ELF users’ attitudes and orientations in tourism interaction

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Introduction

The proposed investigation, in the framework of ELF research, involves some Tourist Industry stakeholders interacting for leisure, cultural, entertaining, sportive, culinary, etc. reasons in order to detect their orientations and attitudes towards the use of English as a Multilingua Franca (Jenkins 2015). From a qualitative approach and by the use of ethnographic interviews among 27 participants to a pilot study conducted in Italy, **I enquire into participants’ consciousness of intercultural accommodation and attitudes towards multilingual resources in ELF encounters** (Cogo 2016). **Moreover, I will explore their awareness of strategic use of pragmatic resources to achieve effectiveness in communication and overcome cultural characterisations** (Baker 2011, 2012b, 2015). This presentation can contribute to clarify tourism employees and visitors’ perspective towards multicultural use of English as a Lingua Franca for tourism in Italy.

Materials and methods

This study is based on a population of twenty-seven participants of different ages and educational background, both expert staff working in different roles in the Tourism Industry in the south of Italy, and non-expert visitors.

Chart 1. Study Population

They were asked to fill a short questionnaire and sit a longer semi-structured interview with the researcher. Not all of the participants allowed to be recorded during the interview. However, 15 hours and 25 minutes was the amount of recording collected. The field work lasted two months and was carried out in different tourist locations of the south of Italy.

The strategic and purposive choice of the participant sample was made to make the result most effectively and meaningfully answer this investigation questions and contribute to the research field theoretically. Nevertheless, we are conscious that it does not represent a given population, and further investigation would be necessary to generalise the present study results.

In the framework of qualitative research, the ethnographic interview were made up of a combination of some descriptive questions regarding linguistic behaviour; in addition to some probing, comparative, evaluative and explanatory questions. They were discursive tools to develop a fuller picture of a multiple reality. **It was possible to make participant talk from their own perspective, using their own ideas, meanings and frames of reference.** They showed understanding of the project’s aims and allowed to build a rapport with the interviewer.

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Results

As this research is mainly concerned, it attempts to put in evidence ELF users’ perspective on attitudes and orientations towards English as a Lingua Franca communication.

Chart 2. Results description.

This study population revealed that a multicultural outlook on talk contributes to achieve effective intercultural communication. Interlocutors are usual to accommodate to each other with kindness and reciprocal understanding.

English is always in the mix (Jenkins 2015), in the background of international socialising. **Speakers realised the strength of multilingual knowledge that can be common to interlocutors and enhance comprehensibility.** Moreover, each personal linguacultural tradition refers to individual choice of learning and life experience. For this reason, it is a psychological drive to bond speaking partners in a fellowship for communication. **Although tourists can only create transient communities of speakers (Pitzl 2016), where contact usually lasts the time of a conversation or a few encounters, participants share a strong sense of belonging. They feel compelled to accommodate to each other to finalise their conversation.**

Conclusions

In conclusion, some subjective perceptions on awareness of strategic use of pragmatic resources were elicited; they were considered, by the participants, pragmatic strategies to achieve effectiveness in communication and overcome cultural characterisations (Baker 2011, 2012b, 2015). Furthermore, **the international use of English as a lingua franca was not only considered a feature connected to the superdiverse reality (Vertovec 2010, 2015) of contemporary times, but an effective resource to penetrate and understand differences among people coming from disparate countries around the world. It should be used to abridge cultural legacies and enhance human patrimonies to face the contradictions of globalisation.**