

Translating Tourism

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Keywords

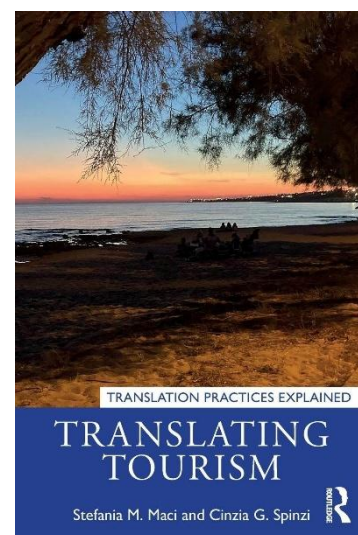
Tourism Discourse

Language for Specialised Purposes (LSP)

Translation

Accessibility

Digital Tourism



Over the last few decades, the global travel and tourism sector has undergone profound transformations driven by increased mobility, the rise of budget airlines, and the emergence of the online travel market (Ritzer and Dean 2015). In 2024, the overall tourism contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) was approximately 11 trillion U.S. dollars, making it an essential component of contemporary economic and cultural systems (Statista 2025). In this context, tourism discourse, namely the language, narratives, and communication practices used to inform, engage and persuade potential tourists, including the usage of multimodal and digital affordances, has progressively evolved to embrace new societal changes and trends in a globalised society where tourists are no longer passive recipients but active prosumers, that is pro-active and informed customers directly involved in the co-creation of their travel experience (Niezgoda 2013). Furthermore, in a context where travel has become increasingly global, diverse, and digitally mediated, the role of translation is pivotal for reaching wider markets, promoting accessibility, attracting non-native audiences, and bridging cultural gaps, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and making each travel experience enriching and fulfilling for all visitors.

Stefania M. Maci and Cinzia G. Spinzi's monograph *Translating Tourism* (Routledge 2025) explores the tourism world from a broad ranging linguistic perspective, combining an

understanding of the complex and fragmented scenario of tourism discourse where a variety of different texts and genres perform a wide range of communicative functions (Jakobson 1960), and an awareness of the crucial role of language as actively shaping cross-cultural relationships and experiences both in the native idiom and through translation.

Drawing on the academic expertise of the two authors as coordinators of two MA courses in Text Science and Culture Enhancement in the Digital Age and in Planning and Management of Tourism Systems, this work provides a comprehensive overview of tourism discourse and its specificities both as a language for specialised purposes (LSP) and in terms of the multiple discourse functions that play a role in the pre-trip, during trip and post-trip travel phases through a range of text types and written and oral genres (Werlich 1976). Furthermore, the peculiarity of this textbook is its in-depth focus on translation and translation-related best practices across all phases of the travel experience, through detailed examinations of authentic texts. As destinations compete in an international marketplace, the ability to provide accurate and culturally sensitive translations is essential for attracting diverse audiences and facilitating meaningful engagement with local heritage (Kelly 1997; Dann 1996). Therefore, effective translation not only enables tourists to access practical information but also shapes their perceptions of cultural identity and authenticity through promotional materials and interpretive texts (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). In this sense, translation operates as a form of cultural mediation, shaping the image of a destination and influencing visitor expectations and experiences (Cappelli 2016). In the digital era, where tourism marketing and trip planning rely heavily on multilingual websites and user-generated content, the role of translation is further amplified, underscoring its importance for visibility, accessibility, and economic competitiveness (Pierini 2007). Hence, translation today is not merely a linguistic activity but a critical element in the global circulation of tourism narratives.

This engaging textbook, written in an academic yet accessible style, is articulated into five chapters that cover the broad-ranging aspects of tourism discourse and include a series of practical exercises that can be easily implemented in class or as homework for self-study in undergraduate or graduate courses. Chapter 1, jointly written by both authors, sets the scene by providing an overview of the broad domain of tourism discourse underlining its performative power to create realities and experiences. Drawing on a fine-grained analysis of the state-of-the-art on tourism discourse and relying on a rich and updated bibliography, the different text types that play a role in the pre-trip, on-trip and post-trip stage of the travel experience (Dann 1996) are examined, emphasising the role of multimodality and Web 2.0 which paved the way for the increasingly central role of tourists as active prosumers and co-creators of their experiences. Furthermore, drawing on Gotti's (2006) framework, the complexity of tourism discourse as a genre combining the specificity of LSP and the general language used with

persuasive aims is highlighted through a detailed overview of its lexical, syntactic, and textual features.

