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Nazi Iritspukhova

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6170-1116>

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Metaphor and English Promotional Tourism Discourse: Systematic-narrative Hybrid Literature Review and Future Research Areas

Abstract: As there is lack of a research synthesis on metaphor in tourism discourse up to date, the paper offers a novel contribution by summarising empirical literature on metaphor use in print and digital tourism promotional materials and identifying the existing research gaps. The review uncovers that figuration is largely underexplored in tourism promotion literature revealing only general functions and specific examples of metaphors. The paper also presents preliminary results from ongoing research on metaphor use in English e-promotional tourism discourse. Thereby, the paper provides new insights into metaphor as a multifaceted phenomenon integrating discursive, conceptual, and cultural elements and contributes to our understanding of the role of metaphor in cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: metaphor, tourism discourse, promotion, conceptual metaphor theory, deliberate metaphor, tourist destination, cross-cultural communication

1. Introduction and context: the role of metaphor in promotional discourse

Today, there is a wide range of research on formal and functional characteristics of metaphor across discourses, registers, and genres (Semino 2008; Steen et al. 2010; Deignan, Littlemore and Semino 2013; Semino and Demjén 2017; to name just a few). In this regard, the role/use of metaphor in promotional discourse has been studied extensively (see, for example, McQuarrie and Mick 1996; Goatly 1997; Sopory and Dillard 2002; Semino 2008; Forceville 2012; Van Stee 2018; Pérez-Sobrino, Littlemore and Ford 2021; among others). The

researchers conclude that in advertising genre, metaphor has a great potential for persuading (Sopory and Dillard 2002; Ottati and Renstrom 2010; Burgers et al 2015; Hidalgo-Downing and Blanca Kraljevic-Mujic 2017; Van Stee 2018) as well as creating ideological messages (Koller 2009a; Velasco-Sacristán 2010). In addition, it has a great impact on advertising communication (McQuarrie and Mick 1996), brand personality management (Ang and Lim 2006; Delbaere, McQuarrie and Phillips 2011; see also Koller 2009a; 2009b), and ad memorability (Phillips and McQuarrie 2004)¹.

Analysing metaphor use within cognitive and discourse-analytical perspectives, Elena Semino (2008) claims that metaphors in advertising discourse are used “as attention-grabbing devices”, especially if they are novel and/or creative (Burgers et al. 2015), i.e., deliberate² (Steen 2015; 2017; Reijnierse 2017). Furthermore, in accordance with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT) (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Kövecses 2020), which defines metaphor as seeing one thing (typically more abstract and intangible - called *the target conceptual domain* within CMT) in terms of another (usually more concrete/tangible – referred to as *the source conceptual domain*), the ability of metaphor to highlight some aspects while hiding others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Goatly 1997; Kövecses 2020), makes metaphor a powerful tool for creating subtly persuasive messages by evoking emotions (Ortony 1975, 50) and influencing evaluations (Sopory and Dillan 2002; Van Stee 2018). Therefore, in promotional discourse, metaphors can represent the advertised products in terms of other objects and by doing so, foreground the features that agents want the audience to associate with them (Semino 2008, 168-169). Hence, metaphor can orient readers’ choices of the desirable product, exert a profound effect on decision-making (Thibodeau and Flusberg 2022), and finally, prompt further actions (Thibodeau, Matlock and Flusberg 2019; Kövecses 2020). These are crucial for the promotional tourism discourse (henceforth PTD) in particular, as according to Francesconi, in tourism promotion, “communication occurs not only if the tourist reader understands the message but if s/he *reacts to it and is persuaded to visit the destination*” (*emphasis mine*, Francesconi 2008, 3).

Following this introduction, section 2 covers general theoretical issues related to the language of tourism; section 3 offers a literature search design; section 4 presents the overview and critical analysis of major studies on metaphor in the PTD, focusing on print as well as digital promotional materials; section 5 provides a qualitative summary of the findings and general tendencies while the final section offers preliminary results of the ongoing analysis of metaphor in English PTD and suggestions for further research.

2. Theoretical overview: metaphor and promotional tourism discourse

While the existing research on promotional discourse provides invaluable insights into the forms, conceptual models, and functions of metaphor, few attempts have been made to study the use of metaphors in the promotional *tourism* discourse. According to Dann (1996, 3), tourism is a form of social control as the language of tourism promotion tends to “persuade people to become tourists and subsequently control their attitudes and behaviours through pictures, brochures, and other media”. In this regard, advertising texts along with visuals are aimed to govern tourists’ choices (Djafarova and Andersen 2008, 292), by shaping their “tourist’s gaze” (Urry and Larsen 2011). Accordingly, tourism advertising represents a system of meanings that transforms “ordinary” places into extraordinary tourist destinations (Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 121; Francesconi 2014). This distinguishes tourism promotion from ordinary advertising as it is inherently the promotion of intangible products (Santulli 2007, 45) with the aim of selling “a dreamed experience” (Francesconi 2008, 181; see also Maci 2013; Francesconi 2014) by exploiting various semiotic means among which the language occupies a key role. Based on this discussion, it can be concluded that in tourism advertising “phrase precedes the gaze”, and “tourism, in its act of promotion, ... has a discourse of its own” (Dann 1996, 2). Consequently, the language of tourism was recognised as a “specialised language” (Nigro 2005; Gotti 2007) and is included in the framework of English for Specific Purposes (Maci, Sala and Godnič Vičič 2018, 3).

