The cultural politics of hospitality: Hosts and guests in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

A construção político-cultural da hospitalidade: Anfitriões e hóspedes em manuais de língua estrangeira para o turismo

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Abstract

This article aims at critically addressing the role of language in highly sensitive "contact zones", such as the wide variety of encounters framed by tourist mobilities. It will particularly focus on the representations of these encounters disseminated by foreign language coursebooks for tourism purposes – a text genre which is generally hardly recognized as a tourism genre, but which is, in fact, as much responsible as any guidebook or travel phrasebook for the construction of "otherness", and for the consolidation of tourist-host identities and performances through the (pre-)configuration of communicative exchanges. Drawing on a selection of English and German language coursebooks, the analysis further attempts at providing insight into the way they replicate and reinforce the ideology, power relationships and the cultural politics of hospitality underlying the world of contemporary tourism.

Keywords: hospitality; languages; tourism; interaction; communication; coursebooks.

Resumo

O presente artigo procura analisar criticamente o papel da língua em "zonas de contacto" altamente sensíveis como é a grande variedade de encontros ocorridos no âmbito das mobilidades turísticas. Incide, em particular, nas representações destes encontros, disseminados pelos manuais de língua estrangeira para fins turísticos – um género textual geralmente pouco reconhecido como um género turístico, mas que, na verdade, é tão responsável como qualquer guia de viagens ou de conversação pela construção do "outro", e pela consolidação das identidades e das performances turísticas através da (pré-)configuração de intercâmbios comunicativos. Com base numa seleção de manuais de língua inglesa e alemã, a análise procura também revelar a forma como aqueles reproduzem e reforçam a ideologia, as relações de poder e a construção político-cultural da hospitalidade subjacentes ao mundo do turismo contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: hospitalidade; línguas; turismo; interação; comunicação; manuais.

1. Introduction

Hospitality is the key concept around which tourism revolves and develops; it is the core feature of a varied and complex field of practices, which rely on communication, encounters and exchanges, occurring in mobility and displacement experiences.

Tourism sets in motion massive flows of people, allowing for multiple contacts not only among travellers on the move but also between tourists and tourism staff in travel destinations. These become the crucial terms of service-based interactions, which are powerfully framed by a flourishing language learning industry, allegedly intended to facilitate and promote linguistic exchanges between hosts and guests.

This article critically addresses the way these encounters are depicted by foreign language textbooks for tourism purposes – a text genre which is generally hardly recognized as a tourism genre, but which is, in fact, as much responsible as any guidebook or travel phrasebook for the construction of "otherness", and for the consolidation of tourist-host identities and performances through the pre--configuration of communicative exchanges. More importantly perhaps, they also provide valuable insights into the ideology and power relationships underlying the world of contemporary tourism, participating actively in the construction of a cultural politics of hospitality.

The article starts by discussing the role of languages in hospitality and tourism, and focuses on the concept of hospitality, the central cultural construct that governs service-encounters in tourism contexts. It moves on to debate the host-guest paradigm, which despite being often contested, still prevails in the mythology of tourism. The paper concludes with an analysis of the tourist-host representations in a selection of English and German language coursebooks for tourism purposes.

2. Languages, hospitality and tourism

In his seminal text on the hospitality issue, Derrida claims that the first violence imposed on a foreigner is a linguistic one. He recalls *The Apology of Socrates* and the

linguistic helplessness in which Socrates finds himself before the accusation of the Athenian court: "he doesn't know how to speak this courtroom language, this legal rhetoric of accusation, defence, and pleading; he doesn't have the skill, he is *like* a foreigner" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 15, italics in original). Socrates' inaptitude to understand the legal language and therefore to defend himself before the law makes him a foreigner, a condition which places him in a very delicate, vulnerable situation. By defining linguistic incompetence as a trait of foreignness, Derrida (and Socrates) also unravel the dilemma of hospitality: should the host speak the language of the stranger, or should the stranger be asked to speak the language of the host (and in this case, if he could speak the host language, would it still be appropriate to consider him a stranger?).

Language difference is crucial to defining foreignness. Linguistic competence and performance become central in travel experiences, and hospitality is a practice which involves overcoming the foreigner's potential linguistic unfamiliarity, disorientation or even humiliation, and minimizing her/his linguistic anxieties and potentially stressful "communication challenges".

