

Persuasive Linguistic Devices in Travel Magazine

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate figurative and non-figurative devices used as persuasion in travel magazines. Data were collected from four travel magazines, namely Lonely Planet, Condé Nast Traveller, National Geographic Traveler, and Travel + Leisure. The theories of persuasive writing involving figurative and non-figurative devices mainly suggested by Reinking, Hart, and Osten (1993); Douglas et al. (2001); Burns et al. (2006); Djafarova and Andersen (2007); Pilbeam, Kerr, and Naudé (2008); and George (2010) were used to investigate the data. The sentences in the headlines, body stories, and captions from eight travel articles were examined to find the persuasive devices.

The findings showed that there were three types of figurative devices frequently used in the travel magazines: personifications, metaphors, and similes respectively. Comparison is the main strategy of these three figurative devices to describe places; personifications use human attributes whereas metaphors and similes use familiar things to compare with

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characteristics of places. These figurative devices are effective devices of persuasion because they give clear images of places and their comparisons do not lessen the credibility of the sources.

In the category of non-figurative devices, there were four types frequently used in the travel magazines: positive adjectives, second person pronouns, imperative sentences, and descriptions. Positive adjectives and descriptions use the strategy of presenting appealing images of places in terms of the five senses. Second person pronouns and imperative sentences use the strategy of addressing the readers directly. These four non-figurative devices are effective means of persuasion because they create motivation for travel.

Keywords: Figure of Speech; Linguistic Devices; Travel Magazine

บทคัดย่อ

จุดประสงค์หลักของงานวิจัยนี้คือ การศึกษาประเภทของภาษาภาพพจน์และประเภทที่ไม่ใช่ภาษาภาพพจน์ที่ถูกใช้ในการเชิญชวนในนิตยสารท่องเที่ยว ข้อมูลดิบถูกเก็บจากนิตยสารท่องเที่ยว 4 เล่ม คือ โกลด์แพลนเน็ต, คอนนาสตราเวลเลอร์, เนชั่นนอลจีโอกราฟฟิคาทราเวลเลอร์, และทราเวลแอนด์เลเซอร์ ทฤษฎีการเขียนเชิญชวนที่เกี่ยวกับภาษาภาพพจน์และไม่ใช่ภาษาภาพพจน์ภายใต้คำอธิบายของเรียนคิง, ฮาร์ท, และออสเทิน (1993); ดักลาสและคณะ (2001); เบิร์นสและคณะ (2006); จูฟารัวและเอ็นเดอร์เซ็น (2007); ฟิลบีม, เคอร์, และโนเด (2008); และจอร์จ (2010) ถูกใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ประโยคในส่วนหัวเรื่อง เนื้อเรื่อง และคำอธิบายใต้ภาพจาก 8 บทความท่องเที่ยวถูกวิเคราะห์เพื่อระบุประเภทของเครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเชิญชวน

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ภาษาภาพพจน์ที่พบบ่อยในนิตยสารท่องเที่ยวมี 3 ประเภท ได้แก่ การใช้คำบุคลาธิษฐาน การใช้อุปลักษณ์ และการใช้อุปมาตามลำดับ

การเปรียบเทียบคือกลยุทธ์หลักของการใช้ภาษาภาพพจน์ทั้ง 3 ประเภทนี้ในการบรรยายสถานที่ คำบุคลาธิษฐานใช้คุณลักษณะของมนุษย์ ขณะที่อุปลักษณ์และอุปมาใช้สิ่งอื่นที่รู้จักกันดีมาเปรียบเทียบกับลักษณะของสถานที่ ภาษาภาพพจน์ทั้ง 3 ประเภทนี้เป็นเครื่องมือการเชิญชวนที่มีประสิทธิผล เพราะให้ภาพของสถานที่ชัดเจนและการเปรียบเทียบของเครื่องมือเหล่านี้ไม่ลดความน่าเชื่อถือของแหล่งข้อมูล

