

Book Review

Reading Tourism Texts: A Multimodal Analysis, 184 pages.
Sabrina Francesconi. 2014. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
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The past decade or two has seen a growing interest in the study of tourism discourse across the humanities and social sciences. While the social sciences have focused on various communication aspects of host-guest and tourism professional-tourist relations and discourses of travelogues, guidebooks, brochures, websites, maps, photographs and postcards, linguistic research has often taken a more narrow view of tourist communication and focused mainly on the verbal meaning-making resource of promotional texts. However, with the spread of multimodal discourse studies, linguistic analysis began embracing the study of other modalities beside the verbal, and other genres beside tourist promotional literature (see among others Hofinger & Ventola 2004, Maci 2007, Calvi 2010, Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, Belcher 2013, Hiippala 2013). It is in this context that Sabrina Francesconi's book, *Reading Tourism Texts: A Multimodal Analysis*, should be considered. Its aim, as the author explains, is not only "to examine linguistic, textual and discursive dynamics enacted by tourism and travel texts" (p. 3), but also to share a methodological approach to the analysis of tourism texts that would acknowledge their dynamic generic nature on the one hand and multimodality as "a pivotal source of expression and semiosis" (p. 6) on the other.

The book opens with an introduction dedicated to tourism and travel in general and tourism/travel texts in specific. The concepts of tourists and travellers are discussed and clarified and the linguistic, textual and discursive characteristics of tourism texts are described, stressing the importance of their fluid nature, generic diversity and multimodal character of expression.

In the first two chapters, Francesconi outlines her theoretical frameworks. In Chapter 1 she explores the complexities of the notion of genre and then provides examples of the processes of generic innovation and integrity in tourism texts through her analysis of Wikitravel. In Chapter 2, using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as her theoretical and methodological framework, Francesconi describes the basic premises of SFL and argues for its relevance for the analysis of tourism texts. Her detailed analysis of a tourist brochure and online communication in travelogues reveal their ideational, interpersonal and textual characteristics.

The initial chapters create a background that effectively sets the stage for the book's next three chapters, which aim to expand linguistic analysis of tourism discourse by including other modalities of expression, – i.e., the visual and aural – in the analysis as well as tourism genres that are less often addressed by linguistic research. Chapters 3 and 4, therefore, focus entirely on the visual and acoustic modalities in tourism genres. Combining Kress and van Leeuwen's methodological framework for visual analysis with Dann's, Francesconi illustrates the utility of this combined social semiotic approach for the analysis of photographs and maps employed in tourism discourse. In Chapter 4, after outlining van Leeuwen's parameters for the assessment of soundscapes,

Francesconi demonstrates its relevance through the analysis of a radio travel programme and a radio commercial for a tourist destination.

Chapter 5 examines the potentials of multimodal and intermodal semiotic approaches for the analysis of the meaning-making processes of static, dynamic and hypertextual tourism genres. The interaction between the verbal, visual and acoustic semiotic resources reveals the meaning-making potential of logos, postcards, videos and websites. These semiotic artefacts cannot be addressed purely by means of linguistic analysis: the analysis of the various modes need to be blended as their meaning resides in the totality of their occurrence.

Finally, Francesconi's afterword provides an overview of the methods of analysis used in multimodal studies. She also shares valuable information about the most recent multimodality projects and resources. Together with the accompanying glossary and the carefully compiled genre-based bibliography of publications on the language of tourism featuring studies of blogs, brochures, CDs, guides, magazines, performance, pictures, postcards, souvenirs, television programmes and websites, Francesconi as much as invites her readers to continue her explorations in the field of multimodal research of tourism discourse.

The relevance of the multi-sensory to tourism experiences has long been understood, however, researching this has often proven to be challenging. Francesconi recognised the potential of multimodal discourse analysis for dealing with it. With a strong theoretical background in both linguistics and tourism studies, Francesconi successfully integrates "applied linguistics [...] into the multidisciplinary network of tourism studies" (p.7). Her analytical approach and meticulous studies of various tourism genres illustrate that SFL and multimodal discourse analysis provide the methods tourism studies need to account systematically for the multi-sensory dimensions of tourism experiences and the complex semiotic artefacts used in tourist communication.

Francesconi's outstanding book and her research during the past ten years support the shift from a purely textual approach to tourism discourse analysis toward the semiotic, offering the multidisciplinary field of tourism studies an applied linguistic approach to tourism discourse and providing valuable insights to applied linguists on relevant issues in tourism studies. As such, Francesconi's *Reading Tourism Texts: A Multimodal Analysis* will surely find its readership among researchers of tourism discourse. Her clear style of expression makes the book accessible to readers who may be less familiar with theories, so will also provide a useful reference to postgraduate students of applied linguistics and tourism studies.

Finally, Francesconi's book will be valuable to teachers of English for tourism purposes, delivering some of the tools they need for the analysis of complex tourism genres and encouraging them to include these genres and with them the multi-sensory world of tourism experiences in their teaching materials. Francesconi's book, therefore, expands the scope of English for Specific Purposes from the lexico-grammatical toward the multimodal.

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