

# Editorial

## Communication in tourism 2.0: redefining roles, restating ‘the traditional’, reaching the world

We are witnesses of and first-hand participants in a new era of tourism-related genres and tourist-mediated information whose origin lies in digital technology. The rapid evolution of social media into major opportunities and challenges for the hospitality and tourism sector (Sparks et al., 2013) has caused a profound restructuring of the ‘architecture’ of the industry and has even led to the coinage of a new term to refer to the phenomenon: Tourism 2.0 or cybertourism. Tourism 2.0 benefits from the many applications offered by web 2.0, among which online applications and web services, blogs, forums, and social network sites deserve a special mention. Communication in Tourism 2.0 is thus characterised by a series of aspects that necessarily enhance the sharing and transmission of knowledge and experiences, including openness, interactivity, mass collaboration, global connection, social networking, and so forth. Consequently, Tourism 2.0 has paved the way for the creation of a hyper-connected community of practice that uses new technologies and social networks to add a multidimensional and more democratic perspective to the tourist experience.

As noted by Bassaler (2012), with Tourism 2.0 consumers can now plan trips better and find the best deals, get information anytime and anywhere, and share their experiences. The tourist that was once a mere semi-passive entity even in her/his own tourist experience management is now a prolific producer of electronically available user-generated content (Schmunk et al., 2014) through which to communicate key attributes and experiences related to sights, accommodation and destinations (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2014). With the cybertourism phenomenon, the tourist 2.0 is increasingly managing her/his tourist experience through the Internet. Therefore, as Calvi (2012) concedes, the tourist 2.0 has more expertise than ever in the information-searching process and knows how to take advantage of all the

communicative channels in order to satisfy his/her specific motivations, which the tourism industry is also able to intercept and support. In fact, companies find a wealth of possibilities in social networks, such as improved knowledge of consumers and trends, the ability to anticipate performance, control of online brand image, and direct contact with consumers to better understand their needs, among others.

Mastering Tourism 2.0 necessarily implies mastering the new forms of communication it has imposed. In fact, as Durán (2012) observes, generalised access to the Internet when looking for information or trying to contract products or tourist services has generated new communication possibilities. On the one hand, traditional genres have become more accessible and consequently more persuasive, interactive and direct, and, on the other hand, new forms of communication have arisen where the content-producers are the very same tourists that transmit their opinions, suggestions and recommendations, through traveller forums, blogs, etc. with a mainly informative function (Calvi & Bonomi, 2008; Sanmartín, 2012; Calvi, 2014).

The articles published in this special issue show how Tourism 2.0, or cybertourism, has led to new modes of communication that have arisen and revolutionised essential aspects of its discourse and yielded relevant sociolinguistic implications. Since the migration of genres to the more advanced, interactive and direct online platform has necessarily implied, as already explained, a redefinition of roles, a restatement of traditional concepts and an increase in the possibilities and information available, this volume thus deals with the evolution experienced by tourism and tourism-related communicative issues in recent decades. This evolution, as this special issue reflects, has given rise to the creation of new genres belonging to an interactive and accessible form of communication (Bonomi, 2011), as well as to the hybridisation of already existing genres, to new forms of instruction and business management, and to a redefinition of roles and concepts in keeping with current times.

In the opening article, M<sup>a</sup> VITTORIA CALVI analyses and reflects on the travel guide as a typical tourist genre by evaluating the main transformations it has experienced in the era of Tourism 2.0. By analysing some excerpts extracted from recent tourism texts, the author concludes that migration to a virtual environment has changed the presentation, distribution and amount of information transmitted as well as the style of travel guides, blurring the

boundaries between the traditional descriptive guidebook and the promotional leaflet and contributing to intensify the hybridisation between different genres.

