

MULTILINGUALISM IN TOURISM

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Abstract

In tourism, communication and transparency are crucial to gain customer trust and expand business. All professional tour operators need qualified translators, who are essential in the tourism and hospitality sector. Hotel and restaurant owners, travel agents, tour operators and tourist guides, all require content in multiple languages to service their client's needs. The language is indeed an issue in hotel reviews, but to varying degrees according to the language group of tourists.

By eliminating language barriers and cultural misunderstandings, the companies can also reach their target customers with effective marketing in their native language. In tourism, however, better language skills mean better quality of service. There is therefore no doubt that the employees in tourism must be multilingual. Therefore, the acquisition of languages, especially among the tour guides, is widely seen as useful and is believed to give students better access to their work. One of the most important foreign languages for the communication in tourism is German, followed by Italian, although English has become the lingua franca of international exchanges. The aim of this paper is to present which foreign languages tourism workers, including primarily tour guides, should be able to communicate with their guests, how we can become multilingual in tourism and how multilingualism is promoted in tourism.

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Introduction

In the neo-liberal world economic order, languages have become goods. From parents who raise their children to multiple languages, to educators

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and political decision-makers who argue for early learning or a higher number of languages taught in schools. According to Žerajić (2019a), "the acquisition of languages, and especially English, is widely seen as useful and one assumes that they give school leavers better access to the world of work" (p. 20).

As expected, language and multilingualism also play an important role in the tourism industry (Heller et al., 2014a). According to Heller et al. (2014b), communication with tourists from other countries requires appropriate language skills, which are also examined as a criterion for employment, but also hardly any specific language skills can be remunerated or valorised and "trivialised" accordingly. Sociolinguistic studies on tourism go beyond multilingual practices to address linguistic processes of commodification and authentication as well as language ideologies. As Coray & Duchêne (2017) says, "peripheral regions market not only their landscape and sports facilities, but also their linguistic and cultural heritage" (p. 64).

The role of multilingual competences in tourism related fields

The tourism is also a heterogeneous sector that cannot be examined per se. It is characterised by an enormous variety of institutions and social actors, spaces and discourses. All of these are interconnected, but these connections are not very clear and unidirectional. On a global level, the tourism in Serbia is part of an international tourism discourse within which destinations compete internationally by accentuating local specificities in an increasingly homogeneous way. At the national level, a number of state and private institutions are working to produce tourism both as a "brand" (marketing brochures, websites, etc.) and as a service provider. Finally, at the local level, interactions with tourists take place in information offices, hotels or tourist attractions. Various levels are also networked vertically. For example, many workers at the local level have taken part in national training courses, or are graduates of national and international tourism schools.

Of particular sociolinguistic interest in a globalised working world are the language-intensive call centre, tourism and advertising industries and the associated processes of commodification of language and language skills, the marketing of national and regional languages and multilingualism and the management of gender-specific language practices (Cameron, 2000a; Cameron, 2000b; Piller & Takahashi, 2006; Heller & Bell, 2012).

Linguistic factors and multilingual resources are also used in the delivery of services in other service sectors. According to Muth (2015), linguistic factors and multilingual resources are highlighted in marketing as added value, for example in international health tourism.

Based on these general considerations, it is very important to point out three types of sites as examples:

- hotel and tourism schools,
- service providers, and
- holiday destinations (places and tourist attractions).

Hotel and tourism schools are privileged spaces for research on linguistic practices and ideologies in the tourism sector, since communication practices and explicit training of these practices overlap there. The focus on hotel and tourism schools has definitely some other reasons:

- Internationalization of hotel and tourism schools is one of the most important factors for spreading English language in the tourism industry.
- Non-English speaking countries, although they have a strong tradition of tourism education, such as Switzerland, are of significant importance to the language disadvantage on the education market. Therefore, some private educational institutions turn to English.

Service providers such as tourist information offices, transport companies or tour operators are other privileged spaces in which tourism is practiced. These companies structure tourism practices by producing services such as transport, accommodation, package tours, etc. Consequently, most interactions are between tourists and "locals", in reality interactions between tourists and employees of these service providers.

