

THE ENGLISH TRAVEL GUIDE AS A GENRE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT: THE ARTICLE, BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE RESEARCH AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS, PRESENTS MAIN APPROACHES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NOTION OF "ENGLISH TRAVEL GUIDE". THE PAPER ANALYZES GENRE FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH TRAVEL GUIDE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND TO CONCEPTUALIZE ITS COMMUNICATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL POTENTIAL.

KEYWORDS: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, ENGLISH TRAVEL GUIDE, GENRE, CULTURE, FUNCTIONAL ROLE.

One of the distinctive features of modern civilization is, on the one hand, social and economic globalization of society and, on the other hand, the awareness and cultivation of national identity, the uniqueness of which becomes apparent against the background of interaction with other cultures. People's needs in cultural harmony lead to the intensification of communicative processes, interlingual contacts and lexical borrowing. One of the key elements of any nation's culture is a travel guide, that can be interpreted not only as a text but also as an element of culture. Therefore, the analysis of a travel guide as a genre of intercultural communication in English as the global language is extremely important.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the key features of the English travel guide as a genre of intercultural communication and to determine its pragmatic and stylistic functions based on the available literature and personal observations.

The aim of the research implies the implementation of the following tasks: to analyze genre features of the English travel guide in the context of global intercultural communication and to conceptualize its communicative and functional potential. The research is based on the texts of 14 English travel guides describing such countries as Ukraine, Japan, Paris, Bulgaria, Spain, Greece, Turkey, France, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Italy.

In present-day linguistics, the interest in issues connected with intercultural communication is steadily increasing. It has become obvious that there is an inseparable connection between language and culture, and without knowledge of the target language culture we cannot learn the language as a means of communication.

Many researchers emphasize the importance of international communication in today's life. Fast travel, internet and international media make it easy to communicate with people all over the world. In the era of globalization, humans as social beings need to interact with each other for survival. Today, many problems that the world confronts have a global nature.

Intercultural communication has also become an academic field of study and research. It seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures behave, communicate and perceive the world. The findings of this academic research are then applied to 'real life'

situations, to respond to such urgent problems as, for example, how to create cultural synergy between people from different cultures within a business.

Noteworthy is the opinion of Ukrainian linguist, F. Batsevych, who believes that intercultural communication is a process of communication (verbal and nonverbal) of people (groups of people) who belong to different ethnic, linguistic and cultural communities and, as a rule, speak various idioethnic languages, feel linguistic and cultural difference of communication partner, and have diverse communicative competence that may cause communicative failures or culture shock in communication [Batsevych 2008, p 13]. In the light of this definition, it can be stated that intercultural communication is based upon the following premise: the communicative needs of culturally different people are influenced by their culture-specific norms of self-expression and are thus likely to differ from their own cultural norms. Intercultural communication implies the ability to foresee the expectations and evaluations of culturally different people, and thereby, require adjustment of one's communication style to the communicative needs of people from other cultures. This means that whenever a message created in one culture is received and interpreted in another culture, intercultural communication occurs.

Readings in research on travel guides [Kiseleva et al 2008, Protchenko 2006, Bolotina 2009, Filatova 2012, Grushow 2003, Kiseleva 2008, Swensen, Daugstad 2012, Rozanova 2014] strongly suggest that the English travel guide as a genre of intercultural communication requires profound investigation. Although this genre is of great interest to many scholars, the linguistic information on it is currently incomplete and, generally, it has been studied sporadically. Available papers provide insights only into the essence of a travel guide and into some of its features of linguistic nature. However, in the opinion of the author of this article, the research on the various features of the travel guide is of great significance as it represents intercultural communication, in the process of which bearers of different cultures and languages interact, and language acts as the most important sign of identity.

The English travel guide can be treated as a genre, that is a typified utterance, an inseparable unity of thematic content, style and compositional structure [Bakhtin 1986, p. 64], which has developed due to a particular function (to inform readers about a place of interest for tourists and visitors) and the particular conditions of communication specific for the sphere of tourism. As any other genre, the travel guide is simultaneously static and dynamic, because it serves a model for constructing new utterances of the same kind, which is, however, constantly modified in the process of its reproduction [Yakhontova 1995, p. 85].

