Advice as a form of persuasion in traveller forums: cognitively-based dialogic interactions with implications for tourism 2.0

Keywords: advice/persuasion/traveller forums/dialogic interactions/tourism 2.0

Abstract

This paper explores how persuasion is construed through advice in the web-genre traveller forum by means of interpersonal markers shaped as writers’ stance and readers’ engagement voices. These markers belong to the cognitively-based, interpersonal kind of metadiscourse, the other one being textually-based (Vande Kopple 1985; Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 2008). Dafouz-Milne (2008:97) has claimed that the essence of metadiscourse lies in its interpersonal aspect and not in the textual one. Due to its own nature, interpersonal metadiscourse must take into account the reader’s previous knowledge, textual experience and processing needs, i.e. three distinct cognitive principles that govern it.

Traveller forums, based on Web 2.0 technology, are characterized by a strong social interaction. An emergent collaborative web culture has begun within travel and tourism where producer and consumer is the same person (Bruns 2008) and where “word of mouth” is central to provide opinions and evaluations about destinations, hospitality places, ways of travelling, etc.

A corpus of 593 threads of conversation (500,000 words), collected from TripAdvisor during 2012, has been analyzed, based on previous studies (Suau-Jiménez 2012, 2014 –forthcoming-). The methodology follows White (2003) and Hyland (2008) proposals of voice, a concept that links individual discursive choice of lexis and grammar, in the form of interpersonal strategies, and socially driven rhetorical functions such as persuasion. Voice is divided into writer’s stance and reader’s engagement, and provides a framework to analyze dialogic interactions.

The expected results, based on qualitative analyses, will open up a way towards a better knowledge of persuasion through cognitively-based interpersonal mechanisms underlying this CMC genre mode. They will also yield information arising from peer-to-peer exchanges that can be relevant for the tourism industry and imply a democratization of tourism 2.0.
References


