Chapter 9
Stereotyping in Tourism Discourse: Intercultural Communication and Nation Branding

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the chapter is to present stereotyping as an important discourse strategy and culture-specific linguistic phenomena in tourism advertising discourse. Stereotyping in tourism advertising occurs when the authors of advertisements generalise underlining only those qualities that make a competitive advantage of the advertised product. Stereotypes therefore play the key role in constituting the identity of tourism product. Besides the tourism product, also the addressee is stereotyped, since the persuasion strategy of the tourism advertising should be adapted to a generalised representation of the specific target audience. In the chapter the stereotyping in the tourism advertising discourse is observed regarding the choice of arguments and modification of their intensity. Further, the intercultural comparison is made between the arguments and their modification in Slovenian and Italian tourism advertising texts. In the final part of the chapter the metaphorization is shown as a discourse strategy complementary to stereotyping.

TOURISM AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PHENOMENON

According to several indicators as well as the beliefs of many experts (Beaver, 2005; Jafari, 2013), tourism is the single largest industry in the world. It cannot however be observed only as an industry in the narrow sense of the term, but rather as a multidimensional phenomenon which is shaped by and affects almost every social field. It involves social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental aspects.

Tourism is present in virtually all aspects of society – as a mass phenomenon it relies on numerous economic and also non-economic activities. Tourism has non-economic origins (motives and needs originating from the characteristics of the modern society such as the need for change of environment...
and life-style, the need for relaxation and recreation as well as health, natural and cultural goods) and exerts decisive influences even outside the field of economy (e.g., cultural, health, technical, social, and political function). The fulfilment of these modern human being’s specific needs is enabled and exploited by economic activities, which we can understand as tourism activity in the narrower sense of the word. Tourism is now conceptualised as a multidimensional activity and therefore its study should be distinctly interdisciplinary. Tourism can and should be studied from the viewpoints of the following disciplines: economy and marketing, psychology, anthropology, sociology, discourse analysis, communicology, sociolinguistics, linguistics, political sciences, geography, environmental studies, architecture, agronomy, urban and regional planning, history, law, sports, business, transport, education etc. (Goeldner & Brent Richie, 2003, pp. 23-25).

In the beginning the tourism research was limited mostly to the field of economy while in the field of social sciences and humanities tourism was usually treated in detail mainly from various geographic viewpoints. Yet, over the last decades the wide range of critical works on tourism have been published also from historical, sociological, sociocultural, anthropological perspectives (e.g., Urry, 1990; Leed, 1991; Horvat, 1999; Cohen, 2004). Also studies of tourism texts as specific linguistic phenomena have recently been undertaken (e.g., Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005; Cappelli, 2006; Antelmi, Held, & Santulli, 2009; Hallett & Kaplan, 2010; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010; Maci, 2013; Francesconi, 2014). Certainly, the linguistic aspects of the tourism studies involve also the linguistic impact on the construction of identity based on the natural and cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure. It is vital to take into account the close link between tourism and culture in terms of delicate relations between tourism marketing of national identity, personal identity and increasingly globalized world community.

AIMS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The aim of our research is to present stereotyping as a culture-specific linguistic phenomenon in tourism advertising discourse evident especially at the level of lexis, verbalisation of the illocutionary force and conversational style. The achievements presented in the chapter are based on three research projects related to the Slovenian tourism and Slovenian nation branding: TURK, TURS, and TI SI in which the sociolinguistic aspects of tourism as a field of intercultural communication have been observed.

The TURK project, i.e., Multilingual Corpus of Tourism Texts: Information Source and Research Basis for Slovenian Natural and Cultural Heritage was a basic research project between 2005-2008. The project indicates close connection between the tourism discourse and the appraisal of Slovenian natural and cultural heritage. Within the project a specialized corpus of tourism texts (TURK) was created in order to determine the relevant areas for Slovenian tourism. It was designed on the basis of statistically relevant criteria and with a set of other helpful language tools. At present, TURK contains almost forty million words in Slovenian with some in Italian and English; the major part are translations from Slovenian. A key criterion in the text selection was the presence of the text in Slovenian and its relation to Slovenian tourism. TURK is thus a collection of texts of different genres, e.g., advertisments, websites, legal texts, scientific texts, from all of the key institutions involved in tourism in Slovenia and abroad since Slovenia gained independence in 1991 (for more information, see http://turk.upr.si).

The TURS project, i.e., Dictionary of Tourism Terminology was an applied research project from 2008 till 2011. Its aim was to gather, on the basis of the multilingual tourism corpus, the tourism terminology and to arrange it in a more user firendly dictionary format. It was based on the connection between