

THE ECO-TOURIST IN CANADIAN AND ITALIAN NATIONAL PARKS

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1. Introduction

has for a long time been the object of social scientific study (Urry 1990; 2000) and due to its expansion it is destined to be increasingly at the centre of scholars from diverse disciplines. This study concentrates on ecotourism, can be defined as tourism that aims to minimize tourists' negative impact on environment and local communities. One of the main ways in which Ecotourism is to maintain and protect the ecological system is the National Park. These are of natural and constructed natural areas; besides the obvious display of natural Parks also offer festivals and spectacles which lay out "displays of ethnicity, culture, urban or industrial heritage through the (re-) invented narratives of spaces which contribute to shape, and are themselves shaped, by the history-geography, issues of national identity, local communities and the demands of

"reference", is one of the attracting factors of tourism (Katan 2001), this is even in the case of ecotourism. Eco-tourists' desire for difference is to experience the midst of a natural uncontaminated and untouched nature. The reasons for desire are varied: for some, it is "imperialist nostalgia" (Rosaldo 1989), for others a yearning to return to a lost past, to a "natural" way of living uncontaminated modern civilization. A successful journey towards the realization of such a desire that one steps out of his/her "environmental bubble" (Cohen 1972) and starts a process of adaptation to nature and a different culture. Our aim is to carry out a possible analysis of the way ecotourist is construed across the Canadian and Italian regions on the theory of cultural orientations provided by Hall (1980). Briefly, besides Cultures into High Context Cultures (HCC) and Low Context Cultures

¹ Authors conceived this study together but for practical reasons Cinzia Spinzi is responsible for sections 1 and 2 and Monica Turci is responsible for sections 3 and the conclusions.

(LCC) and in Hall's model Italy belongs to HCC, America to LCC. Differences between the two are illustrated as follows:

-HCC rely on common background and text tend to be implicit, LCC tend to explain things at great length (cf. Hall 1983; Katan 2004; 2006);

-HCC have a strong sense of tradition and history, LCC privilege change and the present;

-HCC privilege emotions and feelings, LCC focus on facts;

-HCC's emphasis is on community, LCC's emphasis is on individuals (see Katan 2004; Trompenaars et al. 2000).

The analysis that follows attempt to trace a profile of Canadian and Italian ecotourists and will address issues connected with Hall's model: Are Canadian and Italian ecotourism discourses shaped by their own cultural orientation, or do they attempt to speak in the tongue of the displaced tourist?

2. Method and Material

The data for the analysis come from a small comparable corpus of the Canadian and Italian official website of National Parks (www.pc.gc.ca; www.parks.it) totalling 155,200 words for the Canadian sub-corpus and 112,361 for the Italian counterpart. Canada boasts a long tradition in park-based tourism being the third country in the world, after the USA and Australia for the establishment of parks as protected areas with conservationist purposes. If in Canada parks have existed for well over a century, in Italy, this activity is much younger but it is growing by 20% annually at world level (Buzzi 2007). Both websites provide a list of national parks, 23 in Italy and 39 in Canada, with a description of the natural wonders and cultural treasures of the place, as well as of the activities and learning experiences they offer.

From a methodological point of view, this study is corpus-assisted (Partington 2004) and the qualitative analysis mainly relies on the Systemic Functional Grammar. According to this system, clause is viewed as Representation, Exchange, and Message and activates experiential/ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. Here, attention will be focused on the representation of the participants.

The retrieval tool used to process the data is *WordSmith Tools* (Scott 2007).

3. The Canadian sub-corpus

In his seminal study on tourism and language, Dann (1996) addresses tourists with a variety of terms; guests, travellers, drifters, explorers, visitors and eco-tourists are among the most frequently used ones.

Similarly, in the Canadian corpus the eco-tourist is addressed in a variety of ways. However, what is noteworthy is that the actual term *eco-tourist*, that we would expect to find, is absent from our corpus. In order to find what synonyms have been used in

similarly in this specific case, this search provides a DNA of alternative designations for the absent eco-tourist. Results are displayed in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1 – Distribution of the lemmas with their relative frequency in the Canadian sub-corpus

1	<i>Visitor/s</i>	0,18%
2	<i>Tourist/s</i>	0,005%
3	<i>Traveller/s</i>	0,01%
4	<i>Explorer/s</i>	0,01%
6	<i>Camper/s</i>	0,02%
7	<i>Paddler/s</i>	0,01%
8	<i>Hiker/s</i>	0,03%

Shifting our analysis from quantitative to qualitative data, a collocation search has been carried out.