Linguistic interaction is a vital element in mobility experiences – not only due to practical reasons (simply the need to get by in an unfamiliar environment, seek orientation or help, order food, negotiate prices, or ensure one takes the right bus back to the hotel), but also due to the spiritual need to make travelling a meaningful, rewarding experience, which is often related to such widespread assumptions as "travelling enlarges one's cultural horizons", and "it brings people together and promotes intercultural understanding". Much of this transforming and enriching potential attributed to travelling is related to the idealised possibility of immersing in the culturally different other, of experiencing social interaction, making connections, and thus satisfying a basic human need of association with others – what Georg Simmel has defined as the "sociability impulse" (Harrison, 2003).

Tourism provides a myriad of opportunities to realise that sociability impulse, producing moments of contact between strangers, which, however casual, superficial or ephemeral, can fulfil the desire to "either affirm or experience anew some form of human connection across time, space, or cultural difference" (Harrison, 2003: 46). Such potential moments of communication are born of a (temporary) but crucial

suspension of (or disruption with) one's time, space, social relations, and the native language. And under such imposed circumstances of anonymity and void, a whole range of ontological possibilities arises from inhabiting unknown worlds, which imply for instance slipping into new roles and learning everything anew. This rebirth can be partially perceived and embodied in the face-to-face encounter with "host" or "local" people, by attempting to penetrate cultural opacity through verbal/oral exchanges. These linguistic attempts are crucial to establishing host-tourist identities and to reinforcing (or not) the relational/emotional dimension and potential involved in host--tourist encounters.

3. The host-guest paradigm

Hospitality refers to a complex "geography of proximity" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 2), which puts into play relationships between the so-called "hosts" and "guests", "natives" and "tourists", "locals" and "foreign visitors".[1]

These notions and the nature of these binary dynamics have been the object of critical debate and deconstructive approaches in the context of contemporary, globalised mobilities (Aramberri, 2001; Bell, 2009). Such classic, space and time-bound, antagonistic identities are rightfully contested in the light of the current paradigm of increasingly changing social relationships, characterised by fluidity and mobility (Appadurai, 1996; Bauman, 2000; Cresswell, 2006). In fact, the encounters between strangers – traditionally identified with those who travel and are mobile – and locals – traditionally identified with those who dwell and are therefore static and territorialised – must be questioned according to new patterns of worldwide, physical and virtual "circulation, intersection and proximity between strangers" (Molz and Gibson, 2007: 6), which undermine traditional notions of distance and proximity (Cordeiro, 2011b), and subvert the conventional model of movement/transience and stillness/permanence, associated respectively with the terms "guests" and "hosts".

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[1] Hospitality is a phenomenon which suggests a wide range of multidisciplinary approaches (see Lashley and Morrison, 2001), whose debate goes beyond the analytical purpose and scope of this article.

Studies have shown how these terms fail to acknowledge the complex and flexible nature of contemporary interpersonal (tourist) encounters, since it is no longer admissible to consider the conventional host-guest polarity as fixed categories and space and identity-bound labels[2]; these should be preferably, as Molz and Gibson (2007: 7) note, be seen as "fluid, contested social roles that people move into, out of, and between as they negotiate extensive overlapping mobilities and social memberships". Bell (2009: 22) proposes the formulation of "hostings and guestings" to refer to practices and performances carried out in tourist contexts, underlining the importance of "doings" instead of "beings".

Aramberri (2001: 746) goes a step further in the criticism of the host-guest formula, sustaining that in the context of current mass tourism "hosts are no longer hosts, just providers of services, while the guests are no longer guests, just customers". Aramberri's criticism is reflected in the argument that modern tourism has destroyed the pre-modern paradigm of the host-guest relationship, based on the traditional covenant of protection, reciprocity and mutual obligations and duties. This scholar draws attention to the industrialisation of hospitality and the commercialisation involved in tourist encounters, which subvert entirely – on a different level – the host-guest relationship.

From the moment tourism implied the provision of services (from transportation to accommodation) and tourist experiences became subject to processes of commodification, "the nonmaterial reciprocity of the old covenant" (Aramberri, 2001: 746) was broken and replaced by a financial contract (a payment for the deliverance of goods).