Holiday destinations (places and tourist attractions) are important because there are concrete interactions and the overlap of local and global semiotic and linguistic practices.

Multilingualism as a concept and increasing importance of languages in tourism sector

Although English is the most often used language around the world, which applies to the hospitality industry as well, but other languages should not be forgotten, bearing in mind the importance of the intercultural concept and plurilingualism. However, German language could be advantageous if

someone works in a place that attracts German-speaking tourists. Despite the fact that most of such tourists can speak English, not all of them are very comfortable speaking it, and may feel uncomfortable if they want to communicate something for which they lack vocabulary. Those German speakers would anyway prefer to use a business the staff of which can speak German, too. In addition, business with German-speaking staff will therefore have a competitive advantage, and a worker who can speak both English and German is more likely to be hired. According to Žerajić (2019b), foreign language in the hospitality industry is needed when working in a non-English speaking country. In addition, students of hospitality programs benefit immensely from learning a foreign language. Many universities with hospitality management majors have been providing study-abroad programs, and foreign language has become crucial to the education of the industry. It is well known that colleges that offer hospitality degrees, which integrate foreign language learning, contribute to the success of the hospitality industry in general and to the success of individual students in their future careers as managers. Thus in hospitality degree courses, teaching of foreign languages has focused on learning for professional purposes that students may likely be facing in their future career.

On the one hand, specific attention has been given to the increasing importance of language and communication as a tool for the regulation of communication patterns, the standardization of language varieties, and the performance of identities (Cameron, 2000a; Cameron, 2000b). People who have the linguistic competence to speak several languages are multilingual. What role does multilingualism play in multinational corporations? Is multilingualism a problem or a solution for international business? Does English as a *lingua franca* play a role in international business? How do business leaders react to multilingualism or **Englishization**²? Multilingualism has been the focus of interest in recent decades due to globalization, tourism, technology advancement, international trade, and so forth. Language barriers and linguistic diversity surfaced, which may influence corporate communications in international business. According to Richards et al. (1998) multilingualism is "the use of three or more languages by an individual or by a group of speakers such as the inhabitants of a particular region or a nation" (p. 299).

² Making use of English language as *lingua franca* and converting materials in local language to English in an international corporation or organization.

Tourism and profession of tour guides from the aspect of multilingualism

The knowledge about the origin and development of traveling in its historical dimension qualifies you, as a tour guide, to assess the importance of this aspect of quality of life correctly, which has become immensely important in our society. Traveling is not just a contemporary fad, but also the revelation of yearnings, the possibility of personal development, and above all, ensuring the restoration of creative power. For this purpose, traveling has developed as part of our culture in recent centuries.

This is something many travellers may be unaware of, because some people travel, "because the neighbours do it", without worrying about the socio-cultural value of it. However, to understand your profession and your guests better, it is important to be aware of the importance of traveling within our society. This can be done through the analysis of the motives for travel and their development.

A frequently encountered term is the "travel companion", who occurs during round trips. Although there is no unanimous opinion on the scope of such in the tourism industry, it seems that a travel companion itself cannot be the linchpin of the success of the trip. Rather, this helps to control the performance – usually switched to the partner agency on site.

In this case, a local tour guide is usually responsible for technical-organizational and information-conveying tasks. The guide sent by the tour operator serves only as a representative of the company and is responsible for compensatory tasks, such as translations and necessary explanations, which the local tour guide cannot convey, as well as for the solution of communication difficulties, especially of intercultural nature. He is responsible for the smooth running and the success of the journey insofar as he does not design them primarily, but he follows them and intervenes when complications arise.

The tourist travel guide not only provides practical travel information, but also directs views of travellers in a specific direction as, according to Gorsemann (1995) a "perception manager" (p. 137) or as, according to Müller (2012) a "vision school" (p. 28) and thus in the construction of a tourist expectation horizon, especially after John Urry's "Tourist Gaze" increasingly in the focus of recent cultural studies work. Through its clear diction and selection, its pronunciation of recommendations, the reference

to the "worth seeing" and the concomitant preference of a particular travel style, the guide can be understood as a "designer" of tourist models. Pagenstecher (2003) recommends, "the traveller a certain tourist view" (p. 205).