The first question we have attempted to answer is whether all the terms in the word list are actually used to refer to activities typical of the eco-tourist. These terms belong to different temporal environments: while *visitors* and most instances of *travellers* along with *campers*, *hikers* and *paddlers* have Finites in the present tense, *explorers* and most instances of *tourists* are associated with Finites in various form of the past tense. As promotional discourse takes place in the present, it is likely that also its clients are in the present. An analysis of concordance lines confirms this hypothesis: it shows that *explorers* appear in the environment of narrations about the historical dating back to the discovery of the territories of the Canadian Parks. The word *tourists* is also connected with the past, though in this case, the past pertains to tourist practices. In our corpus, as in much contemporary tourist discourse (see Crawshaw and Urry 1997) the word *tourist*, unlike traveller and visitor, carry negative connotations, because, as can be seen in Concordance 2, tourists engage in a mass and elitarian form of tourism that shows no appreciation for the environment and merely exploits it.

N	Concordance
1	villages, the Mingan Archipelago has been used as a tourist resort. Who Named the St. Lawrence Islands?
2	not provide transportation to the islands. Adventure tourists find the facilities at St. Lawrence Islands a history. Long before Beausoleil Island was a haven for tourists, it was visited and inhabited by many distinct
3	Stories of the park's abundant fish were luring in tourists by the train-full. Fish stocking was necessary
4	park is located in the heart of the Thousand Islands tourist area. Make St. Lawrence Islands National Park
5	the land and wildlife that make the area a popular tourist destination. The park is located in an area of rich
6	came a new influx of settlers, and rich summer tourists. Lumber mills sprouted out of nowhere, leading
7	fastest-growing vacation spots in Canada. Wealthy tourists had been buying up islands in the Georgian
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Concordance 2: *tourist** as node word sorted on the L1

In order to trace a profile of the Canadian eco-tourist, attention has been focused on a detailed qualitative analysis of the lemmas within the corpus.

pler and hiker are all nominalizations, Participants that grammatically, semantically and ontologically are emanations of a Verbal process. Though these are portrayed as living in the present, the nature of their activities provide the impression that they live in a pre-industrial past: *campers* return to a state that dates before residential buildings, *paddlers* and *hikers* before the train that the car, an Edenic pre-industrial era.

N	Concordance
1	parts of the park, trails are not as well maintained and travellers must be prepared for random camping (certain village. Discover what has intrigued artists, explorers and travellers for hundreds of years. Gwaii Haanas has no Stephen Herrero's research on risk factors to backcountry travellers in bear habitat, which showed a much lower
2	BE PREPARED FOR ALL EMERGENCIES! Backcountry travellers in all seasons should be self-reliant and fully and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. Learn more about how to reduce the risk of bear
3	beautiful mountain wilderness. As a backcountry traveller, you will be able to visit natural wonders seen by and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. You can significantly reduce the risk of bear
4	others serve as points of departure for backcountry travellers. An elaborate network of hiking trails interlaces of the park's backcountry trails were established by early travellers including First Nations people, fur traders,
5	services backcountry users have come to expect. Frequent travellers can purchase an Annual Wilderness Pass valid in Harbour may take 8-14 days, and during that time, lake travellers may be wind- or wave-bound one in three days.
6	levels. Glacier Lake / Cirque-of-the-Unclimbables Many travellers enquire about the possibility of flying in to Glacier
7	a food cache has been provided here for the use of river travellers to store their food while they are on an some of the most glorious secrets of the prairie. Settlers, travellers and explorers, when first confronted with the
8	on glaciers or icefields. We also recommend it for solo travellers without a local contact. The safety registration was lonely. The land and sky offered nothing to comfort the traveller, especially the European, so accustomed to
9	mountains averaging 2500m (8,000') in height, are visible to travellers on the Haines Road or the Alaska Highway.
10	Class IV rafters or kayakers, strong wilderness travellers, and be able to deal with emergencies and self
11	between Prince Albert and Waskesiu. Today, wilderness travellers can still capture glimpses of freighting and
12	Otherwise, who will believe you? Experienced wilderness travellers may wish to plan an extended backcountry trip
13	the winter crosses numerous avalanche paths. Winter travellers should be equipped with avalanche beacons and
14	beacons and be knowledgeable in their use. Winter travellers should check the daily avalanche forecast for
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Concordance 3: traveller* as node word sorted on the L1

Analysis of *visitor traveller, camper, paddler and hiker* - henceforth named *eco-Participant* - has focused on and these lemmas as Head Nouns in order to try to find out more about their experiential functions. Findings show that they function mainly as Participant in material Processes - 71% of the total instances - followed by mental Processes - 15% - with only a negligible small percentage scattered among verbal and relational Processes.

