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DOCTORAL THESIS- SUMMARY

**THE LANGUAGE OF TOURISM ADVERTISING: FROM DAILY
USAGE TO CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS. A SEMANTIC AND
PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS**

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Key words: tourism, advertising, destination slogans, brochures, destination image, marketing, discourse, TROPES, metaphors, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), corpus, pragmatics, tour operators.

Summary

In 1990 the sociologist John Urry wrote in one of his books (*The Tourist Gaze*) that “people are much of the time *tourists* whether they like it or not.” This can only emphasise the impact that tourism has on humans from a wide variety of perspectives: personal, social, economic, political or cultural. Nowadays, almost every corner of the world is being promoted in the attempt to attract as many tourists as possible. As we live in a society where leisure time is earned just the way money is, spending both of them wisely, matters. The tourists generally dispose of limited leisure time so it has to be sensibly organized. Therefore, advertising materials have one chance only, to transform readers in tourists. These materials must draw the attention by establishing their visibility, raise interest, gain the readers’ confidence and finally persuade and sell.

Because of the fact that holiday packages and services cannot be tested in advance, the tourist experience is an unpredictable phenomenon. It greatly depends on the tourists’ tastes and preferences so it goes beyond the marketers’ control. For these reasons, the marketers in this field must be very imaginative, persuasive and resourceful in order to shape the perfect tourist destination images that would appeal to their readers. Needless to mention, effective marketing and advertising campaigns are at the core of this industry which is incessantly changing in order to meet even the most sophisticated demands.

This thesis is not about tourism *per se*, but rather a linguistic analysis of the language of tourism advertising, with the focus on destination slogans. The analysis encompasses three research fields which complement each other: linguistics, advertising and tourism. Firstly, linguistics is essential in any approach of this sort because it enables the understanding of many disciplines, including tourism and tourism advertising. Therefore this perspective is absolutely necessary when analyzing the linguistic choices made in order to create a perfect destination image or an attractive country brand. Secondly, tourism is a multidisciplinary phenomenon which can be analyzed from a range of perspectives. Greater than before, its worldwide development affects every aspect of the human society, from the tour operators to the ordinary people, from the economic to the social and cultural, from the busiest megalopolis to the remotest island. Thirdly,

advertising can offer some insight into the way communication in tourism works, being also a good medium of persuasion.

This thesis starts with general aspects (the context of tourism research) and continues with more specific ones: the language of tourism as specialized discourse, its properties, functions and persuasive power, the occurrence and the purpose of conceptual metaphors present in tourism destination slogans, but especially the way destination slogans are conceptually structured in order to convey multiple meanings. Therefore the emphasis will be on the *slogans* used in the tourist brochures and on the conceptual metaphors and mappings, used in order to create a convincing destination image and brand.

Although the interest in both of these domains (the language of tourism and metaphor) has grown in recent years, most of the studies have focused on the visual aspects of promotion rather than on the written text which is present too, as it is clearly expressed by Dann's statement: "where photographs are featured, almost without exception they appear in tandem with a verbal message" (1996: 188). Nobody denies the importance of image in creating a perfect destination, yet text contributes equally, if not more, to the act of persuasion and decision-making. Because tourism advertising is such a vast domain of research, we have restricted our analysis to the destination slogans collected from the brochures of three leading tour operators: *Thomas Cook*, *Thomson Holidays* and *Kuoni* (2013-2015 editions- 367 slogans). The purpose was to analyze the destination slogans in order to establish their morphological, lexical and syntactical patterns, but above all, to locate and explain the presence of conceptual metaphors and establish their function in tourism advertising.

This thesis can be divided in four main parts. The first part is concerned with the issue of metaphors and the way traditional theories have changed during the years, to the point that metaphors are perceived more of a matter of thought than of language (according to Lakoff & Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory). The second part attempts to explain the current context of tourism research from different perspectives. It then critically presents the discourse of tourism with its characteristics, techniques and persuasive mechanisms. The third part introduces the tourist brochure as a marketing communication tool, highlighting the role it has in destination positioning.

The most important component of this thesis is the one related to corpus analysis, because it provides the necessary arguments to support our objectives and work hypotheses stated in the introductory part. Although corpus-based approaches still have their pros and cons, we decided that this method would sustain our empirical analysis of the language of

tourism advertising. In short, this paper aimed to investigate tourism as specialized discourse, the functions of the cognitive metaphor in creating and promoting tourism destination images and the way tourist brochures inform, persuade, and especially manipulate their readers by the diversity of the messages they send.