However, "service" is itself a highly contested notion, the purchase of which being much more comprehensive and complex than that of a manufactured good or article. Since a service always implies a form of social interaction and most often a spatial proximity between consumers and providers, "to buy the service is to buy a particular social or sociological experience" (Urry, 2002: 60). This is also the point made by Hemmington (2007: 749) in his debate of hospitality products, which he labels as *experiences*: "customers do not buy service delivery, they buy experiences; they do not

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[2] For a discussion of the most recent studies on the contested nature of the host-guest relationship, see Bell (2009) and Molz and Gibson (2007).

buy service quality, they buy memories; they do not buy food and drink, they buy meal experiences."

The experience factor of hospitality services relates to their inherent "intangible" value (Urry, 2002: 65) – to that immeasurable, unquantifiable, affective value that can potentially transform an "instrumental transaction" into an "emotional transaction" (Lugosi, 2008: 141).

The emotional element involved in these services is often pursued through communication and can be identified with what has been called "emotional labour" (Cameron, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Urry, 2002), i.e., the sort of work that actively contributes to others' well-being and requires thus the management of feelings. Displaying positive feelings towards tourists, smiling at and engaging in a helpful way with consumers (in friendly conversations with customers) are examples of this kind of labour. In tourism-related services there is an innumerable variety of potential encounters between guests and hosts, in which verbal/oral communication is the very substance of such emotional labour.

4. The tourist-host encounter: Performing contact

However contested the host-guest paradigm might be in the light of the contemporary world, it is still a pervasive cultural construct which underlies every representation of the tourist encounter – a much mythified moment in tourist imagination, as the success of travel is very often identified with the possibility of engaging with host populations and plunging into local life (Cordeiro, 2011a).

As with many other moments of travelling, encountering and engaging with the other has a performative character. Drawing on the theatrical metaphors used by Goffman (1959) to explain processes of social life and human interactions, tourism can also be viewed as a series of performances, subject to norms and conventions, on different stages.

Edensor (2000: 324) has argued for the "increased staged nature of tourism", considering that tourist practices are actually performances, happening in strictly organised sites which are comparable to theatrical settings. He further notes that

tourists resemble actors, playing roles, according to pre-established rules and behaviour conventions: "[…] when tourists enter particular stages, they are usually informed by pre-existing discursive, practical, embodied norms which help to guide their performative orientations and achieve a working consensus about what to do." (Edensor, 2001: 71).

Edensor does not consider in his analysis the linguistic dimension of such performances. And yet tourists are not only bodies in transit, performers of ritualised acts, they are language speakers, uttering their native sounds as they move across space, and hesitantly or adventurously trying out interactions, possibly in foreign words, i.e., performing intercultural encounters.

These linguistic encounters between "guests" and "hosts" are also subject to a high-level performativity. Just as tourist practices and movements are pre-configured by an overwhelming range of travel guides, brochures, programs, etc., which play the role of "stage directors", recommending and instructing their actors on itineraries and sights, for example, so are host-tourist linguistic interactions highly scripted performances, powerfully fictionalised in a text genre which exuberantly grows in the book market for the alleged benefit of people on the move: guidebooks, language guides and phrase books are every traveller's best companion. A huge language--learning industry flourishes around tourists' need for cultural mediation and preparation for different linguistic spaces: additionally to language sections included in guidebooks, there is a profusion of pocket language guides, "essential guides", "mini dictionaries", "phrase books", "conversation guides" in all possible languages. This text genre, aimed at the second term of the host-guest equation, has received some critical attention (Cordeiro, 2011a; Phipps, 2007; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010). There is, however, another text genre, addressed to the *first* term of the host-guest dynamics, which remains underresearched. Just as its counterpart for tourists, the foreign language coursebook for tourism purposes idealises the host-tourist encounter, setting the "stages" of the encounter, depicting the "roles", providing the "scripts", and framing the contexts and linguistic exchanges.

The next section focuses on English and German language coursebooks for tourism, attempting at disclosing the mechanisms of representing language interactions in tourist encounters.

5. Host-guest[3] interactions in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

5.1 Foreign language coursebooks for tourism purposes – an overall view

Foreign language coursebooks aimed at the professional field of tourism have predominantly been the object of analyses concerned with the actual linguistic needs of people working in tourism-related contexts (see Bosch and Schlak, 2013).