The language of tourism promotion has been studied extensively (see Dann 1996; Jaworski and Pritchard 2005; Mocini 2005/2009; Cappelli 2006; Maci 2013; 2020; Maci, Sala and Godnič Vičič 2018; Jojua 2022); including keywords (Rokowski and Curad 2003), translation and cultural studies (Pierini 2005/2009; Durán-Muñoz 2011; Manca 2012; Gandin 2013; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019; Giampieri and Harper 2020), tourist language as ESP/LSP (Nigro 2005; Ruiz-Garrido and Saorin-Iborra 2012), and specific linguistic features and terminology (Manca 2008; Pierini 2009; Durán-Muñoz 2019; Durán-Muñoz and L’Homme 2020). However, the language of metaphor in tourism promotion has received far less attention. The scarcity of research may be attributed to the fact that according to some researchers, metaphors are not frequently employed in tourism discourse (Calvi 2001; Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014; qtd. in Giampieri and Harper 2020), for the tourism promotional language is already so diverse, euphoric, and emphatic that it does not require any additional colouring (see Calvi 2001). Another reason for this may be the complexity and ambiguity of meaning usually associated with the interpretation of figurative devices (Djafarova and Anderson 2008). However, some studies along with my current research do reveal some general functions and trends related to metaphor usage in PTD, as the following sections will demonstrate.

3. Methodology: literature search

The article belongs to the category of systematic-narrative hybrid literature reviews, as proposed by Turnbull, Chugh and Luck (2022), that “draws on characteristics of both the narrative and systematic review traditions” (Turnbull, Chugh and Luck 2022, 2). This implies that “the search protocols and inclusion/exclusion criteria draw from elements of systematic review practices and apply a narrative approach to analyse the shortlisted articles.” (Turnbull, Chugh and Luck 2022, 3).

First of all, in order to find the relevant material for the review, it was necessary to operationalise the term *tourism promotion*, which in my research project, I defined as follows: *the act of promoting a destination as well as the experiences related to it by tourist marketers (of the respective destination) to potential tourists*. This means that the research material on tourism b/vlogs, reviews, and other types of texts produced by, for example travellers, were excluded.

The next stage involved the formulation of research questions regarding metaphor use in PTD, with the aim of making the literature analysis more systematic. By bridging the currently most influential theory of metaphor, (extended) CMT (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Kövecses 2010; 2020), discourse-analytical studies of metaphor (Semino 2008; Steen et al. 2010; Deignan, Littlemore and Semino 2013; Reijnierse 2017; Steen 2017), and (socio)linguistic and cultural studies of tourism (Cohen 1972; 2000; MacCannell 1973; 1976/1989; Dann 1996; 2002; Jaworski and Pritchard 2005; Cappelli 2006; Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010; Maci, Sala and Godnič Vičić 2018; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019; among others), three general research questions were posed on three levels of analysis, following the *communicative turn* in metaphor studies (Steen 2015; 2016; 2017; Reijnierse 2017), namely, communicative (RQ 1), conceptual (RQ 2), and linguistic (RQ 3) dimensions:

1. *What function(s) do metaphors perform in tourism promotional materials?*
2.
 - a) *Which conceptual models prevail in this text type?*
 - b) *Are there any cultural specificities in terms of the conceptual models used for the promotion of different destinations?*
3. *What specific linguistic characteristics does metaphor exhibit in promotional tourism texts?*

The following step implied carrying out an electronic search: the data were collected by identifying the English-language open-access papers published in databases such as Research Gate, Google Scholar, and Scopus (Elsevier), deploying the following search terms: “metaphor and tourism”, “culture, metaphor and tourism”, and “figuration and tourism” *without any restrictions on publication period* (which turned out to be necessary during the search process, due to the scarcity of material on the topic). Some articles from the obtained material were excluded as inappropriate during the cleaning process due to the nature of the research (e.g., the articles describing *tourism* as a metaphorical source domain). Therefore, I

also used “backward and forward reference searchings”, which imply the search of material by reviewing the bibliographies and the latest publications that cite relevant publications, respectively, with the aim to find relevant research in the field. Additionally, I used “backward or forward author searching”, which means searching for older (backward search) or more recent (forward search) relevant publications written by authors of relevant publications (Burgers et al. 2019, 104-105).

As a result, the search yielded the final set of seven research articles, one conference paper, three book chapters dedicated to metaphor research, and two books with brief mentioning of metaphor use in PTD. The publication dates of the database encompass the timespan from 1996 till 2022.