Chapter 2, “Translation and Tourism” by Cinzia G. Spinzi, investigates the central role of translation in fostering authenticity in tourism discourse. Translation is vital for bridging cultural gaps through various techniques of cultural mediation. In this respect, the functional perspective of Skopos Theory, which emphasises the importance of a translation tailored to the specific text function and its reception, is pivotal (Munday 2016). At the same time, communicative translation must combine intercultural competence to bridge cross-cultural differences effectively and produce texts that are both faithful to the source language and comprehensible to the target audience, balancing domestication, foreignization, and adaptation, or even recreating a new experience through transcreation to preserve effectiveness and authenticity. Arguing that effective communication in this field is intertwined with the main functions of *savoir* (knowledge), *vouloir* (desire) and *pouvoir* (ability) postulated by Greimas (1966), the chapter closes with a detailed examination of a range of texts from different linguistic-cultural backgrounds and their translation.

In an increasingly global, inclusive, and multicultural society, ensuring that tourism information is clear, multilingual, and accessible not only enhances visitors’ autonomy and satisfaction but also reduces barriers that may prevent specific groups from fully embracing tourism experiences. Accessibility and inclusion in tourism-related translation are the focus of Chapter 3, written by Cinzia G. Spinzi. The “accessibility revolution” in tourism discourse is a recent phenomenon encompassing social, technological and methodological aspects. At the level of translation, it is centred on audiovisual translation (AVT) and the practices of audio description (AD), subtitling for the deaf or hard-of-hearing (SDH), dubbing and voice over (VO), and respeaking with an emphasis on the proactive roles of translators as mediators and collaborators in audiovisual translation for the creation of accessible multimodal products (Pagano, Rosa Teixeira and Affonso Mayer 2020). These practices are explored through the analysis of authentic texts related to specific aspects of the touristic experience, including museum translation, which may contribute to presenting a more inclusive and global view of history and culture, exhibition translation, which requires enhanced adaptation and integrated teamwork between different strategic professionals, museum audioguides, and audio descriptions, which can provide an interactive and customised experience. Furthermore, the linguistic landscape, namely the use of directional, warning, and informational signs that may guide visitors, is explored, highlighting that gaps remain in fostering authentic accessibility.

In Chapter 4, Stefania M. Maci examines the role of tourist guides as professional mediators who may actively shape a travel experience for prospective visitors, drawing on a purposefully designed survey of tour-guiding practices. Moreover, the author develops a framework for

analysing guided tours through chrono-semiotic cultural mediation, emphasising the role of guided tour-planning in navigating and promoting accessibility across different spatio-temporal and cultural boundaries. The proposed framework is further explored through the detailed analysis of several promotional texts.

Finally, Chapter 5, jointly written by both authors, focuses on the complex and fascinating environment of digital tourism, investigating localisation to enhance cross-cultural communication and promote inclusivity. Multiple aspects of niche tourism (dark, medical, and religious) are also discussed as emerging micro-fields in tourism discourse. Moreover, the role of tourist-generated content on social media and apps is outlined, stressing that translation on social media often relies on simplified language and the usage of internationally known emojis that transcend cultural boundaries. The translation of culinary menus, a micro-genre encompassing a focus on cultural and marketing elements, closes the chapter.

Offering a 360-degree perspective on tourism discourse and translating practices in this multifaceted field, and providing a detailed analysis of each text type and genre discussed with an examination of multiple real-life texts from different lingua-cultural systems (mainly English and Italian but also other languages), this engaging textbook is a valuable instrument for graduate and post-graduate students but also scholars interested in tourism discourse and translation. Written in an academic but accessible style, and coupled with a rich and updated bibliography, through the synergy of theory and practice given by the analysis of different data sources, and concluding exercises at the end of each chapter, *Translating Tourism* contributes to shedding light on the complexity and multifariousness of the fascinating and dynamic field of tourism discourse in a multicultural global environment, emphasising its role as a performative genre that co-creates realities, guides behaviours and shapes socio-cultural relations.

Bionote

Maria Ivana Lorenzetti is Associate Professor in English Linguistics at the University of Verona. She holds a PhD in English Linguistics from the University of Pisa (2006). Her main research interests are in political discourse, focusing on populist rhetoric, immigration, sexism and climate change, also from a contrastive perspective. Moreover, she is interested in the syntax-semantics interface, textual analysis, and cognitive linguistics. She has published widely in these areas and contributed to national and international conferences. She is a member of the editorial boards of the *Bibliography of Metaphor and Metonymy* (John Benjamins), the interdisciplinary journal *Iperstoria*, and the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Populism*.

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