

Savytska L. V.

Associate Professor, PhD in Philology

Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics

LANGUAGE OF TOURISM AS AN OBJECT OF TRANSLATION

The language of tourism has recently become a productive area of research, stimulating scientists to work in various fields such as cultural studies, discourse analysis and specialized discourse. Although several linguistic approaches are currently focused on analyzing specific types of texts that can be adopted in the tourist field into objects of special attention, studies on tourism in terms of translation are still relatively recent developments. One of the reasons is undoubtedly the difficulties faced by scholars trying to determine the nature and degree of specialization of the language of tourism.

The phenomenon of tourism is taking shape in a clearly defined but large and diverse community, which includes both professionals of the tourism industry and ordinary tourists. According to Agorni M. [1], the heterogeneous nature of this community generates the complex of discursive practices that characterize this area, best illustrated by such hybrid genres as, for example, a guide, a brochure, a booklet.

Tourism language is characterized by a kind of diversity, expressed at all linguistic levels, which is associated with a clear lack of uniformity in an expanded subject area, such as tourism, borders on other disciplines, such as geography, history, economics, marketing, etc. According to Agorni M. [1], it is extremely difficult to define the principle by which the language of tourism can be viewed as subject-oriented discourse. A micro-linguistic definition narrowly based on a lexical and / or terminological approach which cannot be productive in the case of this type of language. On the other hand, it was clearly demonstrated that the perspective

focused on the textual and pragmatic aspects of the language is particularly fruitful. The specificity of this language, therefore, is at the communicative level: it can be recognized in discursive and textual strategies developed for successful interaction in any kind of tourist activity.

However, if tourism and this phenomenon are relatively easy to identify, then the same cannot be said about its main subjects – tourists. Paradoxically, consensus can easily be reached regarding the existence of a particular tourist community, and the identity of its components is a matter of dispute. Tourists actually identify themselves from the point of view of practice, regardless of whether they are involved in any stage of the journey or in any professional activity associated with it.

Nevertheless, the “epistemic competence” of tourists, according to Ph. Riley [7, p. 47] is extremely difficult to determine, since the knowledge and experience necessary to identify a “tourist” can be practically found in any person. This aspect, however, becomes extremely important in all those cases of communication that go beyond the boundaries of language and culture.

As already mentioned, the main problem lies in determining the identity of the addressee of this message, who is the recipient of tourist texts. The concept of identity, which we refer to, should be understood as exclusively social and situational: it usually consists of a limited number of substantive positions available in specific communicative situations. Speakers demonstrate their individuality by choosing distinctive strategies, the adequate effectiveness of which depends on the degree of their familiarity (or knowledge) with these situations. For example, tourist texts producers involved in the implementation of brochures, such as the Brescia Castle, should be familiar with such subjects as history and architecture, as well as being well versed in advertising writing techniques. However, in the case of translation, the main question does not concern the ability of translators to demonstrate their knowledge in specific subjects, how their ability to mediate this knowledge, in order to make them actually accessible to readers, who supposedly differ from the original work.

The concept of “mediation” was originally applied to translation by B. Hatim and I. Mason [3], who described it as “the extent to which translators intervene in the transfer process, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of a text” [3, p. 147]. This means that translators adapt texts to new communicative situations through a choice or a decision-making process that involves all linguistic and textual levels.

The degree of mediation can vary from minimum to maximum. According to L. Venuti’s distinction [8] between two main approaches to translation, respectively, the presented methods of “domestication” (when translators often end up reducing or even removing certain markers of cultural difference) and “foreignness” (opposite pole) of the continuum, so how the difference in this case is highlighted) is well-known. However, in the case of translation of tourist texts between the two poles there is a characteristic tension. On the one hand, a strong emphasis on the features those characterize the Source culture, the risks interfering with communication, because tourists may not be able to decode information about objects which they are not familiar with.