Development of tourism and different approaches

The previous research on the tourism medium travel guide focused mainly on its emergence with bourgeois tourism and its dissemination in the 19th and 20th century. Changes in the medium after its fundamental establishment, changes in perceptual management and in the recommendation of tourist views have only been selectively investigated so far. However, this view of the medial changes of the originally bourgeois medium seems essential, since the quantity, quality and understanding of tourist travel in the western society changed considerably after the Second World War, especially in the 1960s and 1970s.

A fundamental process of transformation of tourism can be placed in the context of pluralistic life plans of the 1970s. If the tourist seeks the authentic experience, as MacCannell (1989) has put it, the tourism industry – according to Boorstin (1961) – offers only pseudo-events.

According to Bachleitner (2001), tourism can be understood in the present as a "socially relevant event space" (p. 8), which is socially determined by the various actors in this space. Hlavin-Schulze (1998) also points out in her study of the linguistic roots of the concept of travel that this term is close to that of experience – someone who has travelled a lot is »knowledgeable« and experienced (p. 14).

In the scientific discussion, as Freyer (1998) says, "besides the terms »travel« and »tourism«, the first term refers firstly to the traffic of travellers between home and destination, secondly to the temporary stay of strangers at the destination or tourist destination and thirdly the organization of travel preparation" (p. 1). The term »tourism« refers to travel in organised form. According to Mundt (1998), "if one person plans a trip, then one speaks of individual tourism or individual travel; if it is the booking of standardised offers, then one speaks of package tourism or package holidays" (p. 34).

In another distinction, "tourism" is the mobility of the non-stranger from his own environment, which comes back (after the Greek "tornos" = circle-like tool), during which the stranger comes from the unknown and after a

while as stranger leaves again, as Mundt (1998) says (p. 1). Tourists are foreign because they differ in their motives, interests and expectations from the locals. While the former seek the extra-ordinary, the latter live in the everyday. According to Ellenberg et al. (1997), "tourism lives from the annual cycle, from the constant repetition, from the cycle between the promised satisfaction of needs and the repeated awakening of needs" (p. 52).

The (modern) mass tourism lacked a central requirement until the 1920s, namely the right of paid annual leave. Only the granting of an annual holiday with continued payment of income created favourable conditions for a wide spread of tourism.

One of the earliest representatives of these approaches is Daniel Boorstin with his 1961 book *The Image or What Happens to the American Dream*. In his chapter, "From Traveller to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel," Boorstin describes a change in the motivation to travel, whereby he identifies two types, ideally, namely the traveller and the tourist. The old English word "travel" (travel) was originally the same word as "travail" (toil, labour, and agony). A traveller had to be active. Today's tourist makes his tour mainly for pleasure. The traveller worked on something, the tourist only seeks his pleasure. The traveller was active, while the tourist is passive.

The crucial term in Boorstin is the pseudo-event or "pseudo event" – a term that serves as a sort of guide to the description of the two types of travellers and tourists. A pseudo-event is an event that has the following characteristics (p. 35-36):

- It does not happen spontaneously but is planned, stimulated or arranged by anyone. We do not look for the spontaneous, real event, but for extra exhibitions planned for tourists and prefabricated adventures.
- The tourists, for example, stop at certain places set by tour guides in order to be able to take pictures in the best possible light conditions.
- An analogy to the pilgrimage is thus made for the tourist journey, because it forms a movement from one stage to the next and distinguishes three "rites of passage": first, the separation from the place of residence and the usual social ties; second, the situation of a certain indefiniteness and uncertainty, such as when travelling in foreign cultures or together with strangers – where the special experience is expected (the supernatural), and third, the return and integration into the group of origin – with a higher social status.

