TOURISM ADVERTISING AND CULTURE COMMODIFICATION, IMPLICATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES: RIAD IN THE MEDINA AS A CASE STUDY[i,ii]

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Abstract:

In this article, we will describe how advertisers use commodification as a marketing strategy through linguistic patterns present in a travel guide. We will use the case of a riad located in the Medina as a case study in order to demonstrate how this latter is sold as an image or lifestyle rather than a destination. Furthermore, the aim of this research revolves around providing an insight into demonstrating the commodification of the Moroccan culture through advertising destination image, taking a riad in the Medina as a case study.

Keywords: Marrakech, advertising, cultural representation, commodification, Moroccan lifestyle

الملخص

في هذه المقالة، سنصف كيف يستخدم المعلنون عملية التسليع باعتبارها استراتيجية تسويقية من خلال الأنماط اللغوية الموجودة في دليل السفر. سنستخدم حالة رياض يقع في المدينة القديمة لمراكش بهدف توضيح كيف يُسوَّق هذا الأخير الصورة أو أسلوب الحياة بدلاً من كونه وجهة سياحية. علاوة على ذلك، يتمحور هدف هذا البحث حول تقديم رؤية توضح تسليع الثقافة المغربية من خلال الإعلان عن صورة الوجهة، وذلك من خلال دراسة حالة لرياض في المدينة القديمة

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مراكش، الإعلان، التمثيل الثقافي، التسليع، أسلوب الحياة المغربي

Résumé :

Dans cet article, nous décrirons comment les annonceurs utilisent la marchandisation comme stratégie marketing à travers les schémas linguistiques présents dans un guide de voyage. Nous prendrons le cas d'un riad situé dans la médina comme étude de cas afin de démontrer comment

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ce dernier est vendu comme une image ou un mode de vie plutôt qu'une simple destination. Par ailleurs, l'objectif de cette recherche est d'apporter un éclairage sur la marchandisation de la culture marocaine à travers la promotion de l'image de la destination, en prenant un riad dans la médina comme exemple.

Mots-clés : Marrakech, publicité, représentation culturelle, marchandisation, mode de vie marocain

1. Introduction

Marrakech is a city in Morocco, and in it lies Medina, the city's oldest district. In Medina, there are multiple traditional Moroccan houses called riads. Nowadays, many of these riads are used for tourism purposes and serve as small hotels or museums. Tourism is a complex sector that conjures a plethora of political and social parameters which inspire the creation of various marketing strategies. Additionally, the relevance of tourism inspires the notion of culture commodification, which is an inescapable issue in the context of tourism advertising. The question thus lies in determining how culture commodification is portrayed through advertising a destination image. Correspondingly, Advertising entities commodify the cultural aspects of any given tourism destination according to the background of their target audiences in order to establish rapport. This article will be concerned with the application of M. A. K. Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). We will focus on the three main levels of analysis that deal with the way language generates meaning through the following functions: Field/ideational (general content), tenor/ interpersonal (addresser-addressee), and mode/ textual (vehicle or mode of communication). Halliday's SFL will provide us with insights on the use of language in showcasing a riad in the Medina as a destination image to attain commercial and cultural ends through advertising.

2. Methodology and Data Collection

The city of Marrakech is home to the Medina, one of the city's oldest districts. In this study, we find it especially fitting to analyze the language used to promote a riad located in the old district of Marrakech (the Medina) in the following travel guide, namely *Lonely Planet Morocco*, (2017)[iv]. Additionally, we will confirm that culture commodification is indeed a marketing strategy for the destination image of a particular riad. In order to do so, we will establish the general context of the content of our data and define the type of relationship between writer/reader and confirm it through textual meanings that will be explained in the paragraph on our data.