ในส่วนของประเภทที่ไม่ใช่ภาษาภาพพจน์ พบว่ามี 4 ประเภทที่พบบ่อยในนิตยสารท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งได้แก่ คำคุณศัพท์ที่มีความหมายเชิงบวก, สรรพนามบุรุษที่สอง, ประโยคคำสั่งและการพรรณนา กลยุทธ์หลักของคำคุณศัพท์ที่มีความหมายเชิงบวกและการพรรณนาคือการเสนอภาพลักษณ์ที่ดึงดูดความสนใจของสถานที่ในด้านประสาทสัมผัสทั้ง 5 กลยุทธ์หลักของสรรพนามบุรุษที่สองและประโยคคำสั่งคือการสื่อสารกับผู้อ่านโดยตรง เครื่องมือทั้ง 4 ประเภทนี้เป็นเครื่องมือการเชิญชวนที่มีประสิทธิผลเพราะสร้างแรงจูงใจในการท่องเที่ยว

คำสำคัญ: ภาพพจน์; กลวิธีทางภาษา; นิตยสารท่องเที่ยว

Introduction

Information searching is a significant process of travel since tourists must use secondary sources to consider new and unfamiliar destinations or services (Wong and Lui, 2010). With regard to written travel information sources, while the internet and guidebooks are regarded as the main planning tools, travel magazines are the main inspiration to encourage people to travel (Insignia Marketing Research Company, 2008 and Grønflaten, 2009). The source of inspiration is important because according to Cole (2009), inspiration is the first step of the seven-step travel process. Therefore, if no inspiration occurs, travel will not happen. In terms of tourism, inspiration means persuading prospective tourists to go to the destinations by building positive images of the destinations (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2008). Therefore,

travel magazines use mainly persuasive writing. There have been few studies on the language used in travel magazines. These studies emphasized sociolinguistics. Moreover, there have been some previous studies of tourism language in terms of persuasion. Most of these studies focused on the language used on the Internet, and in brochures and guidebooks. These studies are categorized into two groups: those dealing with figurative devices and those concerning non-figurative devices. However, there are some limitations of the previous studies. First, in terms of figurative language, the previous studies focused only on metaphors and figures of speech based on sounds such as puns, alliteration, and rhymes. Second, as for non-figurative language, the previous studies tended to focus only on uses of adjectives, imperatives, descriptions, conditional *if* expressions, and questions as persuasive tools. Therefore, the present study would like to extend these previous studies by examining figurative and non-figurative devices found from previous studies and other persuasive devices in travel magazines.

Research Questions

1. What figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines?
2. What non-figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines?

Review of Literature

The literature review consists of persuasive writing including: (1) figurative devices and (2) non-figurative devices.

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing is writing that convinces the readers to think, feel, or perform in a particular way (Douglas et al., 2001). Based on previous literature, the persuasive linguistic devices can be divided into two categories; figurative devices and non-figurative devices.

1. Figurative Devices

According to Reinking, Hart, and Osten (1993), figures of speech are words having non-literal meanings and expressing sensory images to show what something looks like, tastes like, sounds like, smells like, and feels like. Common types of figurative devices include simile, metaphor, hyperbole, meiosis, litotes, euphemism, personification, apostrophe, pun, alliteration, and rhyme (Reinking, Hart, and Osten, 1993; Djafarova and Andersen, 2007; and George, 2010).

2. Non-Figurative Devices

Non-figurative devices refer to linguistic features having literal meanings and expressing facts, opinions, or suggestions to make readers interested in particular topics. Based on previous literature, common non-figurative devices used in persuasive writing include the use of second person pronouns, testimonials, bandwagon appeals, repetition, rhetorical questions, modal verbs, imperative sentences, conditional sentences, adjectives, descriptions, and intensifiers (Burns et al., 2006; and Pilbeam, Kerr, and Naudé, 2008).

The present study established the frameworks by combining the figurative and non-figurative devices from Reinking, Hart, and Osten (1993); Burns et al. (2006); Djafarova and Andersen (2007); Pilbeam, Kerr, and Naudé (2008); and George (2010). There are in total 24 persuasive devices.

These persuasive devices in both figurative and non-figurative devices categories are presented in Table1, as follows:

Table 1 Persuasive devices in figurative and non-figurative devices categories

Figurative Devices	Non-Figurative Devices
1. simile	1. second person pronoun
2. metaphor	2. testimonial
3. hyperbole	3. bandwagon
4. meiosis	4. repetition
5. litotes	5. rhetorical questions
6. euphemism	6. modal verbs
7. personification	7. imperative sentences
8. apostrophe	8. conditional sentences
9. pun	9. positive adjectives
10. alliteration	10. comparative adjectives
11. rhyme	11. superlative adjectives
	12. descriptions
	13. intensifiers

Methodology

The methodology consists of two parts: (1) data collection and (2) data analysis.

