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Accessibility in Tourist Communication
2016, Issue 9, Volume 1

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the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication

TOURISM ACROSS CULTURES Accessibility in Tourist Communication

2016, Issue 9, Volume 1

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Foreword

It is our great pleasure to present the first volume of Cultus 9, an issue entirely dedicated to the language of tourism in a cross-cultural perspective. A high number of articles have been submitted for this issue by international academics and researchers. For this reason, eight articles are being published in volume 1, edited by Elena Manca and Cinzia Spinzi, the remaining ones will follow in volume 2, edited by David Katan and Cinzia Spinzi.

We would like to thank all the authors for contributing to this field of study, and to this issue, with their high-quality, innovative and interesting work and for their dedication and patience.

In addition, we would like to thank those members of the Scientific Committee who have contributed to the making of this volume and whose work has increased the quality of the articles even more.

We are sure that this issue will be very useful for future research in Tourism Discourse studies.

Elena Manca and Cinzia Spinzi

Popularization and accessibility in travel guidebooks for children in English

Gloria Cappelli

Abstract

Tourist guidebooks are among the most investigated genres in tourism discourse both for their function and for their linguistic features. Through language, they lead the tourists and their “tourist gaze” (Urry 2002; Urry and Larsen 2012) in their real or imaginary journey. They also mediate the tourist experience. They contribute to closing the gap between the tourists’ culture and the destination’s culture (Fodde and Denti 2005), and make culture-specific knowledge and specialized concepts accessible. Guidebooks for children represent an interesting subgenre in this regard. Children generally do not have well-established cultural filters and needs. Their “tourist gaze” still needs to be built and developed and their expectations about the destination (if any) might be completely different from those of the adult travellers. Moreover, the contents presented must be suitable for their cognitive abilities and general knowledge. In this paper, guidebooks for children are discussed in terms of popularization discourse and accessibility. More specifically, data from guidebooks for children between the ages of 6 and 12 are discussed. Focus is on the structural and linguistic properties which emerge from the need to make new information suitable for the intended readers.

1. Introduction

Travel guidebooks are a popular genre in tourism studies (Cappelli 2006; Maci 2013; Peel and Sørensen 2016). They have been investigated from many perspectives and within different traditions of research. Sociologists, anthropologists, marketing experts, historians and linguists have tackled the main features of the genre in order to highlight its contribution to the creation of the image of destinations, sights and local people. Language is crucial to these analyses, and several studies have focused on the language of guidebooks as a means of social control. Linguists have discussed the main rhetorical strategies used for the portrayal of places (Bhattacharyya 1997; Van Gorp 2012) as well as processes of lexical specialization. The many independent studies converge in identifying two main functions of guidebooks: a leading and a mediating function.

Guidebooks “lead” travellers by offering recommendations for accommodation, restaurants, itineraries, etc.. They also provide useful information on the best sights, on the local culture and language, and on the history, geography and heritage of the destination. For this reason, they can be seen as one of the “informational” genres of tourism discourse with a more or less direct promotional effect.

Most importantly for the present discussion, guidebooks “mediate” the experience of the traveller. They choose what is worth seeing and the way to describe it. They also choose what is culturally meaningful and present the local culture to the readers in a way that makes it easily understandable for them. For this reason, Cohen (1985) defined guidebooks as “culture brokers”, because they choose and interpret the sights for the tourist. In so doing, they contribute to the “process of sacralisation” of the destination (Crang 2004), that is, to the symbolic transformation of sights into “must-sees”. They also participate in the “circle of representation” of the tourist experience (Jenkins 2003), by both creating and reinforcing travellers’ expectations.

