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*Ways of Seeing, Ways of Being: Representing the Voices
of Tourism***

Bern: Peter Lang, 2017

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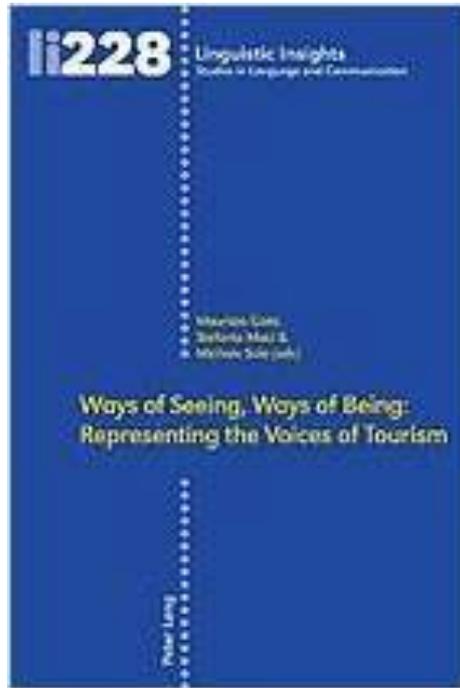
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1 Aside from certain notable exceptions (Cohen & Cooper 1986; Dann 1996), tourism remained relatively unexplored in the field of linguistics for a long time. However, since the turn of the millennium, interest in tourism from a linguistic perspective has grown exponentially (see Thurlow & Jaworski 2010, Heller *et al.* 2014 and Held 2018, for example). Many authors have shown tourism to be a key site for studying the relationships between language, culture and society. For instance, it has been shown how language plays a key role in the elaboration of the tourist experience which can in turn have important sociocultural repercussions (Thurlow & Jaworski 2010). Dann (1996) even posits the existence of a specific “language of tourism.” These examples are but a small selection of the increasing and diversifying research centring on language and tourism.



- 2 Maurizio Gotti, Stefania Maci and Michele Sala’s 2017 edited volume *Ways of Seeing, Ways of Being: Representing the Voices of Tourism* continues in this vein, bringing a sizeable and timely contribution to the field. According to the editors, the book aims to “give voice to the various and different perspectives in the investigation of tourism in its written, spoken, and visual aspects” (p. 11) with a special focus on the different interactions between tourism promoters and (prospective) tourists. Constituting the latest instalment in Peter Lang’s popular and influential “Linguistic Insights” series, the book is made up of nineteen chapters from twenty-two contributing authors spread across four thematic sections.
- 3 The main contributions are preceded by Maci and Sala’s editors’ introduction, in which they offer a brief “what’s what” of current research into tourism before presenting each chapter. Although the research review offered by Maci and Sala is short, it is up to date and comprehensive, capturing the complex nature of tourism and covering both classic and recent studies in linguistics and beyond.
- 4 The first section of the book is entitled “Multimodal representations of the tourist experience” and consists of four contributions. The first chapter, written by **Maria Vittoria Calvi**, focuses on what she names “new travel guides,” online travel guides in which tourists can actively participate. In what will become a key underlying theme of the book, Calvi underlines how developments linked to the Internet have led to tourists becoming more than simple consumers of tourism texts in that web-based travel guides allow tourists to contribute, thus becoming producers of texts for others. Calvi conducts a critical genre analysis on a selection of Spanish new travel guides, showing how the use of personal narratives leads to them having a “thicker” perspective (p. 43) when compared with the “impersonal, directive discourse” (p. 43) of traditional tourist guides. She exposes how tourist writers push and cross genre boundaries in an effort to shape their identities as travellers.