As regards material Processes, *eco-Participants* function mainly as Actor and Beneficiary, while they have the function of Goal in two instances only. Instances of the lemmas as Beneficiary are typically realised by the expressions *for visitors* and *offer visitors*, as shown in the following datafile:

N Concordance

73	located in the park, provides extensive services for visitors. Prince Albert National Park of Canada protects Beach Unit! There are a variety of learning activities for visitors of all ages: Public Summer Programs From late magnificent natural areas and managing them for visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy in a way in local weather create dangerous challenges for visitors on the mountains. Sudden wind shifts can park is by horseback. Some other popular activities for visitors are bird watching and nature photography. of the Redwall Fault - an impressive park entrance for visitors from the south. The character of Kootenay Service provides comprehensive rescue services for visitors to the National Parks. The Costs of rescues will Information Centre all offer learning opportunities for visitors of all ages. Information Centre The Information is great terrain for goats, it's not the best footing for visitors. At present, there are only a few developed trails and researchers bring the park to life. Contact us for Visitor Centre hours. Be one of the few who have had Service provides comprehensive rescue services for visitors to the National Parks. Costs of rescues will park is by horseback. Some other popular activities for visitors are bird watching and nature photography. Like the summer months organizing daily activities for visitors. Learning for better appreciation and better Island National Park offers exciting opportunities for visitors and students to learn about ecological and outdoor recreation. It is an enduring landmark for visitors to Riding Mountain National Park of Canada. herd, and they are often looking for a place away from visitors for some privacy? Fall Many prairie birds are
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Concordance 4: visitor* in the Canadian sub-corpus sorted L1

Instances of expressions of the kind *offer visitors*, construct the *eco-Participant* as benefiting from services provided by the Park or the environment which in the environment is construed in the role of personified inanimate Actor. The relation between Actor and Beneficiary is one between an active Participant and one that is more passive, hence here the writer/s of this promotional material construe/s Natural Parks as personified inanimate Participants in an active position while the *eco-Participant* is left with no choice but to benefit of what is offered. High frequency of instances of the *Eco-Participant* as Actor could be seen as reinstating the *eco-Participant's* agency. Concordance search however shows that in virtually all instances Actor's action are accompanied by Modal Verbs construing different degrees of obligation: from high degree obligation as in *All visitors must register before entering Torngat Mountains* to low degree obligation such as in *Visitors may bike along the path*. *Eco-Participants* active roles in National Parks, though frequent, are restricted by rules designed to protect the environment.

As long as mental Processes are concerned, in the environment of the *eco-Participant* all three types of sensing are found: perceptive, cognitive and emotive. Of these, the most prominent one is the perceptive followed by the emotive and last the cognitive. Processes of the cognitive kind show the *eco-Participant* in the passive role of Phenomenon; for example *visitors are educated about the natural and cultural heritage of Gwaii Haanas*. On the contrary, when *eco-Participants* are connected with perceptive and emotive Processes they perform the active role of Sensors. Emotive processes are frequent, but qualitatively lexically restricted to the verb *enjoy*. The most significant of the mental Processes are those of perception. These are instantiated by verbs such as *see, witness* and *observe*. The pervasiveness of *eco-Participant* visual perceptions is also shown by the collocates of the node *visitor** which include *bird-watching* and *nature photography*. That *Eco-Participants* are construed as perceptive beings who mainly observe, watch or see is relevant for issues of power and control. Cultural theorists such as Foucault

and Urry (1997) have noted that since modernity the development of "subjective vision" has provided the observer with autonomy over the thing or people he sees, while simultaneously allowing new forms of control, a metaphorical – albeit powerful – way of appropriating and taking control of space.