The mediating function of guidebooks is mostly realized through the linguistic cross-cultural representation of the “other” (Bhattacharyya 1997; Van Gorp 2012). By presenting “foreign culture in a nutshell” (Dybiec 2008), guidebooks guide the tourist gaze (Urry 2002). Through discourse, they provide instructions on how to interpret the foreign culture and thus reduce the cultural gap between the travellers’ home culture and the destination’s culture. The metaphor of the “tourist-child” led by the hand by the “guidebook-teacher” illustrates well the role of the genre in the processes of socialization and enculturation of the traveller. All these aspects are strictly related to the concept of “accessibility”, because through specific communicative strategies, guidebooks make many relevant aspects of the target culture understandable and, therefore, accessible for the tourist (e.g. art, history, geography, language, traditions, etc.). They create connections between the “known” and the “new”. They provide interpretive tools for the tourists by helping them integrate their culturally-predicated expectations and needs with the destination’s culture. They take advantage of available mental representations to help tourists make sense of what is new and unfamiliar to them¹ and of the importance of the items selected as culturally relevant.

¹ A good example of this type of strategy is provided by the description of the iconic skyline of San Gimignano as the “Tuscan Manhattan”. This allows American tourists to easily understand the function of towers in medieval Tuscany in terms of both living

Guidebooks for children represent an interesting and yet vastly unexplored subgenre in this regard. Young travellers generally do not have well-established cultural filters and needs. Their “tourist gaze” still needs to be built and developed rather than guided, and their expectations about the destination (if any) may be completely different from those of adult travellers. Moreover, many of the concepts and mental representations available to adult tourists may not be available to children for lack of knowledge or cognitive skills. This necessarily forces a shift in the main parameters according to which guidebooks have been investigated. Rather than attracting, guidebooks for children should entertain. Rather than guiding the tourist gaze, they will be contributing to its creation, while at the same time educating the young readers and providing them with the knowledge they need to interpret a new and foreign environment. At the linguistic level, this emerges in the strategies used to popularize (specialized) knowledge.

Section 2 presents the aim of the research. Section 3 discusses the concepts of accessibility and popularization. Section 4 presents the data and the methodology of the analysis. Section 5 illustrates the features of guidebooks for children as a genre in its own right and shows ways in which cognitive development shapes format and content. Section 6 presents the verbal and visual strategies used to enhance accessibility in guidebooks for children. Finally, section 7 draws some conclusions.

2. Aim of the research

The socialization and enculturation of the tourist relies on the way in which authors decide to present information about destinations and sights. In order to “sacralise the sights” (MacCannell 1989), they describe them in terms of their relevance within a certain cultural framework. If the reader is part of that same framework, mediation is easier. In that case, author and reader can rely on a larger amount of shared knowledge. The farther the cultural references and framework, the more important (and complex) is the mediating role of guidebooks.

Most adult tourists approach travel with a variable amount of knowledge about the destination’s history, geography, art or customs. They also come equipped with knowledge about their own culture and the world. Such

knowledge may have been acquired through experience or learnt through years of formal education. It provides the foundations for the acquisition of new knowledge through the integration of novel and old scripts. In other words, stored knowledge can be exploited to make sense of new “data” and to transform them into new knowledge.

Depending on their age, young travellers might lack the necessary “infrastructure” to make sense of the sights or of the culture of the destination. They might, for instance, not be aware of the differences in lifestyle throughout history. They might not be familiar with specialised vocabulary or concepts. They might not be able to apply cultural relativity to interpret the customs they encounter at the destination. They might not even have the cognitive skills to process complex stimuli. For these reasons, the way in which the destination, its culture and sights are presented to them is especially interesting.

The paper presents the results of a qualitative study of the strategies used in guidebooks for children to make cultural-specific or technical terms and concepts accessible for the reader. The underlying hypothesis is that the same processes at work in the popularization of scientific knowledge can be observed in guidebooks, both for adults and for children (as discussed in Cappelli and Masi 2015). Popularization is here intended as the reformulation, reconceptualization and recontextualization of expert discourse that meet the background encyclopaedia of lay readers (Myers 2003; Hyland 2005; Calsamiglia and Van Dijk 2004; Garzone 2006; Gotti 2013; Mattiello 2014). There is little doubt that much expert knowledge is presented in guidebooks in a way which is accessible to the non-expert reader. All guidebooks include sections about history, geography, art, architecture, and economy. Famous sites are described in terms of their artistic and symbolic value, sometimes with reference to technical concepts. The aim of the analysis, which is part of a wider project focusing on popularization strategies in English and Italian guidebooks at large, was to verify which strategies are used in English guidebooks for children between 6 and 12 years old, and to identify the ways in which contents are adjusted to make them suitable for the presupposed knowledge and cognitive skills of young travellers.

