Textual Patterns for PR on City Marketing when Dealing with A German and Italian Speaking Area

Iris Jammernegg

Iris Jammernegg
Università di Udine (Italy).

Aquesta contribució pretén explorar els models textuals i les característiques lingüístiques que porten a l'èxit en l'estratègia de màrqueting subjacent a la promoció recíproca d'una ciutat i un gran esdeveniment esportiu. Els factors d'imatge rellevants de les dues realitats que s'han de transferir mútuament, un cop definides pels promotors, requereixen una realització lingüística i textualment coherent. Generalment ja es posa atenció en els aspectes lingüísticament superficials, però sovint no s'incideix prou amb la cohesió del text quan s'informa sobre un esdeveniment relatiu a la ciutat.

85

INTRODUCTION

(T)he aim of this paper is to investigate the importance of textual patterns and linguistic features which lead to success in the marketing strategy underlying the mutual promotion of a city and a big (sporting) event. Therefore, I will concentrate on the following three considerations:
• The organization of a big event has to be integrated into the city marketing concept; the public-private-partnership has to define the relevant image factors to be mutually transferred.
• This kind of integration requires a coherent linguistic and textual realization.
• Generally there is attention paid to linguistic surface aspects (e.g. the lexical choice), but there is often a lack of stress on the textual cohesion when communicating an event related to the city.

As best practice example I refer to Graz *2003 - Cultural Capital of Europe*, comparing this city's solutions to those offered by Turin's Winter Olympics 2006 and by Hanover as one of the main protagonists of 2006 FIFA World Cup. My choice is not determined by the specific nature of the event (Graz 2003 was a cultural one) but by the intention, optimally expressed, to turn it into a valid instrument for the city's long-lasting promotion as a desirable destination for tourism, as well as an international business partner. Graz showed that such an operation can change the image of the city as perceived by the relevant publics. From its website archives (http://www.graz03.at), we can deduce the central objectives of the marketing strategy which guided the organization of this event but are also emblematic for similar settings: to redefine the city as a whole almost overnight through the medium chosen, offering a wide range of urban entertainment; to retain this new, positive orientation in the future to find its place in the new Europe while not surrendering its identity, but actually strengthening it; to involve visitors actively in this process and let them experience emotions.

MUTUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITY AND EVENT MARKETING

Given the limited space, I will not go into detail about the complex relationships between city and event promotion. Nevertheless, in order to strengthen my analysis, I will sum up the most relevant aspects. As most cases show, on the one hand, a huge event gains attractiveness from its site, the latter having a certain dimension, offering good generic infrastructures and a wide range of services. On

the other hand, the organization of the event stimulates a new planning phase for the city interested in modernising its economic, architec-tural and social structures, as well as positioning itself better in the perception of old and new targets. When considering the staging of a sporting event, in order to facilitate the above outcomes, the image factors connected to both the event and the city should converge. The resulting core should highlight a dynamic, fun, but also wealthy way of life, based on a sense of community and emotional experiences.

Besides organizational implications, there is, at the communicational level, a great need for cooperation between public and private promoters of city and event interests, in order to harmonize not only the contents, but also and in particular the language and style of institutional and advertising messages.

At the social level, the promoters ought to cooperate with the residents who are the city's ambassadors in contact with attracted guests. Their behaviour and the opinions they express should visualize the claims of the main campaign. Graz, for example, involved and instructed its citizens with an impressive number of focus groups.

Therefore, we can assume that communication between promoters, inhabitants and guests will be complex, multilevel, multicultural, based on disparate semiotic codes and referring to spoken as well as to written language. Furthermore, the participants are supposed to interact not only in the real world but also in the textual realm as social actors who want to transform the context in which they live.

LINGUISTIC AND TEXTUAL REALIZATION
OF THE INTEGRATION CONSTRUCTED

For the purpose of expressing the cooperation between all actors and allowing synergetic effects, an integration between text(s) and context has to be achieved at the textual level. In our quickly changing times, which prefer visual communication based on electronic tools, with tendencies towards individualism and the search for entertainment not only for leisure time, but also in professional and didactic settings, and in consideration of the necessity to activate the addressees as participants, the best means is a *multimodal hypertext*. This kind of text, grounded on the interplay of diverse modes (verbal, visual, audio...) and communication areas or text-types (institutional, advertisement, media reviewing...) is not meant to be a mere online text. It will rather be a text whose single parts can be 'read' on traditional supports (magazines, brochures...), as

well as on the website or on entrance tickets, public transport, event taxis, everywhere in the public space, connecting linguistic, visual, audio, and gestural items. Like the net hypertext, it allows readers to choose one part in spite of the presence of others, to enlarge their knowledge of a specific aspect, passing through different levels or paths, to be a part of it, even modifying it. This text focuses on the most relevant aspects to be conveyed, using several internal references, locating them in different settings which are chosen by the reader according to his/ her personal interests. The resulting cohesion and varied redundancy are useful to guide the audience and increase their willingness to be informed.