- 5 The second contribution is that of **Sabrina Francesconi**. She explores how destination image is formed through multimodal processes in video travel diaries relating to the Italian region of Basilicata. Whilst the conclusions of this contribution are highly interesting – the identification of an interdiscursivity between promotional and narrative discourses, facilitated by the innovative nature of the genre – it is perhaps the excellent introduction to the methodology of video analysis that may be of most interest to researchers in the field. It constitutes an accessible introduction to a set of pertinent techniques that are potentially unfamiliar to many.
- 6 Following this, **Lucia Abbamonte** and **Flavia Cavaliere** examine how the Italian island of Capri is framed for tourists through its official website. The authors opt for an original and interdisciplinary analytical framework in order to explore the visual and verbal strategies employed. Following an analysis rich in examples, they conclude that the verbal level is often “backgrounded” (p. 97) in the multimodal texture of the website, whereas the visual level proves itself to be more engaging.
- 7 In the final chapter of the first section, **Maria Cristina Aiezza** offers a contrastive analysis of the rhetorical and linguistic choices present on tourist offer coupons. This highly original research object is justified by the claim that, in the current digital climate, such coupons are becoming more and more central in the tourist experience. Through an engaging presentation of examples using annotated screen grabs, Aiezza discusses the structures and content of tourist offer coupons and shows how they often contain elements of the “language of tourism” (Dann 1996). She concludes that these coupons build on other promotional tourist texts, thus contributing to the tourist experience.
- 8 All four contributions in the first section underline how the web is transforming the way we “do” tourism, and especially the fact that tourists are gradually shifting from being passive consumers to active producers of tourist texts and experiences. Similar questions are at the heart of section two, entitled “Digital Communication in Tourism”, which is the largest section of the book, comprised of six contributions, reflecting the current principal focus on digital communication in studies investigating language and tourism.
- 9 **Stefania Maci**’s contribution begins the section with a look at how tourism industry operators and tourism consumers interact on social networks. Maci offers clear, well-presented examples from two famous airline companies, through which she shows how web users shift from being consumers to producers of content by reacting to publications by tourist industry operators. Aside from this main conclusion, she also focuses on “liking” photos as a social practice and highlights memes as a unique language phenomenon which is often exploited for marketing purposes.
- 10 **Girolamo Tessuto** keeps to the web-based theme by investigating rhetorical move structure and communicative purpose in online tourism press releases. Through a quantitative corpus linguistic approach, the author shows how these press releases display an increasingly conventionalised structure, closely resembling that of journalistic text, save for the inclusion of certain promotional elements.
- 11 **Maria Cristina Paganoni**’s contribution centres on luxury travel blogs, aiming to uncover the “linguistic cues and discursive turns” (p. 181) used to construct codes of luxury. She highlights the use of very similar linguistic techniques across many texts, including a number of well-known tourism discourse features such as euphoria, stereotypes or mythologies. Paganoni makes an especially interesting observation in explaining how authenticity – a key element of most tourist texts – is “now mostly

deflected upon bloggers, their identity performances, their experience of place and their relationship with like-minded publics” (p. 188) rather than being sought after in the framing of places or experiences.

- 12 The next chapter, authored by **Chalita Yaemwannang** and **Issra Pramoolsook**, deals with a recent and growing phenomenon: companies responding to customer complaints on social networks. Focusing in this case on hotels, the authors highlight how these complaints, as a form of electronic word of mouth, can have a considerable influence on a future tourist’s trip. Responding to such criticism is thus a delicate task and Yaemwannang and Pramoolsook build on previous work by Zhang and Vásquez (2014) to identify the communicative moves made by hotels when doing so.
- 13 **Kim Grego**’s contribution deals with an original object, namely the representations of senior citizens in tourism discourse. Bringing together elements from linguistics and marketing studies, the author analyses an EU call for projects aimed at developing tourism for senior citizens as well as certain projects submitted in response to that call. She shows how age is never directly referred to but presented through negative and positive identity themes which are manipulated by the different project actors for their own ends. Grego provides a welcome critical approach by showing how senior citizens themselves are often excluded from the discourse that is supposed to target them.
- 14 In the final part of this section, **Alessandra Vicentini** focuses on child-free tourism and its discourse as examples of the increasing diversification of the tourist market. She compares the discursive presentation of child-free holidays on tour operators’ websites and in British newspaper articles. Whereas tourism companies tend to focus on justifying child-free tourism in an effort to inform and persuade potential clients, newspapers tend to discuss the ethical and moral implications of such tourism. Vicentini also notes how child-free tourist discourse often co-exists with linguistic elements pertaining to luxury, exclusivity and peacefulness, highlighting the fact that a certain target market is being addressed: “affluent, childless senior or young couples, who may be expected to be large spenders on goods and services” (p. 242).
- 15 The third section of the book is entitled “Cultural aspects related to the language of tourism.” Though the title may be considered slightly vague, it accounts for the diversity of research objects and approaches on offer in the five contributions.
- 16 **Luisanna Fodde** opens the section with an exploration of the “accessibility” of tourism texts. Fodde highlights how authenticity is key to constructing the tourist experience. Through examples taken from tourist guidebooks focussing on Sardinian tourist attractions, she highlights how narratives play a key role in making the discourse of authenticity accessible to tourists. However, the data sources go unrepresented, sometimes making it difficult to grasp the main focus of the research.
- 17 The following chapter, written by **Paola Catenaccio**, constitutes one of the highlights of the volume. Dealing with the original theme of “dark tourism,” Catenaccio explores the discursive framing of Ground Zero as a tourist attraction by analysing the website of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. The author shows how memorialisation is achieved through emotional arousal, provoked by certain discursive strategies. She highlights how certain features of tourism language are kept on the periphery, suggesting that “such touristification is not free of contestation and unease” (p. 288). Catenaccio also proposes a highly interesting conclusion in which she discusses the ideological implications of the discursive framing of Ground Zero, suggesting that the fact that the visitor is framed as