3. Accessibility and popularization of knowledge

Popularization and accessibility are related domains. Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004: p. 370) describe popularization as “a vast class of various types of communicative events or genres that involve the transformation of specialized knowledge into ‘everyday’ or ‘lay’ knowledge [...]. This means that popularization discourse needs to be formulated in such a way that non-specialized readers are able to construct lay versions of specialized knowledge and integrate these with their existing knowledge”.

Popularization discourse has received a fair amount of attention over the past decade (Gotti 2013). Studies have focused on its rhetorical structure, lexical choices, textuality, and on the specific strategies used to make expert content understandable to the non-expert reader (e.g. use of narration or figurative language, explanation, etc.). Many linguistic strategies have been identified as typical of popularized discourse: explanation in all its various forms, such as definition and exemplification, metaphors, descriptions, comparison, and analogy. They all have a common function, namely to allow language users to relate new representations to old representations (Calsamiglia and Van Dijk 2004; Gotti 2013). In other words, they make sure that new concepts become “accessible” to the reader.

In the case of guidebooks for children, the concept of “recontextualization” proposed by Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004) assumes special relevance. The authors claim that “popularization discourse must always adapt to the appropriateness conditions and other constraints of the media and communicative events” (*ibidem*: p. 371). Guidebooks for children represent a specific subgenre, shaped partly by generic constraints, and partly by the particular nature of its intended readership. Since children’s general knowledge is limited when compared to the average adult’s, recontextualization processes shape the linguistic code in a more dramatic fashion. Young readers need to be “guided” more extensively in their interpretation. For this reason, it is especially interesting to study how, and how well, guidebooks for children approach accessibility.

Accessibility can be described as a measure of the ease with which mental representations and pieces of stored information are retrieved from memory (cf. Ariel 1990, 2001). The theory of accessibility developed by Ariel over three decades accounts for the choice of referring expressions in a text and for the functioning of reference chains in textual

interpretation. It focuses on the way in which linguistic markers instruct the addressee on how to access specific mental representations “by indicating to him how accessible this piece of information is to him at the current stage of discourse” (Ariel, 2001: p. 29). The model has received some criticism (cf. Reboul 1997) and it has, to my knowledge, remained mostly confined to the level of textual analysis. However, it provides a good starting point to investigate accessibility at the level of discourse as well.

According to Ariel (1990) the choice of a specific referring expression presupposes the belief that the addressee has some mental representation of the entity being referred to, or that such representation can be more or less easily constructed. Cognitive and pragmatic (i.e. extra-linguistic) factors play a role in such choice. Cognitive factors are especially interesting for the present discussion and include the presupposition of the referent’s accessibility. The less accessible the mental representation, the more informative will the referring expression chosen have to be to allow the addressee to correctly identify the intended referent in the text.

The relationship between degree of mental accessibility and reference derives from the interplay of three main parameters: informativity, rigidity and phonological size (Ariel 1990). Informativity deals with the amount of lexical information that the referring expression provides about the entity referred to (e.g., *the church with the marble portal* presupposes lower accessibility of the referent compared to *the church*). Rigidity refers to the ability of the referring expression to reduce the number of possible interpretations (e.g., *the large buildings* is less rigid than *the temples*). Phonological size refers to the fact that phonologically heavier forms usually mark a lower level of accessibility of the referent (e.g., *The UK* marks a higher degree of accessibility than *The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*).

Ariel (1990) proposed a scale of referring expressions. Depending on whether the referent is assumed to be more or less accessible, the speaker will choose an expression which marks high (e.g., pronouns), intermediate (e.g., short definite descriptions such as *the beautiful square*) or low accessibility (e.g., full name + modifier such as *Raffaello, the painter*). In other words, the addresser assists the addressee in recovering the intended referent or mental representation by offering “cues”, that is, by choosing one or the other referring expression depending on the degree of accessibility he assumes the referent or mental representation have for the addressee.

