

The role of humour in tourism discourse: the case of Montenegro

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of humour as a persuasive tool of tourism destinations' communication and as a means of creating the destination's image and uniqueness in tourism discourse. According to Aristotle's appeals, humour belongs to pathos, which is – besides ethos and logos – an essential means of persuasion in successful communication. In the introductory part, the paper offers a short theoretical insight into the functions of tourism discourse and the role of humour in it, further on examples of online promotional texts about Montenegro are analysed and discussed using discourse analysis. The findings confirm that successful promotion can only occur through the efficient use of tourism discourse which addresses the needs of potential tourists and that humorous texts about destinations are appealing to readers. Based on the analysis, it can be established that branding of tourism destinations, products and services with elements of humour may be outstanding in positive ways, and consequently employed in promotional texts as a successful means of communication.

Keywords: tourism, discourse, branding, humour, Montenegro.

1. Introduction

Destinations deciding to include humour into their promotional videos and texts, show that humour has a significant role in the tourism promotion and in tourism in general – tourists enjoy when the (potential) hosts make them laugh. These discoveries are important, but relatively new since the research of humour in tourism “only started to emerge in the early 2000s” (Pabel 2019: 1) even though research on humour goes back to Plato and Aristotle (Attardo 2017). Carden (2005) discovered in his survey that humour attracts tourists to destinations, and that it is an important pull factor that can lead to better and more enjoyable tourist experiences (Pabel & Pearce 2019; Pabel & Pearce 2015; Pearce & Pabel 2015). Among the destinations that employ humour in branding is Montenegro, which is a popular tourist destination in the Balkans. It is one of the youngest countries in the world. Once part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it gained its independence in 2006 when it left the state union with the Republic of

Serbia (Dževerdanovic-Pejović 2018) and has since become one of the most popular tourism destinations in the south-eastern part of Europe. Montenegro uses tourism as its main development strategy – with the official slogan Wild Beauty. It humorously has a reputation of a country whose inhabitants are proverbially lazy. The decision to examine humour in website texts about Montenegro has been made because websites offer diverse promotional texts in English, the language which still holds the status of lingua franca in tourism operations. Besides detecting humour in the analysed texts, one of the goals of this research is to identify how the humour portrays the destination of Montenegro, and which lexical choices are made in the descriptions of this small, but very diverse tourism destination with around 600,000 inhabitants.

2. Humour and tourism discourse

Humour addresses various topics (Alharthi 2014) and is traditionally related to well-being and health. This is what humour and vacationing have in common. Tourists, according to Pabel and Pearce (2019: 85), “are actively seeking simulated, fun-filled experiences to meet their expectations.” Thus, employing humour is good for the success of the tourism business (Pabel & Pearce, 2018). Humour was significant already in the speeches of ancient Greece, but the first linguistic theories of humour were proposed as late as in the twentieth century by Raskin (1985), Attardo (1994) and Yus (1996). Especially the General Theory of Verbal Humor and the Semantic-Script Theory of Humour contributed significantly to the understanding of humour in the last two decades (Attardo 2020). Zhang and Pearce (2016: 259) explained humour as “everything that provokes laughter and provides amusement.” Holmes (2000: 163) provides a more detailed definition and argues that humour includes “utterances which are identified by the analyst, on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic and discursal clues, as intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some participants.” As subclasses of semiotic humour, Attardo (2020) distinguishes linguistic (humour expressed through written or spoken language), visual, musical, television, cinema, theatre, video games, etc. humour. Besides laughter (Berger 1976) and amusement, jokes and fun are most commonly associated to humour (Pearce & Pabel 2013; Zhang & Pearce 2016). Jokes as “short (narrative)” texts “ending in a punch line” (Attardo 2020: 14) are especially popular in eliciting humour. But it has to be emphasized that studying humour is always context specific (Zhang & Pearce 2016). In tourism, for example, humour has the potential to reduce anxiety, increase social relations, build positive moods and give a distinctive identity to the tourism business (Szabo 2003; Zhang & Pearce 2016). Humour is closely associated to language, which is an important tool also in tourism. In the last two decades, the term tourism discourse has been established successfully (Calvi 2000; Jaworski & Pritchard 2005; Thurlow & Jaworski 2010), as a means of exploring “tourism reflexivity” (Urry 2002: 142) and the representation of the tourism world in various meaningful ways. Consequently, professionals in the fields of tourism have become more aware of the role of communication and discourse in tourism, especially in representations of destinations.

