WHS communities in “the safeguarding [...] and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 1). As a result of the active involvement of these communities in heritage tourism development, alternative non-Western discourses are emerging alongside authorized heritage discourse. These relatively new discourses appear to focus mostly on the “values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles” (Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 3), which represent *intangible* heritage and “the cultural identity of its creators and bearers” (Lenzerini, 2011, p. 101). While both Western and non-Western discourses of heritage have significance in their own right, their uses of off-site markers are expected to differ, and thus create competing representations of a same WHS attraction. Gaining insight into how off-site markers produce different heritage interpretations may help

better understand some of the current dynamics of tourism discourse between experts and non-experts. Nevertheless, to date, studies have focused on the semiotics of mainstream heritage tourism discourse, leaving emerging indigenous discourses a largely under-researched area. Recent calls for empirical discursive research in this area confirm the need to “rethink present heritage discourses” in the light of the “pluralization of heritage” (Wu & Hou, 2015, p. 47), and of the new meanings shaping “the semiotic landscape’ of heritage tourism” (Waterton & Watson, 2014, p. 8).

As a contribution to filling this void, the present study aims at exploring how off-site markers are used in web-based tourism and indigenous discourses to shape a same WHS image. Such a comparative analysis can offer insights into the evolving dynamics of tourism discourse, which may have practical implications for its pedagogy in ESP contexts, as well as for researchers pursuing a “discursive turn” in heritage studies (Harrison, 2013). With this in mind, the study first seeks to determine how markers are used to indicate evidential information of a same WHS in tourism and indigenous discourses. Secondly, it attempts to disclose the epistemic type of evidential information indicated by markers in these discourses. Based on these results, the study considers how these markers may attempt to negotiate competing representations of heritage, and also suggests how their discipline-specific use can enhance ESP learning of tourism discourse.

The paper sets out with a brief overview of the proposed off-site markers, which are framed by key concepts of evidential and epistemic modality (Palmer, 2001; Sanders & Spooren, 1996), and multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Martinec & Salway, 2005). It then provides an outline of the corpus and methodology used in the research, and presents the quantitative and qualitative results of a multimodal discourse analysis. The paper finally offers an insight into the practical implications these results may have for ESP pedagogy of tourism discourse.

2. Presentation and interpretation markers in tourism discourses

World Heritage practices are shaped by discourses that reflect the conservation, management and tourism of outstanding sites for the purpose of heritage presentation and heritage interpretation. According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), *heritage presentation* “denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content”, while *heritage interpretation* is considered as “the public explanation” of a WHS, “encompassing its full significance, multiple meanings and values”.¹ Drawing on these definitions, it appears that off-site markers in WHS discourses may easily operate as either *presentation markers*² displaying carefully selected information about material heritage places or intangible heritage events (Smith, 2012), or as *interpretation markers* explaining their significance. Due to the multimodal nature of web-based tourism discourses, the two broad categories of off-site

1 Cf. Note to the Ename Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, 2008, <www.enamecharter.org/initiative_0.html>, and The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, 2008, <http://www.icomos.org/charters/interpretation_e.pdf>. ICOMOS is an official advisory body to the World Heritage Committee.

2 The meaning of presentation markers thus here differs from that used in pragmatics and discourse studies, where they are considered to be those linguistic expressions that make the information presented more acceptable and accessible to the reader/listener.

markers proposed can be further divided into four main sub-categories: *textual presentation*, *multimodal presentation*, *textual interpretation* and *multimodal interpretation* markers.³

In detail, *textual presentation markers* can be understood to provide evidence of tangible or intangible heritage in different ways. Drawing on Palmer's (2001, p. 35) categorisation of evidential modality, textual presentation markers may be seen as operating as "sensory evidentials" when they provide linguistic evidence through the use of sensory perception verbs (e.g. *see, hear, feel, smell, taste*). Given that motivation for WHS visitation is also driven by learning experience (Poria et al., 2004), and that the sensory kinaesthetic modality may also be considered as a way of directly experiencing the place and becoming aware of its uniqueness, textual presentation markers are also likely to provide linguistic evidence of heritage through the use of sensory kinaesthetic verbs (e.g. *move, climb, walk, ride, drive*). They may further be expressions of a second "purely" evidential category, namely "reported evidentials" (Palmer, *ibid.*), operating as "quotatives" when they overtly signal the original information source, for example, through the use of direct or indirect reported speech, or as "hearsay evidentials" when the source is omitted in order to provide less reliable information for potential manipulative purposes.

Multimodal presentation markers can also operate as sensory evidentials with visual markers creating more vivid and appealing perceptions. They are also capable of altering the truth-conditions of evidence, especially regarding people, places and objects as "represented participants", or "the subject matter of the communication" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 48). In particular, people can be depicted as "offering" information to the viewer, or as "demanding" it by attempting to establish imaginary relations with the viewer, for example, by means of their gaze. Participants can also provide evidence through "narrative" meanings when they are represented in "action processes", where the main participant(s) and the recipient(s) of the action are connected by "vectors" through depicted elements, such as "bodies or limbs or tools", or engaged in "reactional processes", where vectors meaningfully connect the glance of represented participants as reactors with other passive participants (*ibid.*, p. 56-64). Additionally, participants can convey "conceptual" meanings through their static depiction as members of a same class (classification processes), as a part-whole structure (analytical processes), or when portrayed with symbolic attributes (symbolic attributive processes), and even acquire symbolic meaning also through the use of other semiotic resources, for instance, textual (symbolic suggestive processes) (*ibid.*, p. 89-108).

Textual interpretation markers mainly explain heritage meanings and thus help manage the acceptance of its evidential information. In so doing, they allow authors to take personal responsibility in evaluating evidential information (cf. Marín-Arrese, 2011), and to exert "epistemic control" (Langacker, 2013). Hence, textual interpretation markers easily signal different degrees of "subjectification" including "semi-subjective" positions when they offer observational evidence or shared knowledge, but divide the responsibility for the factual status of information with their consumers, who are ultimately in charge of constructing interpretive meaning; "subjective" positions, whereby they "explicitly encode the speaker/writer's personal limitation of the validity of information", for example, through the use of

3 The term *textual* here refers to the deployment of the written mode, whereas *multimodal* is meant to indicate the common co-deployment of the written and visual semiotic modes.

"I-embeddings" (e.g. *I think, I believe*) (Sanders & Spooren, 1996, p. 246). Authors interested in shaping induced WHS images as their covert manipulative goal are, however, more likely to conceal the responsibility for their claims through the use of different linguistic devices (e.g. modal and cognitive verbs) and/or visual strategies altering the "information value" of pictorial elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Such epistemic "implicitness" ultimately denotes a "mystification of responsibility for the realization of events" (Marín-Arrese, 2011, p. 258). This can also be accomplished in the single stages of the construction of induced WHS images. Following MacCannell's (1999) five-stage model, implicit propositional attitudes may be captured in the use of WHS name markers (*naming* stage), or other linguistic items marking types of consumption (*framing and elevating* stage), values (*enshrinement* stage), artefacts (*mechanical reproduction* stage), and social organizations disseminating WHS fame (*social reproduction* stage).