It is well known that the history of the travel guide as a genre dates back to ancient Itineraria that provided information on the routes for travellers. They were road maps indicating the distances between different points. First guidebooks on Europe for secular travellers appeared in the XVI century, but became widespread only in the XVIII-XIX centuries with the appearance of a new kind of cultural practice – tourism; this has become possible due to changes in the structure of Western European society and the development of public mass transport. The second factor that promoted the growth of need in the guidebooks was the development of resorts and resort industry, which required the advertising of its services to attract holidaymakers.

At the beginning of the XIX century, the travel guide was created in its present form. It was named *Baedeker* after German publisher Karl Baedeker (1801-1859), who was the first in Europe to open a special publishing house of guidebooks. As a result of the competition between two publishing houses specializing in guidebooks – *Baedeker and Murray* (John Murray II, 1778-1843, and John Murray III, 1808-1892) – a type of a universal serial road

directory was produced, which has become an indispensable companion of any traveller around the world [Kiseleva et al 2008, p. 8].

It is obvious that with the emergence of digital technology, many publishers turned to electronic distribution, either in addition to or instead of print publication. These publications can take the form of downloadable documents for reading on a computer or of online information accessible via a website. New online and interactive travel guides enable individual travellers to share their own experiences and contribute information to the guide.

The travel guide is one of the most widespread types of text that describes culture. The study of the travel guide from the perspective of linguistics allows us to identify its important linguistic characteristics which are essential to the understanding of intercultural communication.

By examining the definitions provided by different scholars in their papers, it is possible to reveal the most important characteristics of a travel guide. In present-day linguistic literature, the term "travel guide" is unambiguously interpreted. For example, A. Protchenko defines the authentic English travel guide as an advertising and informational publication, on the one hand, and as an informational and advertising encyclopedic or reference book on the other [Protchenko 2006, p. 3].

The English travel guide is a hybrid discursive formation, because advertising, media and popular scientific discourses and styles intersect in it. Thus, different types of travel guides possess the features of different functional styles [Protchenko 2006, p. 14]. According to Yu. Bolotina, the travel guide text (and any other original text created within and for intercultural communication) is a documentary evidence of how the English description of the foreign language culture is realized by particular authors [Bolotina 2009, p. 194]. According to L. Kiseleva et al, the travel guide is a verbal genre with pragmatics and communicative strategies determined by the author/compiler, which includes advertising as well as ideological discourse and clearly models the perception of the described space [Kiseleva et al 2008, p. 8]. N. V. Filatova considers the travel guide as an essential source of information about natural, economic, cultural and household peculiarities of the country enabling communication between the representatives of various countries in the cultural space [Filatova 2012, p. 79].

I. Grushow in the encyclopaedia "Literature of Travel and Exploration" remarks that the purpose of a travel guidebook may be limited to a non-narrative description of a defined geographical area to be used as a practical reference for successive travellers. It follows from this vision that accounts of pilgrims, explorers or sojourners, which may have considerable value for readers in planning their own journeys, cannot be considered guidebooks due to their inherently autobiographical character [Grushow 2003, p. 519]. L. Kiseleva also shares this opinion noting that the travel guide does not belong to all publications that help the traveller in the organization of his/her trip; rather, it is only the directory where practical information (how to get there, where to stay, what to eat, etc.) is combined with the cultural, historical and educational information. It is also important for travel guides to have a comfortable (pocket) format, clear presentation and affordable price [Kiseleva 2008, p. 16 – 17].

It is obvious that the guidebook has to operate within a restricted scope and size. Undoubtedly, the combination of text and illustration is very important for this genre. A quite neutral factual description can be enriched by a striking illustration and, therefore, it will evoke an emotional response. Thus, the aim of a travel guide is to accomplish the goal of

creating images which might rouse interest and curiosity, encouraging people to visit the location [Swensen, Daugstad 2012, p. 2 – 3].