Positive representations of destinations are achieved by employing various linguistic devices and techniques, for example Dann’s (1996: 101-134) tourism categories, to which he refers as three Rs (Romanticism, Regression, Rebirth), three Hs (Happiness, Hedonism, Helio-centrism), three Fs (Fun, Fantasy, Fairy Tales), and three Ss (Sea, Sex, Socialization). Dann (1996: 68) also discusses four sociolinguistic models for promotional texts in tourism, which are divided into the following four categories: a) The language of authentication (promotes the experience of the traveller as authentic, genuine, pure, opposing it to the banality of everyday life); b) The language of differentiation (highlights the contrast between holiday and normal life); c) The language of recreation (emphasises the recreational and hedonistic side of tourism);

and d) The language of appropriation (tries to adopt an attitude of control and domination of what is unknown).

The rhetoric of tourism in general “is full of the manifestation of the importance of authenticity of the relationship between the tourists and what they see: This is a typical native house; this is the very place that the leader fell; this is the actual pen used to sign the law; this is the original manuscript; this is the authentic Tlingit Fish Club; this is a real piece of the true Crowns of Thorns” (MacCannel 1989: 14). Jaworska (2017) analysed the language of tourism promotional discourse and confirmed that metaphorical expressions often used in promotional texts about destinations generate sensory fusions that appeal to multiple senses (Potočnik Topler 2018).

Another characteristic of tourism discourse is lexical density (Manca 2016), which directly influences the syntactic features of tourism promotional texts. In destination descriptions, where the usage of present tenses prevails (the present simple tense is the commonest), usually simple sentences are used interchangeably with complex sentences (coordinated, subordinated and among the latter relative clauses, conditionals, and concessive clauses). Destination descriptions represent promotional texts that are communicative and easy to understand. Their main functions are promotional, informative, and instructive (descriptive and directive text types).

Destination branding that happens through languages and imagery has become a widely used tool in tourism promotion (Nelson 2014: 41-42). Thus, language as the carrier of communication, connotations, and ideas, has a significant role in the tourism industry and in the branding of particular tourism destinations (Potočnik Topler 2018). This is also the case through narratives employing humour, for example, in the work of tour guides (Rashid et al. 2017). Language is, in fact, the most important tool for getting the messages across. Of course, the Internet and social media have a huge impact on tourism (Narangajavana et al. 2017: 60), and have become the everyday habit of communication (Luo & Zhong 2015) and search of information. The reason why marketing communication on the Internet has been chosen for the analysis of the tourism discourse about Montenegro is that for tourists, the Internet has actually become one of the most important sources of information. When referring to discourse, we mean “the spoken, signed or written language used by people to communicate and interact in natural settings” (Cumming et al. 2011: 8). Cumming et al. (2011) also pointed out that there is an increasing recognition and interest in the nature of context. As mentioned, besides special functions, the language of tourism has special features, including specific syntax, vocabulary, and grammar. It has its own discourse, which could be defined as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about/.../ a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall 1997: 44). The following empirical linguistic analysis, based on Halliday’s (2004) discourse analysis, which involves the narrative analysis and the linguistic analysis of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, will reveal how humour, more precisely ethnic humour, which is a special category (Koncewicz-Dziduch 2017), is incorporated into the tourism discourse.