First empirical studies on (general) travel motives in the 1960s in Germany revealed four important motives (Braun, 1993):

1. Rest and relaxation need: rest, shut down, averting the fullness of stimuli;
2. Need for variety and balance: change of scenery, gain new ideas;
3. Liberation of bonds: exemption from duties, breaking out of everyday regulations;
4. Experience and interest factors: interest in foreign countries, sensationalism, curiosity.

According to recent studies of Swarbrooke & Horner (1999), among the main factors that determine the respective travel motifs are the following:

1. Personal development: knowledge enhancement, social orientation, learning new skills;
2. Social status / lifestyle / prestige: exclusivity, value for money, fulfilment of foreign expectations;
3. Adventure Search: interest in culture, physical change (health, recreation), emotional needs (spirituality, adventure, romance).

Now tourists are less likely to learn about the country than the attractions that are meant for them. The term attraction – created around the middle of the 19th century – refers to the most fleeting representation of culture. Attractions give little indication of the true nature of people and the modern travel guide helps to convey certain expectations that await fulfilment. Moreover, the actual experiences must be worth the money spent on them. In order to be able to estimate the value at all, standardised assessments can be used again, such as in travel guides. Therefore, a visit to a three-star attraction is more rewarding than a visit to one with only two stars.

All above mentioned could be seen as a tight connection between tourism itself and multilingualism. All businesses in the booming travel market must understand what is happening, but more importantly, how to respond. In doing so, multilingualism is essential in ensuring that a business survives disruptive innovations in a highly competitive industry. Being able to communicate and trade in multiple languages around the world opens more doors to international travel ventures.

The importance of foreign languages for tour guides

As expected, language and multilingualism also play an important role in the tourism industry (Heller et al., 2014a).

Many researchers have exemplified the importance of multilingualism. For instance, according to Gunnarson (2013) described that, in today's economy, it is not only managers and elite staff who need to be linguistically flexible. Factory floor workers are exposed to different languages during the workday. They have to be prepared to interact with group leaders and fellow workers with a different linguistic background than they have themselves. (p. 162).

Definitely, two premises are well known and connected with the importance of multilingualism in tourism:

1. Tourists are increasingly demanding **authentic experiences**;
2. **Welcome your visitors in the best way – in their language.** Show them that you want them here and are making them feel welcome and valued.

According to Boorstin (1961), tour operators avoid an unscheduled meeting of tourists with people in the destination countries. A well prepared round trip protects them from having to contact the inhabitants when they come to their country. The lack of contact with the locals are replaced by contacts with the tourists traveling with them. The fellow travellers become a special source of experience. So after returning from a trip, less is reported about the locals than about the other fellow travellers (p. 134).

What helps guides with this kind of intervention is that, in addition to their mother tongue, which is also the language used in the environment in which they do their business, they also know the language with which they can communicate with tourists. The different levels of linguistic competence that appear between the guides also influence whether what the guide presents is understandable to tourists. If, with the knowledge of the languages that tourists use, the guide is also familiar with their culture, then they are able to present the contents of the sightseeing in a way that is closer to the cultural context from which the tourists come, and therefore more understandable to them. One way a guide can moderate a tourists experience while sightseeing is to use a tool such as storytelling to try to achieve not only a cognitive but also an emotional connection of tourists to their surroundings, which would enhance the tourist experience. These examples show how, through intermediary roles, guides can influence how the tour will look and what tourists will be offered through it.

This raises the question of which special foreign language competencies the tour guides need in their professional life, what the linguistic difficulties

are and how the missing language skills can best be taught under the given conditions. There follow concrete didactic and methodical considerations, which should make the professional language for the tour guides efficiently.

It is well known that the tour guide is basically the manager of the group and responsible for ensuring that everything runs smoothly, that every stage is completed on time, he drives the group and keeps in touch with hotels, bus drivers and guides. The commonality of the two professions: the ability to communicate must be high, as well as the level of foreign language skills. Language in tourism contexts might therefore help us understand what language is, besides structure: emergent communicative practice that is creative and transcendent. Research on language and tourism in postcolonial settings can show all this and it can tell something about the power relations in place that are relevant for the ways in which knowledge on language is constructed. Whatever said in a particular place is said in a manner that defines and categorises, describes and fixes.