Finally, the qualitative content analysis of the collected material was conducted in order to evaluate patterns and give a critical account of various aspects of the literature “with a view to reaching a number of generalizations about the topic”, synthesise them transparently, find the answers to the research questions posed above, and thus, “identify[ing] issues in need of further research” (Ellis 2015, 1, 5).

4. Main findings

In order to identify what has been done hitherto and what research gaps need to be filled regarding metaphor studies in tourism promotional materials, I analysed the existing studies on metaphor use in the PTD following the procedures above. Below I attempt to present an overview and critical analysis of some major research projects on figuration in the PTD. In particular, I highlight the general tendencies while linking them to the main tenets of up to date the most dominant theory on metaphor, (extended) CMT (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Kövecses 2010; 2020), discourse-analytical studies of metaphor (Semino 2008; Steen et al. 2010; Deignan, Littlemore and Semino 2013; Reijniere 2017; Steen 2017), as well as with (socio)linguistic and cultural studies of tourism (Cohen 1972; 2000; MacCannell 1973; 1976/1989; Dann 1996; 2002; Jaworski and Pritchard 2005; Cappelli 2006; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019; among others).

Graham Dann was the first to emphasise the importance of metaphor in the PTD, within the sociological studies of tourism. The author claims that metaphors and similes³ are “massively used in tourism advertising texts” (Dann 1996, 172), and their main function, “if not their [its] merit”, lies in their ability to reduce the geographical and cultural distance of a destination (Dann 2002, 4). Accordingly, metaphor in tourism advertising discourse is mainly used to “manage the unfamiliarity of the destination”. Based on this assumption, its frequency is claimed to increase in relation to promoting physically and/or culturally *distant* places (*emphasis mine*, Dann 1996, 172–174) as well as developing countries (Dann 2002, 4), with the aim of posing the destinations as something special and extraordinary, and yet very close to ordinary experiences.

In a similar vein, Elmira Djafarova and Hans Christian Anderson (2008) and Elmira Djafarova (2017) argue that metaphor can reduce long-haul destinations by using more familiar concepts for the sake of reducing the strangeness factor; this leads them to the conclusion that “its usage tends to increase in direct relationship to the strangeness of the destination being advertised” (Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 298). Similar to Semino (2008), Djafarova and Anderson mention attention-grabbing as one of the functions of metaphor use in tourism promotion by creating a rich visual image of the destination and the experiences on offer in the mind of a potential tourist (Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 298; see also Djafarova 2017, 39-40). Furthermore, in their discussion of the benefits of metaphor for the tourism advertising discourse, the authors highlight the “compact” nature of metaphor: a metaphor is attractive and eye-catching to the user and, most importantly, it can *convey several meanings in a single phrase (emphasis mine, Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 298-299)*. This is crucial for the e-PTD in particular, as the language on the web tends to be short and concise (Manca 2012; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019), which is why metaphor is the very means that can be effectively employed. It is interesting to note that all these assumptions are also in line with the three communicative functions/hypotheses that metaphors are claimed to serve according to cognitive linguistics (Ortony 1975; Gibbs 1994), namely *the compactness hypothesis*, which refers to the idea that metaphor provides a compact means of communication as it can pack a great deal of information into fewer means compared to the literal language; *the inexpressibility hypothesis*, which is related to the idea that metaphors can express the information “which is difficult or impossible to express if one is restricted to literal uses of language” (Ortony 1975); and *the vividness hypothesis*, which holds that metaphors can convey information and describe our experience in a richer and more detailed way. This again proves the usefulness of metaphor for e-PTD, and thus, runs contrary to the arguments of some researchers maintaining that tourism discourse does not require metaphor.

It is noteworthy that Djafarova and Anderson’s work represents the first diachronic quantitative exploration of figuration in tourism discourse: based on the analysis of 400 advertisements (200 issued in the 1970s, and 200 in 2005), the authors found that compared to puns and alliteration, the use of metaphor dropped sharply from 21.5 per cent (of all of the texts published in the 1970s) to 15 per cent (2005), while alliteration use, on the contrary, increased (from 14.5 to 19.5 per cent)⁴. The researchers attributed these results to the relative ease of the interpretation of messages containing *schemes* (i.e., *alliteration, assonance, etc.*), and difficulties associated with the interpretation of *tropes*⁵ (i.e., *metaphor, puns, etc.*); according to the authors, in many cases, the reader may not grasp metaphors properly or may not find the information they need due to the insufficient scaffolding and/or misunderstanding of the metaphorical meaning. Since tourism is inherently a cross-cultural phenomenon, the reason for this might be the fact that marketers cannot adequately assess the personal and intellectual abilities of