3. Methodology

This article employs narrative analysis on a sample of promotional texts collected in 2021 (a corpus of approximately 10,000 words) which was subjected to content and discourse analyses. The latter is, according to Attardo (2017a), one of the fields that contributed most importantly to the research of humour – along with the General Theory of Verbal Humour, which was also employed in the analysis. The paper is focused on promotional tourism discourse, more precisely, on tourism promotion texts about Montenegro. Promotion is, according to Arfin et al. (2012: 136), an essential source of information for the potential tourists, influencing them when choosing destinations to which they would like to travel. Since websites are significant in

communicating the destination brand to the potential tourists, the features of website promotional texts about Montenegro are analysed. To enhance understanding of the role of humour in tourism promotional texts, random purposeful keywords sampling (Sandelowski 2000; Tamul & Martínez-Carrillo 2018) was employed. In Google search, the keywords *montenegro*, *tourism*, *travel*, *humour*, and *joke* were typed, and among many search results, only texts that actually include some elements of humour from the following websites are retrieved: www.dw.com¹, TheCultureTrip.com², RickSteves.com³ and LonelyPlanet.com⁴. They were chosen as offered search results in April and in June 2021 and as sources of tourist information.

It should be observed that critical discourse analysis comprises various methods and analyses (Van Dijk 1992; Wodak & Meyer 2009), and can be approached in different ways. Since the article is based on the functionalist view of the language, for the analysis of texts, Fasold's definition has been considered which states that "the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use" (Fasold 1990: 65).

Initially, the structure, content, and function of the chosen promotional texts about Montenegro were examined through narrative analysis (Bamberg 2012) and through content analysis, which is a method used frequently in tourism studies (Botterill & Platenkamp 2012). It consists of a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis (Mayring 2000). The analysis began with an examination of the general information about Montenegro, identifying the situation of text-production, socio-cultural background, the text itself, and the effect of the text. Further on in the research, the linguistic analysis was undertaken, exploring repeating discursive patterns, lexical choices, and phraseology.

4. Text analysis and findings

The internet is probably the richest source of available data for linguistic research, offering research materials that are original, authentic, up-to-date and topical. When it comes to promotional texts, "informing," "persuading" and "reminding" are their main objectives (Holloway 2004: 265). Kannan and Tyagi (2013: 3) argue that promotional texts, among others, are "aimed at promoting and selling not only tangible and physical goods, but also ideas and services." Consequently, in promotional texts, the AIDA model (AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is used commonly (Gabriel et al. 2006: 505), and it is also very common in the tourism promotional discourse – in texts promoting destinations, services and attractions, because it is fundamental that promotional materials in tourism meet the traditional and new, modern, contemporary requirements of the advertising discourse (Potočnik Topler 2018). The following examples show that humour plays a significant part in promotional texts and also in creating, maintaining and further developing the image of Montenegro as a destination. Since humour can be a very subjective matter, the following criteria, which are in accordance with the General Theory of Verbal Humour (Attardo & Raskin 1991) and make it possible to detect whether a text is humorous, are observed: 1 script opposition (opposition of semantic frameworks or scripts when it comes to interpreting a humour utterance generates a number of incongruities that the listener has to resolve in his final interpretation); 2 the logical mechanism (describes the resolution of the incongruity in the script opposition, this knowledge source is not always available); 3 the situation (the context which evokes humorous situation); 4 the target (the person or audience the humour is addressed to); 5 the narrative strategies (the genre being

¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/in-the-land-of-mountains-a-road-trip-in-montenegro/a-49481771/>

² <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/montenegro/articles/9-things-you-should-know-about-montenegros-culture/>

³ <https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/read/tms/cetinje-the-end-of-the-road>

⁴ <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/montenegro>

used to express humour, for example a joke); and, 6 the language (words, linguistic figures, tone, etc.). Despite the indisputable fact that the General Theory of Verbal Humour and the Semantic-Script Theory of Humour have been recognized as the two most influential and significant linguistic humour theories of the last twenty years (Attardo 2020) utilized to understand verbal humour in various types of texts, in this article a broad approach encompassing pragmatics and discourse analysis has been used. The so-called broad approach is also supported by Attardo (2020) in his latest book on the linguistics of humour in which he uses pragmatics, conversation and discourse analysis, ethnomethodology, interactionist and variationist sociolinguistics (besides the General Theory of Verbal Humour).