Multimodal interpretation markers may also reveal how authors alter the status between texts and images and their semantic relations to distort evidential information according to their own promotional interests. Authors may thus choose to give texts and images an "equal independent", "equal complementary" or an "unequal" status (Martinec & Salway, 2005, p. 345). Texts and images without "signs of one modifying the other" hold an "equal independent" status, whereby evidential information is open to diverse textual and visual interpretations; texts and images that are "joined equally and modify one another" hold an "equal complementary" status, which denotes that both semiotic modes are mostly used to provide reliable evidential information; when "one of them modifies the other", texts and images hold an "unequal" status, which shows that evidential information is strategically manipulated to orient interpretive meaning according to the author's interests. Authors can further choose to establish different semantic relations between texts and images for similar purposes. In this sense, relations of "exposition" indicate that "the image and the text are of the same level of generality" open to different interpretations; those of "exemplification" show that "the levels are different" to substantiate evidential information through textual or visual examples; in relations of "enhancement", where "one qualifies the other circumstantially" (Martinec & Salway, 2005, p. 342-350), allowing ample margins for manipulating information.

Bearing all these features in mind, this paper aims at addressing three main research questions:

1. What main evidential type of information about a same WHS is indicated by presentation markers in tourism and indigenous discourses?
2. What epistemic type of evidential information do interpretation markers signal in these discourses?
3. Do these markers negotiate competing representations of heritage?

A multimodal discourse analysis is conducted on a collection of web-based texts promoting the WHS Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia to address these research questions.

3. Materials and methodology

The key expression “Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park” was typed into an online search engine and the first ten websites with related tourism or indigenous discourses were collected to build the multimodal heritage corpus (6,242 words; 61 images) for the current study. Samples were distributed into two sub-corpora (cf. Appendix) based on the criterion of tourism vs. indigenous discourse. The sub-corpus with tourism samples was labelled as Official Tourism Boards (henceforth OTB), and was made up of 3,074 words and 25 images; the one with indigenous samples was named Park and Aboriginal Tours (PAT), and included 3,168 words and 36 images. The corpus was purposely kept to a manageable size for a more detailed analysis of markers.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis was theoretically framed by the multimodal social semiotic approach to discourse, thus assuming that “all signs in all modes are meaningful” (Kress, 2010, p. 59). On-screen texts were transcribed and static images downloaded and stored for analysis. Raw corpus data were filtered, and markers were manipulated by predefined evidential and epistemic categories (Palmer 2001; Sanders & Spooren, 1996), and by multimodal parameters (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Martinec & Salway, 2005) for data analysis. Textual presentation markers were coded as *sensory perception*, *sensory kinaesthetic* or *reported* (*quotative* vs. *hearsay*) evidentials; multimodal presentation markers as *represented participants* (*people* vs. *objects*), their information mode (*offer* vs. *demand*), and representational meanings (*narrative* vs. *conceptual*). Textual interpretation markers were coded as epistemic modifiers of evidence according to authors’ positioning (*semi-subjective* vs. *subjective*) and attitudinal propositional meanings of heritage. Markers in single stages of image construction were also recorded using MacCannell’s (1999) five-stage model to detect possible variations across discourses. Multimodal interpretation markers were coded for text-image status (*equal independent* vs. *equal complementary* vs. *unequal*), and as indicators of semantic relations between the two (*exposition* vs. *exemplification* vs. *enhancement*). Variations across the two subcorpora were annotated to examine how markers negotiated competing representations of heritage.

4. Results

4.1. Textual Presentation Markers

Textual presentation markers ($N=146$) in the corpus were mainly used as “sensory evidentials” ($N=121$; 82.9%), and only scantily as “reported evidentials” ($N=25$; 17.1%), thus suggesting the need to provide more immediate evidence to enhance engagement in image formation processes. The senses of hearing, sight and touch, and the kinaesthetic sensory modality were mainly sourced to shape image perceptions, while no instances referring to the senses of taste and smell or other sensory modalities were found. Frequency percentages (%F) recorded higher occurrences for three sensory perception verbs, namely *hear* (29.8%), *see* (25.6%) and *touch* (7.4%), as well as for the sensory kinaesthetic verb *walk* (20.6%). Textual presentation markers were, however, unevenly distributed across the two subcorpora, as reported in Table 1.

Sensory Verbs (N=121)	OTB subcorpus		PAT subcorpus	
	(%F)	Token	(%F)	Token
<i>Hear</i> (N=36)	30.6%	hear tales of survival	69.4%	<i>hear the echo of the beginning of time, Tjukurpa (law) whispering the connections between people, plants, animals and the land</i>
<i>See</i> (N=31)	51.6%	see it from the skies by helicopter or hot air balloon	48.4%	<i>see Uluru-Kata Tjuta through Anangu Eyes</i>
<i>Walk</i> (N=25)	84.0%	walk around the rock with an Aboriginal guide	16.0%	walk along the base
<i>Touch</i> (N=9)	==	==	100%	<i>touch the wind talking through the span of past</i>

Table 1. Frequency (%F) of top sensory perception and kinaesthetic verbs across the two subcorpora.

Results show that tourism discourse is significantly marked by the kinaesthetic verb *walk* (84%) to provide dynamic evidence of *the rock* as the central WHS attraction, which is stereotypically recognized as Australia’s natural icon. The sensory verb in the token points to the “object” in accordance with the Western conception of tangible heritage, while the preposition *around* marks the spatial dimension in which *the rock* is perceived. Moreover, in the example above the nominal phrase *an Aboriginal guide* acts as a cue of the reliability of the factual status of the information, besides hinting at “the authenticity of toured objects [...] to be perceived by tourists” (Wang, 1999: 351).

