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Linguistic Aspects and Typology of Sport Tourism

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Abstract: This article examines the linguistic aspects and typology of sport tourism. Sport tourism refers to travel for recreational or competitive sport participation and spectating. As a niche segment of the global tourism industry, sport tourism encompasses unique linguistic considerations related to terminology, communication, marketing, and cross-cultural interactions. A typology is proposed categorizing sport tourism into hard vs soft forms and spectating vs participation-based types. Linguistic analysis explores lexical choices and semantic connotations in sport tourism discourse. Pragmatic factors in promotional materials, spectator interactions, and cross-cultural exchanges are also discussed. The article concludes by calling for additional research on applying linguistics methodology to advancing sport tourism scholarship.

Keywords: sport tourism, linguistics, terminology, typology, discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

Sport tourism refers to "travel outside of the home environment for a limited time period to participate in physical activities, watch physical activities, or venerate attractions associated with physical activities" [1]. It encompasses both competitive and recreational sports, representing a niche segment of the broader global tourism industry. Sport tourism attracted an estimated 600 million national and international travelers in 2019, contributing over \$600 billion to the world economy [2].

As a unique form of travel motivated by engagement with sports, sport tourism encompasses distinctive linguistic elements related to terminology, communication patterns, discourse features, cross-cultural interactions, and more. However, linguistic aspects of sport tourism remain relatively understudied within existing literature. Therefore, this article conducts an exploratory linguistics-oriented analysis of sport tourism, proposing a novel typology and highlighting key areas for future research.

METHODS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on linguistics in sport and tourism has largely focused on separate contexts, with limited scholarship exploring their intersection. For example, studies have examined the language of sports media

[3] and terminology used in various fields and disciplines related to tourism [4]. Straddling sports studies and tourism research, sport tourism represents an emergent interdisciplinary area of inquiry [1,5]. Various sport tourism typologies categorize forms and activities based on factors like location, purpose of travel, and tourist motivation [6,7]. Yet existing typologies do not incorporate linguistic elements.

Meanwhile, tourism discourse analysis applies linguistics methods to study promotional materials, cross-cultural service encounters, semiotic place representations, and identity construction in tourism contexts [8-10]. Building on this foundation, the current article aims to elucidate the linguistic aspects which characterize sport tourism specifically.

RESULTS

Typology of Sport Tourism

Integrating linguistic considerations, sport tourism may be categorized into two overarching types:

Hard sport tourism - Competitive, intense physical sports often requiring significant training, skill, and fitness. Linguistically, hard sport tourism discourse features specialized terminology, strategic competitor communication, and expressions of prowess or achievement. Examples include marathon running, cycling races, rugby tournaments, and World Cup skiing.

Soft sport tourism - Recreational sports with more accessible participation. Discourse encompasses friendly banter, emphasis on enjoyment, and inclusive lexical choices. Examples include family hiking vacations, cruise ship shuffleboard, and recreational golf resorts.

Alongside this binary of hard vs soft sport tourism, a secondary spectating vs participation-based typology can be proposed:

Spectator sport tourism - Travel to observe sporting events as a fan/audience member. Involves discourse linguistic practices like sports chants, commentary, celebrating victories, and posting on fan forums.

Participation sport tourism - Active involvement playing recreational or competitive sports. Firsthand participation shapes linguistic needs for coaching, rules explanations, event registration, injury discussions, etc.

These two axes - hard/soft and spectating/participation - allow more nuanced categorization of sport tourism forms. For instance, both spectators and participants at a swim meet competition would fall under hard sport tourism, yet their linguistic needs differ. Meanwhile, travelers going on a recreational bike tour are participation-based soft sport tourists.

Unique Linguistic Elements in Sport Tourism

Terminology

Every specialized domain develops field-specific terminology. Like medicine or law, sport tourism similarly encompasses a lexicon going beyond common vocabulary. Key terms include niche activities

like spelunking, parasailing, or Nordic skiing [11] alongside jargon for equipment, competitive bracketing systems, regulatory bodies, and sports science concepts [12]. Beginner sport tourists may face a steep learning curve understanding terminology which frequent participants use effortlessly in discourse. Linguistic analysis should identify challenges posed by insider vocabulary in sport tourism contexts.

Promotional Discourse & Materials

Tourism advertising utilizes particular rhetorical techniques, lexical choices, and cultural assumptions to portray destinations and activities in an appealing light [9]. Sport tourism promotions function similarly, utilizing tropes like thrill-seeking adventurism, fitness idealization, competitive spectacle, team spirit, and more. Yet ineffective promotional materials could also deter sport tourists through linguistic misfires like overly complex terminology or messaging misaligned with target demographics. Researchers should apply critical discourse analysis to sport tourism promotions and advise best practices.

Spectator Interactions & Commentary

Attending live sports events, spectators engage in emotive linguistic practices like cheering, chanting coordinated songs/sayings, or shouting encouragement to on-field competitors [13]. Commentators also utilize sports-specific terminology, statistics, and narrative techniques describing live action for media broadcasts to remote audiences [14]. Both spectator interactions and commentary shape the linguistic context and discourse in sport tourism, warranting deeper analysis.

Cross-Cultural Communication

With its geographic mobility, sport tourism facilitates cross-cultural exchanges between locals and visitors. Such interactions highlight pragmatics factors as different communication norms and languages intersect [15]. Even among English speakers, terminological variation exists between dialects. For example, the term “football” has culture-specific connotations comparing North American usage denoting gridiron vs association football for most other countries. Effective cross-cultural communication remains integral for positive sport tourist experiences and host community relations.

Injury Discourse

Both recreational participants and competitive athletes face inevitable sport injuries, prompting unique healthcare communication needs. Seeking medical care abroad, sport tourists must accurately describe symptoms and pain levels across potential language barriers. Discourse analysis should uncover challenges in this injury-related linguistic context – especially important for higher risk adventure sports. Insights could inform policies supporting participant safety.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This exploration reveals sport tourism as a rich site of unique linguistic practices - from terminology acquisition, advertising persuasion strategies, spectator bonding rituals, intercultural exchanges, and injury healthcare visits. Uniting sports studies and tourism research, sport tourism discourse and

communication patterns remain underexamined in existing literature. Advancing scholarship in this niche domain at the intersection of linguistics and sport/tourism studies presents abundantly fertile ground for knowledge development.

With multiplicity in covered activities and motivations, analyzing universal traits across the entire sport tourism sector proves difficult. As the proposed typology illustrates, dividing the domain into segments like hard vs soft or spectating vs participation facilitates more meaningful analysis. Comparing discourse features between such categories and situating findings in appropriate contexts will strengthen future research quality. Beyond generalized commentary on linguistic aspects, sport tourism scholarship must embrace granular and rigorous investigation of specific uses of language.

CONCLUSION

This article highlighted linguistic considerations unique to sport tourism settings with a proposed typology differentiating forms and functions. As discourse patterns shape the participant experience central to this \$600+ billion global sector, language matters greatly in sport tourism contexts. Therefore, research must move beyond surface-level descriptions applying linguistics methods to uncover deeper insights. Understanding nuanced elements like terminology adoption challenges, cultural pragmatics in host-tourist interactions, injury care communication barriers and more will enable serving both enthusiasts and newcomers better through appropriately tailored promotional materials, spectator engagement initiatives, accessibility accommodations, multilingual resources, and infrastructure supporting linguistic needs. With such ample research gaps and practical implications, the intersection of linguistics and sport tourism studies offers abundant opportunities for impactful interdisciplinary scholarship.

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