Humour of the Montenegrins and about them was not experienced only in the texts, but also during a recent visit. When entering the country at the border crossing with Croatia called *Debeli Brijeg* (in English Fat Hill) in 2019, even the official at the customs' booth office, a place where humour is not generally expected, greeted the passengers with a joke saying that if a desire to work appears while in Montenegro, they should refrain from it for a while and the desire should pass. Related to this reputation of laziness are also postcards sold in Montenegro presenting the 10 Montenegrin Commandments, which are the following: 1 Man is born tired and the purpose of his living is to rest. (*Čovjek se rodi umoran i živi da bi se odmarao.*); 2 Thou shalt love thy bed as thyself. (*Ljubi krevet svoj ka' samog sebe.*); 3 Thou shalt rest by day so thou canst sleep by night. (*Odmaraš se danju da noću možeš spavati.*); 4 Thou shalt not work lest the work killeth thee. (*Ne radi jer rad ubija.*); 5 If thou findest someone doing nothing thou shalt join him. (*Ako vidiš nekoga da se odmara, pomoz mu.*); 6 Thou shalt work less than needed and thou shalt pass on the work to another man. (*Radi manje no što možeš, a ono što možeš prebaci na drugoga.*); 7 Salvation is in the cool shade, no man has perished of exhaustion by taking rest. (*U ladu je spas, od odmaranja niko nije crka.*); 8 Work bringeth sickness, thou shalt keep away from it lest thou perish young. (*Rad donosi bolest, ne umri mlad.*); 9 If by chance thou desirest to work, refrain thyself from it for a while and thy desire shall pass away. (*Ako slučajno poželiš raditi, pričekaj malo, proći će.*); 10 Whenever thou findest someone eating and drinking thou shalt join him, whenever thou findest someone working thou shalt withdraw thyself lest thou become a meddler. (*Kad vidiš da neko jede i pije pridruži mu se, kad vidiš da neko radi, maknes da ne smetaš*). In light of the General Theory of Verbal Humour, it could be argued that the Script Opposition is *work/rest, tired/rested, lazy/hardworking*. What catches the attention of the reader, is the Narrative Strategy – short commandments in the form of witty one liners. In the original text, these one liners are written in a local dialect, while in translation archaic English is used.

Since humour is obviously an essential part of creating the image of Montenegro and the Montenegrins do not mind laughing at themselves, this research is interested in the specific tools and lexical choices in tourism discourse about Montenegro. The latter are viewed as essential in the construction of the tourism discourse, which is significant in creating and branding of tourism destinations.

Montenegrins' joking about themselves makes Montenegro a destination that is different from other destinations and this is unique in this respect. It seems that they are aware that "using the same language and looking the same as the 'other' can cause a loss of a sense of place and result in a withdrawal from certain experiences" (Vučetić 2004).

It seems that spreading the stereotypes about laziness of the natives of Montenegro, is quite typical of tourism discourse about this Balkan destination. On the Internet, several examples could be found. The following is from *The Lonely Planet* online guide:

- (1) The enduring stereotype of Montenegrins is that they are lazy, an accusation that they themselves sometimes revel in. Certainly the cafes and bars are always full, but perhaps no more so than in the neighbouring countries. As a popular local joke goes, 'Man is born tired and lives to rest.' This accusation of indolence probably derived from the era when occupations other than fighting and

raiding the neighbouring Turks were seen to be beneath a man's dignity. It's certainly not true of Montenegrin women, to whom all the actual heavy labour fell.