1. Data Collection

In selecting travel magazines, the present study used the purposive sampling method. Four travel magazines, namely Lonely Planet, Condé Nast Traveller, National Geographic Traveler, and Travel + Leisure were selected. The purposive sampling method was used in selecting an issue. The

December issue was chosen because there are two main holidays including Christmas Day and New Year celebrations around the world. Therefore, it was presumed that the contents of travel magazines in the December issue would intensively promote destinations. Then, purposive sampling and simple random sampling methods were used in collecting travel articles. There were two criteria for the purposive sampling method. First, the topics of the articles had to deal with places and tourist activities. Second, the body stories of the articles needed to contain at least 300 words because the content of an article of this length would convey the vivid details of places, and there should presumably be several persuasive devices. After that, two travel articles which met these two criteria were selected randomly from each travel magazine. Therefore, the total samples in the study are eight travel articles.

2. Data Analysis

Five steps were taken to analyze the sentences from these eight travel articles. First, each sentence in headlines, body stories, and captions from the travel articles was examined. The persuasive linguistic devices found were classified into two categories: figurative devices and non-figurative devices. Second, linguistic devices in the category of figurative devices were further classified. Third, linguistic devices in the category of non-figurative devices were further classified. Fourth, the frequency of each subcategory was calculated. Finally, subcategories were examined in terms of characteristics and functions to investigate how they are used in the travel articles.

Results

The results consist of two parts dealing with the research questions; (1) What figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines? and (2) What non-figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines?

What figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines?

The results revealed that in the category of figurative devices, persuasive devices frequently used in the travel magazines were personifications (38.53 %), metaphors (23.85 %), and similes (20.18 %), respectively.

1. Personifications

Personifications are further divided into five subtypes based on the ways human attributes are created. These five subtypes include (1) **using human actions** which is using verbs expressing actions usually carried out by humans with places, (2) **using parts of the human body** which is using parts of the human body with places, (3) **using human adjectives** which is using adjectives describing the characteristics of humans with places, (4) **using human personalities** which is using words expressing things associated with humans with places and (5) **using personal reference** which is using personal pronouns and nouns referring to humans with places.

Example 1: using human actions

Over the next three days, Steve and I will poke around in some of the most striking landscape to be found anywhere in California: subtle desert, vast lakes, fairy-tale **mountains** that gradually **wear** a thicker and thicker frosting of snow. (Travel + Leisure)

In this example, the verb *wear*, which is usually carried out by human, was used with the mountains. This personification conveys the clear picture of the mountains fully covered with snow.

Example 2: using human adjectives

And **the palms** are **greedy** drinkers, absorbing over 90 percent of available rainfall in the forest. (Condé Nast Traveller)

In this example, the adjective *greedy*, which is usually a characteristic of humans, was used with the palms. This personification conveys that the palms need a lot of water.

To conclude, the purpose of these personifications is to encourage the readers to be interested in places by making them have the lively, animated images of places with the use of human attributes.

2. Metaphors

Based on the structures, these metaphors are further divided into (1) **visible metaphors** which are metaphors using the verb *to be* or linking verbs to connect places and other things by using the form 'A is B' and (2) **invisible metaphors** which are metaphors indirectly connecting places and other things by not using the form 'A is B'.

Example 1: visible metaphors

The city's latest, and largest, **gem is Germany's Military History Museum**, which opened in October. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, the Military History Museum was compared with a gem by using the form 'A is B'. This visible metaphor conveys that this museum is very special and valuable like a jewel.

Example 2: invisible metaphors

To the west, you can see across to the rolling **whalebacks of the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons**, and to the east, the ground slopes away to the fields and cider orchards of Herefordshire. (Lonely Planet)

In this example, the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons were compared with whalebacks without using the form 'A is B'. This invisible metaphor conveys the characteristic of the ranges of mountains as whaleback lookalikes.

In summary, the main purpose of these metaphors is to persuade the readers to be interested in places by making them imagine the characteristics of places with use of comparison between places and other familiar things.