4. The Italian sub-corpus

Contrary to the profile of *tourist* in the Canadian data, the Italian lexical item *turista/i* is not a thing of the past but belongs to the present. All the Finites in the concordances of the *turista/i* are in the present tense meaning that the eco-tourist is undistinguishable from the traditional tourist:

1. Oggi il borgo continua a popolarsi solo in estate, ma al posto delle greggi ci siamo noi turisti a sostare, magari presso la trattoria.
2. Molto ricercati dai turisti sono gli oggetti che qui si realizzano: anfore romane e greche, annaffiatori, fischietti, pigne per giardini, eccetera.

A reason for this discrepancy between the comparable findings may be found in the relatively longer tradition of ecotourism practices in Canada with respect to Italy, as well as in the different historical and cultural background of these countries.

The major lexical items associated with *visitatore/i* are verbs like *offrire* (offer), *garantire* (guarantee), *avvicinare* (approach), *comunicare* (communicate) which place the visitor in the position of benefiting from a service as in the following lines with *visitator** as node:

1. San Domino offre ai visitatori il fascino delle grotte tra cui quella
2. Centro Visita del Parco offre ai visitatori, il giro delle valli in comode bar-
che
3. del Parco garantiscono al visitatore le informazioni indispensabili per
4. affiancato un piccolo museo in cui si anticipano al visitatore le peculiarità
5. dell'anno offre al visitatore uno scenario mutevole e di straordinaria bellez-
za.

The item appears in a transitivity structure which attempts to convey a sensorial and emotionally charged description of a welcoming scene. The reader is presented with a series of Material processes which amount to 56% of the instances (17% are Relational; 14% are Verbal and 13% are of the Mental type). In more than half of the instances *visitatore/i* takes on the role of Beneficiary or better the Client for whom the process is said to take place. It is never given the role of Actor but in the following instantiation: *I visitatori possono pertanto effettuare interessanti escursioni*. What is of interest is the semantic clash between the Actor, the Material action and its Goal, i.e. an inanimate Actor is portrayed as carrying out a Material action which produces an emotional Goal as illustrated by the following lines:

Concordance

N	Concordance
1	fruizione naturalistica dell'territorio del Parco anche i visitatori disabili. Sono stati avviati contatti con le Guide
2	Tra i servizi che il Centro Visita del Parco offre ai visitatori, il giro delle valli in comode barche elettriche, e
3	e ghiaccio, sono altre opportunità che si offrono ai visitatori che rivolgendosi alle "Case del Parco",
4	e da numerosi scogli e spuntoni. San Domino offre ai visitatori il fascino della grotte tra cui quelle delle Virole
5	il Parco il Parco in tutte le stagioni dell'anno offre al visitatore uno scenario mutevole e di straordinaria
6	l'attività; escursionistica che consente, tra l'altro, al visitatore di scoprirne nei suoi aspetti più nascosti i
7	e l'ambiente naturale in cui sono immersi offrono al visitatore le emozioni più intense. itinerari L'Appennino
8	Le Case del Parco garantiscono al visitatore le informazioni indispensabili per una corretta
9	Á. affiancato un piccolo museo in cui si anticipano al visitatore le peculiarità della zona. Ad integrazione del
10	e un recinto di reintroduzione faunistico, un centro visitatori con esposizione didattica sulla fauna, flora e
11	di Lamarosa, ricca di sorgenti. Si parte dal Centro visitatori dell'Orecchiella 1240 m, che merita una visita
12	e un recinto di reintroduzione faunistico, un centro visitatori con esposizione didattica sulla fauna, flora e
13	con una scalinata all'ingresso del Centro Visitatori dell'Orecchiella 1240 m 606550E-4606570N
14	in comune di Sedico, la realizzazione di un Centro visitatori dedicato al tema della fauna selvatica, in linea
15	carrozzine ortopediche, sia per l'assistenza al centro visitatori di alcune strutture ed attrezzature dedicate
16	di rifinimento ed, alcuni (sentiero didattico dal centro visitatori, percorso della memoria per Cocuzza, sentiero

Concordance 1: *visitatori* in the Italian sub-corpus sorted R1

The opportunities offered to visitors are most of the times abstract nouns (e.g. *esperienze*/experiences; *opportunità*/opportunities) or emotive descriptions like *il fascino delle grotte* (the charm of the caves), *le peculiarità della zona* (the highlights of the area), *uno scenario mutevole* (a changing scenery).

