English-Language Tourism Media Discourse: Stylistic Features

By

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to identify the stylistic features of the English tourism media discourse on the material of visitlondon.com website. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the selection of stylistic means that are style forming for advertising texts within the framework of tourism discourse. As a result of a detailed analysis of 123 advertising texts, such stylistic devices as an epithet, a metaphor, a hyperbole, a metonymy, an antithesis, a gradation, etc., were identified, an epithet and a descriptive adjective being most frequent stylistic means. The epithets and adjectives were distributed into 17 lexical semantic groups (LSG). From the point of view of syntax, the analysis revealed rhetorical questions, question-and-answer constructions, imperative constructions, ellipse, sentences with homogeneous members of the clause and etc. Methods of structural linguistic, semantic, contextual and stylistic analyses were used to do the study. The research results can be used in future research of tourism media discourse and academic courses in Linguistics studies.

Keywords: media discourse, communication, stylistic technique, advertising text, tourism advertisement.

1. Introduction

This study is aimed at advertising texts of tourism media discourse. Media texts, being a form of reflection of communicative practices of the media, influence a range of contemporary language practices and values, with an ever-increasing potential for global growth. Tourism discourse is a special sphere of speech activity, the result of which is an advertising text containing selective information about the advertised product (excursion, tour, historical object, etc.). It should be noted that until now, scholars studying the tourism discourse have not come to a common denominator regarding its typological affiliation. Thus, some authors consider the tourism discourse as a subspecies of advertising discourse [Manca, 2016] and a kind of business discourse [Frolova et al, 2019]. However, there is another point of view, according to which tourism discourse is an independent type of discourse that has its own addressee, its own specific thematic focus and a special set of linguistic means [Khabibulina & Fakhrutdinova, 2019].

The features of the tourism discourse include social institutional character [Gutman & Nurmieva, 2019], multicultural content [Bruner, 2005; Manca, 2016; Sabirova, Khanypova & Latypov, 2018; Hamilton, 2018], media [Blommaert, 2005], manipulation (the use of latent linguistic means of expressiveness in order to impose on the recipient a certain attitude towards the tourist product) [Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011], the concept of persuasion [Manca, 2016], manipulation (giving the tourist the illusion of an "off-the-beaten-track" holiday experience) [Maci 2013, p.21].

Admitting that tourism mediadiscourse is used for both specialized and promotional purposes and the fact that the addresser should pay special attention to the stylistic methods used, since their correct application largely depends on how effective the advertising tourist text will be, many researchers focus on linguistic means used in tourism discourse: linguistic patterns, grammar, visual grammar, syntactical structures and style (Manca, 2016; Maci, 2013; Chen, 2021; Choi, 2021).

2. Methods

The relevance of the research topic is due to the growing interest in the issues of tourism discourse, the increased attention of researchers to its stylistic features.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following tasks

- to highlight the structural and linguistic characteristics of the text at the morphological and syntactic levels.
- to identify semantic meanings of lexical units used to describe realities, and lexical semantic groups (LSGs).
- to determine the contextual meanings of the described lexical means.
- describe the functions of the stylistic, lexical and syntactic techniques used.

To do this research we used methods of structural linguistic, semantic, contextual and stylistic analyses.

3. Results and Discussion

We have analysed 123 advertising texts of the English travel website visitlondon.com. The analysis revealed various techniques at the lexical, morphological and syntactic levels. Lexical, syntactic and morphological means of expressiveness are presented in the number of 161 units (see Table 1).

Table 1: Stylistic means of expression

№	Stylistic Device	Quantity	%
1	Epithet	56	34,8
2	Descriptive adjective	48	29,8
3	Metaphor	4	2,5
4	Personification	1	0,6
5	Metonymy	1	0,6
6	Hyperbola	1	0,6
7	Emotional evaluative vocabulary	7	4,3
8	Antithesis	3	1,9
9	Gradation	1	0,6
10	Superlative adjective	14	8,7
11	Informal vocabulary	4	2,5
12	Idioms	1	0,6
13	Phrasal verbs	4	2,5
14	Ellipse	2	1,3
15	Rhetorical question	6	3,7
16	Question-and-answer constructions	2	1,2

Total 161

1. Epithets and descriptive adjectives. The use of epithets and descriptive adjectives with positive connotation makes the description of the advertised product more attractive to the consumer. Influencing the emotional sphere of the addressee, with the help of the means of expression, the authors of the text create a positive image of the tourist product.