This paper, however, does not intend to focus on linguistic or pedagogical issues; it does not aim at revealing content gaps or evaluating textbooks structurally or in terms of their didactic methodologies. The analytical approach considers these texts as cultural artifacts, i.e., powerful disseminators of cultural representations and ideological messages (Gray, 2010). As Apple and Christian-Smith (1991: 3-4, italics in original) aptly state, textbooks "signify – through their content *and form* – particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing the vast universe of possible knowledge. […] They participate in creating what a society has recognized as legitimate and truthful."

This is paradigmatically proven by textbooks for tourism purposes, for they are embedded in the larger set of discourses, representations and images which powerfully shape tourism processes and identities. In the particular case of coursebooks designed for the tourism-related professional activities, they are bound to reflect and (reinforce) the power relations and ideologies which underlie the world of contemporary tourism. The way they culturally frame and linguistically regulate tourist/guest-host interactions is intertwined with the dominant discourses of what tourists are expected to do and say and of how hosts are supposed to act and respond. As a result, coursebooks forge and reinforce a specific cultural politics of hospitality. Considering Jackson's definition of cultural politics as "the domain in which meanings are constructed and negotiated, where relations of dominance and subordination are defined and contested" (Jackson, 1991: 200), tourism constitutes undoubtedly one

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[3] In spite of the contested character of the concepts "guests" and "hosts", discussed earlier, for practical reasons and analytical purposes, the article opts for the indistinctive use of the "guest-host" or "tourist-host" formula.

such domain of representations structured by prevailing cultural and political discourses (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998); and language learning/teaching for tourism becomes a means to represent and legitimise power relations between visitors and visited. They organise tourist practices, disciplining and systematising interactions and encounters, minimising the negative impacts of the "worlds clash" that might occur when people travel. As Jaworski and Thurlow (2010: 11) argue, "[i]t is in communication with each other, in every instant of contact, that hosts and tourists negotiate the nature of their experience, the meanings of culture and place, as well as their own relationships and identities."

The coursebook market is currently well provided for not only in the language of international tourism (English) but also in other languages, such as German, the native language of those who allegedly travel the most worldwide. Tables 1 and 2 show some of the currently available titles in both languages.

Table 1: English language coursebooks for tourism

No.	Title
1	*Be my guest! English for the Hotel Industry* (2002) by Francis O'Hara, Cambridge University Press
2	*English for International Tourism* (1997) by Miriam Jacob and Peter Strutt, Longman
3	*English for International Tourism New Edition* (2013) by Peter Strutt, Margaret O'Keeffe and Iwonna Dubicka, Pearson
4	*First Class English for Tourism* (1991) by Trish Stott and Roger Holt, Oxford University Press
5	*Going International – English for Tourism* (1998) by Keith Harding, Oxford University Press
6	*High Season – English for the Hotel and Tourist Industry* (1994) by Keith Harding and Paul Henderson, Oxford University Press
7	*Oxford English for Careers: Tourism* (2009) by Robin Walker and Keith Harding, Oxford University Press
8	*Ready to order: Elementary English for the Restaurant Industry* (2002) by Anne Baude, Montserrat Iglesias and Anna Inesta, Longman
9	*Welcome! English for the Travel and Tourism Industry* (1998) by Leo Jones, Cambridge University Press

Table 2: German language coursebooks for tourism

No.	Title
10	*Deutsch im Hotel – Gespräche führen* (2000) by Paola Barberis und Elena Bruno, Hueber
11	*Deutsch im Hotel – Korrespondenz* (2001) by Paola Barberis und Elena Bruno, Hueber
12	*Herzlich willkommen – Deutsch in Restaurant und Tourismus* (2001) by Ulrike Cohen, Langenscheidt
13	*Ja, gerne: Deutsch im Tourismus* (2014) by Anita Grunwald, Cornelsen
14	*Kommunikation im Tourismus* (2005) by Dorothea Lévy-Hillerich, Cornelsen/Fraus Verlag
15	*Pluspunkt Beruf – Erfolgreich in Gastronomie und Hotellerie* (2011) by Kathleen Born *et al*, Cornelsen
16	*Zimmer Frei – Deutsch im Hotel* (2000) by Ulrike Cohen, Langenscheidt

Many of these titles appeared in the 90s and were republished or updated in new editions; contemplating different language levels, they partially concentrate on specific but central tourism-related professional subareas, such as the hotel and restaurant industries.

