

CONTRASTIVE APPROACH TO VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TOURISM DISCOURSE¹

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Abstract

The way people converse in a given language community is one of the central categories in the analysis of the verbal behavior in tourism. One conversation is consisted of numerous conventions which every culture establishes according to its specifications. In other words, the idiosyncrasy of the expressions in a language, which mirror a given culture will also reflect on the flow and the characteristics of the conversation. However, it seems easier to postulate particular strategies by which the members of one language are guided while conversing, than to prove, considering the fact that they are found outside of the conscious and they can be foreseen. Still, when members of different cultures establish a contact, the usual flow of the conversation is disabled in many cases because of the different rules of conversing that the native speakers have as elements of communicative competence.

Key words: communicative competency, tourism discourse.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry can be viewed as a chain consisting of string of links which represent the separate sectors and services in the domain of the complete offer of the hospitality-tourism-hotel complex. The rapture of the weakest link, in this case, communication, will lead the persistence of the overall structure or string in danger.

In the tourism industry, the human resources are a key factor. Their level of education, professionalism, as well as their language strategies in the

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relation guest – hospitality worker has a significant importance in the strategy of raising the standard and advancement of the quality of service. Considering the fact that the tourism product is realized by an immediate contact between the provider and the user of the service, the language competency is one of the most important components, they satisfy the needs and wishes of the guests who come from different countries and carry the culture, tradition, and customs with particular attention.

In this paper, the cultural models that directly lead towards the relation of the grammatical and lexical categories in the English and Macedonian language will be presented on one hand, as well as those models that are in some way more distant from the language production and are only a part of the mental apparatus of the speaker of a given language on the other hand. They are labelled by the term *verbal behavior* which represents a subcategory of the communicative behavior that also covers the forms of the non-verbal communication and gesticulation (or its symbolic meaning), as well as the behavior which has some particular symbolism (greeting, hand shaking, kissing, bowing etc.).

RULES OF INTERACTION

According to Seville-Troike (1989:154), the *rules of interaction* component gives the explanation of the rules which are used in speech, emphasizing the meaning of the word *rules*, which in this context refers to ‘the descriptive expressions of behavior, how people should behave while speaking, which are closely connected with the values that are shared in a given language community’. For example, when the speaker gives a compliment, a polite request or an invitation in the English language, the kindness usually requires a suitable answer from the other speaker in his addressing (Seville-Troike, 1984:155).

The way in which the conversation flows in a given language community is one of the central categories in the analysis of the verbal behavior in tourism. One conversation is consisted of numerous conventions which every culture establishes according to its specifications. In other words, the idiosyncrasy of the expressions in a language, which mirror a given culture will also reflect on the flow and the characteristics of the conversation. However, it seems easier to postulate particular strategies by which the members of one language are guided while conversing, than to prove, considering the fact that they are found outside of the conscious and they can be foreseen. Still, when members of different cultures establish a contact, the usual flow of the conversation is disabled in many cases because of the different rules of conversing that the native speakers have as elements

of communicative competence. Based on the existence of such examples, it can be justifiably assumed that there are rules which determine the flow of the conversation, the turn-taking, the termination, the interruption of the other speaker etc. in the intuition of the native speakers

In terms of the analysis of the ways of conversing in tourism in the English and Macedonian language, it is needed to establish the universal characteristics of the conversation, regardless of the language, the surrounding or the context in which the conversation is taking place.

According to some authors such as Labov (1978:254), the speakers who participate in the conversation depend on an assumed meaning which they possess. Theoretically, three cases can be postulated, which the author explains in the following way:

A: events – A has knowledge that B doesn't have

B: events – B has knowledge that A doesn't have

AB: events – knowledge which both A and B have to the same extent

Based on these assumptions, a rule can be postulated according to which if A expresses a statement for the B events, it would be interpreted as *request for confirmations*. This rule is paraphrased by James (1980:122) in the following way:

I think I'm right in believing that:

A: You are the manager of this hotel.

B: Yes/No/that's right...

The conversation can give answer to two demands: it has to make sense, and it has to maintain contact. The conversation, naturally, has its beginning, flow and end. Here, the emphasis is on the flow of the conversation itself, considering the fact that the language strategy turn-taking is illustrated.