On the other hand, the effect of “domestication” of foreign to the extreme lies in the loss of the benefits of novelty and change compared with everyday life, which lies at the heart of the recreational attraction of tourism. Therefore, translators must strike a balance between the necessity to provide information in an accessible and at the same time attractive way. This means that different approaches to translation must be adopted, so cultural differences can be strategically enhanced or reduced in accordance with specific situations.

The language of tourism itself is a form of "cultural mediation", as it "translates" cultural values, promoting the identity of specific geographic areas and their communities. Translation of tourist texts is an extremely interesting case of intercultural communication, since it is not only based on the intersection of languages and cultures that underlies any communication in the border or contact zone [6], but also deals with the transfer of cultural markers that represent places

destination in their specific historical, geographical, social and cultural aspects. The latter was identified by culture experts as culturally specific subjects [2] and, of course, it is one of the most difficult tasks for the translator. Intervention of translators should be carried out both at the textual and at the intercultural level. Taking into account, for example, the case of brochure translation and the assumption, foreign tourists should be provided with a higher degree of information than local one. Translators must choose between text methods such as polish, adding explanations in the text or providing detailed information in footnotes. The choice and combination of these strategies is regulated or should be governed by a comprehensive assessment of the profiles of foreign tourists.

D. Kelly [4] considers in detail the transfer problem of so-called cultural-specific elements. She notes that translators should, on the one hand, help readers to contextualize hidden information by adding glossaries and explanations, especially in the case of items that are particularly important for the promotion of tourists, such as geography or history. On the other hand, however, translators must check the limits of their explanatory actions, taking into account the risk of providing too much information that is too complicated for the reader to process. As Kelly says, foreign tourists need to “information to be dosed in some way to prevent an overload which could lead to a breakdown in communication” [4, p. 35]. Therefore, in some cases, the most appropriate answer may be condensation strategies or even skipping.

The approach to the translation process, marked by a high degree of intervention of translators, almost bordering on rewriting, characterizes the translation of tourist text types. D. Kelly reveals a fine line that distinguishes translation from rewriting, and which underlies all work in this area. The tourism industry is in great demand for this type of product, and this is one of the reasons for introducing courses on the translation of tourist text types in Schools of Languages and Translation.

Tourist texts seem to be particularly suitable for the didactics of languages, specialized discourse and especially translation for a number of reasons that have

already been pointed out by such scholars as D. Kelly [4], and can be summarized into the following elements:

1) the professional relevance of these texts. The market needs more professional participation to solve the problem of poor quality of work in this area;

2) tourist texts represent diversity in terms of subject areas and used stylistic and discursive methods. Another characteristic of these texts is that they can be evaluated by complexity (in terms of language complexity, as well as by degree of specialization) and, therefore, valuable to the learning process;

3) students, as a rule, are well acquainted with texts of this type, since the overwhelming majority of them are consumers of similar works in a foreign or native language. This facilitates the management of all these competencies related to discursive and textual conventions.

Representation of cultural elements is a problem both in translation and in the production of texts in an internal language, regardless of the language used. As mentioned earlier, the central issue is the fuzzy identity of tourists, whether from one country or foreigners.

G. Poncini [5] argues that the concept of common knowledge and points of contact, used to describe all those assumptions shared by participants of intercultural communication, like knowledge, goals and values, play a fundamental role in tourist communication [5, p. 139]. Her analysis of many multilingual brochures to mountain regions shows that the authors of these texts decided to adopt a number of strategies, ranging from “presentation in textbooks” of local specialties or places of interest, with a small evaluative language and without reader engagement strategies, to a positive assessment and a clear connection of the readers with the described elements [5, p. 147].

With regard to translation, translators must not only take into account the amount of basic knowledge that their intended readership already possesses, but also need to be aware of how their own solutions at the linguistic and explanatory level will make it possible to get a more or less noticeable degree of attracting readers, and

therefore affect on the promotion of tourist resorts and attractions. In other words, the choice of translators may increase “not only readers’ awareness but also their appreciation of these features and their value” [5, p. 141].

As a result, translators should not only choose the most appropriate solutions, taking into account both denotative and connotative meanings, but they should also decide what aspects should be given special attention.

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