Even if the theory was not developed to discuss accessibility of meaning *per se*, Ariel's procedural approach to referent retrieval and her concept of mental accessibility offer an interesting perspective to discuss mediating strategies in informational tourist materials. It connects nicely with the suggestions that come from the literature on popularization discourse, because they both presuppose assumptions on the background knowledge shared by the addresser and the addressee. Together, they offer a framework to analyse the linguistic strategies used in travel guidebooks to make the destination and its culture accessible to tourists and to guide their gaze. The linguistic strategies used to popularize "difficult" concepts are, therefore, interpreted in the present study in terms of accessibility enhancement or creation.

4. Data and methodology

The data discussed in section 6 come from a qualitative analysis of a small corpus of children's guidebooks in English. This choice was made for several reasons. Firstly, guidebooks for children are an intrinsically multimodal genre: separating texts from images would inevitably result in a partial picture of the accessibility strategies adopted. Secondly, concept accessibility enhancement and creation often relies on more than just one linguistic form or expression. Automatic extraction of data from the corpora would limit the range of observable phenomena. The aim of this preliminary investigation was to obtain an overview of the different strategies adopted to make concepts relative to the sights or the destinations accessible for the young travellers. The frequency of the individual phenomena and their statistical relevance in the genre was therefore not measured. The quantitative analysis of the data remains an interesting question for further research.

In the choice of the materials to include in the corpus a broad definition of guidebooks was adopted. Texts that are immediately recognizable as guidebooks in the classic sense of the term were included alongside with sticker books and lift-the-flap books about well-known destinations. The underlying assumption is that the macrofunction of such materials for a young readership is comparable to that of traditional guidebooks for an older audience.

For the present study, only data from guidebooks originally written in English for children between the ages of 6 and 12 (middle childhood) were considered. The texts included in the corpus are listed below.

1. *Rome City Guides for Kids (ZigZag City Guides)*
2. *This is Rome* (Universe Publishing)
3. *This is London* (Universe Publishing)
4. *Kids' Travel Guide Italy and Rome* (Flying Kids)
5. *Kids' Travel Guide Rome* (Flying Kids)
6. *Kids' Travel Guide London* (Flying Kids)
7. *Kids' Travel Guide Paris* (Flying Kids)
8. *Kids' Travel Guide New York* (Flying Kids)
9. *A smart kids' guide to Ancient Greece* (CreateSpace)
10. *A smart kids' guide to Impressive Italy* (CreateSpace)
11. *Mission London. A scavenger hunt adventure* (Aragon Books)
12. *Around the globe. Must see places in Europe* (Baby Professor)
13. *Around the globe. Must see places in the Middle East* (Baby Professor)
14. *Not for parents London* (Lonely Planet)
15. *Not for parents Rome* (Lonely Planet)
16. *50 Things to spot in London* (Usborne)

5. Cognitive factors influencing format and contents of guidebooks for children

Guidebooks for children have a long-standing tradition in the English-speaking world. The first instances of what could be called modern guidebooks for children were published in the UK in the 1950's. They were illustrated books about some of the most famous cities in the world by the Czech artist Miroslav Sasek. His illustrations were accompanied by short texts. The first books in the series, *This is Paris* and *This is London*, were published in 1959 by W. H. Allen in the UK and by Macmillan in the US, and they were reprinted at the beginning of the 21st century. Since their publication, a plethora of titles have appeared, some by independent publishers and some by the "big names" in the industry, such as Lonely Planet.

Guidebooks for children differ from guidebooks for adults in many ways, ranging from their format to their content (Cappelli and Masi 2015). These aspects are shaped by the characteristics of the age group for which they are intended. They vary from the traditional book format to the lift-the-flap-book and collector's cards format. They represent a hybrid genre, which includes features of picture books, activity books, card games,

information books and personal journals. The older the target audience, the more “traditional” the format (Figure 1).



Figure 1

Guidebooks for children lack some of the sections found in guidebooks for adults (Maci 2013). More specifically, since children do not choose hotels and restaurants and do not normally travel by themselves, the “useful information” sections are not included.