One reason for choosing this particular travel guide is that it was written by foreign authors. This is an important factor in testing the objectification of Moroccan culture through the eyes of foreigners. Moreover, this analysis will provide a distinctive answer regarding the issue of culture commodification. In our analysis we will find that there are two roles assigned

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[iv] We will refer to this travel guide by its title and not by its authors' names.

to each of the advertiser and the reader. The former serves the role of providing information to the reader, and the latter serves the role of receiving the said information. The goal of this analysis is to reveal how advertisers do not necessarily abide by their informative role. Considering that the main aspect of our data is to provide information to travelers given the nature of its genre, Eggins (2004) alludes to the fact that any interaction involves two or more participants: speaker (to initiate) and speaker (to respond) or in our case, the advertiser (initiator) and reader (responder). The following analysis will concentrate solely on the 'initiating' aspect of the text. That is mainly due to the nature of the genre of our data. It is worth mentioning, though, that the response from the reader's end is translated through their purchasing behavior: acquiescence/refusal. Nevertheless, this is a subject to be studied in future works.

This article follows a qualitative framework, and its reasoning lies in demonstrating that travel guides use language to sell a riad as a destination image by commodifying the Moroccan culture through language. In order to do so, we will use Halliday's SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics). "*SFL has been described as a functional semantic approach to language which explores both how people use language in different contexts, and how language is structured for use as a semiotic system*" (Eggins, 2004, pp. 20-21). In this analysis, we will approach language as a textual vehicle. Language can be interpreted in a plethora of different ways and can be examined or explored from two different angles: as an independent object or as a deciphering tool. In this analysis we will cover both angles because the deciphering nature of language relies heavily on considering its independent aspect. "*These two perspectives are clearly complementary: we cannot explain why a text means what it does, with all the various readings and values that may be given to it, except by relating it to the linguistic system as a whole; and equally, we cannot use it as a window on the system unless we understand what it means and why*" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 3). SFL revolves around three situational/register variables (field, tenor, mode) that constitute the structure of the semiotic system of language (Eggins, 2004). Each of these variables is associated with the following types of meanings: (ideational, interpersonal, textual). This means that the field is expressed through ideational meaning, tenor through interpersonal meaning, and mode through textual meaning. Furthermore, our analysis will explore one excerpt from each travel guide, notably, the meanings generated by written language in relation to context, specifically, we will demonstrate the objectification of the riad by uncovering any implicit meanings present in our data with the use of the types of meanings mentioned above (ideational, interpersonal, textual). On a first level, we will use the ideational meanings to establish the general and main focus of the texts. The ideational meanings are composed of two components: Experimental/experiential and logical (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004 as cited in Eggins, 2005, p. 206).

The experimental component is realized through the system of transitivity. "*Transitivity covers the interpretation and expression of different types of processes and participant roles in the form of linguistic structures*" (Francesconi, 2014, p. 44). Moreover, the system of transitivity is composed of six process elements: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential. Each of these processes includes:
- Participants: (persons, things, entities)
- Circumstances: (place, time, manner).

Figure 2.2 includes all the process types, participants and circumstances as well as their labels.

Figure 2.2: Process Types

		Process types	**Participants**	**Circumstances**
	Material	→	Beneficiary/goal/actor	(Place, time, manner).
	Mental	→	Senser/phenomenon	
	Relational	→	Attribution →	Carrier/attribute
		→	Identification →	Token/value
	Behavioral	→		Behaver
	Verbal	→		Target
	Existential	→		Existent

The other element of the ideational meanings is called logical relations. Eggins (2004) notes that this latter is composed of two systems (taxis, logico semantics) and serves a complementary purpose to transitivity choices. Logical relations are a "*logical structure of the clause complex*" (Eggins, 2004, p. 254). Moreover, the clause complex is formed through multiple clauses.

The formation of clause complexes is done through the following two systems (Eggins, 2004):

- **Tactic:** (responsible for describing the dependency/independency between clauses). According to Eggins (2005), this interdependency is achieved through both parataxis, which hold equal status between clauses and are referred to by numbers 1 (initiating) and 2 (continuing). Hypotaxes, on the other hand, relate to a main clause through a dependency status and are referred to by Roman numerals: α: (dominant) and β (dependent).

- **Logico-semantic:** (responsible for describing the meaning type between clauses). Additionally, the logico-semantic system is composed of two components: projection (locution and idea) and expansion (elaboration, extension and enhancement). (Eggins, 2004, pp. 258-259). Analyzing the logico-semantics will help us determine the rhythm of the sentence structure present in our data. Moreover, there are three systems that further develop the experiential meanings of the clause: elaboration, signified by: (=), Extension (+), Enhancement: (x). (Eggins, 2004, pp. 278-279).