On the other hand, indigenous discourse is significantly marked by the auditory verb *hear* (69.4%), which provides sensory evidence (*echo, whispering*) of intangible Aboriginal heritage (*the beginning of time, the connections*) through natural elements (*plants, animals, the land*). While these elements make the information more credible, they also foreground the importance of “nature tourism” as “surely one of the major ways of experiencing a ‘real’ self”, and thus create a sense of “existential authenticity” (Wang, 1999: 351). Hence, sensory evidentials in both discourses appear to serve the common purpose of attempting to satisfy the tourist’s “quest for authenticity” (MacCannell, 1999). However, the use of the two different sensory verbs clearly contributes to constructing two different perceptions of the heritage attraction. A different reality is also created when the auditory verb *hear* is used in tourism discourse. Here, the marker points to narratives (*tales*) as oral evidence of Aboriginal cultural history to create a stimulating imaginary world. The creation of such a perception also makes it easier to exert epistemic control over the conceptualization of *survival*. By construing its meaning within an imaginary world, the author subtly attributes tale tellers alone the responsibility of the truth-value of past Aboriginal hardship caused by colonization. On the other hand, the kinaesthetic verb *walk* in indigenous discourse appears to create the same

spatial dimension of perception of the rock (*along the base*) as in tourism discourse (*around the rock*). However, the verb here specifically points to *the base* rather than more generically to *the rock*. Hence, *the base* acquires major evidential significance also in relation to “the top” of the rock as its opposite dimensional space. This appears to help raise awareness of the Aboriginal sacredness of the rock, and implicitly suggests that climbing Uluru for consumerist purposes is particularly disrespectful of the Anangu tradition.

Although the sensory verb *see* is used with a similar frequency across the two subcorpora, it also generates different visual perceptions of the heritage attraction. In tourism discourse, it offers direct evidence of the “object” from a bird’s eye view (*from the skies by helicopter or hot air balloon*), which deliberately alters the WHS reality to satisfy the Western demand for luxury tourism. In indigenous discourse, instead, the marker offers a more genuine visual perception from the insider’s perspective (*through Anangu Eyes*). Finally, the use of the sensory verb *touch* was recorded only in indigenous discourse, where it points to a natural element (*the wind*) to offer “existential authenticity” of local cultural history (*the span of past*) like the auditory verb *hear*. Its use also suggests that image perception is constructed as a more multisensory experience in indigenous discourse compared to tourism discourse. This appears to reflect the recent trend of adopting “a sensory marketing approach to the tourist experience” (Agapito et al., 2012: 7), and may also be one of the reasons for the limited occurrence of *reported* evidentials in the present corpus (17.1%). Nevertheless, these were found to be mostly used as “quotative evidentials”, although in different ways across the subcorpora as shown in Examples (1) and (2):

- (1) *hear directly from the traditional owners themselves on how Paddy Uluru fought for Aboriginal lands rights* [PAT #5]

- (2) *the traditional owners do not climb [Uluru] because of its great spiritual significance, and in respect of their culture they ask that others do not climb it either* [OTB# 1]

Example (1) is a quotative evidential used in indigenous discourse to overtly signal the information source (*directly from the traditional owners themselves*), while the expression *on how* offers indirect evidence of the history of the local community from the insider’s perspective (*Paddy Uluru fought for Aboriginal lands rights*). The weaker factual status of this indirect evidence is remediated by the sensory evidential *hear*, which helps strengthen information reliability. In Example (2), the quotative evidential in tourism discourse introduces the negative sensory kinaesthetic verb *do not climb*, but relies on the same information source (*the traditional owners*) and on the use of overtly marked indirect speech (*they ask*) to reject this way of directly experiencing Uluru. This thus allows the author to distance himself from the trustworthiness of the claim about intangible heritage (*because of its great spiritual significance*) as indirect evidential information.

4.2. Multimodal Presentation Markers

The 61 images in the corpus showed that “represented participants” are mostly depicted as people (93.4%), and only in a few cases as objects (6.6%) of the WHS tourist experience. In particular, the images used in tourism discourse are mostly visual-only representations, which thus force viewers to interpret meaning through visual perception. Moreover, they mainly portray represented participants as “offering” viewers information as their gazes are not directed at them. They are thus understood to be “objects of contemplation” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 48), as shown in Figure 1.

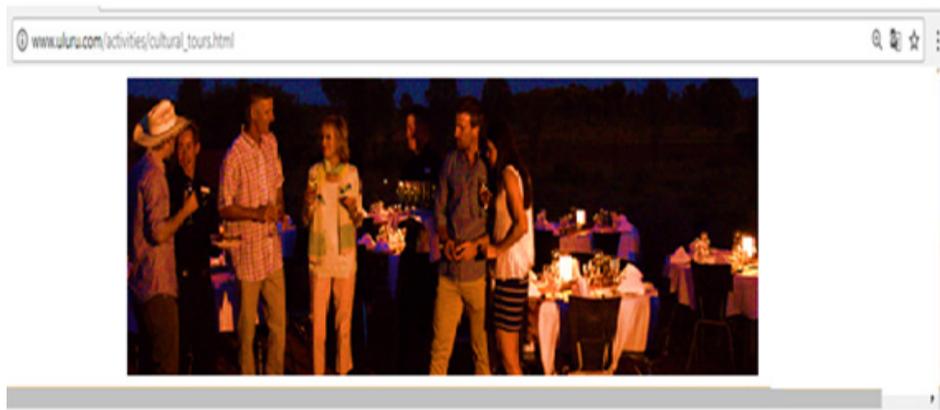


Figure 1. Represented participants in tourism discourse: *narrative* representational meaning (source: Uluru Travel, 2016, accessed at www.uluru.com/activities/cultural_tours.html).

Figure 1 places the viewer in the passive role of observer, who contemplates a group of tourists as the central represented participants. These “offer” social evidential-type of information about the WHS by engaging in an unfolding recreational activity in which they construct a narrative pattern of meaning. In particular, the taller man on the left of the picture and the group of persons on the right participate directly in the creation of narrative representational meaning. Propositional meaning is, in fact, generated by the vector formed by the taller man’s gaze (Reactor), which is directed toward the group of passive participants (Phenomena) so that “a transactional relation” is established (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 68). The vector thus contributes to creating a “reactional process” of narrative meaning so as to leave the viewer to imagine what the represented participants are thinking/saying in order to “create a powerful sense of empathy or identification” with them (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 68).

Conversely, images in indigenous discourse are mostly multimodal, and thus direct viewers to construct interpretive meaning through the written and visual codes. They commonly depict only one central participant as an Aboriginal character, who acknowledges the viewer, and thus “demands” to establish some sort of ideal relationship, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Represented participants in indigenous discourse: *conceptual* representational meaning (source: Uluru Aboriginal Tours, 2017, accessed at www.josweeney.com.au/uluru/).