What they all have in common is a stated interest in providing learners with the "language and professional skills required to perform effectively in all sectors of the industry" (Jacob and Strutt, 1997: back cover). They "train communication at the workplace" (Born et al., 2011: 3, my translation) and provide "the linguistic knowledge needed to deal with the most important daily situations when working with […] tourists" (Cohen, 2001: 6, my translation). A special focus is given to the development of speaking skills "for key job-related situations" (Jacob and Strutt, 1997: back cover), "in order to work effectively in this challenging international sector" (Harding, 1998: back cover) and to play the "roles which arise in the actual communicative contexts at workplaces" (Cohen, 2000: 6, my translation).

The performative character of professional activities, to which the communicative facet is inherent, is a crucial feature of all these coursebooks. In fact, foreign language coursebooks do conceive interactions between hosts and guests as linguistic enactments, in which learners are provided with scripts and roles to "act out similar conversations" according to given dialogue models, and in the expected professional

scenarios, "tak[ing] turns to play [parts]" or "chang[ing] roles (Harding and Henderson, 1994: 14, 26).

Learners are asked to "imagine" roles, "invent" details (Harding and Henderson, 1994: 97, 144) and "act out" conversations with partners according to flow-charts (Harding and Henderson, 1994: 48) or pre-defined instructions concerning the context, conditions and outcomes of conversations; coursebooks provide role-cards, in which dialogues are prepared in great detail, including stages, which should be linguistically performed through the use of language functions (the "script lines") previously given in language sections (see Figure 1). An unequivocal example of this theatrical approach is provided by Harding (1998). Learners are given role-play cards and instructed to act out mini-dramas, for example, between flight attendants and airline passengers. Interaction stages are clearly defined for both groups of "actors": cabin crew are told "what to say and do" ("Stage 1: 1 Greet passengers; 2 Seat passengers; 3 Stow baggage [...]; 4 Make safety announcement; Stage 2: 1 Serve drinks [...]; 2 Collect lunch trays; 3 Serve tea and coffee; 4 Collect lunch trays; 5 Offer duty-free goods; Stage 3: 1 Prepare landing; 2 Say good-bye") (Harding, 1998: 71), passengers are asked to play the role of "airline inspectors travelling in secret" and to "act like a 'normal' passenger at first" (Harding, 1998: 176).

Figure 1: Host-Tourist scripts

A7 Was fragen Touristen noch? Sammeln Sie. Spielen Sie Informationsgespräche.	
Touristen	**Personal in der Touristen-Information**
Wann beginnt die nächste Führung / ...?	In zwanzig Minuten. / In einer Stunde. / Um ... .
Wie lange dauert die Rundfahrt / ...?	(Wenn Sie nicht aussteigen,) zwei/... Stunden.
Wo fahren die Busse ab?	Am ... Platz / In der ... Straße.
Wie viel kostet das Zwei-Tage-Ticket für Kinder?	Wenn sie unter zwölf sind, zahlen sie ... Euro.
Kann man die Tickets hier kaufen?	Ja. / Nein. Sie zahlen im Bus.
Wo bekomme/finde ich eine deutsche Zeitung / einen deutschen Reiseführer / ...?	Am Kiosk. / Im Supermarkt. / ...
	Das kann ich Ihnen (leider) nicht sagen. Vielleicht kann die Buchhandlung / ... weiterhelfen.

Source: Cohen, 2001: 69

The main didactic resource used by foreign language coursebooks relies thus heavily on the conceptualisation of communication acts as performances: learners

become actors in pre-defined work scenes, and are routinely trained in the accomplishment of linguistic tasks.

5.2 Host-guest encounters in coursebooks – an analysis

This performative nature of communication provides a useful set of analytical concepts. Focusing on a sample of 6 of the above listed coursebooks (identified with nos. 2, 5, 6, 12, 15 and 16), the analysis only considered speaking and listening exercises, in which any form of interaction between hosts and guests is enacted, and aimed at identifying: a) the settings (stages, in which interactions between hosts and guests are framed); b) the roles played by hosts and guests; and c) the linguistic performances attributed to them respectively.

The findings were collected and summarized in Tables 3 to 6.