On a second level, the interpersonal meanings will serve the purpose of demonstrating the nature of writer/reader relationship in order to reveal any realized interpersonal meanings as well as the type of interaction that is established by the writer (advertiser). The meanings of these roles are realized through mood patterns. "*… mood refers to variables such as the types of clause structure (declarative, interrogative), the degree of certainty or obligation expressed (modality), the use of tags, vocatives, attitudinal words which are either positively or negatively loaded...*" (Eggins, 2004, p.110). Furthermore, in order to uncover the meanings behind these roles, we must refer back to the overall structure of the clause (mood), which is composed of the following speech functions:

statement, question, offer and command. And each of these speech functions involves both speech roles (giving, demanding) and commodity choices (information, goods and services). Additionally, Eggins (2004) states that the clause is composed of two elements: the MOOD (not to be confused with Mood), which is the part that constitutes the initial argument or statement of the clause. Moreover, the second constituent, RESIDUE, constitutes the remainder of the clause and disappears once we integrate a tag to the clause. Finally, since the register of mode is associated with the textual meanings, the latter will be realized through theme patterns.

The textual meanings will allow us to situate the context of the message and are composed of theme, which constitutes the first and main part of the message and can either be marked/unmarked. We can tell when a theme is marked when it combines with an adjunct and unmarked when it combines with the mood structure of the clause. The Rheme constitutes the rest of the clause, which serves as a developer that provides further information after the theme. (Eggins, 2004). The textual meaning will demonstrate the position of the overall grammatical and semantic structure of our data.

3. Analysis

This section presents the analysis segments, which deal with the way advertisers use language to establish rapport with their target audiences by objectifying tangible as well as intangible Moroccan heritage and thus rendering it a commodified product. Our sample text (excerpt 1) presents the first example for our analysis and is meant to describe the traditional houses located in the Medina/Jamaa el Fna.

> **Excerpt 1:**
> *"Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour: flowers and birds in saffron, verdigris and apricot climb the walls in a vertical garden, while bedrooms are trimmed with sculpted Kufic script framed by azure blue and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting"*. (Lonely Planet Morocco, 2017, pp. 140-141).

3.1 Field analysis
The Field level plays a role in uncovering as well as demonstrating any implicit textual meanings through the use of transitivity which is composed of various process elements: the material process signifies actions of doing, the mental process is about expressing emotional states such as sensing, the relational process is divided into attribution and identification process and symbolize meanings of existence or being, the verbal process focuses on talk expressions, the existential process is mainly concerned with instances of existence or presence and finally the behavioral process expresses meanings of behavior. These process elements are characterized by their participants and their labels (see Figure 2.2).

3.1.1 Transitivity
"Imagine (mental process) the mindset (phenomenon) of travel-weary guests (senser) as they (actor) entered (material process) the main salon (goal) with its symphony of colour (identification process):

flowers and birds (actor) in saffron, verdigris and apricot (attribution process) climb (material process) the walls in a vertical garden (goal), while bedrooms (carrier) are trimmed (attribution process) with sculpted Kufic script framed by azure blue and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting." (attribute). (Lonely Planet Morocco, 2017).

Table 1.1: The following table represents the selection of process types present in excerpt 1

Process types	Number	Percentage (%)
Material	2	33,33%
Mental	1	16,6%
Behavioral	0	0.0%
Verbal	0	0.0%
Existential	0	0.0%
Identification	1	16,6%
Attribution	2	33,33%
Total	**6**	**100.0%**

Table 1.2: The following table represents the labels of participants occurring in excerpt 1

Process types	Number	Percentage (%)
Actors: animate	1	12,5%
: inanimate	1	12,5%
Goal	1	12,5%
Beneficiary	0	0.0%
Senser	1	12,5%
Phenomenon	1	12,5%
Behaver	0	0.0%
Sayer/target	0	0.0%
Existent	0	0.0%
Token/value	0	0.0%
Carrier	1	12,5%
Attribute	2	25.0%
Total	**8**	**100.0%**