In the image, the represented participant is looking directly at the viewer as a sign of an invitation for more involvement with him. From a multimodal perspective, this involvement can be better understood by examining the different information values accorded to the three key elements present in the visual space, namely the represented participant, the rock and the informative text. Along the horizontal axis of the visual space, the rock mostly occupies the left part of the image as “already given” information, well recognizable for its iconic value; the represented participant is positioned on the right as “key information”, which the viewer “must pay particular attention to” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 180). The stick used as a support is an attribute, which engages the aged man in a symbolic relation with the surrounding land. More importantly, the represented participant acquires *conceptual meaning* through the vertical axis of the visual space, where the rock is placed in the upper section as the “Ideal”, which “tends to make some kind of emotive appeal”, while the text is positioned in the lower section as the “Real”, which is “more informative and practical” (ibid., 186-187). The man’s static position suggests his “timeless essence” (ibid., p. 56), and engages him in a “symbolic suggestive process” (ibid., p. 108) of meaning mediated through the written text in the foreground, and more specifically by the keyword “timeless”. It is through this conceptual representational meaning that the represented participant primarily “demands” a deeper relation with Aboriginal intangible heritage from the viewer.

4.3. Textual Interpretation Markers

Results showed that the frequency of occurrence of textual interpretation markers ($N=189$) was similar to that of presentation markers ($N=146$), thus suggesting a recurrent evaluation of evidential information, which is typical of promotional discourses. Textual interpretation markers revealed a significantly higher frequency of authors’ *semi-subjective* positioning (71.4%; OTB 36.3%; PAT 35.1%) compared to their *subjective* positioning (28.6%; OTB 13.7%; PAT 14.9%) across both discourses. In spite of this common feature of sharing responsibility

with their readers, authors used markers to evaluate evidential information in ways that induced completely different interpretive meanings as pointed out through Examples (3) and (4):

(1) *the Anangu believe this landscape was created by their ancestors at the beginning of time*
[OTB # 4]

(2) *They have always known that this is a very special place* [PAT #1]

Example (3) shows how the epistemic strategy of *implicitness* is used to conceal the author's presence in the tourism text, and thus mystify the responsibility for the veracity of propositional meaning. First, *the Anangu* are presented as a source of "observable evidence" (Palmer, *ibid.*, 24), allowing the author to share information directly with her readers. However, *the Anangu* are foregrounded as the only agents responsible for the truth-condition of the claim, and thus represent the premise for the author's manipulation of information. Epistemic control over propositional meaning is then covertly exercised through the deliberate use of the non-factive verb *believe*, which denotes an extremely low degree of information reliability. This leaves the reader in charge of cognitively elaborating the significance of the verb *believe* in order to construct interpretive meaning. The author's low degree of personal responsibility for the evaluation of this information thus reflects a traditional Western attitude, which tends to undervalue local beliefs tied to intangible heritage.

Similarly, Example (4) shows how the strategy of "implicitness" is also used in indigenous discourse to draw attention away from the author, and focus on *they* (the Anangu) as the same agents of evidential information. However, a different "epistemic legitimisation" strategy (Marín-Arrese, 2011) is here used to express responsibility for the truth value of propositional meaning. Epistemic control is, in fact, covertly exercised through the deliberate use of the factive verb *have known*, which denotes a high degree of facticity. Unlike the non-factive verb *believe* in Example (3), the verb *know*, in fact, intrinsically presupposes that knowledge is constructed as the result of prior sensory experiences, whereby it is also "the basis of 'evidentials' ('I know because I see', 'I know because I hear' [...])" (Wierzbicka, 1996, p. 49). The present perfect *have known* together with the frequency adverb *always* reinforce the reliability of the Anangu's everlasting knowledge, and thus easily convince the reader to accept the responsibility of sharing the claim that *this is a very special place*. Differently from Example (3), the author's low degree of personal responsibility for the evaluation of evidential information is here understood to encourage readers to activate their own perceptual capacities to appreciate the significance of intangible heritage. In addition to the occurrences of *know* (N=29) and *believe* (N=32), another recurrent verbal pair, namely *understand* (N=16) and *think* (N=18) was found to characterize factive and non-factive verbs as the discriminant epistemic type of evidential information, as reported in Table 2.

PAT	OTB
<i>We have very significant Tjukurpa here for you to see and understand</i>	<i>the Anangu think that by simply touching the rocks they can communicate with dreamtime and receive blessings from their ancestors</i>
<i>We'll teach how to understand the natural and living cultural landscape that is Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park</i>	<i>Many Anangu think that some illness and problems are caused by harmful elements in the spiritual world</i>
<i>you'll understand there is more to Uluru than meets the eye</i>	<i>They think that the spark of life, the soul which energizes them, is part of that ancestor</i>

Table 2. Epistemic-type of evidential information: factive *understand* vs. non-factive *think*.

A more in-depth analysis also showed that textual interpretation markers operate differently across tourism and indigenous discourses in the single stages of image formation. Markers were recorded in all stages, except for the last stage of “social reproduction”. With reference to the *naming* stage, frequency percentages (%F) showed higher occurrences for six types of name markers ($N=145$), namely *Uluru and Kata Tjuta* (61.8%), *Uluru* (61%), the acronym *UKTNP* (41.6%), *Ayers Rock* (20.8%), *Ayers Rock/Uluru* (10.4%) and *(formerly/previous)ly Ayers Rock* (4.4%) in the whole corpus. Name markers were distributed evenly across the OTB subcorpus ($N=77$; 53.1%) and the PAT one ($N=68$; 46.9%), and presented low variation both within the OTB subcorpus ($M=25$; $SD=24.64$) and the PAT one ($M=33.4$; $SD=28.7$), as reported in Table 3.

Name Type	OTB subcorpus (N=77)		PAT subcorpus (N= 68)	
	Name	%F	Name	%F
Original	Uluru	61.0%	Uluru & Kata Tjuta	61.8%
Official	UKTNP	7.8%	UKTNP	33.8%
Westernized	Ayers Rock	20.8%	(formerly/previous)ly Ayers Rock	4.4%
Double names	Ayers Rock/Uluru	10.4%	==	==

Table 3. Distribution of name marker types across the tourism and indigenous subcorpora.

Results show that the WHS is mostly marked as *Uluru* and *Ayers Rock* (81.8%) in tourism discourse, whereas the original name *Uluru-Kata Tjuta* and the institutional acronym *UKTNP* (95.6%) are predominantly used in indigenous discourse. Example (5) illustrates how *Uluru* and *Ayers Rock* are used as markers of interpretive meaning in tourism discourse:

- (5) *World Heritage-listed Uluru is one of Australia's most iconic symbols* [OTB# 1]
European explorer William Gosse called the rock Ayres Rock in 1873 [OTB# 2]

Uluru in the first instance points to the popular WHS brand (*World Heritage-listed*) and to stereotypical meaning (*most iconic symbol*), allowing the author to divide the responsibility for the claim with his reader on the basis of widely shared knowledge. The name in itself circumscribes the extensive WHS area to the rock, and its use thus reflects a Western *consumerist* attitude towards heritage. In a similar vein, the toponym *Ayers Rock* also points to the “object”, marked this time by historical evidential information (*European explorer*). This reflects an underlying *colonial* attitude to the WHS attraction, which is similar to that of authorized heritage discourse imbued with “a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable” (Smith, 2006, p. 11). Example (6) shows, instead, how the name markers *Uluru-Kata Tjuta* and *UKTNP* point to different evaluative meanings of evidential information in indigenous discourse:

- (6) *Anangu are the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta and the land around. They've been at this place for tens of thousands of years* [PAT #1].

