

## MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF ATTRACTIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE CREATION OF A DESTINATION

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***Abstract:** Branding of countries and destinations is vital in today's highly competitive tourism industry. Consequently, languages, especially languages of the media, play a significant role in the tourism business and in the branding of the destinations, where especially English as the prevailing language in the tourism industry plays an essential role in the positioning of places. Thus, it is significant what kind of registers, linguistic patterns and techniques are used in destination's slogans, brochures, travelogues, guide books, and of course in the media. By using discourse analysis and content analysis, this article analyses media representation of Slovenia and other European destinations in the Lonely Planet guidebooks. The analysis has shown that in the Lonely Planet guides examples of positive branding are prevailing.*

***Keywords:** language, tourism discourse, branding, destination*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to significance in the process of branding a destination, and because tourism meets the several conditions for the constitution of a discourse community [1] in recent years, the term tourism discourse has been successfully established in the tourism and linguistic studies [2]. The language of tourism is not only considered a specialized discourse, but also a means of branding of the destinations and consequently making profits. Also Jaworski and Thurlow [3] define tourism as a “communicative business” and “a language market”, in fact, the authors [4] believe that “language and languages sit at the very heart of the tourist experience, its representation and its realization, its enculturation and its enactment”. Therefore, it can be concluded that tourism discourse is significant not only for reflecting but also for forming reality, and further on, in this respect, significant in the tourism business. Good communication contributes many things [5], sustainable tourism among them. Tourists with quality information are able to choose rewarding experiences while displaying respectful behaviour. This, in the long term, creates mindful visitors whose impact on the environment can be better managed.

### 2. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

This paper examines tourism promotion texts because tourism promotion is an essential source of information for the potential tourists [6], and a means of influencing the potential visitors in the process of choosing their travel destination. Kannan and Tyagi [7] state that promotional texts, among others, are “aimed at promoting and selling not only tangible and physical goods but also ideas and services”. In the process of tourism promotion, languages represent significant tools: language is the carrier of communication, ideas, and connotations, and, thus, has a key role in the tourism industry and in the branding of particular tourism destinations [8]. However, despite the recognized importance of the language and languages in branding, few research studies were focused on the impact of languages on tourist destinations [9]. In the recent years, the empirical approach of most research have mainly been a content analysis of printed promotion media such as brochures, magazines, pamphlets, booklets and guidebooks, and few research have been concerned with the analysis of electronic tourism promotion, such as websites and blogs despite the popularity [10], [11]. It should be observed that both, the visual and the verbal representations are important in persuading and

attracting potential tourists [12]. Undoubtedly, the Internet has become the most important source of information, which “has dramatically influenced the distribution of tourism information” [13]. Also Francesconi [14] discusses the migration of the contemporary tourism communication to the web. Due to the key role of the Internet in the tourism discourse the website language has been chosen for the current analysis, which focuses on the online *Lonely Planet* texts on Slovenian destinations. *Lonely Planet* has been chosen due to the fact that the guidebooks under this brand are widely known, thus influential, and available also in the Internet. The English language is analysed because it prevails in the tourism industry and currently holds the status of lingua franca.

### 3. TEXT ANALYSIS

When discussing tourism discourse, Dann’s [15] four sociological models for promotional texts in tourism need to be mentioned. Dann [16] arranged them as follows:

1. The language of authentication (promotes the experience of the traveller as authentic, genuine, pure, opposing it to the banality of everyday life);
2. The language of differentiation (highlights the contrast between holiday and normal life);
3. The language of recreation (emphasises the recreational and hedonistic side of tourism);
4. The language of appropriation (tries to adopt an attitude of control and domination of what is unknown).