The contents and their presentation seem to take into account the cognitive skills of the different age groups for which they are intended. According to the psychological literature, childhood can be divided into four main phases (Valkenburg and Cantor 2001). Throughout the stages of infancy (0-2), early childhood (3-5), middle childhood (6-12) and adolescence (13-19), children vary in terms of ability to concentrate and to self-regulate, attention span, interests and relational skills. Research on youth tourism shows that young travellers want “activities, sensory experiences and play, where they are active and absorbed – preferably with other children” (Gram, 2005: p. 11). Later in childhood and adolescence, peer social interaction becomes most important and travelling “with” is more relevant than travelling “to”. Even though they are clearly aware of differences involved in being away from “home”, children seem to be attracted by the culturally familiar aspects of travelling rather than by the differences (Cullingford 1995). Recollection studies provide support for these observations and highlight how childhood holiday memories shift

from being prevalently egocentric to being prevalently social and converge on three main aspects: the importance of having fun, excitement and adventure; the memory of sightseeing, education and learning as partly negative experiences, and the importance of feeling grown up and independent (Small 2008).

All these aspects, as well as our knowledge about children's cognition, shape the structure, language and look of guidebooks for young travellers. Young children (0-5) have little eye for detail and quality, therefore books addressing this age group, including information and guidebooks, are rich in simple, colourful illustrations, and hands-on activities such as stickers or flaps. They usually include popular fictional characters, which can provide an anchor to known elements. They exploit fairy-tale-like narration (Valkenburg and Cantor 2001).

During the early school years, centration (the ability to centre one's attention only on striking features of objects) decreases and children develop an improved ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality. Their attention span is longer and they start to prefer social play and faster paced entertainment. They can appreciate complex plots and characters and more difficult and varied contents, including humour. They are more responsive to verbally oriented information. Guidebooks for this age group include longer texts, anecdotes and "fun facts", and game-like activities with a formative aim (see Figure 2, which presents the local currency).



Figure 2

Most guidebooks include a fictional character who guides the child towards discovering the destinations. This "imaginary friend" can either

be a popular character or a peer, such as Leonardo in the Kids' Travel Guides series. The opinion of peers plays an increasingly important role in children's lives. Through late middle childhood (9 to 12), kids develop a more complex interest in real world phenomena and entertainment designed for adults. By the age of 9, they prefer realistic entertainment and become attached to real-life heroes such as sport and movie stars, which is reflected in the choice of anecdotes in guidebooks (Valkenburg and Cantor, 2001). They also develop a taste for collecting and accumulating, which makes cards the perfect choice for this age group. Guidebooks for teenagers are similar to guidebooks for adults in format, but they are often written in a more "subversive", "not-for-parents" style (see Lonely Planet "not-for-parents" series)

This accommodation of the psychological features of the target audience is in itself a way to increase content accessibility. The next section discusses some of the ways in which linguistic and iconic resources also contribute to enhance accessibility in this genre.

6. Popularization strategies for accessibility

Popularization discourse resorts to a large number of rhetorical strategies to make expert contents accessible to non-expert readers (Garzone 2006; Gotti 2013; Mattiello 2014). The most common strategies found in the corpus are explanation in its different forms (e.g., description, denomination, analogy, exemplification and definition), anchoring to the reader's background knowledge and life experience, attribution (i.e. the explicit mention of the source of the information provided), use of more than one semiotic code at the same time and generic hybridization.

6.1. Explanation

Explanation is by far the most common strategy found in guidebooks. It is present in the corpus with various types of textual instances.

6.1.1 Explicit explanation of general and technical concepts

An interesting phenomenon observed in guidebooks for children is the frequent inclusion of very explicit explanatory passages focusing on

general concepts relative to tourism and the genre itself (often in the form of negation of the genre). Thus, it is quite common to find a more or less brief comment on the hybrid nature of the genre, and instructions for the reader on the best way to make the most of it.