Most Anangu speak English as a second or third language and prefer to be accompanied by an interpreter as an accredited guide with UKTNP, who has extensive experience working with Anangu and inside the park [PAT #4].

The original name in the first instance signals the *Anangu* as *the traditional owners* of the WHS and its surroundings; the institutional name in the second points to their current role as joint managers of the WHS, and thus to their involvement in heritage tourism development. Hence, both names reflect an attitude of *ownership* of heritage, which should not, however, be interpreted according to the capitalist conception. It rather reflects the “guardianship role over use or non-use by others and their own people” (Lai, 2014, p. 298) as a form of heritage preservation. The less frequently used double name *Ayers Rock/Uluru* (10.4%), in which the Aboriginal name follows the European one, reflects, instead, a *dominant Western/subaltern indigenous* view of heritage grounded in authorized heritage discourse. Conversely, the Western name *Ayers Rock* in indigenous discourse is always preceded by the temporal adverbials *formerly* and *previously*, which operate as markers of historical evidence of the period when the land was subtracted from its original owners. They also function as epistemic modifiers of the name, whereby they reflect an attitude of claiming *Aboriginal land rights*, which also explains the extremely low use made of this name marker (4.4%).

Interpretation markers in the *framing and elevating* stage are mainly used to indicate the “identity-conferring status” of heritage (Rojek & Urry, 2003, p. 13). In tourism discourse, the WHS boundaries are framed by geographical evidence (e.g. *lies in the centre of Australia, is located in the red heart of Australia*), thus showing a more objective degree of responsibility for the veracity of propositional meaning. However, *Australia* is laden with epistemic value as it confers the WHS the status of *national* identity, thus reflecting an underlying sense of *Western pride*. In indigenous discourse, instead, the WHS boundaries are framed by cultural evidence (e.g. *in the spiritual heart of, lies in the territory of the Anangu people*), which denotes more subjective responsibility. *Territory* has epistemic value, which contrasts with *Australia* in order to confer the WHS the status of *local* identity, thus denoting an implicit sense of *Aboriginal pride*. Similar propositional attitudes were revealed also in expressions “elevating” the WHS. A recurrent use was made of the noun phrase *ancient landscape*, embedded with

sensory evidence (*landscape*) and different epistemic meanings (*ancient*) of this evidence, as illustrated in Examples (7) and (8):

- (7) *Come for the rock, experience the ancient landscape of Uluru* [OTB# 4]
- (8) *For Anangu, the ancient landscape is the narratives, songs and art of Tjukurpa* [PAT #3]

In Example (7), the rock is considered as historical visual evidence, which allows *Uluru* to be elevated as the main *ancient* “object” of the tangible *landscape* in tourism discourse; in Example (8), instead, the *Anangu* provide evidence through their *ancient narratives, songs and art of Tjukurpa*, which holistically elevate *the landscape* as intangible heritage.

Enshrinement markers were consistently used to supply evidence of the uniqueness of the WHS in terms of the *natural* landscape in tourism discourse as opposed to the *cultural* landscape in indigenous discourse, as shown respectively in Examples (9) and (10):

- (9) *Experience the beauty of this unique desert landscape; Ayers Rock/Uluru is breath-taking at sunrise and sunset* [OTB# 2]
- (10) *Anangu's spiritual law, Tjukurpa, is the foundation of life and society. Please note: Aboriginal hosts are traditional people with strong cultural obligations* [PAT #5]

In Example (9), *desert landscape, sunrise* and *sunset* provide evidence through sensory perceptions of the *natural* landscape, which allow the author to overtly express positive evaluations, (*the beauty, breath-taking*), denoting an explicit sense of *admiration*. The underlying promotional purpose is to entice the virtual visitor into the *sensory* experience of tangible objects. In Example (10), instead, *Anangu's spiritual law* offers evidence of the *cultural* landscape (*the foundation of life and society*), which enables the author to ethically evaluate heritage as *strong cultural obligations*, thus reflecting an implicit sense of *preservation*. The covert goal here is to draw the virtual visitor into being fascinated by the *spiritual* atmosphere surrounding intangible customs and values.

As a core part of the *mechanical reproduction* stage, evidence is provided through the reproduction of artefacts in both discourses, as indicated in Examples (11) and (12):

- (11) *Create your own artwork to take home as a memento of your experience* [OTB# 4]
- (12) *Learn the essence of an ancient way of teaching and create your own story to take home* [PAT #1]

Example (11) shows how the use of the experiential verb *create* in tourism discourse points to evidence which becomes tangible when the visitor actively engages in the *manual* reproduction of heritage (*artwork*). The noun *memento* operates as an epistemic modifier of heritage reproduction, evaluating it as pure commercial objectification. In Example (12), a similar engaging experience of reproducing heritage also appears to be offered. However,

the noun *story* substitutes the meaning of *artwork* as plain manual heritage reproduction in (11) with that of the local cultural practice of story-telling as *oral* heritage reproduction. This is determined by the factive verb *learn* as a fundamental premise for the successful realization of the experiential verb *create*. Hence, *learn* in indigenous discourse operates as a marker of propositional attitude (Langacker, 2013), which reflects a *holistic* view of heritage, whereby the intangible is “the larger framework within which tangible heritage takes on shape and significance”⁴. Although the verb *learn* may therefore appear to create a competing representation of heritage reproduction, its regular use in tourism discourse reveals that a positive propositional attitude is also taken toward the value of intangible heritage as indicated in the instances (a)-(k) in Example (13) . These all show how the verb provides evidence of different experiential consumptions of heritage, and implicitly expresses positive evaluations of local cultural practices. This appears to remediate the longstanding void created by authorized heritage discourse. However, the verb is more likely to reflect the marketing strategy of promoting the diversification of the WHS attraction offer through local heritage.

(13)

- a. **learn** about ancient traditions and stories from the Dreamtime
- b. **learn** about Tjukurpa, the traditional law guiding the Anangu people
- c. **learn** about bush tucker, traditional medicines, sacred Aboriginal rock art and how animals formed the Uluru landscape
- d. **learn** about the local Aboriginal culture
- e. enrich your experience by **learning** about the ancient culture and history of the land from the traditional custodians of Uluru, the Anangu
- f. **learn** about its fascinating history with the Uluru people
- g. **learn** about ancient bush skills and how to hold a spear
- h. **learn** about the different symbols used to create beautiful works of art depicting Creation Time (Tjukurpa) stories
- i. **learn** how the local people lived in such a hot desert climate surviving on a variety of bush plants and animals
- j. **learn** how this grass is made into the final product of paper
- k. You will discuss Tjukurpa and the Songlines and **learn** their relevance to Anangu life in the desert learn about Aboriginal culture and the Aboriginal history of the area

In other words, the verb *learn* is understood to function as a “pull factor” (Dann, 1996) in the attempt to respond to the current quest for a more experiential consumption of heritage.