In the case of Graz, this sort of text started far from Graz: along the highway from Vienna airport to the Austrian capital, visitors from abroad were confronted with huge placards which read "Welcome to Vienna, the most beautiful suburb of Graz". The PR texts available in Graz took over this strategy of unexpectedly reversing known assertions, aimed at achieving the marketing strategy claim to radically change the image of the city, from "nice but a bit old-fashioned" into "innovative, unique, quite impertinent".

It has to be a multimodal text because, as pointed out by Cheong (2004: 163), "Compared to text with a single semiotic code, the meaning potential of multi-semiotic texts is greatly expanded.", insofar as "the text serves to elaborate" the visuals (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 194), but also, reversely, the images act on the text (Cheong, 2004: 168, 178), always amplifying the meaning created by the whole beyond its single resources. Thus, the interaction between the semiotic resources is mutual at every instantiation (Lim Fei, 2004: 239). Choice and display of the visuals is of extreme importance, since they function as the centre of the visual impact where the reader engages with the text for the first time (cf. Bohle, 1990: 36), starting his personal reading path which will be bidirectional or multidirectional (cf. Lim Fei, 2004: 230).

Examining the official Hanover homepage, we notice that the picture of the geometrical city Gardens, in contrast to the dynamic sporting event, is not suitable. Much more convincing is the picture published on the website of the Turin 2006 Olympics where we see a wintry central street by night, crowded with people enjoying a kind of firework display of special effects which enhances two statements of the closing text: "The city (...) has proved itself to be avant-garde, cosmopolitan and even glamorous" and "It was a great and nearly impossible challenge for Turin, a fascinating city at the foot of the Alps, known for the closed character of its inhabitants, its fog and its cold winters."

If our objective is to promote an event (and its site), the text-genres used within the hypertext format should privilege the informative-persuasive function. We want to be known by the publics addressed and we want them to change habits, to think and act in the way we suggest. In our context, PR texts have to:
• catch the audience's attention and arouse curiosity;
• set up expectations of emotional experiences;
• be believed;
• negotiate needs, desires, eventual objections the addressees may express, turning them into active participants in the dialogue which, ideally, continues with the event and the city as a whole;
• be used while experiencing the event / the city.

These aspects imply that we have to renew the well-known tourist guide pattern; we should reproduce elements of oral dialogue in written texts, insert more common language terms and structures and address the reader directly. The text has to exploit its multi-semiotic possibilities and cohesive ties.

Given that the text has both information and promotion functions, it seems natural to insert passages structured like print advertisements, including compositional elements such as Lead, Announcement, Enhancer, Emblem, Call-and-Visit Information from Halliday and Hasan's generic structure potential (1985: 64). The attention-arresting element in the Lead, which embeds the central idea of the promotion, manipulating the viewer's perception of reality in order to meet the vision intended by the authors (cf. Cheong, 2004: 165), should preferably consist of visual elements. Following Halliday's (1994) model of expansion for logical meaning, according to which the most salient parts are read first, the explaining text —the enhancer— has to make the kaleidoscope of possible meanings accessible to the recipient and guide him to understand the message correctly. Still, while advertisements can persuade relying on the evocative function, PR texts have to prove what they are claiming if they wish to be reliable. There will be no contradiction if the expectations awakened in the recipient are fulfilled by the remaining text as well as by his/ her further experiences in the reality described.

Let us now look at the Graz brochure 2003 through the visitor's eyes. The format, content and style of the city's former guide had been changed. The new, smaller one has dimensions which are suitable for use while participating in the event or walking through the town. The brochure allows the reader to identify him or herself with the persons shown, with the feelings they convey

and with the movements they express. So it allows the assimila-
tion of some key image factors: the event / the city as a dynamic
community to join. This identification is achieved through the
multimodal text structure: pictures and text passages really refer to
each other and to other items located elsewhere in the hypertext,
expanding their respective meanings, as we can observe in the
interplay between key details illustrated in the pictures and the
systematic use of idiomatic expressions in the related texts. The
pictures represent a story (and we remember the importance of lin-
king information to personal stories), starring a young couple
enjoying the city, and the main text, which presents the profile of
the city, explicitly hints at the multi-story-based character of the
city where everybody can select the most congenial ones. Thanks
to elliptic clauses, contracted forms, exclamation points, the pro-
sody evokes an oral dialogue which, on the one hand reduces the
distance and the asymmetrical asset of the author-reader-rela-
tionship, and on the other hand gives the reader an active part,
further facilitated by the direct way the reader is addressed ("you
can", "you should", "you will"), as well as the limited use of
impersonal / passive voice.