Language socialization in the workplace and vocational training

Language skills are considered a prerequisite for professional action competence today. This gives rise to three important fields of research, which concern linguistic socialization in the workplace and in vocational training: the promotion of second languages in the workplace, the promotion of language skills during the vocational training and the co-construction of linguistic and technical competence. Current research on L2 teaching in the workplace takes a holistic approach. It emphasises the need to promote second language learning in knowledge of the effective communication needs and therefore to design it on the basis of ethnographic research in the workplace (evidence-based, practice-oriented teaching), not only knowledge of technical language but also to impart social interactional competences for everyday action situations (scenario-based teaching), to help learners improve the opportunities for participation (emancipatory vision) by making them available for cultural differences in interaction expectations and standards and for potentially discriminatory sensitised practices (language awareness).

In tourism service professions, communicative and language skills play a central role. Duchêne/Piller (2009) illustrates this using the example of training materials and practices from the tourism industry, which express a primordial customer orientation and follow logic of productivity,

profitability and control. It shows how service-specific communicative competencies can be expressed in the form of rules of conduct and script instructions for non-verbal and verbal communication can be taught.

According to Heller et al. (2014b) communication with tourists from countries where other languages are spoken requires appropriate language skills, which are also examined as a criterion for employment, but which are also hardly ever specifically rewarded or valorised and accordingly "trivialised". Sociolinguistic studies on tourism (mainly from Europe and Canada) go beyond multilingual practices to address linguistic processes of commodification and authentication as well as language ideologies. Studies on heritage tourism or tourism patrimonial show: the marketing of francophone heritage in Canada (Moïse et al., 2006; Moïse & Roy, 2009; Heller, 2014), Welsh mining heritage in Wales (Coupland et al., 2005), linguistic and cultural heritage among the Sámi (Pietikäinen, 2013; Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014) or literary tourism in Catalonia (Pujolar & Jones, 2012).

A local accent or a specific language (as an exotic constructed language, minority language, etc.) can be used to authenticate the destination or product for sale.

Another way of boosting tourism is to market the linguistic resources of a place in order to promote language tourism: Gao (2012) has demonstrated this using the example of a southern Chinese region (West Street in Yangshuo), which is very popular with tourists and is constructed as a global village in which the English language can be practiced in authentic surroundings in order to attract local language school tourists.

Multilingualism is also an everyday phenomenon nowadays, and virtual-visual multilingualism, i.e. multilingualism in virtual contexts, is becoming increasingly common in the globalised world.

According to Gorter (2006), "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (p. 1).

The focus is thus on the written form of language in the public space. The term "visual multilingualism" refers to language that is visible, for example, public road signs, advertisements, street and town names,

business and public advertisements or signs. This is also the preferred definition in this work.

In general, however, it was also found that the language border is often not addressed in advertising. The reason for this variability is that language, language border and multilingualism are ascribed different meanings, which can then lead to tensions with regard to their tourist benefits. On the one hand, the language border/language situation is seen as an aspect of local identity (politics), which can serve as a unique selling point or at least as a marketing gag or hook. It often serves as an expression of diversity (whereby linguistic diversity is often understood to be on a par with cultural diversity) and thus supports the sales argument "We offer a lot of different things – and this in a small space". On the other hand, language is also understood as a (neutral) means of communication, and in a service industry such as tourism, communication should be as accessible as possible, i.e. adapted to customer needs. In this respect, language border characteristics, such as bilingual place names, can lead to confusion and make it difficult to create a uniform brand name and image for the destination. In addition, the language border can act as a deterrent for potential visitors who fear communication difficulties. In the attempt to combine these different understandings of language in a way that is useful for tourism promotion in the language border area, the following adaptations and contradictions have been observed:

- **Diversity** – but not too much: The omnipresent importance of local authenticity in tourism reduces diversity to national languages, and usually only to the standard varieties of German and French. Dialects and languages of migration remain largely hidden.
- **Separate** – but multilingual: the connection of diversity with linguistic-cultural stereotypes (e.g. German thoroughness – discipline and punctuality, French wine culture, etc.) requires a presentation of the language border as a clear separation of linguistic and cultural groups.