all users to evaluate the metaphor interpretation process (Djafarova 2017, 45). Moreover, the ability of metaphor to trigger semantic and pragmatic tensions (see Cameron 2003; Charteris-Black 2004) may further complicate the process. In this regard, Djafarova and Anderson offer a typology of metaphors that aims to facilitate the understanding of marketers' messages: they distinguish between object-based (i.e., based on the comparison with a concrete entity) and concept-based (i.e., involving an abstract entity) metaphors. The researchers warn us that concept-based metaphors do not provide an appropriate, desirable visual image of tourism without sufficient linguistic/visual "anchoring" since these metaphors do not contribute to the understanding of such a complex phenomenon as tourism unless a further explanation of the metaphor is provided (Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 298; Djafarova 2017, 45). This assumption can be related to the earlier study conducted by Morgan and Reichert (1999): the authors expressed a similar concern in relation with the language of advertising and highlighted the importance to distinguish between concrete and abstract types of metaphors, especially if the issue is related to the user's perception and understanding of a metaphorical message. The researchers empirically proved that addressees understand concrete metaphors better than abstract ones (see more in Morgan and Reichert 1999). Accordingly, although Djafarova and Anderson (2008) and Djafarova (2017) do not confirm their assumption empirically, the experiment of Morgan and Reichert (Morgan and Reichert, 1999) corroborates the advantage of concrete metaphors when it comes to creating an appropriate image of the destination advertised. This, in its turn, leads to a more effective understanding of promotional messages especially if they are related to a cross-cultural promotion.

A significant study for the tourism promotion literature is provided by Sabrina Francesconi (2008), who analysed excerpts of texts on world-famous destinations published in the period 2003–2005 from British tourist advertising catalogues. The aim was to determine how different places are promoted using the conceptual source domain of PRECIOUS STONES⁶ (such as *gems, gold, emeralds, pearls, turquoise*, etc.). The author concluded that these metaphors are prevalent in tourism promotional material and foreground the unique preciousness and extraordinariness of the destination by emphasising its "impressive beauty, grandeur and value" (Francesconi 2008, 180–181), which in turn, endows it with an elevated status (Francesconi 2008, 182–184). Francesconi's work made an invaluable contribution to the literature on metaphor in tourism discourse as subsequent studies (see Jaworska 2017, Iritspukhova, in preparation (a)) report similar results. This means that the metaphors of PRECIOUS STONES exhibit metaphorical discourse systematicity (see Cameron 1999), i.e., they are common for the specific type of discourse of tourism promotion.

Jodie George (2010), in her analysis of poetry "utilised primarily as a marketing tool" to promote a destination, attempts to determine how poetic devices such as metaphors, alliteration, etc., "inscribe particular cultural meanings onto landscapes

for economic purposes” (George 2010, 1, 3). Similarly to Dann, the author claims that “metaphors are useful within tourism advertising because they help ameliorate unfamiliarity by drawing comparisons between that which is well-known and the more foreign qualities of a location”, and it is especially effective and “strategic” in the promotion of developing countries. In this regard, George distinguishes so-called *place-based cliché* metaphors (such as *Côte d’Ivoire - the African Riviera* (George 2010, 8), which “focus on the beneficial qualities of the destination through a comparison with *somewhere* known to be desirable”, and *PRECIOUS STONES* metaphors (for example, the *Jewel of the Mekong*), which suggest that the place “is magnificent in its splendour, precious and valuable” (*emphasis mine*, George 2010, 8). The author points out, however, that by using metaphors marketers often tend to idealise or “romanticise” a place, by hiding the negative or even “tragic” realities of the respective locations (e.g., *poverty, high levels of illiteracy*, etc.), thus “making distant any unpleasantness to avoid adversely impacting on the tourist” (George 2010, 9). Interestingly, a similar concern was raised by Djafarova and Anderson, who concluded that “advertisers can use metaphors to *avoid the responsibility* of presenting *real* images of tourism” (*emphasis mine*, Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 299-300). Consequently, metaphor in this case may act as an effective tool which can highlight certain qualities while skilfully pushing unfavourable aspects into the background, and thus, may create ostensibly positive social realities for us (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 156).

Richard Hallett and Judith Kaplan-Weigner’s (2010) work represents one of the first comprehensive studies of the e-PTD. Drawing on multimodal discourse analysis techniques and CMT, the authors analyse the role of the language and visuals used on the official promotional tourism websites, otherwise known as official destination websites (Fernández-Cavia et al. 2020, 2), in the formation of tourist and destination identities. The researchers highlight a distinctive discursive strategy that metaphors usually serve in this type of text, namely that of a narrative device (Hallett and Kaplan-Weigner 2010, 12). They conclude that it is through the use of metaphor that official tourism websites construct and promote the regional and social identity of a place, which in turn, prompts the reader to assign metaphor-related values to the described place and thus, form their own identity (Hallett and Kaplan-Weigner 2010, 5, 45, 56, 57). As an illustration, the authors examine Louisiana’s official destination website before and after Hurricane Katrina and argue that the most prominent metaphors describing the destination before the disaster were *LOUISIANA IS FOOD* and *LOUISIANA IS DIVERSITY* realised linguistically in the form of metaphors and similes as well as visually, in photographs. These metaphors in tandem formed the identity of Louisiana as a culturally diverse state, or as “a smaller version of the quintessential American melting pot” (Hallett and Kaplan-Weigner 2010, 49). However, after the hurricane, these two were replaced by the conceptual metaphor *LOUISIANA IS A PHOENIX/LOUISIANA IS REBORN*, which shows the physical devastation of the state, and pleads the nation and tourists for social action to restore the society destroyed by natural disasters