Epithets and descriptive adjectives are represented by the largest number of uses. The analysis of advertising texts revealed 56 epithets and 48 descriptive adjectives which form 34.8% and 29.8% respectively.

The most commonly used epithets are unforgettable (6) (hereinafter, the number of uses is given), scary (6), spooky (5), magnificent (5), gory (4), great (4), impressive (4); descriptive adjectives – traditional (21), famous (10), cosy (9), historic(al) (9), iconic (8), friendly (7), comfortable, (5), perfect (5), modern(5), elegant (4).

The rest of the epithets and descriptive adjectives are used in the advertising texts three or less times.

It should be pointed out that the number and frequency of the use of certain epithets and descriptive adjectives depends on the topic of the site section. For example, advertising texts devoted to the main sights contain the largest number of uses (16 uses out of 21) of the adjectives historic and historical, which we attribute to the LSG History – historic Tower of London, historic location, etc. The frequency of the use of this adjective emphasizes the large number of historical monuments in British cities and towns and their ancient architecture.

To create a positive and attractive image of the historical monuments of London, Oxford, Stonehenge and their suburbs, as well as to describe the impression received from visiting the sights, the authors of the website use the lexemes which are included into the following LSGs:

- Fame – iconic Stonehenge, iconic sites, iconic skyline, etc;
- Impression – unforgettable views, unforgettable site; stunning green sea, stunning architecture, magnificent royal palace impressive view, breathtaking experience, great impression, etc.

To attract the addressee's attention to the English landscapes, the authors of the website characterize the advertised objects using phrases included into the LSG Location –unique perspective, pastoral views, picture-perfect village.

The website developers use a variety of lexical units to describe the British capital. In order to convey the ominous atmosphere of the city, the authors of the advertising texts most often use the vocabulary included into the LSG Fear – spooky, horrifying, scary, etc. – the spookiest time, horrifyingly haunted buildings, horrifying activities, scarier side to London, scary atmosphere, dark secrets, sinister alleyways, etc.

However, in addition to the language tools that cause the recipient to associate with something dark and scary, advertising texts dedicated to the filming of Harry Potter films in the imaginary city of Hogwarts contain lexical units with a positive connotation which form a LSG Impression – impressive decorations, exciting special effects.

It should be stressed, to achieve the effect of mystery in the considered advertising texts, a variety of emotionally marked lexical units are used. The most frequent lexemes in the LSG Magic are the words magical and mysterious – Hogwarts is particularly magical at Christmas, magical festival season, mysterious stories, mysterious characters. The same LSG includes the adjectives wizarding and spellbinding – wizarding world, spellbinding effects.

When analyzing the texts about London parks *Go Ape Battersea* and *Go Ape Alexandra Palace*, a large number of different epithets were also revealed, which are presented in the following LSGs:

- Impression – unforgettable adventure, memorable day out.
- Challenge – challenging routes, challenging obstacles.
- Sensation ощущение – blood-pumping actions.

Advertising texts dedicated to sports venues such as The London Stadium, The Wembley Stadium, The Emirates Stadium, The Twickenham Stadium and the entertainment complex *The O2* with the multi-purpose indoor stadium *The O2 Arena* also contain a large number of epithets and descriptive adjectives which are used to describe modern technology and architecture of the buildings, clothing stores, beauty salons, etc. The lexemes used in the advertising texts are represented in the following LSGs:

- Impression – magnificent view, magnificent stadium bowl, incredible 360-degree views of London, unforgettable time, impressive view, stunning hydrotherapy spa.
- High-tech – state-of-the-art bowling lanes, the most technologically advanced football stadium.
- Fame – walk in the footsteps of iconic legends, icon outlet, legendary sportsmen.
- Entertainment – fun-filled amusements, have a rocking good time.
- High Standards – premium outlet, luxurious changing room.
- Dimension – the biggest names in music perform.

The greatest number of epithets and descriptive adjectives were found in the advertising texts devoted to London pubs and bars. Our research included 69 texts describing traditional London pubs *such as Traditional London Pubs, Gastro Pubs, Cosy Pubs, Bars* and *Pubs on the* Thames.

To emphasize the centuries-old history of London pubs, the adjectives ancient, old and old-fashioned are used, which are included into the LSG Age – ancient pub, old pub, old-fashioned (English) pub.