At the same time, bilingualism (or multilingualism) is used to ensure communication emphasised by the population.

Foreign languages in vocational education

According to Žerajić (2018), a favourable atmosphere for learning foreign languages should, first of all, create educational and linguistic policies that language learning is not actually an obligation, but in each society, it is necessary to provide multiple language resources (p. 741). However, such

language polytheism does not arise by itself, but is created by inclusion in our essential developments and decisions concerning education and upbringing. The foreign language as the language of the profession is obligatory from the first year at all faculties of academic and professional studies, and this is most often, but not exclusively, English.

Students enrolled in a higher education institution are highly expected to master professional terminology in the practical application of their knowledge after completing their education. Considering the fact that foreign languages are important in this field, within the Academy of Applied Studies, in two out of three departments – The College of Tourism and the College of Hotel management, English, German, French and Russian are taught from the first semester. By the end of their studies, it is expected from the students to achieve A2 level according to GER³.

The foreign language has the status of an elective language apart from German, French and Russian are offered. The elective foreign language is taught during five of the total of six semesters according to prescribed syllabus with a fund of 3 hours per week, which means one lesson and two exercises and we start with expectation that their higher education in the coastal area of the foreign language will end at the A2 / B1 level crossing.

According to GER (2001), these language levels imply the following:
A2 – the student has a repertoire of elementary language resources that allow him to solve everyday situations with the help of the previously given content. As a rule, a student can make compromises in relation to the realization of the spoken purpose and to search for words. In addition, he may use short, useful expressions to meet simple, specific needs and ask, for example, for certain information about a person, everyday routines, desires or needs.

He/she can use simple sentence forms and express them using memorised sentences, short group words and speech patterns about himself and other people, what they do or own, etc. He/she has a limited repertoire of short memorised statements that satisfy the simplest basic speech situations. In situations that come out of the daily routine, there is often an interruption and misunderstanding (p. 111).

³ Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (eng. CEFR)

Conclusion

Tourism researcher Freyer (2011) states that past investigations with regard to intercultural encounters in tourism, represent the starting point for the travellers and tailor-made offers in the foreground. In the future, it would be important to develop tourism as a cultural sociology research field in a better way, and it would be desirable to conduct the extensive research on the cultural and sociological impact on the travellers.

English is still the first language at all levels of education, as well as the most popular language by tourists in Serbia (according to the statements the Association of Tour Guides of Serbia), but other languages, according to Blažević (2001), especially German and Italian recently, take very important part in the field of tourism and hospitality. In summary, it can be said that the institutional language choice in hotel and tourism schools is not neutral, but is linked to an ideological positioning that links the training market with the needs of the tourism industry. The institutional language choice allows addressing a specific target audience of students. At the same time, the choice of language restricts the access of students with other linguistic profiles. Institutional language choice in hotel and tourism schools is also determined by national and supranational interests, because, in order to be nationally accredited, a part of the curriculum must be taught in a national language.

Regarding the tour guides as a crucial actor in tourism industry, being a local tour guide, provides the opportunity to experience other cultures and languages. Those who travel to other countries, and those who interface with foreign visitors in this country, have a responsibility to represent their own culture (and its good manners) well, and to respect the other culture they encounter. Learning a little of the local language demonstrates a willingness to move out of one's comfort zone and try something new, and shows respect and recognition for that language and its culture.

Languages are useful because tour guides need good communication skills. Since a tour guide may be one of the first people tourists meet in the country they are visiting, it is important for the tour guides to understand the needs of tourists and be able to answer the questions about their own country. It is also helpful to be able to speak a foreign language such as German, French or Italian as this may improve chances of finding a job.

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