Metaphor- Setting the Theoretical Framework

Metaphors are present in almost any type of discourse especially due to the fact that they “play a central role in the construction of social and political reality” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 159). Yet, their pervasiveness in discourse does not make their analysis less difficult, as it was shown by researches from different fields: education (Cameron, L. And Low, G (1999); Low et al. 2008), literature (Steen 2007; Gibbs 1994; Kövecses 2004), politics (Charteris-Black 2004; Musolff 2004), advertising (Forceville 1996; Dann 2002; Tanaka 1994). Because the central focus of this chapter is the metaphor, different theories of it have been presented, starting with Aristotle, the romantic poets, continuing with the Interaction Theory of Ivor A. Richards (1936) and Max Black (1954), the pragmatic views of Paul Grice (1975) and John Searle (1979), the Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), up to Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory (1986).

The Aristotelian view on metaphor highlights three important aspects: firstly it focuses on *single words* rather than on sentences, secondly it is perceived as a *deviance* from the literal usage and thirdly, it is based on *similarities* between two things (Johnson 1981). The Aristotelian perspective is rather restrictive because it limits the use of metaphor only to the literal excluding the cognitive aspect. He confines metaphors only to poetry not to the everyday language, perceiving them as deviant forms of discourse.

The Interaction Theory proposes for the very first time a set of two useful terms: ‘tenor’ and ‘vehicle’. They belong to Ivor Richards who in 1936 coins these two terms which actually represented the two halves of the metaphor. The former provides a description of the latter and only together can they have a metaphorical meaning. Richard’s conceptions about what was later called the Interaction Theory were developed by Max Black in his essay *Metaphor* (1954). Not only does he refine Ivor Richards’ theory but he also questions Aristotle’s view on metaphor and elaborates what he calls the ‘comparison view’ of metaphor. Black rejects the idea that metaphor is just switching one term with another, thus elaborating his own theory which he calls the ‘interaction’ view of metaphor.

The pragmatic dimension of metaphor is equally important as the cognitive semantic one, the metaphor being deeply rooted in the discourse and the context of the

utterance. From a pragmatic point of view, the nature of metaphor has been explained in different ways (Taverniers 2002): metaphor as a type of *conversational implicature* (Paul Grice 1975); metaphor as a type of *speech act* (John Searle 1979); metaphor as “loose talk” (Dan Sperber & Deirdre Wilson 1986). If perceived as a type of conversational implicature, metaphor requires more effort in understanding and interpreting utterances because it flouts at least one of the four maxims. (Grice focuses on speaker’s meaning not on sentence meaning to determine the metaphorical value of an utterance, fact that has been questioned by the cognitivists.) In Searle’s acceptance, metaphors are seen as indirect speech acts. (The problem with Searle’s theory is that the speech act approach cannot properly explain how metaphor works.); whereas Sperber & Wilson classify metaphors as “loose talk” (opposed to literal uses), meaning the everyday words and phrases can be used in order to understand more vague or imprecise expressions.

However, the theory which we bases part of our analysis on, is Lakoff & Johnson’s Conceptual Theory Metaphor (CTM). According to them, metaphors are a matter of the ordinary rather than extraordinary and above all they are a matter of thought rather than of language: “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3). Cognitive linguistics defines metaphor as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. These two domains are called SOURCE DOMAIN and TARGET DOMAIN: the former is formed of concrete notions, while the latter of more abstract ones. (ARGUMENT IS WAR; LIFE IS A JOURNEY; GOOD IS UP/BAD IS DOWN; THE MIND IS A MACHINE, etc.). Between the source and the target domain there is a set of systematic correspondences, which are referred to as mappings (Kövecses 2010). In order achieve these correspondences Lakoff and Johnson suggest that there must be a set of some conceptual relations that associate our linguistic system with our cultural and experiential knowledge.

Discourse and Tourism or the Discourse of Tourism?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context anchorage to this study. Due to the great attention that tourism has received in our contemporary society, setting the context of tourism research seems the right thing to do in order to gain a better understanding of the multiple implications of this field. Far from attempting to define what tourism is, (there is a large spectrum of definitions and none of them can cover all of its meanings), this chapter is intended to discuss important concepts in relation to the language of tourism. In this

respect, important contributions (Cohen & Cooper 1986; Dann 1996, 2002; Jaworski & Pritchard 2005; Jaworski et al.2003; Thurlow & Jaworski 2010, 2011) shed some light on the close relationship between language, communication and tourism.

According to Jaworski & Thurlow (2011), language is everywhere in tourism, being placed at the very heart of the tourist experience. We also relied on Graham Dann's claim that tourism has a language of its own and we reviewed the four major theoretical perspectives (authenticity, strangerhood, the conflict and the play perspectives), the lexical and syntactic features of the specialized discourse of tourism, the characteristics and techniques of the language of tourism and finally the social control that it exerts on the tourists.

Although it has been a subject of research for more than fifty year, only recently has it turned into a very studied and exploited field, being still in its infancy in both linguistic and tourism studies (Jaworski & Thurlow 2011). Tourism is more than a set of economic activities, it is rather a “productive system that fuses discourse, materiality and practice” (Franklin & Crang 2001:17). Often called the world's fastest growing business, it has become a “domain of considerable importance in the contemporary world, [...] attracting a growing body of research” (Cohen, 2011:13).