Currently, the interior and menu of some English pubs are a combination of traditional and modern. To emphasize the presence of new trends, the authors of the texts use the following lexical units included into the LSG Age – modern, contemporary and trendy (modern British dishes, modern décor, modern interior, contemporary European menu and trendy touches).

The LSG Atmosphere is represented by the following phrases – cozy fireplace comfortable room, snug place, peaceful place, peaceful and hearty atmosphere, friendly atmosphere, charming locals' hangout, buzzy place, atmospheric place, pretty place, welcoming interior, roaring (warming, cracking) fire, gloomy charm, time-warp feel, etc.

To describe the public of the English pubs, the interior and the dishes served, the authors of the advertising texts often use adjectives included into the LSG Style, such as posh, elegant,

stylish, well-heeled, creative and quirky.

The LSG Taste and Flavour is represented by the phrases fine wine and cheese and luscious cocktails, beers and bar snacks, while the LSG Choice includes the lexemes delectable and world-wide – delectable selection of cheese and meat and world-wide cuisines. The LSG High Standards is represented by the lexeme's bohemian and top-notch – bohemian vibe and top-notch modern British food.

The LSG Location is worth attention. It includes such lexical units as leafy, picturesque, tranquil and panoramic. Due to the use of these lexemes, the good location of pubs is emphasized, which, according to the authors of the advertising texts, should affect the choice of the addressee.

2. Metaphors. The use of metaphors aims at creating a succinct image based on bright, often unexpected and bold associations [Zorina et al., 2019]. We identified the following metaphors in the website advertising texts:

- Follow Jack the Ripper's trail of terror through the atmospheric and sinister alleyways.
- foodie heaven.
- gourmet paradise.
- urban jungle.

The metaphors *gourmet paradise* and *foodie heaven* are used to draw the recipient's attention to the proposed range of English pubs. The metaphor *urban jungle* is used to create an image of a densely built-up city.

3. Personification. Follow… the atmospheric and sinister alleyways that have changed little since that long ago autumn of 1888 when terror stalked the shadows. The phrase terror stalked the shadows is personification. This stylistic technique is used to make an emotional impact on the addressee.

4. Metonymy. Metonymy means replacing one word with another one. For example, London walked in fear is a metonymy. By London one can understand the citizens of the British capital.

5. Hyperbola. Hyperbola attractions are around every corner is used to emphasize that London is worth visiting since it contains a great number of places of interests.

6. Antithesis was identified in the number of 3 units in one sentence – Tulse Hill fuses both historic and modern; with antique fittings alongside trendy touches, and a contemporary European menu also featuring some British pub classics. Using antithetical constructions, the authors of the advertising text emphasize the successful combination of old and traditional trends in the interior and British cuisine with modern ones.

7. Gradation. Ascending gradation (climax) is used by addressees to enhance expressiveness – It is an experience. It is a challenge. It is rewarding. Applying this stylistic device, the authors strive to awaken in the reader the spirit of struggle and striving for superiority.

8. Informal vocabulary creates the impression of liveliness, ease and brings written speech closer to oral spoken language. This allows the authors of the website to conduct a

dialogue with the addressee as an equal. For example, instead of the nouns company and group, the authors use the lexeme tribe, the main meanings of which are tribe, clan and family. Using an informal tribe, the authors evoke feelings of cohesion and unity with friends in the recipient and encourage them to relax together.

The effect of liveliness and ease and some kind of freedom is conveyed by the informal verb grab in the phrase grab a cup of tea. The expression locals' hangout is used to make the recipient want to see the daily life of local people.

9. Idioms and Phrasal verbs. The purpose of using idioms and phrasal verbs in advertising texts is to create or enhance the expressiveness of speech, the formation of expressive, emotionally rich, vivid expressions. The authors of the texts deliberately go beyond impersonal presentation for a more natural perception of the text by the audience [Manca, 2008]. For example, the idioms beat the winter blues and the phrasal verbs tuck into, brush up and soak up carry a positive evaluative function and are more expressive and emotional compared to the verbs and phrases stop being sad, eat heartily and refresh – visit this pub to beat the winter blues, soak up some culture, soak up the authentic set, tuck into classic pub dishes, brush up on history.

10. Emotional Evaluative Vocabulary. Emotional evaluative vocabulary contributes to the appearance of the addressee's reaction, which is necessary for the addressee of the tourist advertising text. The aim of the authors is to create a positive attitude towards the acquisition of the advertised travel product – here's our pick of the best pubs in London for food, top-quality cuisine, high-quality spirits, it's a perfect place for having a rest, etc.