an emotional, rather than political, being leaves the way clear for forced alignment to the dominant ideology of the museum and hinders political understanding of 9/11. This is an excellent contribution, underlining how discourse is central in framing the tourist experience whilst also dealing with a socially relevant destination.

- 18 **Giuliana Diani**'s chapter adds to the focus on travel blogs as key for the marketing and consumption of tourism issue tackled elsewhere in the book. She proposes an analysis of how American travel bloggers represent the cultural heritage of Florence. Adopting a mixed corpus linguistic and discourse analysis approach, Diani uncovers a high percentage of lexis related to cultural heritage in the blogs, as well as a large number of positive evaluating adjectives. She suggests that bloggers use informative and historical details to add credibility to their writing whilst subjective narration allows them to seem personally and emotively involved in the experience. This contribution is heavy in examples, so much so that certain examples are given with no (or next to no) analysis, and the conclusions are, by the author's own admission, "predictable" (p. 299).
- 19 **Daniela Cesiri** and **Francesca Coccetta** continue the Italian theme with a comparison of how tourist promotion of Venice varies according to target market. The authors compare two websites – the official Venice tourism website aimed at a broad population of tourists and a website aimed specifically at museum goers – in order to establish the techniques used by the sites to attract visitors. Each author takes a radically different approach, giving rise to a contribution that draws from corpus linguistics, visual analysis, and genre analysis. While the ambition is laudable, the contribution often reads like two separate chapters, rendering the reading experience rather confusing. Nevertheless, the authors conclude that both websites display a certain mismatch between text and visuals, creating confusion in terms of their intended aims, functions and targets.
- 20 **Judith Turnbull** provides the final contribution to this third section with an interesting look at how tourism texts contribute to the "destination image" of Rome. Combining linguistic analysis with elements taken from tourist studies and analysing a selection of Internet texts dedicated to Rome, Turnbull shows how affect is used less than cognitive appreciation, suggesting that the focus of tourism texts remains on places rather than emotions. While suggesting that the tourist texts studied are predictable, she nonetheless identifies features used to give the destination image a distinctive character, such as marked lexis, personal appraisals, and humour.
- 21 The final section of the volume is dedicated to a theme which also appears in the earlier sections: the language of tourism in social media. **Donatella Malavasi**'s contribution explores the language of sustainable tourism. The introduction is particularly interesting as the author links the development of sustainable tourism to the general recent increase in awareness of social and ecological responsibility. Malavasi analyses the key discursive strategies from the promotional websites of prominent sustainable tourist destinations. In doing so, she puts forward an unusual and innovative focus on function words, showing how these words are used in discursive patterns that contribute to the persuasiveness of the text. The analysis provides a novel and valuable insight into the language of tourism that goes beyond lexis.
- 22 **Erik Costello**'s contribution presents a comparative study of different promotional texts representing the Italian city of Padua. Focusing on adjective use, Costello compares four corpora of promotional texts written by both native and non-native English speaking professional writers, as well as native and non-native university students. Costello highlights some differences in adjective use between the groups. English learners use the

highest number of adjectives whilst texts written by native-speaker professionals have the highest ratio of adjectives when compared with other word types. Non-native speakers are shown to be more creative in coining otherwise unattested adjectives while native-speaker professionals were shown to use “a larger number of refined, sophisticated as well as idiosyncratic adjectives” (p. 390), though the criteria by which “refined” and “sophisticated” are defined by the author may be discussed. Costello also offers an analysis of the different types of adjective used by each group and a look at the different patterns of pre-modification. In discussing the implications for teaching future tourist professionals, Costello highlights how such research could help students avoid potential pitfalls and become sensitive to key discursive strategies.