RELEVANCE OF TEXTUAL COHESION

As defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 328), cohesion is crucial
for a text to fulfil its communicational purposes: "The analysis of
cohesion (...) will (...) show why the text is interpreted in a certain
way...". Cohesion belongs to the textual metafunction which
"construes ideational and interpersonal meanings as information
that can be shared by speaker and addressee; and it enables this sha-
ring by providing the resources for guiding the exchange of mea-
ning in text" (Matthiessen, 1995, quoted by Hasselgård, 2004: 68).
      Good PR texts require a focused organization of the con-
tents which makes the characteristics relevant for the addressee,
rather than for the author / promoter; anticipating and stimula-
ting the expectations of the audience by cohesive ties, because, as
Hoey (2001: 20) underlines, "a text which left us with no idea of
how it might develop would be a text with which we were not pro-
perly engaging". Thus, respecting both cohesion of contents and
information perspective as well as linguistic-structural cohesion,
the text helps its reader to orientate him or herself and receive the
message intended.
      Let us now examine some examples. As we can see on the
homepage of Hanover, sub-page related to the official World Cup

2006 website of the German Federal Government, the text begins in the right way: "When you think of Hanover, often you immediately think of the trade fairs…": the text establishes first a direct contact with its reader, starting a dialogue, and then stresses the relevant information about the characteristics the city is known for in the world. The two adverbs in clause-initial position, both semantically and syntactically marked in combination with the main data, function as multiple themes with cohesive value, referring to the preceding context as well as guiding to a new clause (cf. Hasselgård, 2004: 84). They thus suggest to us that there is something even more important to be discovered in this city. The structure creates expectations which, from the next paragraph on, are roughly ignored. What we get is not the hard core of the city's profile, what makes it unique and worth being explored, but a boring historical excursus about the evolution of the city from its earliest beginnings. This choice can't convince for several reasons. In the first place, it neglects both the expectations created and the internet user's habits. On the starting page of a website, the user is disposed to learn only about the very relevant aspects which have to be meaningful to him. In our case, a visitor interested in the sporting event wishes to find the fun, dynamic side of Hanover at first glance. It is not probable that he will be fond of history, and especially not in an encyclopaedic presentation format. This long passage also destroys the dialogue which was initiated and, using the past tense, distances the reader from the object described. It prevents him from making a connection with his being there and the reality of the city. The text-type characteristics are also not suitable for our communicational purpose. They are descriptive, not appealing, as shown by the textual connectors and syntactically relevant markers which are predominately of chronological and spatial nature. We observe a pronounced lack of connectors which could underline facts relevant to the reader's experiences. No emotion connected with the city is roused. When we look at the end of the historical excursus, the actual product, modern Hanover, seems quite anonymous: "Hanover recovered quicker than one would have thought. A modern city was built upon the rubble. Since then, it has remained a city in the green, a federal state capital with important cultural institutions, good shopping facilities and events of national importance." There is nothing which could make the city different to other cities, and there is still nothing to capture the reader's heart.

On the other hand, the 2003 version of the guide to Graz represents an excellent example of giving historical information about the city, related to the spirit of the event, enhancing the

message by cohesive ties in text and co-text. No more historical facts are reported: the central text starts this way: "Graz has many stories to tell.", working on the polysemic German term 'Geschichte', which means history, story, tale, evoking different feelings, expectations, striking different interests. The text, based on Toulmin's argument scheme, then presents three examples in order to support this thesis, using linguistic connectors which reinforce the main idea expressed at the beginning and proved at the end. History, the first of these stories, emerges as legacy now visible in the city of Graz, one of the best maintained cities in Central Europe —worthy of the title 'World Cultural Heritage'. Thanks to this brief, easygoing text which stresses the relationship with the addressee's presence in Graz, both the reader used to the traditional presentation of a city which starts from History and the reader seeking new experiences are satisfied.