In connection to the above stated, a further explanation has to be given for the function of maintaining contact or the phatic function, i.e. phatic communication as called by Malinowski. The phatic function is 'the use of the language for creating an atmosphere or maintaining the social contact, and not the exchange of information or idea, like for example, conversations about the weather or asking others about the state of their health'(Crystal, 1985:67). A question about the relevancy for comparing the language strategies in tourism is raised: what is the subject of the phatic communication in different language surroundings? The author Lever (Lever in James, 1980:133) differentiates indexical and deictic phatic communication. By indexical communication, the author refers to the transfer of information about the person to the speaker, as well as their social

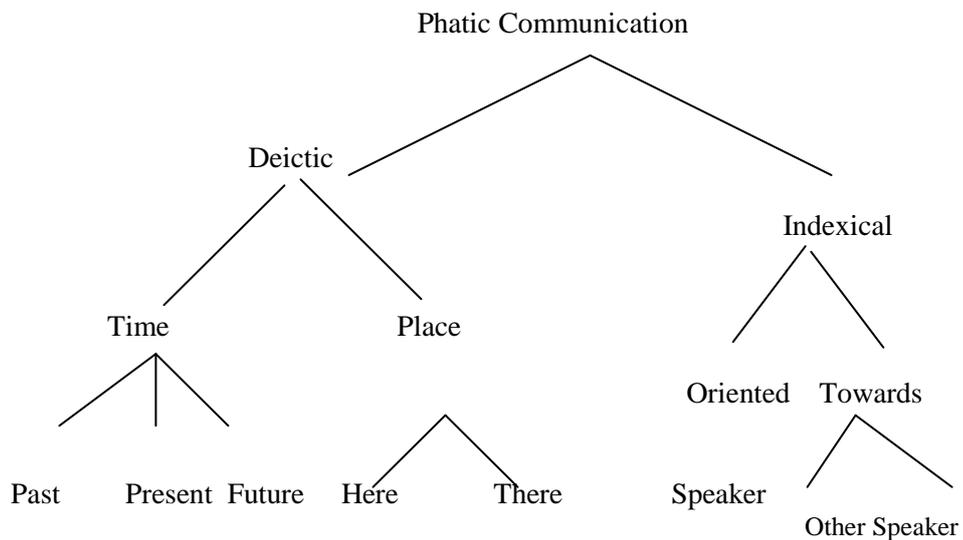
status, while by deictic refers to the place and the time of the statement itself. The time reference includes present, past, future, while the place reference is presented with the terms 'here' and 'there'. The following examples illustrate that in a good manner:

<i>Nasty storm last night.</i>	(past)
<i>What a beautiful time of year it is!</i>	(present)
<i>D' you think we'll get rain tonight.</i>	(future)
<i>Nice hotel this.</i>	(here)
<i>What a boring trip.</i>	(here)
<i>They served afternoon tea at that other hotel.</i>	(there)

The indexical communication can be double, depending if the speaker addresses himself or another speaker, as in:

<i>This is hard work. My feet are killing me.</i>	(oriented towards oneself)
<i>That looks breathtaking! Do you come here often?</i>	(oriented towards the other speaker)

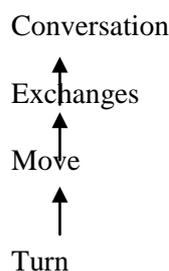
The above stated can be graphically presented in the following way (James. 1980):



Many times, in practical situations, the boundaries are not entirely clear i.e. one same statement can address to more parameters. The analysis of the corpus indicates that with speakers of CL1, the statements oriented towards the other speaker, usually are in a form of a question, while the declarative sentences express indexical communication oriented towards the speaker himself. Of course, this is not a strongly defined rule, but rather only a form of tendency in communications in tourism. According to that, this choice will be conditioned also by the social status, so the inferior speaker will use symbols which are oriented towards himself, in contact with the superior speaker. In the opposite direction, the superior speaker will use statements oriented towards the other speaker, if he in more inferior. Illustrated by an example, that would look like this (James, 1980:133).

*I've been waiting at the reception desk fifteen minutes, now.
You were here before me.
Have you been here long?*

The analysis of the corpus shows that in the turn-taking in conversation in CL1 (Culture of Language 1), one characteristic is that one speaker speaks in one moment. It is said that the speaker who speaks 'has turn', and the conversation flows in a way that the participants all take their turns. Considering that the conversation has a particular goal, the speaker and the listener both take their turns, indirectly reaching a consensus about the goal of the conversation 'move'. The conversation move is an integral component of the exchange. In that way, the components of the conversation can be represented by a scale of units of the rules of interaction in the following way (James, 1980:137):



The analysis of the rules of interaction refers to the turn-taking or simply conversation move. In other words, in the analysis of language interactions, such ethnographies 'indicate one sequence in the form of stimulus-plus-interaction of the participant, analyzed according to their role

in the beginning, the maintenance, and the end of the conversation, as for example, the convention of greeting, saying goodbye, changing the subject, and represent an important methodological term in learning the ethnography of speech' (Crystal, 1985:35).