- 23 The following chapter, written by **Miguel Fuster-Marquez**, offers an analysis of the discourse of US hotel websites. In analysing how these sites try to “convert lookers into bookers” (p. 401), Fuster-Marquez focuses on their use of lexical bundles and their variations. The author shows how certain lemmas can “interrupt” lexical bundles in order to add information without changing the discursive meaning. Lexical bundles, and certain variations thereof, are shown to be central units for hotel writers. While the substantial explanation of the theoretical bases of lexical bundles will be welcomed by non-specialists, it eats into precious space that could have been used for further analysis.
- 24 The final contribution is **Jorge Soto Almela**’s study on the notion of “experience” in tourism promotional campaigns. Using the approach of semantic prosody – meaning extended over more than one word or linguistic item – the author explores how sensory words are key to the discursive elaboration of the tourist experience. He shows how strong positive semantic prosody surrounds the notion of experience in tourist texts whilst also observing that “unique” is the lemma that most commonly occurs with “experience,” highlighting the importance of framing the tourist experience as special and singular. Almela thus proposes an interesting new take on some of the classic themes of research into language and tourism.
- 25 Gotti, Maci and Sala’s volume provides researchers interested in language and tourism with a collection of high-quality studies that take on a wide range of research objects through the lenses of a number of different approaches and fields. Corpus linguists and discourse analysts will find particular interest in the volume, given the prominence of those particular approaches. The recurrent character of such methodologies gives the volume a certain coherence which is sometimes difficult to find in such edited works, and the understandable, and pertinent, focus shared by many chapters on web-based material contributes to this consistency.
- 26 Despite these positive aspects, certain criticisms could also be made. Aside from certain counter examples, the book is fairly Euro-centric, focussing on only a handful of European countries. Whilst this is not necessarily a problem, and may indeed be useful for those working in places that are heavily represented in the contributions – e.g. Italy – perspectives obtained from elsewhere may have added depth.
- 27 Although Maci and Sala’s introduction alludes heavily to the sociocultural repercussions of tourism and the resulting critical stance of much sociolinguistic research into tourism, very few of the contributions adopt such a stance. Whilst potentially beneficial for some, tourism can also be seen as a destructive phenomenon both ecologically and socioculturally. For example, Thurlow & Jaworski (2010) show how tourism positions tourists as a *de facto* privileged class bestowed with symbolic capital, contributing to social inequality by segregating and stratifying tourists and locals. Elsewhere, Kelly-

- Holmes & Pietikäinen (2014) explore how local languages and identities can become “commodified” in tourism, leading to social tensions between hosts, tourists and other stakeholders in the tourism industry.
- 28 The discourse of tourism plays a key role in creating and maintaining such negative dynamics and linguistic research has an important part to play in exposing and deconstructing these processes. The fact that very few authors tackle such problems here feels like a missed opportunity.
- 29 Finally, although subtitled “Representing the Voices of Tourism” and aiming to “give voice to the various and different perspectives in the investigation of tourism in its written, spoken, and visual aspects” (p.11), there is little to no analysis of spoken language anywhere in the book. This has been characteristic of linguistic research focused on tourism across the years, with most studies concentrating on textual or visual sources, as is the case here. This is a shame as it creates a heavy focus on the “before” and “after” of the tourist experience. Comparatively speaking, little is known about what happens linguistically “during” the tourist experience. Studies focusing on the way in which tourists use language and discourse *in situ* – both with locals and with other tourists – could have shed light on this key aspect of tourism.
- 30 However, these criticisms should not take away from the fact that *Ways of Seeing, Ways of Being: Representing the Voices of Tourism* is a rich, thought-provoking and expansive contribution to the linguistic study of tourism. The inclusion of such a volume in the Linguistic Insights series points to the promising growth of work in tourism in linguistics and this book will no doubt be of interest to scholars studying tourism both within ESP and beyond.
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