Table 3: Settings portrayed in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

Airport/plane
Cruise/ferry
Hotel/Resort
Restaurant
Tourist information centre
Tourist site/attraction
Travel agency

Table 4: Roles played by hosts and guests in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

Hosts are…

airline check-in clerks
car-hire representatives
flight attendants /cabin crew
ground stewards
hotel managers
receptionists
survey conductors
tour company representatives
tour guides
tour operator sales staff

Guests are…

business travellers
passengers
(groups of) tourists
enquirers
customers / potential tourists

| tourist information officer/clerk |
| travel agent |
| waiters |

Table 5: Hosts' linguistic performances in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

| asking reasons for travelling |
| booking holidays |
| checking in |
| dealing with communication difficulties |
| dealing with complaints giving flight safety procedures |
| dealing with difficult guests |
| dealing with problems |
| describing events/monuments/itineraries/accommodation/rooms |
| explaining bills |
| finding out about the needs of travellers |
| giving directions |
| giving information on accommodation/sights/travel times/means of transportation |
| giving tourist advice |
| guiding tourists round places of interest |
| making flight reservations |
| making suggestions |
| recommending leisure activities/services/attractions/excursions/gastronomy/wines |
| selling tickets |
| suggesting action plans |
| taking and confirming bookings |
| taking messages |
| welcoming guests |

Table 6: Guests' linguistic performances in foreign language coursebooks for tourism

| asking for (general) information/recommendations about accommodation facilities/services and prices/directions/travel times/weather conditions/ upgrades/attractions/leisure activities |
| buying services/tickets |
| complaining |
| expressing wishes |
| finding out about good deals |
| leaving messages |
| making reservations |

The data gathered in Tables 3 to 6 provide insightful information on the settings host-guest interactions are expected to occur, on the roles both parts are likely to play

and, of course, on the scripts, dialogues and lines both hosts and guests are meant to perform verbally.

The settings identified are those specifically designed by the tourist industry and materially frequented by tourists and thus defining them as such: settings which owe their *raison d'être* to people on the move, and where tourist life is supposed to develop: hotels, railway/bus stations, airports, restaurants, travel agencies, tourist sites are the spaces of travel in which tourist-host identities and relationships are established.

Coursebooks frame verbal interactions at information counters, hotel receptions, check-in desks, restaurant tables, and guided tours; they are rigidly contextualised, consisting, in fact, of service exchanges between tourism workers and tourism customers. Tourist stages portrayed in coursebooks are thus the settings of service encounters.

As for the roles played by "hosts", they are not only in greater number and variety than those attributed to "guests"; they are also characterised by greater density, determined by their professional profiles: waiters, tour guides or receptionists make up very diverse professional identities. "Guests", on the other hand, remain under the vague, rather undefined, large-spectrum label of "tourists", occasionally identified as "passengers", and most often dubbed as "customers", not really being taken into consideration their potentially distinctive or individual traits.

Accordingly, the majority of linguistic performances listed in coursebooks are attributed to hosts; while tourists' linguistic utterances typically revolve around emphatic and commanding acts of "asking", "requesting" or "complaining" in order to fulfil their particular needs and wishes, hosts have to perform linguistically a wider range of functions, which are substantially associated to complying acts of "giving" (information, explanations, help, solutions, suggestions, etc.).

Tourists are shown involved in communicative acts that presuppose their comfort and engagement in amusing activities or in pleasurable and meaningful experiences. Hosts, on the other hand, occupy a subordinate position, whose linguistic production solely aims at securing the provision of services: they are service providers, playing competently their part within the mechanical workings of the tourist industry.

The performance of host-guest interaction depicted by coursebooks is a performance of the service encounter between service providers and service seekers, the latter being "in charge" of the communication process and imposing her/his terms over the "hospitality relationship".

This functional communicative model generally adopted by coursebooks reflects the ideological power asymmetry of tourism in general and of the service encounter in particular. In fact, hosts and guests are the poles of an unequal relation – one which opposes employees to clients, producers to consumers, a working to a leisured class.

This unequal power relation is visually represented on the front cover of the recently released German language coursebook, *Ja gerne! Deutsch im Tourismus* (Grunwald, 2014), in which a smiling waiter emerging from the relaxing blue water of a swimming pool seems to epitomise the tourist dream of being served (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The tourist dream of being served?
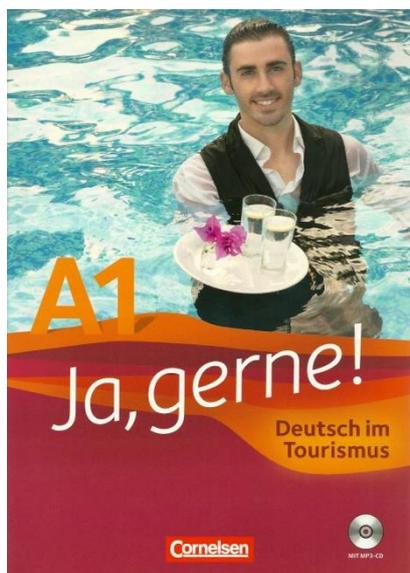
Source: Grunwald, 2014: front cover.