(Hallet and Kaplan-Weigner 2010, 48–56). The images accompanying the verbal metaphors depict light that may signify the new energy and life of the state and reinforce the verbal metaphors, thus enhancing the overall effect. The authors point out that the “metaphor plays a seminal role in not only recontextualizing a community as a phoenix rising, but also a potential tourist as the morning sun” which takes part in the regeneration of the nation (Hallet and Kaplan-Weigner 2010, 56).

Another important study of the web-based PTD is presented in the work of Elisa Mattiello (2012), who analyses metaphor employing the framework of a relevance-oriented lexical pragmatics theory (Sperber and Wilson 2008). She argues that in tourism promotion, persuasion largely depends on the strategic use of metaphors. Moreover, the author claims that in tourism promotional texts, metaphor is often combined with hyperbole (see also Chen and Ahrens 2022), and is frequently used in chains of metaphorical expressions, which further strengthens its persuasive potential. In this regard, a more detailed study of hyperbolic and extended metaphors is very interesting, as they usually act as deliberate metaphors (Reijnierse 2017) and hence, are both more salient to the reader (Steen 2015; 2017). In addition, the interplay of hyperbole and metaphor (along with other figurative devices) may contribute to the figurative framing effect of the message, which “can have an impact beyond each of the figures in isolation” (Burgers, Konijn and Steen 2016, 12), and thus, maximise the suasive effect. It is noteworthy that in this and her later study on the translation of metaphors (2018), Mattiello draws our attention to the extensive use of personification metaphors in tourism discourse arguing that “they have highly suasive power upon tourists exploring the web in search of an ideal holiday destination” (Mattiello 2012, 72). This is an important claim since tourism discourse crosses cultures, and sometimes metaphors tend to cause misunderstandings, especially if the shared knowledge and expectations on which it relies are not matched. In this regard, personification, i.e., endowing an inanimate object with human characteristics/qualities, makes use of the best and most familiar source domain for everyone - *humans* (*emphasis mine*, Kövecses 2010, 39; see also, Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003), which may enable the marketers to stay on a safer side and resolve the problem posed by Djafarova and Anderson (2008), and Djafarova (2017) (see above). The prevalence of personification metaphors in tourism discourse is also confirmed in my research data (Iritspukhova, in preparation (a)), cf. (metaphorically used words are given in *italics*):

- 1) The other natural reserves, Sataplia and Prometheus caves are offering an experience of going really underground to the very *guts*⁷ of Georgia. [https://georgia.travel/en_US/article/Georgias-best-places-for-adventurous-souls]
- 2) It [New Orleans] is a city that *greets* you with an Old-World appeal and *embraces* you with its *spirited soul*. [<https://www.visittheusa.com/experience/rhythms-south-3-cities-3-tastes-southeast>]
- 3) Small in size but *big on personality*, Wales is bordered by England to the east ... [<https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en/wales>]

The first two of these examples feature novel and creative extensions of the conventional conceptual metaphor A COUNTRY IS A LIVING ORGANISM/A PERSON represented by a novel linguistic metaphor *guts* in the sentence (1), and an extended metaphorical chain of words *greets*, *embraces* and *spirited soul*, in the sentence (2), thus all of them representing deliberate metaphors. In the sentence (3), metaphor is realised by the words *big on personality*. However, the last example differs from (1) and (2) in that it represents a *metaphorical zeugma* (Iritspukhova, in preparation (b), as a manifestation of deliberate metaphor (see also Steen 2016, 119), as the concrete size of the country is combined and compared with the abstract size of the country's personality. These examples again show how marketers can manipulate familiar domains and offer creative elaborations that strike readers and hence, may capture their attention, which in its turn, enhances their interest. Moreover, these examples alongside the evidence from other researchers (e.g., Chen and Ahrens 2022) prove that along with PRECIOUS STONES metaphors, personifying metaphors also display metaphorical discourse systematicity in the PTD. Interestingly, Delbaere, McQuarrie and Phillips (2011) based on a series of experiments, report that personification metaphors are important persuasive tools in advertising as they tend to "increase the liking for the brand" by evoking "positive emotional response" in consumers. They "produce[d] more positive attributions of brand personality, relative to what other visual metaphors, not using personification, could accomplish" (Delbaere, McQuarrie and Phillips 2011, 127). This means that personification metaphors are prevalent in promotional materials in general and are not restricted to PTD only.