(<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/montenegro/background/other-features/d44687fe-5afa-41f2-8bc2-d18828809f53/a/nar/d44687fe-5afa-41f2-8bc2-d18828809f53/360151>)

The text implies that the Montenegrins are lazy as opposed to tourists who are hardworking and visit Montenegro for their deserved holidays. This stereotype is supported by claiming that in Montenegro cafes and bars are always full. The argument about full bars is downplayed in the next sentence by adding “but perhaps no more than in the neighbouring countries.” Immediately after that laziness is emphasised again by using the phrase “Man is born tired and lives to rest,” which is labelled a joke in the text despite the fact that it is a one liner. Immediately after that, laziness of Montenegrins is downplayed again by offering a probable explanation for this which lies in history “when occupations other than fighting and raiding the neighbouring Turks were seen to be beneath a man’s dignity.” The last sentence, in fact, argues that only men are lazy since it says “It's certainly not true of Montenegrin women, to whom all the actual heavy labour fell.” As the analysis shows, the text in example (1) employs a laziness stereotype and a funny line (a variation of the first Montenegrin Commandment) “Man is born tired and lives to rest” or a joke as this line is called in the text, but the perception of humour of the entire text in example (1) is probably also culturally and geographically dependent. Namely, despite the fact that humour is a universal phenomenon, it is also geographically (Ridanpää 2014) and culturally conditioned (Jiang et al. 2019).

Jaworska (2016: 83) argues that often, research concerned with representations of destinations in tourism discourse points to the prevalence of stereotypical images. Example (1) fits well into this category.

Also in example (2) Montenegrins’ laziness is humorously emphasized – with the goal to point out that Montenegro is really an ideal holiday destination:

(2) Laziness in Montenegro is indeed so famous that the country now holds its own World Championships. Every year since 2012, the village of Brezna has held a competition to find the laziest person in the country. The rules? You simply have to lie down, and the last person to get up is the winner. The current record stands at a whopping 37 hours, so you best get working on doing nothing if you plan on competing this year.

(<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/montenegro/articles/9-things-you-should-know-about-montenegros-culture/>)

A General Theory of Verbal Humour analysis of example (2), which mentions the World Championship in laziness in Brezna, could look like this:

Script Opposition: Montenegrins/others, lazy/hardworking

Logical Mechanism: lie down, doing nothing

Situation: championship

Target: Montenegrins

Narrative Strategy: storytelling

Language: oppositions (lie down vs. get up, get working on doing nothing)

Example (3) is a travelogue (another type of tourism promotional discourse) mentioning a local tourist worker and his joke:

(3) “We have a joke that goes like this: If Montenegro could be flattened, it would be the biggest country in the world,” says Andri Stanović as he looks out of the car window into the barren mountain landscape. Montenegro – the country of the black mountains – is in fact almost completely covered by mountains. They drop steeply to the Adriatic coast in the south and tower up to high peaks in the north. Stanović’s work for the National Tourism Organization of

Montenegro is to make its country better known as a holiday destination, and beside the heavily frequented tourist beaches on the Mediterranean Sea and the famous Bay of Kotor, to make the wild mountain world accessible to visitors as well (<https://www.dw.com/en/in-the-land-of-mountains-a-road-trip-in-montenegro/a-49481771/>).

As it is seen in example (3), a travelogue uses a joke as means of grabbing readers' attention. If a General Theory of Verbal Humour is applied to this example, an analysis could look like this:

Script Opposition: small/big

Logical Mechanism: to flatten the country

Situation: a road trip to Montenegro

Target: Montenegro

Narrative Strategy: storytelling, a summary of a dialogue with a local tourist worker

Language: a joke, no end punchline

Also example (4) is an excerpt of a travelogue. The latter presents a whole day journey by train from Belgrade in Serbia to Bar in Montenegro. This railway is outstanding because it has 254 tunnels, 435 bridges, and dates back to the 1970s. At first sight, the text does not include any elements of humour, but to those acquainted with the public transport hygiene and some issues with hygiene in public places in Montenegro, the last phrase in the paragraph below "and more sterile," is humorous.

(4) Before I went to sleep that night, I remembered my taxi driver: 'But it makes no sense to take the train.' Lying in bed, I could hear the sea washing onto the shore outside my rented apartment's window. If I ever saw him again, I would make sure to tell the cabbie he was right: a flight would have been much faster and easier, and more sterile.