All these developments were possible mainly thanks to the rapid progress of globalization, which led to a more competitive and diverse market where there is a sharp line between failure and success: “every country, every city, every region must compete with every other for its share of the world's consumers” (Anholt 2007:1). Thus tourism has now a significant dimension in the global social life as well as in the economic one. In this respect, destinations must promote their unique features in order to draw tourists' attention and win them over in a field where other fierce competitors are trying to do the same.

The language of tourism covers all forms of tourist communication, being present in the pre-trip materials, during the trip as well as in the testimonials meant to provide feed-back. As tourism is a constantly expanding phenomenon, its language needs to be very carefully and productively used. The language of tourism has its own functions, properties and techniques, which combined are able to manipulate and change attitudes and behaviours.

Tourist Brochures and their Role in Tourism Advertising

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the importance of advertising and marketing campaigns in tourism. The main focus is on tourist brochures as important sources of information and powerful tools of persuasion. Brochures successfully combine text and images in their act of persuasion; therefore they are complex marketing tools. In our endeavour, we considered necessary the works of the following scholars: Hiippala T. (2007, 2013), Francesconi S. (2014), Kress G. (2010) or Kress, G. & T. van Leeuwen 2006.

Another important aspect covered in this chapter is linked to the three tour operators whose brochures were chosen in order to select the corpus of slogans which will be analyzed in Chapter 4. The selection criteria of the three tour operators (Thomas Cook, Kuoni and Thomson Holidays) were determined by their worldwide reputation and prestige, the variety of destinations offered (a variety of slogans) and the fact that they use rather similar organization and layout of their brochures, having them geographically organized. Because this thesis is more oriented towards the verbal than the pictorial messages of tourist brochures, an important part of this chapter is represented by the tourist slogans (Pike 2004, 2008, 2009; Pike & Page 2014; Keller 2003; Ju-Pak 2013; Aaker 1996; Richardson & Cohen 1993) as important tools of brand positioning as well as influencing factors in customers' decision making and behaviour.

Destination slogans are defined and analyzed from the point of view of their effectiveness in shaping the destination image and brand. By the use of appropriate linguistic and marketing techniques, destination slogans inform, describe, promote, advertise, persuade, enhance brand equity and contribute to gaining consumers' trust and loyalty. Therefore tourism slogans are promotional and brand positioning tools needed in creating destination brands, having a major role in shaping images, conveying values and beliefs as well as in attracting and persuading potential tourists.

Nowadays, more than ever, the choice of a holiday depends on the selling propositions made by the tour operators (if they are credible, unique, appealing and interesting). Tour operators do their best to brand new destinations and rebrand old ones in order to keep up with the consumers' sophisticated tastes and demands. As a result there is this urge to depict distinctive destination images, magical settings, a secluded and pristine environment; or to use Richardson and Cohen's words (1993), to come up with 'unique selling propositions'. The power of the language of tourism advertising is unimaginable: photographs, text, slogans, logos, they all tell stories about destinations that wait to be discovered.

Conceptual Metaphors in the Destination Slogans- Corpus Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the collected data in order to highlight the persuasive power of conceptual metaphors which are present in the tourism slogans in our corpus. After briefly putting into balance the pros and cons of the corpus- based approaches, this chapter is intended to follow an interpretative approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Apart from providing statistical information such as word frequencies, lexical and syntactic patterns, we also analyzed the geographical distribution of the leading destinations. We generated a bar chart and six maps (by using Excel and Geographical Informational System- GIS) as a result of the key words used in the slogans, on the top of the list being America with 44 occurrences, followed by Canada and Australia, while at the end of the list there are mainly countries from Middle East and Africa as well as South America. It is quite clear that the preferred countries are those with a coastline or seaside. This emphasizes once again the tourists' predilection for the exotic, the blissful islands and unspoilt nature. This goes hand in hand with the slogans which are abounding in descriptive words, superlatives and metaphors, all trying to depict what each corner of the world has the best to offer.

In order to enable and make more objective the lexical, morphological and syntactic analysis, we used TROPES software, which can be downloaded for free and it is quite easy to use, generating amazing results. On a morpho-syntactic level TROPES can identify the morphological category of the words in the text, recognizing the homonyms (estimated average error rate of 2%). The grammar of the software includes the following morphological classes: nouns, verbs (divided into factives, state and declarative), adjectives (divided into subjective, objective and numerals), determinants (articles, prepositions, certain pronouns) connectors (conjunctions, relative pronouns), adverbs and pronouns (personal). Moreover, the resulting data was exported in Excel in order to generate graphs, which were interpreted.

