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ON THE DISCURSIVE SELF-CONSTRUCTION OF EXPATS, BEHAVIOR AND VALUES

Abstract

Considering that learners engage in the creation of new educational scenarios, often using digital media, travelogues have been analysed because they represent the digital development of a well-established genre within tourism discourse. This study focuses on the discursive construction of expats as 1) integrated tourist and 2) travelogue writers. I consider the occurrence of an *Us* as opposed/assimilated with a *Them* in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces by analyzing a corpus made up of articles taken from the most accessed travel webzines for expats at the time of the research. Then I analyse the thematic structures and techniques of this textual typology. The paper may help to address pedagogical issues such as critical genre awareness and identity construction.

Keywords: expat, tourism discourse, otherization, user-generated blog

1. Introduction

1.1. Expats: labels, and communities

Due to the most recent socio-political situation in many countries, the phenomenon of migration is reappearing as a discourse within the mobilities field (Benson, 2011). The connotations of the word "immigrant" are very different from the label "expat", a term which has come into view to define a new trend in migration, yet the boundaries of its meaning are not fully marked. According to some definitions, an *expat* is someone who is temporarily living abroad, as opposed to an *immigrant* which specifically means someone who has moved to a new country. Others claim an immigrant moves as a result of a want/need to escape something in his own country (poverty, war, lack of education) for something better, whereas expats' moves are typically more neutral (job related or retirement). In general, the term is used to define British and American emigrants who move to the Commonwealth countries for work. Using Torkington's (2012) words, these people belong to the middle class and contribute to the discourse on tourism because, when migrating, they engage in the latest "modern, global, elitist, borderless and highly mobile social practices" (p. 71). They contribute to these tourism-related practices by identifying themselves as 'the best tourists' thanks to their unique position, which allows them to visit the host country as the locals would. The blogger Hays-Pisani (2015) explains that expats have a greater span of time and a better understanding of the host culture, since they assimilate and integrate better in the context without acting as a tourist (Loftis, 2015). Their behavior is different in that, whereas tourists visiting a place expect everyone to accommodate their needs, expats tend to be more acquainted with traveling issues, such as language, flexibility, respect for other cultures (Hays-Pisani, 2015).

In contrast with the above mentioned definitions, it seems that a different representation of expats has emerged in academic studies (Bains, 2015; Lawson, 2013; Torkington, 2012), in which they are seen as strongly ethnocentric individuals who uphold the ideology of the British/American lifestyle. For example, Torkington (2012) explores lifestyle migration between northern Europe and the Golden Triangle area of the Algarve (Portugal), where people from Northern Europe are not considered immigrants but "resident tourists", even when they settle permanently in the country. Two of the distinguishing features of resident tourists is that they do not speak the local language and they mostly go to places where they meet their co-nationals, features which are not in line with the adaptation and assimilation process that is emphasized in expats' self-representation. The term "residential tourist" is also used by Benson (2011), who distinguishes this phenomenon from what she calls "labour migration". She also suggests that residential tourists are people with sufficient economic security who move to a country in search of a better quality of life after retirement. The representations of the destinations are categorized under three main headings: the rural idyll, the coastal retreat and the cultural/spiritual attraction (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). This, together with the motivation behind the choice of moving, make residential tourists different from expatriates, who move for job reasons and do not expect to find the ideal place to live. Another label in existing ethnographic studies is "professional migrants", who are often described as those who have exclusive work and lifestyle conditions and are thus characterized by words

like *privileged* and *elites* (Shimoda, 2014, p. 138). These features are brought to their most extended meaning in the study by Bains (2015), who argues that expats' racialized (white and western) identities allow them to imagine themselves outside of the label "foreigners", and put themselves in a higher social position.

