

Cosmopolitanism and translation

with emphasis on tourism texts

Dr. Stavroula Kefala

Director of research, Ministry of Tourism, Greece

Invited talk
Dec. 17, 2021

MA English Language Linguistics and Translation
Specialization: Linguistics, Theory and Applications

Course: Translation and Intercultural Communication

Department of English Language and Literature,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens



Tourism texts and their analysis seem to heighten translator perception and facilitate translator training in terms of identity construction, cultural appreciation and self-realisation. Tourism as a socio-cultural condition of globalisation, is considered “a barometer” and “an instrument of local and national self-understanding” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998:141) as well as a vehicle of intercultural dialogue (Robinson and Picard 2006, Johnson, 2014).

A central theoretical framework in the study of promotional texts is the sociologically oriented theory of Critical Cosmopolitanism (Delanty 2006a, 2011, Swain 2009), which seems to have the potential to account for aspects of meaning-making in tourism advertising material. Tourism, which involves exchange, negotiation of identity, flexibility of beliefs and a transformation of self, in order to assume the ‘tourist’ quality, seems to be very conveniently explained by the theory of Critical Cosmopolitanism which focuses on cultural encounters and whose key characteristic is “a reflexive condition in which the perspective of others is incorporated into one’s own identity, interests or orientation in the world” (Delanty 2011:634).

Critical Cosmopolitanism measures notions such as the degree of openness and dialogue, as well as the risk of connecting to other cultures, which constitutes a tool for exploring and categorising a culture’s responsiveness to cultural communication and its interaction with the Other.

A critical cosmopolitan approach with respect to cultural phenomena, in brief, concerns a methodological emphasis on (1) the identification of openness to the world, (2) self-transformation in light of the encounter with the Other (3) the exploration of otherness within the self (4) critical responses to globality and (5) critical spaces between globality and locality (Delanty 2010:17).

Taking into account the particularities of tourism advertising discourse, we can investigate strategies of persuasion used whilst building and maintaining a social relationship between host and visitor and how relevant issues of identity and participant roles can be traced through the analysis of linguistic shifts in the translation of tourism discourse.

Through analysis of Greek-English pairs of translated tourism advertisements we can trace different approaches to self-reference identity. Tourism advertisements, a sub-genre of advertising, have a specific structure, content and style which serve its communication purposes, entailing its recognition as a separate genre with special characteristics. Issues analysed include multimodality, hybridity and “translation”, through examples showing host-tourist relations via analysis of English –Greek pairs of translated tourism discourse, mainly by National Tourism Organisation websites and brochures. Another issue of interest in tourism advertising in this context is the use of metaphors or evaluative language enhancing the idea of the creation of experience in order to promote self-realisation when in contact with the Other. Finally, a part of the lecture will be dedicated to visuals and how they play an important role in the creation of the advertising message.