1. This is not a guidebook. And it is definitely not-for-parents. It's the real inside story about one of the world's most famous cities – London. In this book you will hear fascinating tales about famous and infamous people, creepy underground places, dark history and strange characters galore. (*Not-for-parents London*)
2. Tourism is a term that describes a person traveling solely for recreation. These travellers are called tourists. [...] Sometimes tourists can seem out of place or appear to stand out with his or her surroundings. Typically a tourist enters into a culture different from his or her own for a brief visit. Many people call this kind of travel going on vacation or going on holiday. (*A smart kid's guide to Ancient Greece*).

The same strategies are used to present concepts that might be useful to interpret the sights and which the author assumes are not yet available to the target reader as in (3):

3. Renaissance is French for “rebirth.” The Renaissance period started in Florence. There was a lot of new growth in the arts, architecture, and science. (*Kids' Travel Guide Italy and Rome*)

6.1.2 Definition and description

“Definition” and “description” are often used interchangeably in the literature on explanation. Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004) distinguish between the two by specifying that definitions explain unknown words and descriptions explain unknown things. However, in a case like (4), the distinction between the two categories is quite blurred.

4. Have you spotted any domes in Rome? What is a dome? A dome is a structure that looks like the top half of a circle and is hollow inside. (*ZigZag City Guides Rome*)

Regardless of the terminological issue, definition/description is probably the most common explanatory strategy found in guidebooks for children. Definition is often instantiated through juxtaposition of specialized terminology and non-specialized vocabulary as in (5) and (6).

5. When the Pope dies or retires, the Cardinals from all over the world come here to choose a new Pope. At a special meeting, a “conclave,” every Cardinal casts his secret vote. (*Kids’ Travel Guide Italy and Rome*)

6. The Colosseum is full of underground passages, the hypogeum. (*Kids’ Travel Guide Italy and Rome*)

These passages exemplify the variety of forms juxtaposition can take. General terms can be followed by a specialized term in quotes, in italics, or between dashes. Other possibilities include the use of brackets and a different order of term and definition, as in (7) and (8):

7. It’s also been a mint (a place where money is made), a place to store weapons, and even a zoo”. (*Kids’ Travel Guide London*)

8. To the north was the vast emperor’s throne room (the aula regia); to the west a basilica (used by the emperor to meet his advisers) and to the south a large banqueting hall, the triclinium. (*Kids’ Travel Guide Rome*)

As is evident from these examples, popularization strategies are rarely used in isolation. Most commonly, more than one strategy is used in the same passage, as in the case of generalization in (7). Frequently, terms are defined in terms of more familiar concepts as in (8), where references to throne rooms and banqueting halls are likely to be easily accessible to English-speaking children.

The “basilica” example in (8) is especially interesting because the word is defined in functional terms. The reader might, in fact, be familiar with the label, but not with the specialized sense. In present-day English, a basilica is a place of worship. In the Roman times, though, the basilica was a place for political meetings. In terms of accessibility of mental representations, this seems an interesting case in which explanation strategies help the reader form (or retrieve) the correct mental image by disambiguating between competing referents.

6.1.3 Generalization

Example (7) also contains an instance of generalization. Generalization consists in paraphrasing or providing a general definition to substitute specific elements. Thus, “a place to store weapons” is a generalization of the technical term “armoury”. Generalization is usually opposed to exemplification (Calsamiglia and Van Dijk 2004). Surprisingly, exemplification is very rare in guidebooks for children, and in the few cases in which it occurs, it is introduced explicitly by markers such as “for example” as in (9).

9. Each Italian region is known for its favorite way to eat pasta. For example, in the capital city there are two favorite ways that Romans eat their pasta: Carbonara or Cacio e Pepe. (*A smart kids' guide to Impressive Italy*)

6.1.4 Analogy and metaphor

Metaphors are rare in the corpus. The few instances found are mostly idiomatic as in (10).

10. The Roman Forum was the heart and soul of ancient Rome. It was the public square where Romans did their banking, trading, shopping, chatting, and praying. (*Kids' Travel Guide Italy and Rome*)

Analogy is often used to provide an anchor to the reader's culture as in (11).