What emerges from academic research and from expats' self-representation is a controversial definition, which is still focused on an anglophone point of view. Another definition includes graduate and postgraduate students who try to widen their job opportunities and increase their incomes by looking for and accepting jobs in other countries, especially in areas such as biology and engineering. These expatriates do not conform to the former definitions. They are young postgraduates of different nationalities, with a basic knowledge of English, who move around within Europe looking for a paid occupation they are qualified to do, which is not necessarily connected to language education or governmental jobs. Their income, contractual benefits and most importantly the kind of job they are offered distinguish them from immigrants moving for unqualified jobs and poor incomes. Their young age makes them more likely to use their time for outdoor activities, such as trips, food and wine experiences, and tourist visits to the local area, of which they are informed by the net. What is confirmed by several studies, in fact, including the one by Lawson (2013), is that expats are offered networking and support through blogs and websites. The online forum appears to be a tool for maintaining ties among the expat community, as well as maintaining symbolic meaning attached to the old life and the new (Lawson, 2013). In Lawson's opinion, the net offers reference to shared (British) culture. She claims that routines such as requests for advice, new member announcements and expressions of support show how the forum is a communal mechanism for supporting "life in France, in English", a claim that is the complete opposite of the expats' self-representation. The point is, in this study, that expats form a community within the communities they live in through the webzines and the blogs that they write to inform and support other expats (Lawson, 2013), and which represent a new genre (Cappelli, 2008).

Genres are essentially defined in terms of typifications of rhetorical actions or consistency of communicative purposes within a specific discourse community, and having a "relatively stable structural form" (Bhatia, 1993, p.181). Alongside traditional genres like the guidebooks, brochures or postcards, weblogs and apps have more recently found their way into tourism communication, becoming texts that differentiate and interact and therefore engender hybrid forms. The expats' websites in particular, give information not only on locations but also about living there, and are therefore designed in both a persuasive and trustworthy way. They are persuasive in that they reassure their readers about the good quality of expats' life, and trustworthy because they write about their own experience of how to deal with the process of transformation from being a foreigner into a new country, to living as an integrated individual enjoying "otherness" in an enthusiastic way. These websites mediate the encounter between expat and destination both at a cultural and at a linguistic level and by selecting what is relevant and what is not, they represent the destination just as a guidebook would. It follows that these websites share common textual and linguistic features with other touristic texts, yet in other ways they are clearly different from them.

1.2. Aims and structure of the paper

This paper questions how expats discursively construct their identity as integrated tourists and in relation to an out-group in terms of values, behaviors and spaces. Secondly, taking expats as writers of travelogues, the study considers how these travelogues can be considered as belonging to tourism discourse. First, I consider the occurrence of an *Us* as opposed or assimilated with a *Them* for in- group vs. out-group consolidation and in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces, by analyzing a corpus composed of a number of expats' articles. These texts build group solidarity with other people in the same situation, while at the same time maintaining and building an open channel between the source and host cultures. The us-them polarization thus displays the struggle between oppositional forces, and may reflect not only different identities but also opposing ideologies. In a second passage, I analyze how the writer presents himself as a guide, looking for the strategies used to persuade, seduce and at the same time inform, features that are typical of tourist guidebook genres.

In this article, I describe the corpus under analysis and explain the criteria of choice first, and then I identify and discuss the linguistic means through which identity is construed. I analyze the occurrence of the first pronominal instances, comparing them with the third pronominal instances, and finally I analyse the reciprocal collocations and their polarization toward positive and negative representation of identities. In addition, I look at expats' texts as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies, and search for the linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that are involved in the genre. Finally, I discuss the results and draw some conclusions, considering the pedagogical implications.

2. Corpus description

The corpus consists of a selection of articles taken from Transition Abroad, a magazine that started as a paper publication in 1977 and has been a webzine since 1995. The website has a homepage with some information and a link to their webzine. It specifically aims at

“providing information that would enable open-minded and empathetic travelers to actually meet the people of other countries, to learn about their culture, to speak their language, and to *transition* to a new level of understanding and appreciation for our fascinating world. The title was also meant to suggest the changes in our perspective that result from such cultural immersion travel.” (Transition Abroad, A Brief History of Transitions Abroad Publishing: Our Mission)

According to the sales manager, the webzine has received eight million visits worldwide by readers who are seeking a source of primary information. They have listing and rotating ad banners that are related to teaching and studying centers, volunteering and working abroad. Anyone can become a contributor and submit an article. The webzine is referred to as *TAzine* and it basically has three sections: Europe, Latin America and Asia. By clicking on the *TAzine* cover issue, one can browse current or back issues that include a number of photos of landscapes and portraits. At the end of each article, readers can join the discussion on a board where comments and likes are left. Articles include descriptions of areas visited, both in terms of geographical and cultural aspects, as well as tips about how to find options on a budget.