Hosts are predominantly depicted as helpers or servers: receptionists, waiters, officers at information counters (mostly low status professional individuals) are tourists' main interlocutors. This is also visually reinforced by the pictures included in coursebook portraits of host-guest interactions: scenes at the hotel reception, in the restaurant or at information centres show guests being served, comfortably seated,

enjoyably relaxing, making requests, complaining, asking for information; hosts, on the other hand, are mostly represented in a servile attitude, sometimes wearing a uniform, always looking friendly, helpful and submissive (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3: Asking and requesting: tourists playing their roles

Source: Cohen, 2000: 58.

Figure 4: Working under the tourist gaze: friendly, familiar and servile hosts

Source: Cohen, 2001: 10.

The asymmetric power relation between hosts and guests is also reinforced by what Lippi-Green (2012) calls the "communicative burden", which relies on hosts, not on guests. The former are the ones instructed on how to deal with communication problems and difficult clients; it is up to them to make sure they understand tourists' requests and service expectations. As native or non-native speakers (dealing with native or non-native speakers), they are the ones who need to listen attentively, be prepared to understand different accents, intonations and mispronunciations; they are

the ones who need to pronounce and spell correctly, provide accurate information, and not be misunderstood.

As already identified in interaction analysis of major tourist genres (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010), the host-guest paradigm is enacted as a series of service encounters, which are intrinsically characterised by their brief and pragmatic nature. The fleetingness and liminality of the tourist-host encounters determine hugely the way communication and linguistic exchanges are imagined in tourism performances.

Linguistic performances are reduced to standardised communicative routines which rarely go beyond the superficial, practical and courteous exchanges of greeting, helping, informing, explaining, suggesting, recommending, etc. Tourists take up the role of clients, needing practical help or advice, or involved in acts of purchasing, booking, etc.; accordingly, hosts are expected to respond as competent professionals, as providers of information, as helpers or even servers. Dialogues are strictly scripted, not only in terms of content and wording, but also in terms of their inner sequence and expected (successful) conclusion.

The performance of interaction depicted in coursebooks follows the rules of predictability and uniformity, almost exclusively not acknowledging any form of deeper engagement and relational content or intercultural exchange.

Tourists/guests and tourism workers are expected to interact according to coherently constructed fictitious dialogues, which end as abruptly as they begin (see Figure 5). Interaction sequences consist of automatised turns and lines, leaving no room to the spontaneity, relative randomness and messiness that characterise human conversations.

Interactions are based on a highly stylised "question-answer-question" communicative flow; they are represented as short and simple, instrumental, functional, and "clean" exchanges (stripped of any complexity and ambiguity, deprived of misunderstandings, humour, comments, inhibitions, silences or interruptions); they hardly allow for creative, spontaneous or unexpected deviations. They propose short, predictable conversation units in a standardised language, which are but abstract constructions of the idealised fluid and smooth communication flows in a linguistically "spiky" world.

Figure 5: Stylised, mini-dialogues

Source: Cohen, 2001: 11.

6. Conclusion

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent, globalised world, characterised by a post-industrial, informational and service-based "new economy" (Castells, 2000), communication and (foreign) language skills acquire a prominent role. One of the most important of such service sectors in which linguistic performances play a central part is tourism, the global arena of multilingual and multicultural encounters and exchanges. These are pre-configured by a vast array of cultural artifacts, ranging from guidebooks, travelogues, phrasebooks to foreign language coursebooks, all sharing the common responsibility of constructing "otherness" and regulating host-guest interactions.

In spite of the contested nature of this binary formula, it is still a prevailing paradigm in tourism practices, one that lies at the heart of a powerful tourism mythology concerning the tourist encounter and the need to establish some form of human connection in a foreign world. The emotional dimension is a core aspect of the tourist experience, in which the ability to communicate and interact (with "locals" or "hosts") can play a decisive role. A substantial part of such exchanges occurs with so--called tourism staff, which is the core of the hospitality service-based industry.