3. Similes

Similes are further divided into two subtypes based on the forms of similes. These two subtypes include (1) **using the comparative word 'like'** which is using the comparative word 'like' to connect places and other things and (2) **using the comparative structure 'as...as...'** which is using the comparative structure 'as...as...' to connect places and other things.

Example 1: using the comparative word 'like'

Around Rotorua, a Maori heartland, it's easy to believe the struggle continues, as **the eerie landscape** bubbles and churns **like some primordial stew**. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, the comparative word 'like' was used to form a comparison. This simile conveys that a landscape having a heated liquid bubbling appearance looks like the food *stew*.

Example 2: using the comparative structure 'as...as...'

Even amid the kerfuffle of the Medina, **the amplified wail from the mosque** is inescapable-**as persistent as the constant wind that blows in off the ocean**. (Condé Nast Traveller)

In this example, the comparative structure ‘as...as...’ was used to form a comparison. This simile conveys that the persistent sound from the mosque is similar to the constant flow of the wind from the ocean.

In conclusion, the purpose of these similes is to make the readers interested in places by making them imagine the characteristics of places with the use of overt comparison between places and other familiar things.

What non-figurative devices are frequently used as persuasion in travel magazines?

The findings showed that in the category of non-figurative devices, persuasive devices frequently used in the travel magazines were positive adjectives (32.36 %), second person pronouns (19.49 %), imperative sentences (17.35 %), and descriptions (12.09 %), respectively.

1. Positive Adjectives

The examples of positive adjectives found in the samples include *famous, tranquil, relaxing, pleasant, pretty, smart, comfy, amazing, special, and exhilarating*. In addition, many of these adjectives evoke feelings of ‘extremely good’ and ‘extremely attractive’. The examples of adjectives with these senses are *perfect, excellent, gorgeous, and stunning*.

Example 1:

Eco-friendly bungalows along the **pristine** beaches of nearby Tayrona National Park offer a **tranquil** base from which to begin the vigorous three-day uphill hike past traditional villages of the Kogui people. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, the positive adjectives *eco-friendly, pristine, and tranquil* meaning ‘good for the environment’, ‘fresh, clean, unspoiled’, and

'pleasantly calm' respectively were used to describe bungalows and beaches. These positive adjectives convey the environmental concern of bungalows, the good condition of beaches, and the good atmosphere of the bungalows.

Example 2:

This portion of Mulholland is the knife-edge ridge cleaving the valley from the L.A. basin, delivering **magnificent** views on both sides. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, the adjective *magnificent* meaning 'extremely attractive' was used to describe the views of Mulholland. This positive adjective conveys that the views there are very attractive.

In conclusion, the purpose of positive adjectives is to persuade the readers to visit places by presenting the positive characteristics of those places.

2. Second Person Pronouns

Some instances of the use of second person pronouns, including their possessive and reflexive forms were found in the travel magazines.

Example 1:

That night, at **your** hotel, **you're** grateful for the log fire, and the hot-water bottle that awaits **you** in **your** bed. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, the pronoun *you* and its possessive form *your* were used in describing the service of the hotel in Sri Lanka's hill country. These second person pronouns were used to encourage the readers to visit the place by making them feel a sense of being involved in this hotel.

Example 2:

Warm **yourself** by the fire in the bar or one of the smaller rooms before heading through the restaurant, where meals include Cotswold lamb with slow-cooked courgettes in garlic, steak and kidney pie, and guinea fowl with roast mushrooms and Madeira. (Lonely Planet)

In this example, the second person reflexive pronoun *yourself* was used to recommend what to do in the pub of the Fox Inn. This second person pronoun was used to persuade the readers to visit the place by making them feel a sense of being involved in this pub.

To conclude, the purpose of the second person pronoun is to persuade the readers to visit places by making them get involved in places.

3. Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences are used to suggest activities and directions. Sometimes, a transition word or a coordinating conjunction such as *then*, or *and* was used to connect imperative clauses to show the sequence of activities and directions.

Example 1:

Once you've crossed the railway bridge, **turn** left onto the first unmarked country road, which leads past a small lake. (Lonely Planet)

In this example, the imperative sentence begins with the verb *turn*. This imperative sentence was used to suggest directions for walking in the Cotswolds.