My corpus consists on the 48 articles taken from the Europe 2015 issue (90,847 words) and on the 59 articles taken from the Asia 2015 issues (113,897 words), for a total of 107 articles (204,744 words in total).

2.1. Data analysis and framework

The articles were downloaded and collected as separate files, which were saved in .txt format in order to be processed by *Antconc 3.4.1*. The articles were then ordered and divided into sub-corpora. Each issue was considered a sub-corpus. For the interpretation of data, I combined a quantitative approach derived from Corpus Linguistics, but with a more qualitative understanding. The first step was to look at collocates in order to see the relationship between the node word and the other lexical items in the corpus. These linguistic choices show how writers engage in the representation of groups (Wodak et al., 2009). As suggested by scholars (e.g. Krzyzanowski and Wodak, 2007; Wodak et al., 2009), research on the construction of identities and belonging has shown that the individual/community negotiates the Self through discourse and, in addition, negotiates his/her/their dichotomy between individual and collective identities (migration as subjective experience and attributed membership). In particular, borrowing Wodak et al.'s words, "the conceptualization of identity results from a combination of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes, of related emotional attitudes and of similar behavioural dispositions" (2009, p.153). The categories involved in the *Us-Them* polarization thus serve to convey meaning and categorize the world. This linguistic strategy is used to construct and express identity through the main narrative voice, the travel guides writer's voice. The analytical framework is consequently based on the assumption that expats imagine themselves as a group-community. This mental construct is produced discursively and implies a complex of conceptions, emotional dispositions and attitudes, and similar behavioral conventions (as in Wodak et al., 2009). This representation reflects the expat identity, which is shared collectively through the webzine. Their narrative voice emerges from the texts that are construed as a sort of intertwined genre (a diary, a guidebook with descriptions of local amenities and a manual of surviving tourist-centred needs such as getting to a specific location, getting a good night's sleep, finding a meal, getting a good bargain in a shop).

The webzines have been looked at in order to study the contents, strategies and linguistic realization of the self-representation to understand if the writer is an integrated tourist, what his/her values and behaviors are from the point of view of polarization versus external identities, and his/her self-positioning towards other cultures. Since the language persuades and seduces (Dann, 1996) through certain discursive techniques that are based on authority and persuasion, certain strategies (namely comparison, testimony, ego-targeting, emotive manipulation, dialogic interaction and invitation) will be analyzed in order to understand how the writer offers him/herself as the perfect travel guide.

In the first part of the analysis I focus on the language related to the in-group and out-group in the European issue. Expressions used to refer to the Us-group are isolated from the corpus wordlist and sorted by frequency and a qualitative aspect is added to the analysis by using concordancing tools. This procedure is applied for the language related to the 'outsiders' as well. The second part of the analysis focuses on the language related to the Us-group and

the 'outsiders' in the Asian issue, and the same procedure of isolating expressions from the wordlist and using concordance is repeated. The final part of the analysis focuses on the discursive construction of the expat as a tourist guide, and analyses the texts for the most prominent markers of tourism discourse.

3. Constructing Us-Them in European contexts

In the first part of the analysis, the focus is on specifying the strategies which the expat writers use in constructing their image, the in-group and the out-group. The expressions used for in-group are isolated from the corpus wordlist. Seven different forms for *Us* appear on the wordlist, in order of frequency per token, *I* (905), *my* (426), *We* (405), *our* (212), *me* (139), *us* (84), and *expat* (27). From the number of tokens, it is obvious that the first person in clippings *I* and *my* are significantly more frequently used than the first plural *we* and *our*. This pattern does not apply to the construction of a group. However, these articles come in the form of a blog diary in which a narrative I discusses what (s)he meets during his/her travels. The narrative I is associated with verbs and predications usually ascribed to discovering, such as: *faced, asked, walked, exclaimed, knew, shuddered, captured, stepped out, thought, enrolled, found, believe*. These verbs are used in narratives and give the idea of becoming aware of a situation or a fact, or being the first to find or observe something peculiar. This use is illustrated in the following example:

- 1) Cruising along the Fjærlandfjord, on our way to the Norwegian Glacier Museum, I *captured* this reflection of Norway's scenic splendor. (E7)

To *we* and *us*, the verbs are associated to the improvement field: *travel, find out, learned, gathered, teaches, explain*. These verbs underline the disposition to learning from the other(s), being helped, as in examples:

- 2) [...] while an older Spanish gentleman *explained* to us the difference between papas, pipits, and patatas (three different words for potato) in hilarious detail. (E13)

Analyzing the word *expat*, it is possible to draw the image these articles offer:

- 3) The expatriates that Istanbul attracts has fluctuated through the years. In the 1970s, for instance, it attracted mostly hippies from the US and Australia. Today it brings in a slapdash assortment of English teachers, drifters, writers, musicians, entrepreneurs, diplomats and especially young freelance journalists [...] (E19)
- 4) They come to me wanting apartments with terraces, large bedrooms, and clothes dryers. I need to be the first person to rein them in and adjust their expat expectations. (E17)
- 5) There will be language and cultural misunderstandings to deal with. You may find your friendship groups perform mitosis, breaking off into two groups, into local friends and expat friends, who will seldom mix together on account of language or cultural complications. You will change roles and

navigate personalities and complain about locals to expats and about expats to locals. (E19)

- 6) [...] you will also find yourself part of a very lively expat scene, with people from manifold disciplines from all over the world, who will help to broaden your mind and build you an international network of friends. (E19)

These examples involve the idea of a different (more stimulating) life that needs adaptation skills.

The *others* are referred to as *they* (174), *them* (91) or with the adjective *their* (228), as *locals* (164) or through markers pointing to their nationality (Italians, Spaniards, etc.). Collocates refer to language, food, culture, locals, friends as in the following examples:

- 7) When *locals* shop at markets *they* take the time to smell, thump, and even taste what *they* are being offered [...]. (E3)
- 8) They speak English better than they speak German [...]. (E5)
- 9) Italians are extremely patient and accommodating when you are trying to learn and will often try to help you any way they can. (E33)
- 10) Fortunately, I have found few people in the world who are as forgiving as Spaniards when you absolutely butcher their language. (E12)

These examples give the idea of an *I* that is incompetent, and a patient and cheerful *other*. Apart from *locals* (118) the word *they* is also used for food (9), accommodation (6), destination (1), services (9), attitudes (2), students (6), other tourists (23). Interestingly, other tourists are construed negatively:

- 11) tourists [...] as they race from destination to destination often appearing stressed and exhausted. (E26)
- 12) I see people buy a lot of things to take home, but they should also be able to enjoy it here. (E11)

In these examples *Them* is idealized as a lovely person/community who knows how to savor life, provides information, speaks a foreign language and is accommodating and patient. The positive polarization goes against the image of *Us*, who moves clumsy and has no skill in languages but intends to discover the world and shows open-mindedness. The *tourist* is at the far end of the negative polarization, worried, under pressure and behaving in the most consumerist way instead of savoring the experience. In terms of values and attitudes, it is evident that the polarization *Us-Them* here involves the in-group of expats versus the other tourists instead of the host people, from whom the in-group attempts to acquire knowledge and living habits.