As it was previously discussed in the methodology, the field register (expressed through ideational meanings) serves the purpose of situating the general content of the text and highlighting what this latter is about. The text revolves around a general description of a riad in the Medina. Following the transitivity analysis, the tables above demonstrate numbers and percentage rates of the process types (Table 1.1) as well as their participants. (Table 1.2). The excerpt analyzed above demonstrates a description of a state of 'being' enhanced by the mental process 'imagine' and its phenomenon 'the mindset'. This state of being is associated with two sensers: you- the reader (implicit), and 'travel weary guests (explicit). This association implies an indirect implication of the reader, which serves the purpose of situating the reader within the advertiser's desired position – to put the reader in the shoes of the 'travel weary guests.' Moreover, Table 1.1 demonstrates a high percentage of the material process: 33,33% with participants (Table 1.2) that are both animate: 'travel weary guests' and inanimate: 'flowers and birds', the goal of the animate actor is linked with 'entering the main salon' which is then

elaborated once as the identification process demonstrates. Knowing that the identification process, as well as the behavioral, verbal and existential processes, have a percentage value of 16% to 0% this eliminates the descriptive role of the text, meaning that this paragraph's mission is to persuade the reader to "imagine" a staged mental state while disregarding any informative functions. The logical relations will complete this analysis in a way that further demonstrates the aims of this promotional excerpt through the grammar system of the clause complex shown in Table 1.3.

3.1.2 Logical relations: the systems of logical relations: clause complex and taxis

The logical relations are a part of the general category or level 'field', and its purpose is to provide a logical continuity to the transitivity choices analyzed above. Firstly, the logical relations or clause complexes are composed of the tactic element, which is responsible for describing the independency status (parataxis) between clauses and is referred to by numbers: 1 (initiating) and 2 (continuing). The dependency status (hypotaxis) is referred to by Roman numerals from dominant (α) to dependent (β). Secondly, the logico-semantic system is concerned with demonstrating and describing the type of meaning between clauses, notably through the element of projection, which is composed of two elements: idea and locution, which represent reported or quoted language/speech. The second element is expansion and is composed of the following components:

- **Extension:** provides new meaning elements to the clause and is symbolized by the signal (+).
- **Enhancement:** is meant to add circumstantial details and is characterized by the symbol (x).
- **Elaboration:** provides examples and/ reiterations and holds the symbol (=).

Embedding, on the other hand, is what Eggins (2004) describes as an association with formal, careful written text or clauses, as they pack extra meaning/information in their designated place and is signaled by brackets. This analysis will be applied to excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1:
"*Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour: flowers and birds in saffron, verdigris and apricot climb the walls in a vertical garden, while bedrooms are trimmed with sculpted Kufic script framed by azure blue and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting*". (Lonely Planet Morocco, 2017).

Key: embedded clause ( ), elaboration = , enhancement x , α β: hypotaxis, 1,2 parataxis
1. *clause complex*: $= \alpha$ Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon (with its symphony of colour):
$= \beta$ flowers and birds (in saffron),
$= \beta$ (verdigris and apricot) climb the walls (in a vertical garden),
2. x β while bedrooms are trimmed with sculpted Kufic script (framed by azure blue) and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting.

Table 1.3: The logico-semantic relations and their
components and are measured by numbers and percentages

	Number	Percentage (%)
Clause complexes	1	8,3%
Clause simplexes	0	0.0%
Embedded clauses	5	41,6%
Parataxis	2	16,6%
Hypotaxis	4	33,33%
Total	**12**	**100.0%**

The logical relations in this excerpt show a complete absence of the clause simplex, leaving way for a complete dominance of the clause complex; this latter is demonstrated by one dominant and initiating clause 'Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour.' Additionally, hypotaxis 33,33% is more recurrent than parataxis 16%. This means that there are no relations of equality and independence between the entities present in the promotional excerpt. Embedding is recurrent five times with a percentage of 41,6%. This means that the paragraph has been carefully written. This hypothesis is further confirmed by the recurring presence of relations of elaboration.