At the morphological level, such a means of expressiveness as an adjective in a superlative degree is revealed. In 123 advertising tests, 14 adjectives were found to be superlatives – the best, the most ancient, the oldest, the friskiest, etc. The use of these lexemes emphasizes the advantages of the advertised objects, their exclusivity and, as a result, the need to visit them. The largest number of superlative adjectives was found in the advertising texts dedicated to the description of sports venues and musical events held at their venues and stadiums – the world's most popular entertainment venue, the world's most popular music, London's coolest music venues, etc.

In addition to lexical techniques, the advertising texts contain a number of syntactic means of expressiveness.

1. Imperative constructions. Almost every sentence in the considered advertising texts is advice addressed to the reader, an offer to visit the advertised tourist sites. For example, See Windsor Castle, Stonehenge and the Roman Baths on this one-day tour and get chatting with the locals at this foodie haven.

2. Question-and-answer construction. The function of the question-and-answer structure is to make up a dialogue and establish contact with the addressee. The question is used to make the reader think, while the answer's aim is to make the customer act – Do you like to think you're the boss of balance? The connoisseur of coordination? Time to step up and prove it to your tribe, Looking for a step-up from our Adventure Course? – The new Treetop Adventure+ is just for you with higher platforms and longer zips.

3. Rhetorical questions. The purpose of the rhetorical question is to attract the consumer's attention towards the site or event and enhance the impression. The use of a

rhetorical question involves the addressee in thinking, prompts him to search for his own answer – Are you ready for an unforgettable adventure? What makes a traditional London pub?

4. Ellipsis. In the studied advertising texts, the following elliptical constructions were identified – a good pint and a glass of red. By pint a pint of beer is meant and red means red wine. In advertising texts, elliptical constructions are used to create an emotionally expressive coloring, imagery, clarity and effectiveness of an advertising text that is intended for a mass reader, and therefore should be close to him in structure (Manca, 2016). The authors use this stylistic technique to make the advertising texts resemble spoken language and thereby attract the attention of the target audience.

5. Sentences with homogeneous members of the clause. The functions of this stylistic device include detailing and concretization:

1. By listing the pub's visitors, the authors draw the addressee's attention to the level of the advertised establishment in the past, its history. For example, it was a meeting place for sailors, thieves, smugglers and pirates…
2. The next example highlights the wide range of opportunities for the advertised excursion – See a different side of the city, by day, at twilight or at sunset.
3. The enumeration of the verbs related to the LSG Rest is aimed at creating positive emotions in the recipient and forming associations related to comfort and relaxation – Sit back, relax and enjoy the views from the comfortable salon.
6. Conditional clauses. It is noteworthy that in the texts under consideration, only type I conditional sentences are used, describing real situations. The main sentence of all the examples contains the advice conveyed by the imperative construction – If you fancy partying into the early hours, discover the best pubs in Clapham; If you're already in London, find activities for today and etc.

4. Summary

First, at the morphological level, in the tourism discourse texts it is possible to distinguish a fairly frequent use of adjectives in the superlative degree. At the syntactic level, it is necessary to note the frequent use of rhetorical questions, a small number of question-and-answer constructions and conditional sentences. Their role is to advise the target audience to seek the services of the advertised travel agency. Secondly, at the lexical level, stylistic devices such as an epithet, a metaphor, a hyperbole, a metonymy, an antithesis and a gradation were identified. The study revealed a large number of epithets (34.8%) and descriptive adjectives (29.8%), which can be found in 17 LSGs, the most frequent of which are Age, Fame, Impression and Fear.

Thirdly, the subject matter of the text regulates the meaning of epithets, descriptive adjectives and emotional evaluative vocabulary. Fourthly, the stylistic techniques identified in the course of linguistic analysis perform an emotive function, thanks to which the authors of advertising texts express their attitude to the described objects and form a positive reaction in the recipient.

The authors see prospects for further research of the problem in expanding the material under study, conducting a comparative analysis of stylistic means in English and Russian texts, as well as in identifying general and specific linguistic features of tourist advertising texts and texts of other genres of tourism discourse.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of advertising texts of the English website *visitlondon.com* showed the use of various stylistic techniques at morphological, syntactic and lexical levels. All they are used to perform an emotive function, causing an addressee's positive reaction and interest and influencing the effectiveness of the texts.

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