As the discourse of tourism advertising is endowed with a great persuasive force, a textual analysis would not suffice. Therefore, a critical discourse perspective was considered necessary: Charteris Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA). The CMA is an approach to metaphor analysis that is trying to reveal the intention of language users (informative, persuasive, manipulative etc.) and it is realized in three stages: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation.

From our analysis, structural metaphors seemed to be the most frequently used, as it can be seen from the examples: tourism is food/light/an animate being/a fluid/music;

change is a journey; paradise is food/a lifestyle; destinations are containers/colours/guides/entities; happiness is a natural force. They have been structures in five main categories (metaphors of the ‘tourist’ and ‘tourism’; metaphors of ‘journey’; metaphors of ‘dream’; metaphors of ‘paradise/ heaven’; metaphors of ‘happiness’; metaphors of ‘tourist destinations’) and supported by clear examples. Besides these conceptual mappings, the beauty and the specificity of the tourist destinations are enhanced by the use of a wide range of adjectives. Yet the interpretation of all these ‘signs’ transmitted by these slogans depend heavily on the readers’ personal, cultural and social values, their needs and expectations as well as their affective and cognitive thinking.

Conclusions

The results obtained support what was claimed at the beginning: the close link between linguistics, tourism and advertising. In tourism advertising and marketing where destination image and destination brands represent the key to buying a holiday package, appropriate linguistic techniques make all the difference. A destination image is not formed only through pictures, but mainly through vivid descriptions. Either by creating new images or reinforcing the already existing ones, the tourist marketers must ‘feed’ the readers’ conceptual system. The more interpretations a tourist destination generates, the more attractive it becomes.

After having analyzed the 367 destination slogans, the following main conclusions can be drawn:

- ✓ Destination slogans are based on conceptual representations with a high emotional impact- Consumers’ conceptual representations are crucial in destination choice
- ✓ Destination slogans improve people’s mental images of a country by shaping a positive image
- ✓ By using the right promotional tools, slogans can determine the choice of a destination over another
- ✓ Conceptual Metaphor Theory should be complementarily used with the Conceptual Blending Theory

Among the positive range of emotions frequently associated with holidays, the most important one is happiness. People are in a continuous quest for this mental state that is why they are so exposed to the advertisers’ message. In the tourism slogans happiness is conceptualized in a variety of ways: as vitality, natural force, light, freedom, fun, escapism,

etc. The concepts of ‘dreamland’, ‘paradise’, ‘freedom’ and ‘detachment’ are often part of stereotypical representations, but still, they seem to attract. This can only lead to the conclusion that stereotyping is an effective marketing technique, but it all depends if you are part of the society which labelled or has been labelled.

Slogans always rely on positive concepts and images; hence all the destinations are placed in a positive light. If destinations are conceptualized as entities, jewels, guides and even forces, they will make themselves remembered only for the good parts. By assigning human qualities to a destination (“The heart of India”) it makes it look more welcoming, friendlier and more open to visitors.

In chapter 4 we analyzed some of the linguistic choices present in the corpus. According to Johnstone “ways of talking produce and reproduce ways of thinking, and ways of thinking can be manipulated via choices about grammar, style, wording and every aspect of the discourse”(2007: 54). Therefore, every linguistic choice will determine a certain interpretation, thus revealing a way of thinking. Due to the advertising complexity, the same destination can be pictured in various ways. After all, the destination choice is not a sum of objective factors or a matter of free will, but a cognitive reaction to the discourse of advertising.

In spite of the fact that the Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was one of the main methods of analysis, we reached the conclusion that for better results it should be complementarily used with the Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) of Fauconnier and Turner. Both theories are similar in many perspectives, yet what conceptual blending has in its advantage is the fact that it allows projections between more mental representations (not only two like in the case of CMT). Consequently, the range of interpretations would greatly increase, no matter the domain.

This thesis was by no means indented to be an exhaustive study of the language of tourism advertizing. On the contrary, we consider that by restricting the analysis only to the presence of conceptual metaphors in destination slogans, we were able to conduct a more thorough analysis. Applying the Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the language of tourism advertising permits us to consider this approach as an original one. Although CMA has been successfully used in the discourse of economy, religion, politics or finance, in the discourse of tourism it was scarcely used (only in partially, not applied to the whole thesis). What is strange about these three vast domains of research (tourism, linguistics and advertising) is the fact that they have been widely researched separately, or grouped by two, but very rarely altogether.

The purpose of this multidisciplinary analysis was not to count or enumerate the conceptual mappings and metaphors, but to indicate that their presence is not random in the slogans: they are used with the clear purpose to create positive images, to appeal to the emotional side of the addressee, to reinforce culturally and socially embedded stereotypes but above all to influence destination choices. Nowadays, when there is so much competition, every client matters so the tour operators have to be convincing enough and have to create a trustworthy name in order to survive.

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