A more in-depth analysis of metaphor is presented by Sylvia Jaworska (2017): using a corpus-based methodology and CMT, the author attempts to empirically test Dann's hypothesis regarding the relationship between the frequency of metaphors and the geographical/cultural distance of the destination promoted (see above, Dann 1996; 2002). It is worth noting that the researcher is highly transparent about her operationalisation of metaphor and metaphor identification protocol. Moreover, she divides her analysis into linguistic and conceptual levels, which is called upon in current metaphor research (Steen 2007; Steen et al. 2010).

The results of Jaworska's study reveal a significant quantitative difference in the use of metaphors, with more metaphors employed for promoting culturally and physically remote destinations as compared to relatively nearby locations, and thus, empirically confirm Dann's hypothesis. Moreover, the author offers a more refined version of the jewels metaphors earlier proposed by Francesconi (2008), namely: LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS ARE JEWELS. Alongside, she distinguishes other recurring conceptual metaphors, among which the most frequently used are those associated with the body (see Mattiello 2012), such as A TOURIST DESTINATION IS A CENTRAL PLACE, A TOURIST DESTINATION IS A SLEEPY BODY. The research also revealed new conceptual models employed in PTD, such as A TOURIST DESTINATION IS A PAINTING, metaphors related to religion A TOURIST DESTINATION IS A LAND

OF PLENTY, and taste ELEMENTS OF LANDSCAPE ARE A (SWEET/DELICIOUS) TASTE (Jaworska 2017, 30). An interesting finding was that in the advertising tourism texts of nearby destinations (in this case, Britain) conventional metaphorical expressions related to BODY appeared more often, while in the texts promoting distant places, the top-used metaphors were associated with NATURAL SUBSTANCE, RELIGION, and sensory conceptual domains, such as COLOR and TASTE. The author concludes that sensory conceptual metaphors “work together to evoke images of the rare beauty and abundance of resources and attractions of important, pristine, luxurious and colorful places”, and create “a sensory fusion of sight and taste images that can potentially increase the ‘appetite for consumption’ (original emphasis, Jaworska 2017, 30). This presents destinations as more attractive and open for exploring. However, at the same time, the author points out that “these metaphors obscure social and environmental issues” and “give ideologically charged messages that covertly hide aspects of reality and thereby reinforce colonial and neo-colonial legacies” (Jaworska 2017, 30). We may conclude that in this case, the author similarly to George (see above, George 2010), emphasises the function of metaphors to highlight the aspects that glorify the destination by deliberately obscuring its unfavourable tangible (e.g., tourist attractions, etc.) as well as intangible (e.g., culture, history, etc.) features, thus creating different social realities (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 156).

5. Summary

The account has provided a review of the main literature on the topic of metaphor use in the PTD. The results in most cases reveal the answers to the research questions posed for undertaking the review, as follows below.

RQ 1: What function(s) do metaphors perform in tourism promotional materials?

Most authors point out that in the PTD, metaphors are mainly used to reduce the strangeness of the destination, especially if the promotion concerns a remote and/or developing country. Interestingly, within the sociological and anthropological studies of tourism, one of the main motivation drivers of people to travel is postulated to be a so-called *strangeness perspective*, otherwise known as the search for the exotic. This strangeness, or exoticism, may be found in another place, culture, gastronomy, lifestyle, geography, etc. However, most people show some caution in this regard, since although novelty and unfamiliarity are important elements in the tourism industry, not all people are ready to fully immerse themselves in a foreign environment (Cohen 1972, 166). Consequently, personnel working in the tourism industry try to reduce the aspect of unfamiliarity not only materially (by providing products/services close to home comfort, bilingual staff who can also speak the tourist’s language; international cuisine that is recognisable and

acceptable to tourists, etc. (Cohen 2000, 559; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019, 8), but also verbally and conceptually by referring to different means, one of them being the active use of metaphors. Therefore, as metaphor can reduce the strangeness of a concept/referent by helping us to conceptualise it in more familiar terms, it can offer a more familiar and thus, non-threatening picture of the experience, "for unfamiliarity to remain pleasurable, it must be experienced within the shelter, enhanced by a touch of familiarity" (Cohen 2000, 559).

Another important function of metaphors in tourism promotion is highlighting the positive aspects of the destination while obscuring its negative features (either material or abstract). The claim is fully compatible with the main postulates of CMT according to which metaphor can foreground some aspects while hiding others, and strategic use of one source domain over another may deliberately accent certain characteristics of the target by disguising others which are less favourable (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Kövecses 2020). These functions may also be linked to another sociological perspective in tourism, that of *authenticity*, proposed by culturologist and sociologist Dean MacCannell (1976/1989). He claims that in the modern world, one of the main motivations of the tourist is the search for authenticity, i.e., "real life". As a person, nowadays, is tired of the routine, difficulties, instability, and falsehood that fill his/her life, and in this respect, experiences a weakened sense of reality (MacCannell 1976, 93), s/he tries to find the truth in untouched natural landscapes, other cultures, traditions, sometimes in other historical periods. To this end, s/he seeks a certain purity and simplicity in a primitive society. However, in the interest of tourism, the real life of the local population gets largely manipulated and commercialised. Therefore, tourists rarely experience *pure* authenticity, and in most cases, this authenticity is *staged* for them (*emphasis mine*, MacCannell 1976/1989, 91–109; Dann 1996, 8). Accordingly, specifically (or even strategically) chosen metaphors may contribute to this *staging* process by intentionally glorifying the visual attractions as well as the intangible features, like culture, history, etc. social and environmental issues of the destination while simultaneously diverting our attention from the real picture of the place and the life there (George 2010; Jaworska 2017).