4 Mounir Bouchenaki, “The Interdependency of the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage” (keynote address delivered at the ICOMOS 14th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium, Victoria Falls, 2003). http://openarchive.icomos.org/468/1/2_-_Allocution_Bouchenaki.pdf.

4.4. Multimodal Interpretation Markers

Differences in the status between images and texts and in their logico-semantic relations confirmed that interpretation markers also operated differently at the multimodal discursive level across the two subcorpora. Interpretive meaning was, in fact, mainly marked by an *unequal* status between texts and images, and by their logico-semantic relation of *enhancement* in tourism discourse; instead, it was marked much more by an *equal complementary* status between images and texts, and by the logico-semantic relation of *exemplification* in indigenous discourse. In particular, multimodal content was predominantly mediated through the combination of at least two images with only one accompanying text in tourism discourse as shown in Figure 3.

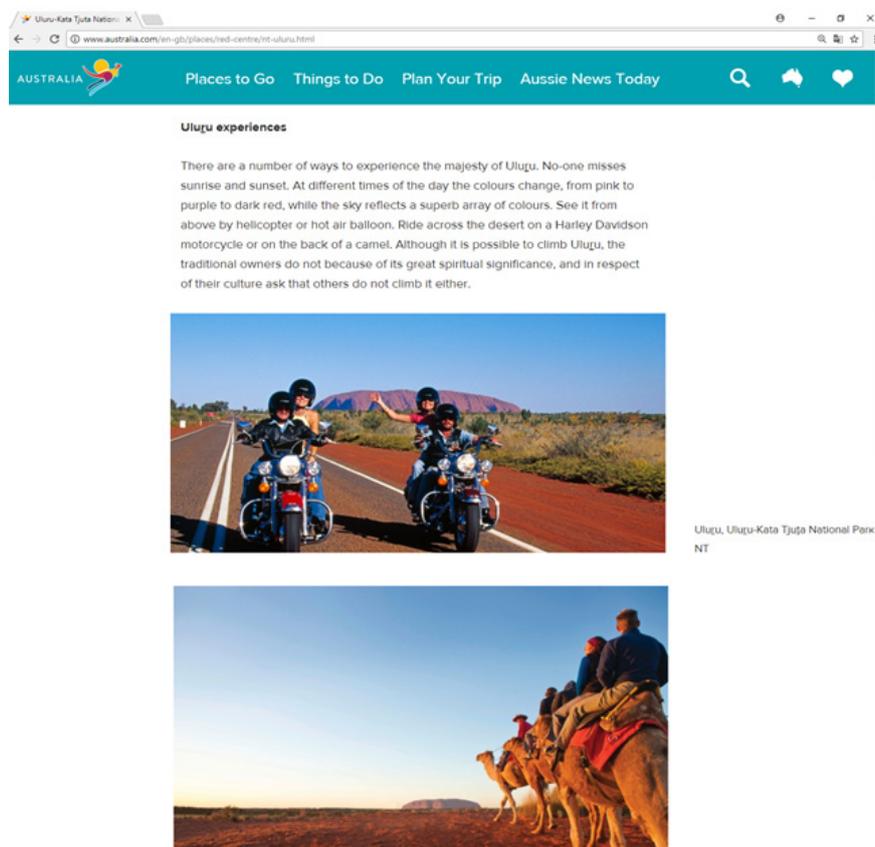


Figure 3. Multimodal marking in tourism discourse: *unequal* status and relation of *enhancement* (source: The Official Site for Australian Travel and Tourism Australia, 2017, accessed at <http://www.australia.com/en-gb/places/red-centre/nt-ulu.html>).

In Figure 3, the two images offer the viewer more appealing and immediate evidential information compared to the plain text, whose opening phrase *there are a number of ways* conveys vague evidential information. In spite of the subsequent use of the sensory kinaesthetic verbs *walk, ride*) pointing to the submodality of experiencing the place, and of the verb *learn*, textual meaning ends up, however, being partially obfuscated by the appealing images and their visual meanings. While the two uses of the sensory kinaesthetic verb *ride*

find their semantic equivalents in the two images, the meanings of the sensory kinaesthetic verb *walk* and the factive *learn* are lost in the process of intersemiotic translation. Thus, the overemphasis on the specific visual meaning of the *Harley Davidson* and of *the back of a camel* turns these into epistemic markers, which signal the heritage attraction as mere luxurious or exotic pleasure. They rule out, in fact, the possibility of the experiential consumption evidenced in the text (*learn about ancient traditions and stories from the Dreamtime*), denoting a *materialistic* attitude toward heritage, strongly influenced by the Western hedonic consumption of tourism.

On the other hand, multimodal content was mediated in indigenous discourse on an equal one-to-one basis between texts and images. As shown in Figure 4, the image and the text complement each other on an equal footing, whereby the textual marker *knowledge* feeds general evidential information into the visual, and in return, the image clarifies the generality of this information by offering an example of Aboriginal rock art as specific evidential information. Both general and specific *knowledge* provide strong evidential information (Wierzbicka, 1996), and the use of both semiotic modes serves to further strengthen the reliability of this information. While the reader-viewer is mostly responsible for inferring meaning multimodally, the author overtly evaluates textual information, exemplified by visual evidence, as an experience, which is *more than just the tourist side of the rock*. This reflects an underlying attitude, which assigns deeper significance to the consumption of the heritage attraction of *Uluru*.

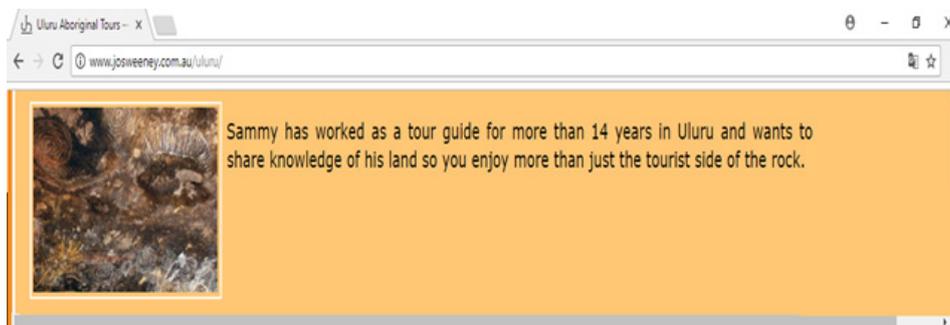


Figure 4. Multimodal marking in indigenous discourse: equal complementary status and relation of *exemplification* (source: Uluru Aboriginal Tours, 2016, accessed at www.josweeney.com.au/uluru/).