4. Constructing Us-Them in Asian contexts

As in the European context, seven different forms for *Us* are analyzed on the wordlist in the Asian corpus, and, namely, in order of frequency per token, *I* (1248), *we* (639), *my* (511), *me*

(229), *our* (212), *us* (209), and *expat* (78). The clusters refer to *community, circles, colleagues, destination, expert, family and forum*. The main collocates for *expat* and *I* are associated with verbs and predications usually ascribed to survey, such as: *ranked, classified, earned, shares*, but also *community, condos* and *loneliness*. These verbs are used in suggestion and advice involving logistical basis, with an eye to emotional states, especially when dealing with the word *expat*. This use is illustrated in the following example:

- 13) naturally one of the most common problems expats run into is loneliness.
(A48)

The examples involving *I* offer an image of self-making, mostly being alone in decisions:

- 14) teaching in Southasia for five years, I realized that if I wanted to open up [...].
(A59)

In relation to *we* and *us*, verbs are associated with adventure (*living, exploring, decided, arrived, found*), which seems to be in line with what has been found in the European issues. Among the verbs, there is *explore* and those suggesting feelings:

- 15) we would explore Thailand and the surrounding regions [...]. (A57)
16) we would still call Thailand home [...]. (A57)

However, a closer look reveals different attitudes and feelings as in these examples:

- 17) we have become accustomed to the sticky, humid place [...]. (A59)
18) We live in a gated community [...]. (A59)

A different condition emerges here, a discomfort that leads to self-exclusion from the host territory and makes expats closer to their community:

- 19) value living among expats, our family [...]. (A57)

This idea is confirmed when analyzing the occurrences, collocations and functions for *Them*. The out-group are referred to as *they* (348), *them* (154) or with the adjective *their* (372) or as *local(s)* (170). Apparently, locals' habits are described and referred to positively:

- 20) Perhaps the best reason to relocate to China are the people. In our experience, Chinese people are unusually warm and welcoming. They are curious but always kind. We found that even after 14 months of living and traveling around the massive country, we came away with nothing but good experiences with the locals. (A59)

The adjectives *warm, welcoming* and *kind* carry a positive connotation, which is eventually confirmed by the last sentence, which judges meeting locals as a *good experience*. However, in many instances, *they* is used to convey a negative image, explicitly or implicitly, both for local people and by extension for the whole country:

- 21) Men's behaviour toward foreign women is most often immature. They may try to touch you casually in an elevator [...]. (A59)

- 22) [in Singapore] but there does seem to be some resentment for expats who appear to be coming in and “stealing” the most highly paid jobs. (A52)
- 23) We don’t have the same rights as men and far too many crimes against women go unreported or, worse, unpunished when they are reported. (A59)

A very common suggestion as in (24) sounds as an alarm, a distance between *Us/Them* with a very negative polarization for *Them*.

- 24) As such, women need to be particularly alert when traveling to India and, in order to avoid potential issues, must conform to what’s expected by the locals [...]. (A59)

These examples convey a negative image of locals, who are depicted as resentful and whose customs (and maybe values) are at least unpleasant. *Them* is ultimately connected to a distance in habits, customs and languages, which eventually ends in the impossibility to communicate and understand each other:

- 25) The word she gave me, with a gentle smile, was “talat,” or “dadat,” or as close to what she said as I could replicate. (A33)

In these sentences the polarity established by the use of *Them* is very ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a fascination for the differences in habits, culture and food but the writer’s attitude and continuous suggestion is to be alert. The image of Asian locals is definitely not idealized, and language is both a job opportunity and a communication barrier. There is no reference to other tourists, the few might be more involved in the *Us*-group.

5. Travelogues as a “tourism” genre?

There is a contrast between tourist and traveler, which has already been demonstrated. In Francesconi’s words (2014), tourism enacts

a dichotomic discourse, tourism condemnation goes hand in hand with travel celebration. Accordingly, ‘travel’ is a responsible, sustainable, fulfilling activity practiced by independent, curious and refined human being moved by an authentic interest and passion for what is remote, ancient and authentic. (2014, p. 2)

It has also been demonstrated that “travel and tourism texts have the ideological potential to influence and orient perception, ideas, values, and actions” (Francesconi, 2014, p. 3). As seen in section 2, the corpus of this paper consists of expats’ texts, interpreted as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies that are typical of tourist guidebooks, and I look for some linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that are involved, starting from quotes. According to Gartner (1993) the tourist industry constructs a favorable destination image as a recognizable spokesperson’s suggestion. These spokespeople may be rich, famous personalities and, in the digital era, also common people who have tested the experience. Quotes are therefore used as evidence of a quality experience and as a gateway to an ephemeral world created by literature and dreams. At the phrastic and textual level, quotations of famous travel writers/authors appear to play a crucial role in guidebook

representations, as they give support to the information given, in terms of either prestige or discredit. The same strategy can be seen in the corpus of expats' web-texts:

