Pragmalinguistic features of on-line tourism advertising language

Andrea Francesco Bilotto *Università della Calabria*
andreabilotto@hotmail.com

The more modern practice of booking holidays independently of travel agencies, owing the increased use of the Internet which "has brought the travel agent to most people's sitting rooms" (Donnellan, 2005: 8), brings to investigate tools, techniques and pragmalinguistic strategies applied to on-line tourism in order to make the "product" more interesting to a potential clientele (Warren, 2006).

On-line tourism advertising language clearly represents a form of persuasive communication and shares common features with traditional advertising since it "attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and, in so doing, convert them from potential into actual clients" (Dann, 1996: 2). However, it is concerned more with individual than with mass audience and, therefore, privileges a warmer approach in contrast with the hard sell approach of traditional way of promoting.

The corpus of the investigation, consisting of a set of British and American on-line brochures which have been selected as representative of the genre frequently encountered on the internet, helps to explore the properties of the language of tourism and examine the employed techniques ranging from verbal and visual to a combination of both (Dann, 1996).

Thus, the study aims to identify a profile of words and images that create a language of persuasion and, in the specific, to investigate the pragmalinguistic properties which enhance message memorability and success. It also explores novelty which attracts prospects' attention and strengthens emotional bonds, indexicals which emphasise proximity and urgency to buy, and politeness which enhances participation by evoking prompt responses while giving an illusion of freedom (Hardin, 2001).

The study aims to give greater understanding of the language of tourism and to provide insights into how tourist promoters take advantage of customers' psychological "push" factors and of promotional "pull" factors in order to convince potential holidaymakers to purchase the product.

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Warren, T., (2006). "How to Double your sales and profits with a travel website that sells!" (www.adventurebizsuccess.com/business_articles_tourism_websites.php)