In their contribution, ELENA BÁRCENA, ELENA MARTÍN MONJE AND MARÍA JORDANO present the curricular design of a subject on English for specific purposes from the Degree in Tourism at the Spanish national distance learning university, UNED. The authors analyse the quantitative data compiled in former editions of the subject, inviting the reader to reflect on the model of Tourism 2.0 in the subject of English for Tourism, while dealing with its main methodological and technological aspects, which are presented and analysed together with the challenges of such a teaching modality and its complex didactic scenario.

Through the qualitative analysis presented in her article, ROSANA DOLÓN explores ways in which hotel websites project a place identity for the hotel itself and, in doing so, also for the town or city where it is located. The author reflects on how this representation relies on sociocultural conventions, which in turn may influence the discursive construction of the social actor *tourist*.

FEI-WEN CHENG's article shows how a multimodal analysis can add insight to brand formulation by investigating the way two luxury hotel chains represent and promote themselves through their respective websites. The textual analysis presented explores how a composite corporate identity is linguistically codified at the lexical level, while the image analysis unveils how it is manifested in the representational and interactive meanings of the choices of image.

ÁNGEL FELICES presents in his article the results of the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) project entitled *Autonomous Learning of Specialized Vocabulary in English for Tourism*, which has proven to be a useful complementary task to materials from international publishers in English as a Foreign Language. This project promotes autonomous learning in a more realistic, authentic professional context, serving as a model for the development of similar e-learning platforms in other regions or countries.

In her article, MARÍA-JOSÉ LUZÓN puts forward the main features of ELF interactions in travel blogs, which enable social interaction among members of communities with shared travelling interests and in which English is most often used as a Lingua Franca. The purpose of the research presented is thus to analyse the features of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions in

travel blogs and to explore some strategies used by participants in blog discussions to achieve shared understanding and show belonging to an ELF community.

In line with Calvi's article, GIOVANNA MAPELLI's paper also deals with the guidebook and its reconfiguration and even hybridisation as a genre, bringing about significant changes in the textual patterns as well as in the relevance of the information transmitted in these texts. In her article, and with a view to identifying the characteristics of the genre, the author presents a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the vocabulary and interpersonal metadiscourse of different kinds of travel guides 2.0., which are subsequently compared with traditional guides and other informative promotional texts.

In her article about neology and its contexts of use, JULIA SANMARTIN offers a pragmatolinguistic analysis of the eco-logical, the sustainable and the environmentally-friendly in legal genres and in web genres of tourist promotion. Accordingly, through her research she attempts to unveil whether there is a correlation between neologisms that include a sense of "protecting the environment" and that are created either with the affix *eco-* or through a syntagmatic composition with the adjectives "sustainable", "sostenible" and "ecológico" in two parameters.

Finally, FRANCISCA SUAU-JIMÉNEZ'S paper explores how interpersonality, as a framework for analysis, is always necessarily conditioned by contextual variables. The article is based on the analysis of two prototypical tourism web genres: traveller forums and promotional tourism websites. In it, the author claims that valuable data on the construction of interpersonality in terms of promotion/persuasion and evaluation/advice in non-academic genres can be provided by stance and engagement voices, bringing new data to the interpersonality framework and thus helping to fine-tune this model.

Some book reviews on the topic dealt with in this special volume have also been included for the interest of our readership. It is hoped that the readers find them relevant and insightful.

Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate Dr. Carmen Pérez-Llantada, Editor-in-Chief of *Ibérica*, and her editorial team (Concepción Orna-Montesinos, Oana Maria Carciu and Diana Giner) for their dedication, effort and impeccable work, as well as for all their kindness to me. Thank you.

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All through this volume, which I have proudly co-edited, many significant and complementary aspects, whether lexical, discursive, sociolinguistic, instructional, etc., regarding Tourism 2.0 have been put forward and dealt with in an attempt to comprehensively show how the new kind of communication fostered by cybertourism has already led to a redefinition of roles and to a restatement of traditional concepts. As a result, tourism has become an even more global, multidimensional, democratic and participatory phenomenon capable of reaching and involving the whole world with just a click.

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