Example 2:

Hunt for antiques along Petaluma's downtown Victorian row, and **dine** on seasonal sake-steamed, aged abalone at Michelin-starred Cyrus in Healdsburg. (National Geographic Traveler)

In this example, two imperative clauses beginning with the verbs *hunt* and *dine* were connected by the coordinating conjunction *and*. This imperative sentence in the coordinate structure was used to suggest a lot of myriad activities offered in Sonoma County, California.

To summarize, the purpose of imperative sentences is to persuade the readers to visit places by suggesting where to go and what to do on trips.

4. Descriptions

Description gives vivid details of a particular place by using a verbose style of writing.

Example 1:

And birds are everywhere—great herons and snowy egrets wading through the mudflats, pelicans and cormorants in treetops, and large flocks of ibis taking wing in billowing blankets of white. (Lonely Planet)

In this example, the description presents the kinds of birds, what they are doing and where they are. This description conveys the detail of attractive birds in Everglades National Park.

Example 2:

Pelicans bob on the rolling waves, which are normally measured in inches, not feet. No thundering surf, just the gentle 'hurrah-hurrah' from the mellow emerald waters. Sandpipers dart about the flat terrain, pecking at the margin between land and sea while hunting their dinner. (Lonely Planet)

In this example, the description shows the types of birds, their actions, their positions and the characteristics of the water. This description conveys the detail of the charming environment at Siesta Key Beach.

In summary, the purpose of descriptions is to persuade the readers to be interested in places by sending visual pictures of places to the readers' mind with the use of verbose writing.

Conclusion and Discussion

In the figurative devices category, the three types of linguistic devices frequently used in the travel magazines include personifications, metaphors, and similes. The main strategy of these three figurative devices is the use of comparison in describing places. While personifications compare characteristics of places with human attributes, metaphors and similes use other familiar things in comparison of places. There are two major reasons why these three figurative devices are effective devices of persuasion. The first reason is that these figurative devices provide the clear images of places. Personifications make places seem like people to present physical features and abstract ideas of places. The readers can easily see the pictures of places through familiar features associated with humans. Metaphors and similes describe unfamiliar physical features and abstract concepts of places by using well-known concrete things. The readers can picture places more readily through their associations with easily recognizable things. The second reason is that these three devices can provide the clear images of places without losing credibility of sources. They help the readers to imagine the images of places in terms of human attributes and other familiar things based on the truth. Personifications give non-human things life-like qualities of their own; human attributes which are related to the features of places are used to

describe the true qualities of places. Although metaphors and similes express one thing as something else, their expressions involve the similarities between the true qualities of two different things.

In the non-figurative devices category, the four types of linguistic devices frequently used in the travel magazines include positive adjectives, second person pronouns, imperative sentences, and descriptions. Positive adjectives and descriptions rely on the strategy of presenting appealing images of places. These two devices present sensory experiences of places in an appealing way in five senses: sight, taste, sound, smell, and touch. Second person pronouns and imperative sentences rely on the strategy of addressing the readers directly. They are used to communicate with the readers directly to make them feel a sense of involvement in recommended places. The main reason why these four non-figurative devices are effective devices of persuasion is that they can create motivation for travel. Positive adjectives and descriptions which present appealing images of places create positive perceptions or positive feelings toward places. Inspiration can be evoked by attracting the readers with positive characteristics (Averill, 1975; Thrash and Elliot, 2003 cited in Kim and Fesenmaier, 2008). Therefore, positive adjectives expressing the positive characteristics of places and descriptions giving the readers impressive pictures of places can encourage the readers to visit destinations. Second person pronouns and imperative sentences which are used to address the readers directly make the readers feel an involvement with places. 'Involvement is generally referred to as one's motivational state toward an object in which that motivational state is activated by the relevance or importance of the object' (Bloch and Richins, 1983; Rothschild, 1984; Zaichkowsky, 1985 cited in Kim and Fesenmaier,

2008: 4). Therefore, second person pronouns and imperative sentences create motivation for travel.

Limitation and Recommendation

The present study investigated persuasive devices in the four travel magazines, namely Lonely Planet, Condé Nast Traveller, National Geographic Traveler, and Travel + Leisure. In fact, there are countless other travel magazine titles. Further studies of persuasive writing in a larger number of articles in a wider range of titles would enable the identification of more types of persuasive devices and lead to greater understanding of persuasive writing in travel magazines.

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