The third function of metaphors, in the context of official destination websites, was the formation of the identity of both the destination advertised and the tourists visiting it. By acting as a narrative device, metaphor is said to frame important issues for the destination in such a way as to prompt potential tourists for the action not only to help by visiting it but also becoming the part of its identity formation.

RQs 2: a) Which conceptual models prevail in the PTD? b) Are there any cultural specificities in terms of the conceptual models used for the promotion of different destinations?

A few studies suggest the main models of metaphor which clearly exhibit metaphor discourse systematicity in the PTD (RQ 2a); these are the metaphors related to the

domain of PRECIOUS STONES, A LIVING ORGANISM, and cliché place-based metaphors. Along with them, the prominent metaphors are those drawing from the source domains of SENSORY PERCEPTION (such as TASTE, TOUCH, SOUND, etc.) as well as RELIGION, PAINTING and FOOD. It is interesting to note that personification metaphors are also prevalent in advertising discourse in general. As for the cultural difference in metaphors (RQ 2b), it is suggested that more established and popular destination promoters (e.g., Europe and the USA) employ metaphors related to LIVING ORGANISM and FOOD (especially in the case of the USA) whereas the marketers of farther and exotic destinations prefer exploiting SENSORY PERCEPTION and RELIGION metaphors. It may be concluded that the marketers of more established destinations tend to use relatively more concrete metaphors in the description of destinations and related experiences whereas those of farther destinations usually employ more abstract domains in the promotion (see above, Djafarova and Anderson 2008).

RQ 3: What specific linguistic characteristics does metaphor exhibit in promotional tourism texts?

As for the linguistic manifestation of metaphors, very limited research has been done on the topic and thus, no general trends can be stated as regarded the language of metaphors per se in the PTD (e.g., which parts of speech prevail as vehicles of metaphor). Several studies, however, do offer some insights into the patterns of metaphors used in this text type, and the creative use of the language of metaphors: the tourism promotional texts tend to employ hyperbolic metaphors, extended metaphors (metaphorical words that are extended throughout the long stretch(es) of the text) (see above, Mattiello 2012; also Hallett and Kaplan-Weigner 2010) and zeugmatic metaphors (see above, Iritspukhova, in preparation (b)). That means that additional research is needed to study the peculiarities of the linguistic realisation of metaphors as well as their creative manifestation in the PTD (see also Adu-Ampong 2016 for a similar remark).

6. Further perspectives

The review of the literature and the drawn conclusion reveal that despite their valuable contribution to the functions, models, and forms of metaphor, the presented studies are rather limited in their scope and do not offer a systematic description of metaphor use in tourism promotional materials. Additionally, sometimes the authors are not transparent enough regarding their operationalisation of metaphor and the methods used for the identification of linguistic metaphors (but see Jaworska 2017; Mattiello 2018; Chen and Ahren 2022). This complicates the process of replicating the studies and thus, reliably comparing the results. Therefore, we can conclude that in the PTD, the study of metaphor in general, and its creative manifestation, in particular, is still in its infancy. Accordingly, along with the research questions

posed above, additional queries may be raised, such as:

- 1)
 - a) What is the frequency and general distribution of linguistic metaphors across the word classes, in the e-PTD compared to other text types (e.g., *news*, *fiction*, etc.)?
 - b) What are the general patterns of linguistic metaphors employed in the e-PTD?
 - c) Does the popularity of the destination affect the frequency of linguistic metaphors and their distribution across the word classes? Is there any difference between the developing destinations and more established ones?
- 2)
 - a) Which conceptual models prevail in the PTD? Do they differ from other promotional discourses?
 - b) Does the popularity of the destination have any impact on the conceptual models used for their promotion? If yes, which models prevail in each case? What is the possible explanation?
 - c) Are there any cultural specificities in terms of the conceptual models used for the promotion?
- 3)
 - a) What is the frequency and general distribution of deliberate vs non-deliberate metaphors in the e-PTD? What are the general patterns in the deliberateness of metaphors used in this text type?
 - b) Does the popularity of the destination influence the frequency, distribution, and patterns of deliberate metaphor?
 - c) What other function(s) may metaphors display in tourism promotional materials? Do their functions differ according to the popularity of the destination?