N. V. Filatova suggests that travel guides can be divided into two main types: 1) advertising and referential publications and referential and advertising materials given in prospecti, booklets and brochures; 2) author's travel guides, which are informational and advertising materials and referential and encyclopaedic publications. Despite different size and content, the two types of travel guides have the same basis. It includes historical information, the description of sights, map, data concerning the location of monuments, sightseeing tours, nearby cafes and souvenir shops, information for people with disabilities and necessary phone reference [Filatova 2012, p. 79].

Yu. Rozanova distinguishes six kinds of printed travel guides: 1) visual travel guide, which presents numerous photographs and illustrations. These travel guides are often complemented by a 3D relief map, to make it easier to understand the terrain; 2) informational travel guide, where the traveller will find not only information about the sights, but also addresses of hotels and restaurants that are illustrated; 3) travel guide for relaxation with predefined routes. These are publications with minimum of text and maximum of illustrations, extremely popular among children; 4) travel guide for backpackers, which has recently appeared. In these guides, travellers share their experience of travelling to a particular country. The first guide for backpackers appeared in 1971, when a young couple returned from their honeymoon and decided to tell about their trip and to inspire other young couples. Thus, a book "Through Asia, inexpensive" marked the beginning of the world famous publishing house "Lonely Planet"; 5) travel guide for sofa's travellers, designed for people who are just going on a journey. It is a kind of an orientation guide, which allows the reader to understand whether he/she wants to go to this or that country or not; 6) travel guide for independent travellers, existing in Europe and the United States more than a dozen years. This guide is designed for those who are not satisfied with the standard routes offered by travel agencies, but who want to spend every night in a comfortable environment [Rozanova 2014, p. 283].

One can agree with L. Kiseleva that the travel guide is not just a guide for travellers and tourists, helping them to navigate the terrain and get the necessary practical information. It is an ideological text, and its ideological nature comes into conflict with superficial objectivity, generally adopted in travel guides [Kiseleva 2008, p. 37].

The style of a guidebook sometimes demonstrates such dominant features of scientific style as a high level of generalization, accuracy, informativeness and impersonality created by the use of impersonal sentences and passive constructions. From publicist style, the travel guide borrowed a combination of standard language and expressivity, the former manifesting itself through a wide use of clichés. From the discourse of advertising, the genre of a travel guide inherited creolization, that is, the obligatory presence of illustrative materials, such as photos of attractions and maps of objects supplementing the text. In the photographs and illustrations, exceptional views of described geographic points are usually imprinted [Filatova 2012, p. 81 – 82]. There is no doubt that a genre of the travel guide is extremely complex as to its structure, compositional organization and the diversity of embodied modes, speech tactics, verbal and nonverbal codes [Filatova 2012, p. 82].

The functional role of the English travel guide obviously contributes to the goals and tasks of intercultural communication. According to L. Kiseleva, travel guides semiotize the described space, which is primarily disclosed through selection. Any, even the most detailed travel guide cannot include all information, and, therefore, the selection of facts and objects is

inevitable. The other function of travel guides which is directly linked to its pragmatics is its advertising function. A travel guide is in no way historical or even natural history research. Its informative and educational functions are subjected to the advertising task – to attract tourists and visitors to the described site [Kiseleva 2008, p. 20 – 21].

A travel guide, as a rule, is compiled and anonymously written (when it comes to a well-known publishing company, the owner's name on the cover does not necessarily mean that he or she is the author). The readers of travel guides are not particularly interested in authorship because they are looking for reliable information in the text (in the broadest sense of the word) rather than for literary merit or scientific originality [Kiseleva 2008, p. 37].

Summarizing the available research, we can state that a travel guide is a book of information about a place designed for the use of visitors. It usually includes full details related to transportation, accommodation, restaurants, historical and cultural information. It is an original text created within and for intercultural communication, in which the comparison and contrast of "home" and "foreign" is one of the organizing principles. There are a variety of travel guides, focusing on different aspects of travel. Travel guides can also take the form of travel websites, free and accessible for everyone. Furthermore, travel guides may be used for a range of purposes, from learning to entertainment.

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