11. Ancient Rome's Fort Knox, the Temple of Saturn was the city treasury. (*Not-for-parents London*)

6.2 Attribution

Attribution is often generic in guidebooks for children. It usually includes a mention of legends or hearsay and, only rarely, reference to more “prestigious” sources as in (13).

-
12. One legend says that after a huge, flood of the Tiber River, a little boat was left on this exact spot! That was, the inspiration for the fountain's statue! (*Kids' Travel Guide Italy and Rome*)
 13. "Busy emporium for trade and traders", it was described by the Roman historian, Tacitus, one thousand nine hundred years ago." (*This is London*)

6.3 Anchoring to the reader's experience, culture or time

Anchoring to the reader's experience, culture or time is extremely pervasive in guidebooks for children. It is done through several different strategies. Forms of direct address which call the readers to some sort of action are frequent, and often prompt them to compare the world as they know it and as it used to be as in the following examples.

14. Before television, you could count on a church mosaic for a hefty bit of drama. Tiny tiles of coloured marble and gold were put together to tell stories. (*Not-for-parents Rome*)
15. Track down these two complex designs. Keep a look out above your head and beneath your feet. [...] When you find it, imagine the time it would take to carve and construct this without the use of today's power tools. (*Mission London*)

This type of strategy is quite common, as are word play and explicit comparisons as in (16) and (17).

16. Rome was not built in a day, but the Colosseum was built in eight years. The work was finished in the year 80, and there was room for 50,000 people to sit inside and watch the gladiators fighting. But if you go inside today all you see are cats and tourists and photographers and postcard sellers." (*This is Rome*)
17. Rome is the capital of Italy and is famous for its history and beauty. You may notice things in Italy don't always look the same as they do where you are from." (*Zig Zag city guides Rome*)

Anchoring is often created through intertextuality. More specifically, guidebooks use fairy-tale-like narration and recognizable formulas typical of children's literature and nursery rhymes.

18. Let's go right back to the beginning. Once upon a time there was a motherly she-wolf and two baby brothers called Romulus and Remus. [...] According to the legend..." (*This is Rome*)
19. Old Father Thames / London Bridge not Falling Down / Remember Remember the Fifth of November... / With an oink, oink here... (Titles of sections in *Not-for-parents London*)

A distinctive and very common strategy found in the corpus is game-like activities aimed at raising children's awareness about relevant aspects of the destination. They usually prompt reflection on the similarities and differences between "home" and the destination, or between past and present lifestyles. Thus, an introductory passage about London might be followed by questions such as "what is the capital city of your country?", "does it have a nickname?", "do any major rivers flow through your country's capital city?" and "what is the main language in your country?" (Kids' Travel Guides *London*). In some guidebooks, children are asked to spot the "odd object" in a picture. Illustrations usually include characters from older times with present-day items such a mobile phone or a wrist watch.

Other activities are aimed at verifying that some complex concept has been understood as in Figure 3, which presents the extension of the Roman Empire, after its exceptionalism is discussed in the preceding pages.



Figure 3

Some guidebooks include rebus-like activities where children have to read a passage in which some technical terms have been substituted by images. This type of activity is meant to favour retrieval of newly learnt words and concepts through associative processes. In all these activities, the iconic apparatus has a fundamental role.

6.4 The fundamental role of the iconic apparatus

Images play a decisive role in accessibility creation and enhancement in guidebooks for children. The genre is inherently multimodal: the role of colours, images and layout is just as (if not more) important than the text. Text and images cannot work independently. The visual apparatus contributes to making meaning accessible by engaging young readers through various strategies exploiting a complementary relation between codes. The younger the reader, the more difficult is the separation of linguistic and iconic resources. In materials for the younger travellers there are only illustrations. Guidebooks discussed in this paper present an alternation of photographs and drawings. The latter are still prevalent, even though creative collage-like compositions make their appearance, where photos and illustrations are integrated (cf. Lonely Planet Not-for-parents series).

