

A corpus-based discourse analysis of the perception of 'nature' in travel promotion texts.

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During recent years consumers have become increasingly concerned about the protection of the environment. Infact, after the 1980s, issues such as 'global warming' and 'ozone depletion' begin to appear more frequently in media coverage, leading to a rise in environmental consciousness (Holden, 2008). By the end of the 20th century these concerns had become more prominent, leading the tourism industry to respond to them (ibid.) through the implementation of the so-called eco-tourism. In 1992, two billion dollars were spent on 'nature travel', indeed 75% of vacationers chose their holidays 'with environmental concerns in mind' (Dann, 1996). In order to respond to this demand, the tourism industry is now taking advantage of the concept of nature travel, exploiting the term linguistically in its advertisements.

This comparative study examines the discourse used in English language travel promotion texts to investigate the uses of "nature" and how "nature" and the "natural" are constructed in these texts. Specifically, there are several aims of this on-going PhD research: to identify how nature is described by advertisers in travel promotion texts in order to attract potential 'green' tourists, i.e. tourists who care about the well-being of the environment; to reveal how nature and what is regarded as natural are employed within these texts; and to compare and investigate the perception of nature in the different journals analyzed.

This paper follows a corpus-based approach to discourse analysis in an attempt to combine the qualitative approach of Discourse Analysis with the mainly quantitative approach of Corpus Linguistics in order to provide an integrated model of discourse analysis. The preliminary results show that, although the lexical items used to describe the natural world seem to express concern for the physical environment, the role of nature is limited. Indeed, the nature depicted in these travel promotion texts seems to be highly influenced by human beings. Nature is used as a recreational attraction and resource, the perfect setting for various activities and/or sports, while its preservation and respect on behalf of the 'responsible' tourist is marginal.

Dann, G.M.S. (1996). *The Language of Tourism. A Sociolinguistic Perspective*. Oxon: CAB International.

Holden, A. (2008). *Environment and Tourism*. Oxon: Routledge.