On the whole, multimodal interpretation markers like their textual counterparts appear to evaluate evidential information targeting tangible heritage in tourism discourse and intangible heritage in indigenous discourse. However, just like the factive verb *learn* was found to operate as an epistemic marker remediating the traditional neglect of intangible heritage in mainstream tourism discourse (cf. Example 13), multimodal markers in indigenous discourse were also found to work as signifiers of tangible heritage, as illustrated in Figure 5.

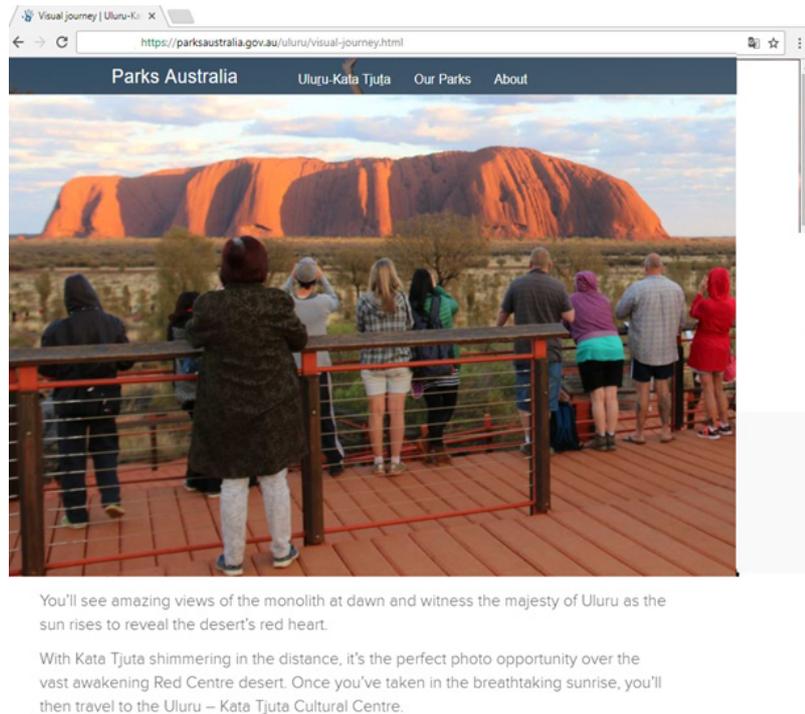


Figure 5. Negotiating competing WHS representations: multimodal markers in indigenous discourse (source: Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park, 2015, accessed at www.parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/).

Both textual and visual markers in Figure 5 mainly offer interpretations of a shallow consumption of tangible heritage through the appreciation of the natural landscape in accordance with traditional Western practices. Textual markers thus operate mainly as sensory evidentials of sight (*see, views, shimmering*) as opposed to the more frequent use made of the auditory evidential *hear* in discourses of intangible heritage (cf. Table 1). In the intersemiotic translation, the textual markers *monolith* and *red* are enriched by their visual counterparts through the semiotic code of colour (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2002) and through the system of salience (e.g. size, focus, perspective) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to convey an *amazing* image of Uluru. In the provision of a shallow consumption of heritage, *the perfect photo opportunity* as a textual marker jointly operates with the visual marker *the viewing platform* to shape the WHS as a product and a commodity.

5. Discussion

Heritage is widely acknowledged as being “that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes” (Ashworth & Graham, 2016, p. 7), and is therefore never an unmediated encounter with the past. Its “usage” is consequently “perceived as sign of that usage” (Culler, 1988, p. 155) according to the interests of its sign-makers. Ever since the UNESCO seal of approval has been artfully exploited as a marketing device by the tourism industry, the WHS has become a “semiotic landscape [...] with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making” (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010, p. 2). Web-

based constructions of destination images further confirm that “tourism is in large measure a quest for [...] signs” (Culler, *ibid.*), and an “exemplary case for the perception and description of sign relations” (Culler, 1998, p. 60). Such a perspective highlights the importance of markers in tourism discourse, which can be further fostered by offering an insight into their specific use in shaping WHS images. The present study has therefore set out to examine not only how these markers operate in mainstream tourism discourse, but also in emerging indigenous discourses for the same purpose of providing evidential type of information and epistemic type of evidential information about a WHS attraction.

The results of the present study show that textual presentation markers in both tourism and indigenous discourses operate mainly as *sensory* evidentials, although perception verbs were deliberately chosen to point to different information. The verbs *walk* and *see* were mostly used to indicate the materiality of heritage in tourism discourse; the verbs *hear* and *see* signalled its immateriality in indigenous discourse. This evidential type of information thus validated a “constructive authenticity” in tourism discourse, whereby “the authenticity projected onto toured objects” was marked by evidentials of the natural landscape (e.g. *the rock*), and an “existential authenticity” in indigenous discourse, where “a potential existential state of Being” (Wang, *ibid.*, 352) was indicated through evidentials of the cultural landscape (e.g. *the span of past*). The limited use of quotatives and the lack of occurrences of hearsays as *reported* evidential information can therefore be explained as the need to stimulate more immediate perceptions, which make the type of induced authenticity more convincing. Multimodal presentation markers differed in their indication of evidential type of information concerning “represented participants”. In tourism discourse, groups of tourists *offer* social information about the WHS through their engagement in *reactional* processes, which shape their representational meaning as *narrative* in order to stimulate the viewer’s desire for identification with the represented participants; in indigenous discourse, instead, a single Aboriginal character *demand*s deeper relations with intangible heritage from the viewer by engaging in *symbolic suggestive* processes, whereby the participant is endowed with *conceptual* representational meaning also through other semiotic information sources.

As to the second research question, textual interpretation markers mostly signal *semi-subjective* positioning as authors share responsibility with their readers, especially when informing about intangible heritage. This was done primarily through the use of the epistemic strategy of *implicitness* to mystify the responsibility for the truth-condition of propositional meaning, while epistemic-type of evidential information was mainly marked by the discriminant use of factive vs. non-factive verbs (*believe* vs. *know*; *think* vs. *understand*). In tourism discourse, evidential information ascribed to indigenous agents is weakened by the use of non-factive verbs; in indigenous discourse, instead, it is strengthened by the employment of factive verbs. In both cases, authors appeared to assume a detached attitude toward intangible heritage, leaving the virtual visitor with the main responsibility of verifying the factual status of information. Yet, these attitudes were discriminated by a high/low appreciation of heritage “embodied in people rather than in inanimate objects” (Logan, 2007, p. 33). As a result, the virtual visitor needs to engage in some sort of cognitive process to mediate interpretive meaning when non-factive verbs are used, whereas personal perceptual experiences are encouraged for major appreciation of intangible heritage when factive verbs point to more reliable evidence. Choices of markers ranging from the *naming* to the *mechanical reproduction* stage of image formation were also regulated by similar attitudes. Even multimodal interpretation

markers were selected with similar purposes in mind. Hence, the *unequal* status between texts and images and their recurring semantic relation of *enhancement* in tourism discourse were indicators of the conception of heritage as Western hedonic consumption; the *equal complementary* status and the predominant semantic relation of *exemplification* in indigenous discourse evoked, instead, the view of heritage as local experiential consumption.