- 26) "Frankly, I believe I am in good company when I proclaim my motto, 'savor the journey as well as the destination!'" . Jeff Titelius is a travel writer and publisher of EuroTravelogue.com—chronicles of wondrous journeys throughout Europe. As Jeff says, "Wherever the roads or rivers may lead, I seek out cultural connections with places and people." (E32)
- 27) Whatever I had read or seen about the city had never prompted me to mark it on my travel map. Writers such as Gunther Grass and V.S. Naipaul called it "a city without a future," and Bombay-born Rudyard Kipling referred to it as "The City of Dreadful Night." Rajiv Gandhi once said that it had become a "dying city" after the economic relapse of this once celebrated industrial and cultural center of India. And the description of life in the slums of "The City of Joy" by Dominique LaPierre, later depicted in the famous film adaptation of Roland Joffé, as well accounts of Mother Teresa's life and work amidst the city's most destitute had further contributed to the desperate image I had of this West Bengal capital. (A55)

The second strategy on a lexical level, which insists on the creation of an imaginative world, consists in the use of words belonging to the language of the destination, which are used mainly to confer an exotic flavour to the text and to provide local colour. Linguaging is a way to mediate cognition, shaping knowledge and experience through language. Cappelli (2013) uses the term in the context of tourism discourse as the employment of foreign words (especially the local language) in the discursive negotiation of cultural differences. She argues that linguaging has the function of providing authenticity to the experience of the writer, and also of reducing the gap between two cultures by providing linguistic shortcuts to otherwise difficult language and/or cognitive concepts. In addition, especially in expats' blogs, linguaging has an expressive function and a pragmatic meaning since it allows the reader to experience the cultural gap and the writer's difficulty in closing this gap. It is worth noting that foreign words are sometimes used without any explanation, thus immersing the tourist in the local culture, or accompanied by a translation or a comment, thus giving the reader the instruments to understand it. However, linguaging may be also seen as a sort of 'manipulation' through the use of particular expressions shared by writer and reader, which makes them closer:

- 28) Though I wouldn't know until I returned home, these "bietole," which I thought to be greens related to beets, were actually broccoli rabe, prized in Italian cuisine. (E33)
- 29) People exchange greetings as they run into each other, "新年愉快 · 恭喜发财!" Happy New Year, wishing you happiness and prosperity! (A30)
- 30) Santa plied us with "tiger's milk," a gently fermented maize left to work its magic in a bucket. We moved on to "tongba" (millet beer) then "rakshi" (pronounced "roxy"), a hot version of schnapps, before falling into bed [...].(A28)

Alongside the use of exoticism, great emphasis is placed on words such as genuine, historical, real, authentic, originally, unique, typical, traditional, etc. Rather than referring to specific attributes of the destination, these emotive words appeal to tourists' expectations about it or about the tourist experience in general (namely through expressions such as *undiscovered*, *adventurous*, *romantic*, *authentic*, *magic* etc).

- 31) But there is definitely much more to Bali: the various arts and crafts, the typical dances, gamelan music, and Wayang Kulit theater, the Hindu temples with their many rites and festivals, the impressive cremation ceremonies, and of course, the magic food with its intriguing spices, sambals, and secret touches. (A58)

Emotive words also imply the writer's involvement. Very often, touristic text writers make personal judgments or use emotive registers through specific linguistic choices. Words such as interesting, unmissable, worth are used in self-committed sentences to trace what 'must' be seen.