(<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/belgrade-bar-railway-the-ultimate-balkans-train-trip>)

Employing the General Theory of Verbal Humour an analysis could be as follows.

Script Opposition: clean, sterile/dirty; fast/slow

Logical Mechanism: choose a different means of transport

Situation: a train trip to Montenegro

Target: Montenegro

Narrative Strategy: storytelling

Language: comparison of adjectives

Additionally, example (4) shows that when some background information is explained, the past tense is adopted. As far as the voice of destination promotional texts is concerned, the analysis shows that the active voice is used much more often than the passive. By using the active voice, those promotional texts are more communicative, also more subjective and, consequently, more convincing.

Example (5) is another one that employs a joke, although some would probably question the definition of joke in the following excerpt:

(5) Montenegrins have a very close connection with the art that their people have produced. There is an old joke that when the Ottoman Army approached Cetinje, the locals made sure to remove all the art before coming together as an army to repel the approach. That might be a bit of an overstatement, but this little nation is fiercely protective and intensely proud of the visual art it has created.

(<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/montenegro/articles/9-things-you-should-know-about-montenegros-culture/>)

The joke “that when the Ottoman Army approached Cetinje, the locals made sure to remove all the art before coming together as an army to repel the approach” is used as a tool for attracting a reader’s attention. It is also a means of introducing something positive. Pabel and Pearce (2018) suggest that using humour in tourism, for example in tour guiding and representations of attractions facilitates memorable and positive tourist experiences and is valuable for the overall success of tourism businesses. As the following examples (6) and (7) show, humour is a significant tool of persuasion (or means of persuasion according to Aristotle) also in destination descriptions available on various promotional websites:

(6) By European standards, Montenegro is about as poor as it gets. They don’t even have their own currency. With just 600,000 people, they decided, heck, let’s just use euros. And since it’s such a tiny place, the official Eurozone countries are willing to look the other way.

(<https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/read/tms/cetinje-the-end-of-the-road>)

(7) This is a brutal country – and it’s impoverished. Every hundred yards or so, the local towing company has spray-painted its phone number, “*Auto Slep* 067-838-555,” on a rock. You get the feeling they are in the bushes, praying for a mishap. Desolate farmhouses claim to sell smoked ham, mountain cheese, and *medovina* (honey brandy) — but I don’t see a soul. Up here, the Cyrillic alphabet survives better than on the coast.

(<https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/read/tms/cetinje-the-end-of-the-road>)

A General Theory of Verbal Humour analysis of example (6) could be as follows:

Script Opposition: rich/poor; following the rules/improvisation

Logical Mechanism: exaggeration

Situation: monetary circumstances

Target: Montenegro

Narrative Strategy: storytelling

Language: simile (as poor as it gets), gradation (poor → they don’t even have their own currency), phrase “look the other way”

Example (7) vividly describes the situation besides the winding roads of Montenegro (spray painted phone numbers on rocks, the feeling that someone is waiting in the bushes, praying for a mishap). If the General Theory of Verbal Humour is applied to this short excerpt, an analysis could be as follows:

Script Opposition: rich/poor

Logical Mechanism: exaggeration

Situation: monetary circumstances

Target: Montenegro

Narrative Strategy: storytelling

Language: languaging (*Auto Slep*, *medovina*), gradation (hiding, praying for a mishap), metaphor (I don’t see a soul.)

As can be concluded from the analysis of examples (6) and (7), joking about being poor or without money is another means of eliciting humour and attracting tourists to a destination. It is well known that some tourists prefer less expensive destinations with a lower GDP so that they spend less during their vacations.