As to the final research question, results indicate that markers were hardly ever used to negotiate competing representations of heritage. These findings confirm that “images of place are endlessly manufactured” to produce “a quite striking diversity” in spite of the fact that current semiotic “processes appear homogenizing, reducing differences between places through the proliferation of essentially the same signs and images” (Lash & Urry, 2002, p. 260). Hence, while the majority of markers created a divide between representations of material and immaterial heritage, only two exceptions were found in the sample discourses. The use of the factive verb *learn* in tourism discourse was understood as an attempt to remediate the persisting neglect of intangible heritage in authorized heritage discourse. It could, however, be also seen as part of the promotional strategy of diversifying the offer of the WHS as a tourism product. Similarly, very few multimodal markers were used in indigenous discourse to rebalance its promotion of tangible heritage. Even in this case these limited attempts may be considered as part of the policy of creating *meaningful and realistic opportunities for Anangu to engage in, and benefit from tourism* [PAT #4].

The recent call to remove “the manifest content of messages of ‘the language of tourism’ [...] by exposing their latent layers of connotation [...]” (Dann, 2012, p. 52) together with the evidenced use of markers in shaping evidential and epistemic meanings of WHS attractions suggest that ESP pedagogy of tourism discourse needs to pay closer attention to these functional uses. Accordingly, ESP instruction ought to adopt a multimodal approach, whereby learners of tourism language are enabled to engage in tasks, which privilege semiotic meaning-making processes based on the use of authentic materials (Plastina, 2013). First of all, tasks may be designed to raise learners’ awareness of the discipline-specific use of sensory verbs, direct and indirect speech, factive and non-factive verbs, and of information values in heritage images. Tasks can be further planned to familiarise learners with the three main functions highlighted in the current study, namely evidential presentation of WHS information, qualification of the author’s commitment to the factual status of textual/multimodal evidential information, and identification of subjective attitudes toward heritage. In detail, learners could first receive instruction on the linguistic and multimodal meanings of markers in the context of heritage tourism discourse, allowing them to draw comparisons with their functional use in other more familiar tourism promotional texts addressing the general public. Learners may then be given a sample multimodal text on a WHS extracted from a mainstream tourism website, and required to engage in meaning-making activities. These could include identifying and classifying linguistic items and visual elements according to the three aforementioned functions, as well as speculating about the status and semantic relations between texts and images highlighted in the present study in order to gain “new understandings [arising] as a result of transducing semiotic material across modes” (Nelson, 2006, p. 71). In the next step, the task could be replicated with the use of a text on the same WHS taken from an indigenous website so that comparisons can be drawn to pinpoint differences in the use of markers. Teacher questions “asking why these semiotics (rather than others) are mobilized to do certain things at certain times” (Iledema, 2003, p. 29) may also prove helpful in developing learners’

critical awareness of attitudinal meanings underlying competing heritage representations. Additionally, information transfer activities could be designed to encourage learners' deep processing of semiotic differences in the use of markers across the diverse stages of WHS image construction (e.g. name markers). Learners' control over the way they progress in these meaning-making practices could then be enhanced by allowing them to engage in marking processes leading to the production of their own web-based WHS images. In accordance with the ESP principle of learner-centredness, this task would motivate students to create their own meanings by reconstructing the primary functional use of markers previously given. This would ultimately allow them to gain a more critical understanding of how markers are chosen to orient evidential and epistemic meanings according to the underlying interests of tourism and indigenous discourses as outlined in the present study.

6. Final Remarks

Following the increased recognition that heritage holds an important place in the tourism industry (Prideaux & Timothy, 2008), the WHS has become an "interactive space" created by tourism and indigenous communities, where their "social practices and values meet and new meanings are created" (Wearing & Darcy, 2011, p. 19). The results of the present multimodal analysis consistently show that new WHS meanings are shaped by simultaneous processes, whereby Westernized images are constructed and also re-constructed now that indigenous communities are called to (re)present and market their heritage. Off-site markers play a key role in making these processes meaningful, and thus contribute significantly to shaping the dynamics of current tourism promotional discourse. As such, these semiotic devices confirm that "nowhere [...] is a semiotic perspective considered more appropriate than [...] in the study of tourism imagery and in the treatment of tourism communication [...]" (Dann, 1996, p. 6). Accordingly, ESP courses for students of tourism ought to provide adequate instruction on the functionality of markers as part of learners' need to develop both their linguistic and semiotic skills, which allow them to better cope with tourism promotional communication in their future profession.

The present study has offered an insight into the evidential and epistemic uses of textual and multimodal markers in tourism and indigenous discourses. However, the small-scaled research has focused on marking processes in discourses promoting only one heritage site. Further research may help gain a deeper understanding of the discipline-specific use of presentation and interpretation markers by investigating their occurrences in other dominant and alternative discourses mediating other jointly managed WHS, as well as in the subaltern heritage discourses, which stand outside of the dominant tourism discourse due to the fact that indigenous peoples have no official role in WHS management.

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Appendix – The Multimodal WHS Corpus

Park and Aboriginal Tour websites (PAT)

1. Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park
www.parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/
2. Australian Government-Department of the Environment
www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/uluru-kata-tjuta-national-park
3. Australian Government –WHS
www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/uluru
4. Uluru Aboriginal Tours
www.josweeney.com.au/uluru/
5. SEIT Outback Australia
www.seitoutbackaustralia.com.au/SEIT-PATJI---Aboriginal-Guided-Tour-with-Traditional-Owners-of-Uluru/

Official Tourism Boards websites (OTB)

1. The Official Site for Australian Travel and Tourism Australia
www.australia.com/en-gb/places/red-centre/nt-uluru.html

2. Australian Tourism Network

www.atn.com.au/nt/south/uluru.htm

3. Northern Territory Visitors Bureau- Travel Online

www.northernterritory.visitorsbureau.com.au/tours/ayers-rock-uluru/

4. Uluru Travel

www.uluru.com/activities/cultural_tours.html

5. Big Uluru Trek

www.bigulurutrek.com.au/bigulurutrek