The list of questions is far from exhaustive. However, answering these questions will fill in the current research gaps in cognitive and discourse-analytical studies of metaphor, by posing metaphor as a multifaceted conceptual, discursive, and cross-cultural phenomenon, and offer an important contribution to the tourism language research. It will also be a valuable addition to the studies analysing and comparing metaphor use across different registers (see Steen et al. 2010). This line of research is especially interesting since e-promotional tourism texts belong to the online hybrid register of info-promotion/-persuasion (Biber and Egbert 2018).

In my ongoing research (Iritspukhova, in preparation (a; b)), I have been analysing the use of metaphor in the web-based PTD of a developing country, such as Georgia, and two popular and established Anglophone touristic destinations, such as the UK, and the US⁸, using the cognitive and discourse-analytical framework (Semino 2008; Steen et al. 2010; Deignan, Littlemore and Semino 2013; Reijnierse 2017; Steen 2017; Maslen 2017). I follow Lakoff and Johnson's definition of metaphor (see Section 1), and for the identification of linguistic metaphors, I use a combination of the procedures such as MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007), its modified and extended version, MIPVU (Steen et al. 2010), and Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure, or DMIP (Reijnierse et al. 2018), brought in line with linguistic

characteristics of tourism language. This method allowed me to systematically analyse the language of metaphor in the research material and offer rigorous results. My analysis reveals that in all the database that I collected for the analysis (around 56,000 words), the overall frequency of linguistic metaphors in the e-PTD text type amounts to around 10%, which puts the e-PTD somewhere between those of conversation and fiction (see Steen et al. 2010). Another interesting finding was that contrary to the long-held assumption that developing countries deploy more metaphors for their promotion, my data showed fewer metaphors used for the promotion of Georgia compared to the UK and the US: only 9% of all the words used for the promotion of Georgia were used metaphorically, while the figure for the UK was the highest – 12%, followed by the US – 10%. However, the number of deliberate metaphors, in fact, was the highest for Georgia: almost 5% of all metaphorically used words were used deliberately in the Georgian corpus, followed by the US with 4%. Even though the UK showed the greatest proportion of linguistic metaphors, the number of deliberate metaphors was the smallest, amounting only to almost 3% of all the metaphors. This means that the empirical evidence albeit debunking Dann's assumption, partly supports it with a specification of the kinds of metaphors strategically employed, i.e., it is the *deliberate* metaphors that might be used more often for the promotion of geographically/culturally remote and developing destinations.

These results are only preliminary and mostly quantitative as more detailed research is being conducted, in an attempt to answer most, if not all, the research questions raised in this section. However, this analysis again shows the importance of systematic research of metaphor use for the promotion of tourist destinations, and basing any assumptions related to such a complex phenomenon as metaphor, on solid empirical grounds. Even from the initial general observations, we can state that this analysis can offer a substantial contribution to the field of linguistics, tourism marketing, and cultural studies, in relation to the differences in conceptual models used for the promotion of each of the destinations. Moreover, the results of such research are significant as they may be a springboard for subsequent studies on the way socio-cultural factors may affect people's comprehension of touristic metaphors and behavioural studies on which models of metaphors are more persuasive for people from different cultures. A further promising line of research concerns the function and nature of multimodal metaphor as a persuasive strategy in online promotional registers; although there have been several studies analysing metaphor in different modalities (Hallett and Kaplan-Weigner 2010), there is still a dearth of research addressing the use and interplay of verbal and non-verbal metaphors in the PTD, especially on relatively new platforms, such as Youtube, social media ads, etc.

All these may raise tourism marketers' awareness about the breadth of common conceptualisations employed to describe tourism destinations and experiences. The results of such research may also provide them with insights into the possible cultural pitfalls that may lead to misunderstandings, and creativity that can be used

in manipulating the language of metaphors for the enhancement of the overall suasive effect. This will help marketers make messages more comprehensible and effective, especially in the cross-cultural contexts.

Notes

- 1 For a more extensive overview of metaphor use in the advertising genre, see Hidalgo-Downing and Kraljevic-Mujic (2017) and Pérez-Sobrino, Littlemore and Ford (2021).
- 2 Other candidates for deliberate metaphors are extended, topic/situation-triggered, etc. (see Semino 2008; Reijnierse 2017) as well as zeugmatic metaphors (Iritspukhova, in preparation (b)).
- 3 It should be noted here that in the (extended) CMT, similes are regarded as so-called *direct* metaphors (see Steen et al. 2010).
- 4 The use of pun was extremely low in both periods, amounting to 1% in the 1970s, and 0.5% in 2005 (Djafarova and Anderson 2008, 297).
- 5 The distinction between tropes and schemes goes back to classical theories (see Leech 1969; see also Mcquarrie and Mick 1996) and is not reflected in the CMT as such.
- 6 In this paper, I follow the internationally accepted conventions in that I write conceptual metaphors in SMALL CAPITALS.
- 7 For more clarity, other metaphors in the example were not highlighted.
- 8 The official destination websites were the following: Georgia: <https://georgia.travel/>; The UK: <https://www.visitbritain.com>; The US: <https://www.visittheusa.com>.

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