CONCLUSIONS

This article was meant to show how the multimodal hypertext pattern meets the communicational needs of mutual city and event marketing, insofar as its characteristics allow: to combine disparate semiotic resources, thus enhancing the message intended by the promoters; to allow the addressees to choose the way they want to access the information led by their personal interests; to include different text-genres and patterns; to be open to modifications by writers (actualizing the whole or single elements, taking into account that the capacity of a society to interpret a promotional text is culturally determined and changes over time - O'Halloran, 1999: 320), as well as by recipients (through actions, e.g., writing personal impressions on city walls / additions to existing text parts, giving feedback in online forums).

      In this context, we have urged the renewal of tourist text patterns based on informative-persuasive functions. Nevertheless, we ought to consider that, even if the promoters' objective is to underline the event / the city as something innovative and unique in its field, the mixed genre of promotional text should not completely deny the usual genre characteristics, since the reader's expectation will be partly guided by his or her previous reading experiences with texts of the same kind (cf. Hoey, 2001: 43). Therefore, the given text-type should be improved by developing the functions to the best of their ability. In order to achieve this, authors have to remember the crucial importance of cohesion of contents, information perspective, and linguistic-textual struc-

tures which attract the interlocutor's interest by offering cataphoric items, as the search for a link between these items and their co-referent is a stimulating problem-solving activity, carried out by text processing (cf. Baicchi, 2004: 26). These structures are also supposed to orientate the audience, conveying the message intended. The successful information perspective, in accordance with the reinforcing cohesive ties, will activate the reader's emotional participation, addressing him or her directly, presenting contents relevant for his or her experience of the event / the city. If we want to "share the knowledge about how texts signal and represent" the writers' purposes and the interlocutors' ones, persuading "the reader into accepting the constructed text" (Samson, 2004: 200, following Kress 1989), this kind of interaction has to be realized to its highest degree in texts whose authors play a very explicit social role, serving the goals of city marketing. When even textual genres like academic writing, usually seen as detached and objective, "gain credibility from writers' projecting themselves into the text, and displaying commitment to their ideas" (Samson, 2004: 199), more affective text patterns as represented by, among others, informative-persuasive ones, should take this into consideration by introducing dialogue structures.

Finally, choice as well as disposition of the visual elements and text strategies helpful to efficiently stress the messages need further investigation, from an intercultural point of view, in relation to single target cultures.

REFERENCES

BAICCHI, A. (2004) "The cataphoric indexicality of titles". In: AIJMER, K.; STENSTRÖM, A.-B. (eds.). *Discourse Patterns in Spoken and Written Corpora*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, p. 17-38.

BOHLE, R. (1990) (HEATH, S. ed. and trans.) *Publication Design For Editors*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

CHEONG, Y.Y. (2004) "The construal of Ideational meaning in print advertisements". In: O'HALLORAN, K.L. (ed.). *Multimodal Discourse Analysis*. London: New York: Continuum, p. 163-195.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K. (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). London: Edward Arnold.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K.; HASAN, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

—. (1985) *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Socio-Semiotic Perspective*. Victoria: Deakin University. (Republished by Oxford University Press 1989).

HASSELGÅRD, H. (2004) "The role of multiple themes in cohesion". In: AIJMER, K.; STENSTRÖM, A.-B. (eds.). *Discourse Patterns in Spoken and Written Corpora*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, John Benjamins, p. 65-87.

HOEY, M. (2001) *Textual Interaction. An Introduction to Written Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge.

KRESS, G. (1989) *Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KRESS, G.; VAN LEEUWEN, T. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

LIM FEI, V. (2004) "Developing an interactive multi-semiotic model". In: O'HALLORAN, K.L. (ed.). *Multimodal Discourse*

Analysis. London: New York: Continuum, p. 220-246.
MATTHIESSEN, C. (1995) "Theme as an enabling resource in ideational 'knowledge' construction". In: MOHSEN, G. (ed.). *Thematic Development in English Texts*. London: Francis Pinter, p. 20-54.
O'HALLORAN, K.L. (1999) "Interdependence, interaction and metaphor in multi-semiotic texts". *Social Semiotics* 9/3, p. 317-354.
SAMSON, C. (2004) Interaction in written economics lectures. The meta-discursive role of person markers. In: AIJMER, K. and STENSTRÖM, A.-B. (eds.). *Discourse Patterns in Spoken and Written Corpora*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, p. 199-216.

Material analysed (June 2006):
Kleine Grazer Geschichte, brochure of Graz 2003
<http://www.graz03.at> website archives
<http://wm2006.deutschland.de/EN/Content/Host-Country-Germany/Cities-and-stadiums/Hanover/hanover.html>, sub-page related to the official World Cup 2006. Homepage of the German Federal Government.
Torino 2006, <http://www.torino2006.org/ENG/OlympicGames/news/news_ita161411.html>