Communication is very important for developing successful relationships – practically in all areas of our lives, not only in the sense of promotion, but also in the sense of general knowledge, safety, development, etc. Arfin et al. (2012) have come to similar conclusions. When speaking of tourism discourse, according to Arfin et al. (2012: 136), tourism promotion is an essential source of information for the potential tourists, and it influences people when deciding on the destination they would like to travel to. Consequently, the association between

persuasiveness and attractiveness in tourism promotion are used in different types of media, “where the language is utilized to enhance the elements of persuasiveness and attractiveness” (Arfin et al. 2012: 137). The media in this respect – and websites specialized for tourism, have a significant influence. Ge (2019) points out that not only relevant, but also “entertaining” (2019: 6) information is important, and humour fits well into the entertaining category. See example (8):

(8) It's nigh on impossible to come across a travel section without someone trumpeting Montenegro as the new 'it' destination. And though the country is rightfully revelling in the spotlight, the people remain as they've always been: candid, convivial and charming. Unlike in many other emerging destinations, hassling and scamming visitors isn't big on Montenegrins' agenda; for the most part, you're more likely to encounter a spontaneous bear hug than a bothersome tout. Whether you're chasing highland hospitality or coastal comradery, expect gregarious greetings, the shirt off your host's back and the addition of at least 5kg; these folks love to feed.

(<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/montenegro>)

At first sight, the text in example (8) does not include any elements of humour, but to those acquainted with the traffic in Montenegro, the verb “trumpeting” brings smile on their faces. Namely, the locals trumpet a lot on the roads and at the crossroads (for saying hello on the one hand and for expressing annoyance on the other) and trumpeting is something tourists need to get used to.

Above examples clearly show that nominal phrases are the carriers of the meaning and information and that complex nominal phrases are premodified by adjectives, such as popular, enduring, old, etc. In the destination descriptions the so called adjectivization is employed, which is crucial in the creation of the destination image. It needs to be emphasized that the quality of tourism promotion texts is very important as these texts act primarily as initial sources of information for potential tourists and as motivations for travel (Francesconi 2014: 24). Creating and developing the image of a destination through positive communication and positive tourism discourse is vital for a destination, for the country, for a local environment and for the whole region, for the host and the tourist. And this is exactly where humour has a significant role.

4.1. Lexical and textual features of promotional texts

Promotional texts describing tourism destinations feature special style and register. Many of them employ evaluative and emotive devise. Cappelli (2006: 295) points out that such texts “deal with traveller's expectations,” and that they often feature evaluative and subjective expressions. Because some tourists like to squeeze many activities into a short period of time or even in one day, enumerating the activities that can be carried out in a single day has become a sort of a pattern of promotional tourism discourse.

According to Dann (1996), the lexical choices of every text are fundamental. By using the words magic, ideal, magnificent and other adjectives, texts trigger the associations to the fantasy world, fairy tales or create some other framework that tourists desire, indicating that, at a certain destination, wishes and fairy tales can come true. Consequently, the destination becomes more attractive and desirable to the potential tourist.

By using carefully selected adjectives (keywords), the destination can be represented as magical, beautiful, entertaining, lyrical, romantic, adventurous, fun, wild, unspoiled, exotic, etc. Depending on what the author of the text tries to emphasise, various registers may be employed (register of nostalgia, register of health, register of food and drink, eco-tourism, etc.). Cohen (1985) described the vocabulary technique of employing “dramaturgic effects” the “keying” (Cappelli 2006: 331). By using keywords efficiently (adjectives, adjective-noun collocations,

verbs, etc.) that are appealing to tourists, readers really become tourists, as Cappelli (2006) pointed out in her book “Sun, Sea, Sex and the Unspoilt Countryside: How the English Language Makes Tourists Out of Readers.” Tourism promotion texts employ certain phrases, collocations, and patterns, which have turned into tourism clichés because they are used very often.

Blažević and Stojić (2006: 60) argue that in tourism promotion texts “[k]ey words refer not only to the attributes of the destination but also to the requirements of the potential tourist.” Also, similes (comparing two things by using like or as) and comparisons are an outstanding feature of tourism promotional texts. Furthermore, the use of superlatives, amplifications, and hyperboles (exaggerations), enumerations and repetitions are common. These figures of speech and stylistic devices make promotional texts more interesting, vivid, poetic, romantic, and they also function as the mechanisms for keeping the attention of the reader. Besides the entertaining function also jokes are employed for attracting the readers or keeping their attention. While other elements of humour have predominantly the entertaining function (building up a positive atmosphere, positive relationship, etc.).