The most common ethnographies which are found in the tourism communication, i.e. in the language surroundings such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and which are singled out by the analysis, are questions and answers, claiming and agreeing, compliment and gratitude, scolding and apology etc.

For the conversation to flow with no obstacles, it is necessary for the participants in the conversation to give valid 'contributions' i.e. their statements to be in accordance with the norms of the given culture. In that context, the author Edmundson (Edmundson in James, 1980:138-140) states that there are certain conventions from a linguistic aspect that are used to 'refresh' the conversation which is ongoing, and he calls them gambits. From the six gambits that the author gives, two are of an essential importance according to him.

The back-channeling of parts of the statements of the speaker or introducing special words such as *right, okay, I know, sec, yeah, mm and oh* indicates to the speaker that the listener(s) are still listening. That is done by the other speaker in order to maintain the conversation by repeating and reacting to the previous statement. Bublitz (1988, 198-140) calls the repetition a *positive interruption*.

According to Edmundson (Edmundson in James, 1980:138-140), the repetition of a part of the speaker's statement occurs when the listener has no answer ready, so in that way he wants to gain more time. Edmundson calls this gambit *pick up*. This is characteristic for the touristic discourse in the Macedonian language.

*I wonder whether you have a single
room for 15th December?
Did you say vacant rooms?
15th December, Sir... Well, let's just see.*

*Dali imate slobodni sobi?
Rekovte slobodni sobi?
Eden moment, da vidime...*

*I wonder whether you've finished
with my checking out.
Checking out, Sir?*

*Dali veke me odjavivte od
sobata?
Sakate da se odjavite,
gospodine?*

Well... one moment, please.

Samo moment, Ve molam...

At the same time, the repetition expresses respect to the speaker, in that way which lets the speaker know that the question was not ignored, even though an answer is not given. This type of pseudo contribution on behalf of the other speaker convinces the speaker that his question is not unusual, but is, in a way, expected. Because of that, Edmundson considers the *pickup* gambit as a statement from the theme-rheme type (Edmundson in James, 1980:138-140).

The *down to her* is a gambit which has been conditionally brought to being the first maxima of politeness, which Lakoff (1972) marks as 'don't impose yourself on your listener'. Considering the fact that this means of 'refreshment' of the conversation is particularly frequent in the English language (especially in the British variant), in many cases it conditions the stereotypical understanding of CL1, especially of the British culture as polite, tactical and non-imposing. The goal of this means is to make the statement more acceptable for the listener by down-toning it. These accessories can stand in front of the main statement or after it. Some of the most common accessories which appear in the corpus are:

I think I'm right in saying that X=Y;
Correct me if I'm mistaken but X=Y;
X=Y unless I'm mistaken;
X=Y or I'm imagining things.

What is of essential importance in this analysis is to determine which of the stated means for 'refreshment' of the conversation are used naturally by the speakers in tourism, whether and when there is an overlap, considering the social status of the speakers, their age or the level of education.

CONCLUSION

Considering the fact that the language interaction is a dependent entity, determining the boundaries of its identification is a relevant factor. For example, the telephone conversation is an interaction which is limited with the ringing of the phone as a summoning signal, and the hanging up as a closure. Boundaries of the language interaction also can be found in statements such as 'goodbye' or 'come again next summer' etc., as well as in laughing at a joke. Also, different facial expressions, the tone of voice, the body movement or the change in the rhythm of speech can appear as boundaries of language interaction.

The everyday formal language interaction in one language community has clearer defined speech boundaries than the informal, because there is a greater degree of predictability in the verbal and non-verbal content of the routines that follow these language interactions. The short meetings with acquaintances sometimes are consisted of routines which are boundary markers of longer and less formal language interactions. It seems that such concisely presented categories are acceptable in tourism in terms of depth and width of the analysis of the ways of communication in both languages. The ethnographical descriptions of communication in tourism are arranged in such way that offer a clear boundary for the seemingly fluid and unreachable categories, which leaves a possibility for their internal expansion, in the same class of occurrences.

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