Figure 4 provides an excellent example of integration of semiotic codes to contrast and compare past and present. These pages are taken from “This is Rome”, considered to be one of the first guidebooks for children in the English speaking world (Candles 1960). It was published in 1959 and it is ideally meant for 5-12 year old children. The images complete the text. Moreover, they offer an extra layer of meaning for older readers, be they adults reading with children or older children who have the cognitive skills and the socio-pragmatic competence to process this kind of humour. Younger children might only be able to focus on the most basic layer of meaning involving the different look of ancient and contemporary Romans. Older readers, however, will also grasp the humorous intent of the illustrator to portray ancient Romans (e.g., emperors and leaders) side-by-side with present-day Romans (e.g., eager pasta eaters and barmen). Sasek’s fine humour was recognized by critics from the start. Thus, in a review, Candles (1960) wrote: “The book may seem to appeal to very small children, but it is designed for the sophisticated reader who will enjoy the incongruous contrasts and who

will not be puzzled by the abrupt -- and unexplained -- turns of the text. The book is full of unanswered questions. [...] Older boys and girls will know the answers, or where to find them; younger children attracted to the book by its gay colour and many pictures will be merely baffled. Sophisticated readers will enjoy not only the brilliant draughtsmanship and the warm comedy but also the fine economy with which Mr. Sasek uses words. He employs no tricks but colours the plainest statement with his own wry humour.” (p. 21).



The discussion of images in a separate section is just an artificial distinction for the sake of the present discussion. The iconic apparatus accompanies and often integrates the other popularization strategies mentioned above, as in the case of the rebus-like activities mentioned in section 5.3. A thorough discussion of the role of the iconic apparatus in guidebooks for children would be outside the scope of the present publication. However, the analysis of the corpus shows a coherent use of images in the data, which can be essentially grouped in three macrofunctions: explaining the text to make concepts more accessible, integrating the text by providing extra information in an immediately accessible way, and engaging the reader to focus his/her attention on relevant aspects of the attractions or the destination. In this sense, guidebooks for children exploit visual resources like other genres for children such as early non-fiction books (Mallet 2004; Sezzi 2012).

7. Conclusions

The analysis of the popularization strategies in guidebooks for children confirms that the need to transform and recontextualize expert knowledge for young travellers shapes the genre at many different levels. The general aim of children's guidebooks seems comparable to that of non-fiction books for children (e.g. history information books, cf. Sezzi 2012). Given the limited knowledge of the readers, the development of their cognitive skills and the lack of a consolidated tourist gaze, guidebooks for children oscillate between instruction and entertainment, with the latter ultimately being subservient to the former.

This macro-purpose affects the organization and the style of the genre. Accuracy of information, which is fundamental for the formative intent of the genre, is pursued through the interaction between the text and the reader and through encouraging questioning and debate. New knowledge and ideas are made accessible through a series of different strategies meant to create links with the reader's existing knowledge and mental representations. Mental accessibility comes in a rich array of degrees. If we borrow the concept from Ariel's (1990) model, we can compare the different strategies observed to the different accessibility markers that she discusses.

Just like the accessibility markers, the various strategies identified in the corpus are connected to factors such as the presupposed familiarity with

topic, the distance between mentions of an entity in a text (e.g., in the interplay of text and images) and the competition between referents (e.g., the basilica example discussed in 6.1.2).

Accessibility and multimodality seem to be indissolubly intertwined in the genre. Various semiotic resources are used simultaneously to make new concepts accessible. Popularization strategies such as explanation, anchoring, and attribution simultaneously exploit verbal and visual materials. The interplay of language and images is used to guide children in the process of retrieving or constructing the correct mental representations. Intertextuality offers familiar contexts in which novel concepts can be presented. This provides scaffolding for the interpretation of new information while leaving cognitive resources available for the integration of old and new scripts.

The entertaining nature of the game-like activities is of paramount importance. Such activities are meant to promote critical thinking and reflection on the similarities and differences between the known and the new. Through this, young travellers learn about their own culture and the new culture they have a chance to experience. In this sense, through “edutainment”, guidebooks contribute to the creation of their tourist gaze. Ultimately, this should not be too surprising, because, as Henry Miller (1957) once wrote, “one’s destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things”.

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