IWoDA'16

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Extended Abstracts

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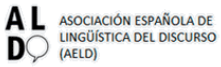

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Preface

This volume is divided into two main parts. The first part consists of the plenary speakers' abstracts and biographical notes. The second part contains the extended abstracts of the presenters.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of IWoDA'16, we would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all authors for providing their valuable work.

Dr. Milagros Torrado Cespón

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Constructing the image of Venice and the use of discourse markers in websites and digital travel guidebooks in English, **Daniela Cesiri, "Ca' Foscari" University of Venice**

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The annual survey conducted by the City of Venice Tourist Board states that nearly 10 million tourists visited Venice in 2014 (Miraglia, 2015, p. 12); of these, more than 1.5 million are Italians while nearly 8.5 million are from abroad. The 'Top 12' nationalities that visited the city come from European and non-European countries alike, namely they come from – in ranking order – the USA, France, the UK, Germany, China, Japan, Australia, Spain, Brazil, South Korea, Canada and Russia.

These data illustrate the situation that Venetian tourism operators have to face, especially in terms of the language to be used when promoting the city, the territory as well as individual sites, destinations or events. In this context, English performs the function of a *lingua franca* that is used by tourism professionals to successfully communicate their message, addressing not only perspective tourists from English-speaking countries as also tourists of other mother tongues who use English to communicate outside their country.

In addition, it should be noticed that Venice is currently promoted through a wide range of channels, either traditional or innovative, using the Internet as their main 'market place'. Considering the multifaceted nature of the language in the field of tourism (Dann, 1996) that balances domain-specific and general terms, the present study investigates particular aspects of the language that is used to 'sell' the city of Venice, a complex tourist destination, to international visitors.

In this regard, this contribution is a continuation of three previous studies that examine the English language used to promote Venice online. Cesiri (forthc.) investigates the use of the "languaging" technique (Dann, 1996) in two groups of websites in English, one promoting Venice to international tourists and one specifically addressing visitors from English-speaking countries. 'Languaging' is generally defined as "the impressive use of foreign words, but also a manipulation of the vernacular, a special choice of vocabulary, and not just for its own sake" (Dann, 1996, p. 184). The analysis of the texts revealed

that the websites make a consistent use of terms in Italian or in the Venetian dialect but the translations, paraphrases or explanations provided in English do not convey the cultural importance of the phenomena to which the terms refer, thus making it difficult for the potential visitor to fully understand and appreciate the local culture.

Cesiri (2016a) conducts a qualitative analysis on a corpus of digital travel guidebooks (DTGs). Also in this case, the investigation focuses on analysing the instances of the 'languaging' technique. The study revealed that, once again, terms in the Venetian dialect or in Italian are frequently used but they are accompanied by approximate explanations in English that fail to communicate the real meaning and cultural value of the original terms. In addition, this group of texts does not clearly differentiate, through typographical devices, the terms in English from those in other languages, thus increasing the overall sense of confusion that is generated by the poor rendering of the local culture.

Finally, Cesiri (2016b) investigates another group of DTGs, tagged via the *CLAWS Part-of-Speech Tagger* and searched for lexico-grammatical features by means of *Wordsmith Tools 6.0* (Scott, 2012). The quantitative and qualitative analyses detected recurrent lexical words and verbs, revealing the stylistic preferences of the authors of the DTGs and how they managed to convey their promotional message, providing at the same time effective practical information. In particular, the investigation revealed that – though the DTGs use a language that is emphatic, showing a clear promotional aim – the authors keep their style emotionally balanced, thus they manage to give the impression that, even though they are freely available and linked to a more commercial website, their DTGs are nevertheless reliable and professionally-made supports to the tourist experience.

The present study, then, examines the texts already used in these three contributions in order to conduct a finer-grained analysis on the stylistic features used to promote the city of Venice. In particular, the use of discourse markers (and any possible pragmatic implications) will be considered, trying to understand whether expressions in English manage to convey more successfully the promotional message where the use of the 'languaging' techniques somewhat fails. These studies are part of a bigger project that will seek to understand the nature of the language used to describe this complex