The host-guest paradigm lies at the confluence of two contrasting facts: on the one hand, the practicalities of transactional, fleeting and superficial service-oriented interactions (reflected in a specific context-based, instrumental language use); on the other hand, the "emotional labour" of the "customer care culture", which in the case of tourist experiences, relates to processes of engagement and relational content.

This article attempted to deconstruct the way English and German language coursebooks, deliberately conceived to frame communicative exchanges and interactions between tourists and tourism staff, do favour the transactional use of language at the expense of intercultural communicative opportunities, which is generally assumed as a prerogative of tourism.[4] By doing so, coursebooks replicate the cultural politics of hospitality which dominates the asymmetric world of contemporary tourism: the host is attributed a subordinate, servile position; the guest is attributed a sovereign status, mainly interested in the fulfilment of "typical" tourist/consumer needs and desires.

Coursebooks are truly the products of a service-based economy and of the efficiency drive of tourism management; attempting at avoiding the messiness of real--life communication, they aim at disciplining and regulating communication encounters, potentially fraught with chaos, difficulties and tensions.

What (the analysed) coursebooks do not to incorporate in their didactic framework is the recognised need for intercultural awareness skills in the training of tourism and hospitality employees. According to an already substantial body of studies within the field of intercultural communication and tourism (Jafari and Way, 1994; Reisinger and Dimanche, 2009; Reisinger and Turner, 2002), host-tourist encounters are highly influenced by cultural differences; communication difficulties, tensions (and even hostility) can be attributed to a "lack of experience with the foreign culture" (Reisinger and Turner, 2002: 54).

I would like to suggest that the inclusion of an inter(cross)cultural awareness approach to foreign language teaching for tourism might provide a way out of the

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[4] This idea is enshrined at the highest level of institutional responsibility in the World Tourism Organization's *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, which states the firm belief "that, through the direct, spontaneous and non-mediatized contacts it engenders between men and women of different cultures and lifestyles, tourism represents a vital force for peace and a factor of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world." (WTO, 1999: 2)

asymmetrical representation of tourist-host encounters based on a purely instrumental, strictly functional use of language in commercial exchanges. This might be attained if coursebook conceptualisation took into consideration culturally different tourist markets, instead of fictionalising an abstract identity called "the tourist".

The awareness of tourist cultural differences for commercial purposes is interestingly exemplified by a recent initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tourism Regional Committee of Paris-Île-de-France. The portal and guide *Do you speak touriste?*[5] are aimed at tourism professionals and intend to provide them with the knowledge of key cultural features of major nationalities visiting Paris, so that they "better know the foreign tourist customers". The guide consists of mini-portraits of the city's main tourist markets. 11 nationalities (including the French!) are briefly portrayed in touristic terms and their cultural profiles are outlined. Despite the clearly commercial objectives of the initiative, what stands out is the commendable preoccupation with the need to understand tourists in their different, culturally determined expectations. The guide includes, for example, besides a few welcome words in the foreign language and some important communicative tips, the idealised picture each nationality has in mind when visiting Paris, their socio-professional characterisation, the average time spent in the city, or elements of their tourist behaviour and preferences, such as the means of transport most used or their eating habits and rhythms.[6]

Foreign language coursebooks are appropriate vehicles for the promotion of such an inter(cross)cultural awareness among tourism-related service providers/workers. By regarding tourists not just as mere consumers but as elements pertaining to a determined cultural group, with particular (culturally conditioned) service expectations, coursebooks might aim at more "relational" content-based tourist-host interactions.

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[5] http://doyouspeaktouriste.fr/Guide_DoYouSpeakTouriste.pdf, accessed September 16, 2014.
[6] For example, the guide (see previous note) informs about the German need of constancy and the Chinese preference for shopping luxuriously; it depicts Japanese as demanding but discrete tourists. When speaking to Belgian tourists, the guide advises to make sure they are francophone; Brazilians have a poetic image of Paris and plan their trip in great detail. The Spanish need attention and sympathy; the British expect personalised advice and sound explanations. Dutch are pragmatic and pay attention to details. Americans are very direct and need to be reassured about prices. Italians are impatient tourists and fond of organised tours.

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