- 32) A completely blue sky, the warmth of the sun mitigated by a gentle breeze, calm waters, comfortable lounge chairs, a cool drink, and that swooning feeling that, although it took us more than two full days and nights to get here, it *surely* is going to be worth it. (A12)
- 33) [...] the most beautiful dzong of Bhutan can be seen in Punakha; and the spacious Bumthang valley with its friendly villages and numerous monasteries further to the east is *definitely* worth a visit as well. (A34)

This strategy engages readers through the writer's authority, based on an implication that the writer more or less explicitly recommends the experience. Directives and the verbal action recommend are used in this unbalanced dialogue:

- 34) If you have a free weekend, I also recommend you take a train to Córdoba and check out the cathedral built smack in the middle of a mosque. (E39)
- 35) Be sure to ask "Servis var mi?" to the driver after you arrive and he will point you in the right direction. (E26)

The link with the reader is assured by the use of the pronoun *you*, which is frequently employed along with a rather colloquial language and a conversational style, which aims to address the tourist in a direct way and make him/her feel at home. This involvement becomes especially relevant when authors and readers belong to the same society or culture, as they usually share the same knowledge, attitude and even ideologies. Additionally, the use of *you*, which is often found both in advertisements and tourism discourse, turns the reader into a 'subject'. In the corpus, *you* occurs 1252 times and is used to engage the reader in the narration or has the function of an exhortative marker:

- 36) If you are a foodie like me, you might want to plan a series of trips from region to region trying out the local drink. (E17)

The last linguistic strategy uncovered is the use of comparisons by means of simile and metaphor (Dann, 1996, p. 17). Comparison is a verbal technique which is employed to soothe

the effects of strangeness and to manage the unfamiliarity of a destination. Destinations are thus treated as something special yet quite close to one's usual experience:

- 37) You'll never find encounters like this on any itinerary in the world! (E3)
- 38) In Turkey, as in other places, [...]. (E26)

In the corpus, comparison is often used to express (the desired) integration with the context, both in terms of foreign customs and values, a desire which is often explicitly expressed:

- 39) Our weekly games of fútbol made me feel like a real Spaniard [...]. (E12)
- 40) Like many locals, on weekends we dine on curry and som tam at riverside restaurants or take a short boat ride to Koh Kret [...]. (A57)
- 41) [...] the frustration of always being treated like an outsider by locals even when I adopted Indian customs [...]. (A59)

6. Conclusions

Whilst previous research has examined migration in terms of flows, habits and lifestyles, this paper sees it as a mobile practice in which a better lifestyle is constructed according to expectations, and where identity is reformulated (Lawson, 2013; Shimoda, 2014; Torkington, 2012) in terms of opposition between the *I* (or in-groups) and out-groups. Expatriates give advice to other expatriates-to-be in weblogues, telling them their stories of traveling, difficulties and good results when approaching different countries, cultures and people. In order to explore the discursive construction of the expat as an integrated tourist and a travel guide writer, two issues of an online webzine were considered, and the construction of an in-group and an out-group (in the expression of values, behaviors and spaces) were analyzed. The analysis is based on the assumption that expat webzines are rightfully included among the new genres of tourism discourse by providing a form of reliable living testimony and exploiting the same rhetorical mechanisms used in promotional tourism material, as already suggested by Cappelli (2008), who includes them as on-trip informational materials.

By analyzing a corpus of reports from the most accessed travel webzines for expats, the paper suggests that these articles promote different images of expats' identity and tourism. On the one hand, European areas are positively represented as authentic and warm, with ideal hosts. A narrative *I* emerges and it is associated with predications usually ascribed to discovering, and underlines a disposition to learning from the other(s), in a stimulating environment. References to locals always have positive connotations. *They* are more than happy to talk with expats, who try their best to savor their new life and to be involved in the context, bitterly despising other tourists who cannot enjoy the experience. On the other hand, being an expat in Asia offers a different perspective. Texts are mostly suggestions and tips about how to move in a totally different culture. The analysis shows that the language related to the *Us*-group is associated with an image of self-making; predications are usually ascribed to suggestions and pieces of advice about how to face different attitudes and feelings, which leads to self-exclusion from the host territory. A polarization between *Us* and *them* exists, which is in line, yet does not totally conform, with what was found by Torkington (2012),

according to whom expats refuse to integrate, do not speak the local language and mostly go to places where they meet their co-nationals. Perhaps these results support what Lawson (2013) suggests, which is the idea that there is an ideology within western lifestyle migration, or a 'right way' for westerners to live in Asia.