*Lonely Planet* employs all the models, but most often the model of authentication, which promises some genuine experience, using adjectives *largest, most popular, unequalled, amazing, traditional, beautiful, majestic, spectacular, most interesting* etc. Some examples:

- (1) The karst cave at Postojna, one of the largest in the world, is among Slovenia’s most popular attractions and its stalagmite and stalactite formations are unequalled anywhere. It's a busy destination – the amazing thing is how the large crowds at the entrance seem to get swallowed whole by the size of the cave, and the tourist activity doesn't detract from the wonder. [17]
- (2) Visit the Alpine town of Bled, sail to Bled Island in a traditional Pletna wooden boat and visit the Church of the Assumption. Explore the beautiful Vintgar Gorge, graced with pools, rapids and Šum Waterfall at the end. Once you return to Bled, take some free time or visit the town’s majestic Bled Castle. Continue the trip to visit the karst Postojna Cave, where you discover underground karst beauties: spectacular stalactites, stalagmites, limestone curtains and more by riding the train. Finish the journey in Predjama village and enter the majestic Predjama Castle carved into a 123-meter high stone wall. [18]
- (3) The newest addition to the Postojna Cave complex is this well-designed, kid-friendly space. It displays details of karst phenomena in an engaging manner, and tracks cave exploration. Most interesting is all the memorabilia and vintage posters detailing the 200-year history of tourism to Postojna Cave (eg, the cave got electric lighting in 1883, a decade before Ljubljana). [19]

The analysis shows that linguistic patterns and the choice of lexical items in *Lonely Planet* descriptions of European destinations support Dann’s [20] argument that the language of tourism discourse uses “positive and glowing terms” to describe “the services and attractions it seeks to promote” [21]. Mainly, the *Lonely Planet* texts, which are, descriptive and directive, are dense, focused on specific tourism registers, full of modified nouns, adjectives, superlatives and expressions of extreme, supported by adverbial, participial, and verbal imagery. Some further examples:

- (4) Picturesque Piran (Pirano in Italian), sitting pretty at the tip of a narrow peninsula, is everyone’s favourite town on the Slovenian coast. Its Old Town – one of the best-preserved historical towns anywhere on the Adriatic – is a gem of Venetian Gothic architecture, but it can be a mob scene at the height of summer. In quieter times, it’s hard not to fall instantly in love with the atmospheric winding alleyways, the sunsets and the seafood restaurants. [22]
- (5) Rising gently above a wide valley, Ptuj (p-too-ee) forms a symphony of red-tile roofs best viewed from across the Drava River. One of the oldest towns in Slovenia, Ptuj equals Ljubljana in terms of historical importance, but the compact medieval core, with its castle, museums, monasteries and churches, can easily be seen in a day. But there are so many interesting side trips and activities in the area that you may want to base yourself here for a while longer. [23]

The lexical items in the above descriptions have the objective to be appealing to the potential tourists, and are thus chosen very carefully. Often the authors of the *Lonely Planet* texts try to establish the so-called magical framework of

the destination by employing the “magic technique” and by using the words *majestic*, *magnificent* – words associated with fantasy worlds and fairy tales indicating that, at the described destination, fairy tales can come true.

The majority of Dann’s [24] tourism categories, which he names as three Rs (Romanticism, Regression, Rebirth), three Hs (Happiness, Hedonism, Helio-centrism), three Fs (Fun, Fantasy, Fairy Tales), and three Ss (Sea, Sex, Socialization) are used in the analysed *Lonely Planet* descriptions. To create an attractive invitation to a destination the *Lonely Planet* authors employ a combination of the aforementioned techniques and categories. Using various combinations of techniques conveys multiple messages which target many potential tourists, their needs and interests. According to the *Lonely Planet* descriptions it could be concluded that European destinations are all desirable destinations trying to address many types of interests and many types of tourists.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that the *Lonely Planet* texts have a direct impact on the promotion of described destinations, and provides us with classic examples of promotion tourism discourse and promotion tourism language, and, therefore, represents good foundations for further studies about the features of language used for tourism promotional purposes, also in the field of English for Tourism. It is a fact that English still holds a status of lingua franca, and has the monopoly in the world’s tourism business. Tourism texts have their own characteristics, i. e. they are very dynamic, evolving, and constantly subject to changes. In the recent decade, for example, the migration to the web of tourism communication has been upgraded with the app communication, which means that professionals working in tourism branding, tourism research and tourism education need to keep track of the novelties and include them in their creative, research and education processes. Undoubtedly, efficient promotion can occur only through the efficient use of tourism discourse which addresses the needs of potential tourists who become actual tourists if they are persuaded by the right combinations of linguistic choices. It is, therefore, significant that the experts in the field of tourism are capable of using language as a crucial tool in the tourism industry.

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