Another significant and outstanding characteristic of tourism destination descriptions is languaging – *Auto Slep* and *medovina* in example (7), which is related to acquiring a linguistic sense of a destination and positioning oneself within the repertory of customary practices of a local culture (Cappelli 2013). Employing the languaging technique and using foreign words in a tourism promotional text provides the sense of the local to the reader – probably with an additional goal to impress the reader as well. When pronounced, especially if the pronunciation is not correct, it can elicit humour. This supports Dann’s (1996: 184) view of languaging, which he also describes as “the impressive use of foreign words.” Thus, languaging contributes to authenticity of destinations presented in promotional texts, and according to Cappelli (2013), reduces the cultural distance between two cultures.

5. Discussion

Usually, tourism promotional texts are carefully structured and informative within limited space. They display, as is seen in the cases of Montenegro descriptions, a selection of lexical, structural and grammatical choices and persuasion techniques that are rarely neutral, but always trying to attract, persuade, influence, and seduce the potential tourist to become an actual tourist arriving to the destination. By focusing on positive characteristics of destinations and by employing jokes and humour, the analysed texts directly impact the promotion of Montenegro. It should be emphasized, however, that humour is always the result of various interacting elements and that also communication acts receive their value only in their relation to the market.

As it was decided to conduct the research based on a small number of website promotional texts describing Montenegro, it needs to be pointed out that only texts from four online sources have been analysed, and this presents the limitations of this analysis. But despite the limitations, the study provides us with classic examples of promotional tourism discourse and the usage of humour in them. Mainly, these promotional texts are dense, focused on specific tourism registers, full of modified nouns, adjectives, superlatives and expressions of extreme, supported by adverbial, participial, and verbal imagery. All lexical items in the analysed descriptions of Montenegro have the objective to be appealing to tourists and are chosen carefully. Tourism promotional texts about Montenegro employ humour as a rhetorical strategy, and at the same time also allude to idleness, relaxation, romanticism, happiness, fairy tales, etc. In the analysed descriptions, the majority of Dann’s (1996: 101-134) tourism categories (see section 2) are used. This specific mood of tourism promotional texts is created by using metaphorical, poetic

language and by employing strategies and words that are carefully chosen. Elements of humour may fit well into each category.

6. Conclusion

Efficient promotion can only occur through the efficient use of tourism discourse which addresses the needs of potential tourists who become actual tourists if they are attracted to the destination and persuaded by its attributes through the usage of the right techniques, strategies and combinations of linguistic choices. Tourists bring money to destinations, destinations develop, and developed destinations attract not only tourists but also businesses. Therefore, it is significant that the marketing managers in tourism, especially in the area of tourism promotion and branding, are capable of utilising language as a significant tool in the tourism industry – as a means for earning money, making profits, and as a means of promoting the overall long-term sustainable destination development.

Tourists that are aware of the possible influences of a certain discourse can choose rewarding tourism experiences from many offers in the market, and at the same time act as responsible tourists. This analysis, therefore, supports the assumption that linguistic choices play a significant role in the processes of creating the image of the destination, its branding and promotion. One of the objectives of promotional texts is, therefore, to put the reader and potential tourist into the right positive mood. This is where employing humour for achieving well-being, and a positive mood, etc., is significant. As it is seen from the analysed examples, Montenegrins like joking about themselves and emphasizing laziness as a part of their national character. Employing humour in such manners is probably very safe although Wiseman (2007) established that different nationalities respond differently to jokes. Even though only a small sample of promotional texts from four sources was analysed, which presents the limitations of the research, it was confirmed that linguistic patterns and the choice of lexical items in promotional descriptions of Montenegro play a fundamental role in tourism and display the usage of humour as a rhetorical strategy that has mainly the functions of attracting attention and entertaining. Along with these characteristics, the analysed promotional texts are very dynamic and communicative, but at the same time subordinated to various linguistic patterns and lexical choices, typical of tourism discourse.

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