3.2 Interpersonal and textual meanings

The interpersonal and textual meanings are components of the second and third levels (tenor and mode) of SFL. First of all, the following tables represent the types of clause structures referred to as mood patterns. Clause structures will help us define the kind of relationship that the writer is establishing with the reader, notably through degrees of obligation expressed through imperative structures. The MOOD designates the original statement or argument of the clause, and the Residue is everything that follows. Secondly, the theme and rheme components are part of the textual meanings or mode level. Moreover, the textual meanings are meant to provide context for the message and are characterized by elements which designate the first part of the message. The theme can either be marked – when it is combined with an adjunct or unmarked when it combines with the mood structures of the clause. The rheme constituent provides further information that completes the meaning of the clause. This analysis will be applied to excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1:
"*Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour: flowers and birds in saffron, verdigris and apricot climb the walls in a vertical garden, while bedrooms are trimmed with sculpted Kufic script framed by azure blue and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting.*" (*Lonely Planet Morocco*, 2017)

Imagine	the mindset	of travel weary guests	as they entered	the main salon with its symphony of color
predicate	complement	Subject	finite	complement
MOOD		RESIDUE		
THEME (unmarked)		RHEME		

Flowers and birds	In saffron, verdigris and apricot	climb	The walls in a vertical garden
subject	complement	predicate	complement
MOOD		RESIDUE	
THEME (marked)		RHEME	

While bedrooms	Are trimmed	With sculpted kufic script	Framed by azure blue
subject	finite		
MOOD	RESIDUE		
THEME (marked)		RHEME	

And	finished	With a red Pompeian red skirting
Adj: conj.	Predicate	complement
RHEME		

The following analysis will demonstrate the nature of the relationship between the writer and the reader, which is expressed through the system of mood. The paragraph is composed of statements that are expressed through the declarative mood. We can notice that there is a complete absence of any imperative or interrogative forms, yet interestingly enough, we can appreciate the presence of the modality of obligation (modulation). A semantic dimension which, according to Eggins (2004), is a meaning of giving commands without any grammatical structure of imperatives. Additionally, the implicit subject "you" is selected by the author to address the reader in an indirect way in order to establish relations of trust and close emotional involvement. (Dann, 1996, as cited in Francesconi, 2014). The unmarked theme is adopted once in the first and initiating clause of this paragraph through the use of the imperative predicator 'imagine'. Although the initial sentence 'Imagine the mindset of travel-weary guests as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour' indicates an unmarked theme, the rest of this clause complex notably 'flowers and birds' and 'while bedrooms are trimmed', adopts a marked theme. This means that this paragraph realizes a coherent structure that synchronizes with the overall semantic structure of the paragraph. Additionally, the rheme is meant to provide further information about the meaning of the paragraph.

The analysis of the paragraph above shows interesting insights on all the field, tenor and mode registers as it helped demonstrate not only the overall context of the paragraph (ideational meanings) but also determine the relationship roles of both the writer/reader (interpersonal meanings). In determining this relationship, we noticed that the sample text realizes a friendly tone through the establishment of trust and close emotional involvement with the reader which

in turn confirms the hypothesis of selling a staged/unreal image of the riad, notably through mental processes such as 'imagine' an intangible phenomenon 'the mindset' and further assigning the adjective of 'travel-weary' to the senser 'guests.

The commodified image extends even further with the presence of material processes that represent the action of doing, which have been assigned to non-conscious entities 'flowers and birds' performing the action of climbing walls. As for the Mood and theme (textual meanings) of the paragraph, we notice that it follows a carefully written structure. This analysis confirms our hypothesis: destination commodification is indeed a marketing strategy. This hypothesis is backed up by a carefully written mode which adheres to the norms of the advertising genre of travel guides.

4. Conclusion

This article begins with a definition of the notion of culture commodification and its relation with destination image as a product for advertising. To reiterate, the image formation of the riad as a destination is showcased in the paragraph as a secondary or induced type of image. Moreover, the advertiser imposes a certain context that creates a staged image which is then articulated and communicated interpersonally to the reader in order to establish two types of relationships to attain a certain goal- (making profit). Additionally, the mode register, which is expressed through textual meanings, provided us with the essential tools to reveal that our paragraph conforms to the norms and values of advertising travel guides, which follow a careful written structure. Furthermore, this last point further confirms the fact that advertisers not only use culture commodification as a marketing strategy for the promotion of the riad but also to establish rapport with the reader and perhaps influence consumer response.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article.

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