One contrast between the expat facing a 'comfortable' difference and the one facing a totally different culture is the construction of the in-group. The European *Them* (locals) emerges as a lovely person/community, eager to offer their help even in a foreign language. The positive polarization goes against the image of *Us*, who moves clumsily and has no skill in languages but wants to discover the world with an open-mind. On the far end of negative polarization is the other tourist, worried, under pressure and following the most consumerist habits instead of savoring the experience. In terms of values and attitudes, it is evident that the *Us-Them* polarization involves the in-group of expats versus the other tourists instead of the host people, from whom the in-group attempts to acquire knowledge and living habits. On the other hand, the Asian issue offer a totally different opposition. Analyzing the occurrences, collocations and functions for *Them*, the paper shows that *I* is in a state of alert against dangerous behaviors and distances between *Us* and *Them*. In these sentences *Them* (locals) is very ambivalent: on the one hand there is a fascination for the differences in habits, culture and food, but the writer's attitude is to be alert because of the differences in the those habits, customs and languages. While the European issue offers mostly reports of journeys and experiences, the Asian issue contains suggestions and advice to cover the distance between *I* and the local customs/people. This might be due to the fact that, while Europe falls under Benson & O'Reilly's (2009) categories, namely the rural idyll, the coastal retreat and cultural/spiritual attraction, the Asian issue seems to offer a fourth category: 'the land of job opportunities'. The destinations in this category are characterized by a choice made more because of the new economic constraints than bohemian lifestyle choices. The idea of the land of opportunities suggests a need for further research into the world of expats, broadening the scope to non-anglophone expatriates.

The second part of this study considers the corpus of expats' texts interpreted as a collection of pieces of advice and seductive strategies that are typical of tourist guidebooks, and I therefore looked for linguistic and thematic structures and techniques that were involved in this sub-genre. The two issues certainly support and confirm the idea that expats' talk (articles in this case) is rightly included among the new genres of tourism discourse (Cappelli, 2008), and that it contributes to tourism discourse itself by providing a form of reliable living testimony and exploiting the same rhetorical and cultural mechanisms used in promotional material related to tourism. I found the same textual features in guidebooks, from quotes, directives, and emotional words, to exoticism and the you-involvement strategy as an advertisement and emotional tool. Comparison deserves a special mention since it is used differently in expats' texts than in guidebooks. In fact, comparison is known to be a powerful instrument in the representational process as it can be employed in opposite ways depending on the aim of the writer. It can reduce the gap between the destination culture and that of the tourist or increase it by stressing distance in space and time. This approach is particularly useful in revealing the influence of imageries associated to other places and people, which may be different from a different (e.g. expats') angle.

In conclusion, travelogues are understood in this paper as the natural evolution of travel guidebooks in digital contexts, since they make use of digital motifs (openness, directness and interactivity), have a wide audience and are produced by non-professional writers. The analysis of the thematic structures and techniques belonging to this textual typology helps to address pedagogical issues such as critical genre awareness as well as identity construction. Considering that learners engage in the creation of new educational scenarios (often using digital media technology), digital texts may serve to develop their linguistic and cognitive outputs. Travelogues are a form of collaborative knowledge construction offered by non-professional writers (user-generated content) in digital media. By understanding how expats provide a description of identities, included otherness (out-group, Wodak et al., 2009) in terms of environment and culture, the paper provides a starting step towards critical thinking for policy-making, teaching and learning, and identity research. In addition, considering travelogues as the digital development of a well-established genre within tourism discourse, the paper addresses the issue of genre descriptions in digital contexts, which can feed into pedagogy in the form of syllabus and materials design, addressing multiple approaches. The new (digital) frames imply a focus on genre awareness (helping students experimenting new practices, e.g. the ability to use online resources, ability to identify echoes in the digital genres, ability to use multimodality to understand a message) and on their potential influence on the organization of knowledge, thus involving them into the questioning of audiences and authorships, new meanings and language repertoires as well as providing them with the possibility of new conceptualizations of notions like identities.

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