A high degree of metaphorization is instantiated in Verbal process where once again visitors are passively given the role of Receiver as in the following ideational incongruent wording: *al fine di raggiungere il maggior numero possibile di visitatori e comunicare loro le bellezze della natura* (in order to get the highest number of visitors and communicate them natural beauties). In this case a Verbal process is incongruently used to attain a vision that typically depends on a Mental perceptive process. In other words, the example produces a synaesthesia.

Interpersonally speaking, possibility is given to visitors who 'can' choose following their desires or intuition concerning the area:

6. *I percorsi evidenziano le vocazioni di ogni area, per cui il visitatore può scegliere l'itinerario in base alle caratteristiche della zona.*

(The trails point out the vocation of every area, so the visitor can choose the paths according to its characteristics of the area)

Modality is the modalization type and far from the prescriptivism which characterises the Canadian sub-corpus.

Visitors may *ammirare splendidi esempi di architettura locale* (admire splendid examples of local architecture) or the materials used for buildings (e.g. *local stone*) or food products from the place (e.g. *blueberry*) locally named as 'baggi' (blueberry). In this last case the employment of the local dialect gives the corpus itself a local flavour.

When you embark upon a corpus-based activity you do not know what scenario will

(Johns 1988). Even though the adjective *local* was not on the list of the search-words, it is worth mentioning it because in the Italian sub-corpus it functions as a post-modification of 'those living in a given geographical area and aspects of their culture' in 65% of the concordances. *Local* appears in prepositional phrases and in Circumstances such as *in dialetto locale, nel folklore locale, nella parlata locale*.

SF classifies the above Circumstances as abstract belonging to the Location: space categories. In fact these do not refer to real places. Nevertheless, they point to a process of dislocation: the visitors are invited to immerse themselves into an unknown 'cultural space' that mobilises not merely sense of sight but also touch and hearing. The effects of this dislocation are far more complex than just dislocation in space. Visitors are asked to immerse themselves into the 'otherness' of a culture that is significantly expressed through the architectural style, the local dialect and food. The following enlarged concordance illustrates a dislocation of space into an uncontaminated world which also entails a temporal displacement into a time when no human impact was present (*integro/untouched*) and where human values were simplicity and authenticity:

7. *La zona è ancora paesaggisticamente integra: questi luoghi hanno vissuto fino a non molto tempo fa nel più pacifico isolamento, con la poca popolazione rurale dedita all'attività della campagna, in particolare modo alla viticoltura e alla produzione del vino, all'estrazione della locale pietra calcarea per la preparazione della calce, ed ad una semplice pesca.*

(The landscape in the area is untouched: these places lived in a peaceful isolation until some time ago, with a few rural people dedicated to the countryside activities, particularly to wine growing and production, to the extraction of the local hard stone to prepare lime, and to a simple hunting)

The landscape is connected with its historical context and it is shaped by images or ways of seeing, and by peoples' relationship to the land. This pervasive emotional connection to the land is functionally realised through material processes where the *local community/people* play the role of Actor:

8. *La comunità locale non ha mai reciso il cordone ombelicale che a essa la lega.*
(The local community has never severed the umbilical cord that links to it).
9. *Nel corso delle epoche passate le antiche genti locali hanno lasciato tracce indelebili della loro civiltà.*
(In the course of the past the ancient local peoples have left permanent traces of their civilisation)

Visitors are projected in the past to learn form history and to continue past traditions in the present where a multisensory approach is required to set up a relation with the environment which goes beyond the 'tourist's gaze'.

5. Conclusions

Analysis has shown that the Canadian and the Italian sub-corpus tend to conform to the Contextual taxonomies proposed by Hall with few exceptions. The different patterns of communication, products of diverse type of cultures (cf. Katan 2004, 2006; Spinzi 2010), shape the way languages construe the 'environment'. Despite their differences both Canadian and Italian culture construe the eco-tourist as client and nature as a commodity. However, the more evocative patterns of communication of the Italian language leaves room for the reader's imagination and subjective interpretation; on the contrary, the English language, typically categorized as 'instrumental', is more direct and explicit. In the Canadian sub-corpus, the visitor portrayed in the corpus is not concerned much with emotive responses to nature but mainly with perceptions, control and action. Visitors are explained carefully and at great length what they can, may, must do. Conversely in the Italian sub-corpus the text provides only scant factual information, much is left unsaid and visitors are encouraged to emotionally engage with the natural environment as well as its culture, tradition and past.

To conclude the sub-corpora analysed speak of and for the respective cultures and show no interest to reach for eco-tourists, whose experience remains essentially one of displacement.

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