

The Printed Travel Guide in the Analysis of the Tourist Discourse. The Presentation of the Travel Guide in Romanian and French

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Abstract

Given the diversity of travel guides on the market, it would be difficult to try to get a complete picture of them. Thus, the travel guides in Romanian and French, which we have in view for our analysis, are volumes that contain practical information (itineraries, means of transport, traditions and art, fauna and flora, accommodation and catering, etc.), images, positive descriptions regarding the destinations presented and information that promotes the tourist product. Although they are part of the category of practical and cultural guides, their presentation is at the heart of our analysis in order to highlight both the similarities and differences between the guides in Romanian and French. The aim of this paper is to show that, although at first glance they seem quite homogeneous, printed travel guides have both common features and differences (Faccin 2015: 16) regarding the content and structure of these promotional materials.

Key words: travel guide, discursive regularities, informative character, axiological dimension, textual genre

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1. Introduction

Despite the assertion of the Internet, the rapid dissemination of new methods and behaviors of using the content of tourist information, paper (or book) guides continue to have, to some extent, a privileged position on bookstore shelves, their offer remaining still wide and diverse.

The printed tourist guide is a means of tourist information used by the traveler-reader, a textual tool with which the reader is introduced to discover an unknown or insufficiently known space and which promotes places and the imagination of future travelers (Stock 2014: 6). These material supports are works published in collections that aim at the exhaustive enumeration of “what must be seen” (Boyer & Viallon 1994: 55). Although at first glance, they seem quite homogeneous, presenting both common features and differences (Faccin 2015: 16), these material supports differ from each other depending on the target audience and the organization of the materials presented to readers (Devilla 2013: 59).

2. Literature review

The paper is part of a wider research, regarding the analysis of the written tourist discourse, in Romanian and French. For this research, we stopped at the printed tourist guides, trying to study how the tourist destinations in Romania and France are described, and how they are presented to the reader, future tourist. In choosing them, we sought to be reference guides, not to be translated, and to be as recent as possible. Regarding the choice of publishers, we decided to keep only the major collections of guides, namely Ad Libri for the Romanian language and Le Routard and Le Michelin, for the French language.

These are volumes that include practical information (itineraries, means of transport, traditions and art, fauna and flora, accommodation and catering, etc.), images, positive descriptions of the destinations presented and information that promote the tourist product, being a true cultural mediator between two different partners. Thus, the sender seeks to create a link between the reader and the unknown destination, between the traveler and the places that are presented as elements typical of the "exotic" world.

3. Research methodology

From a methodological point of view, we chose a corpus that can be compared, related to the tourist field, namely the printed travel guides. We performed this analysis using documents in two languages, Romanian and French, convinced that the multilingual aspect will allow us to gain a universal vision of the subject. First, we described each corpus separately, then we compared them to show that, although they are published in different cultures, they have points of approach and distance.

4. Findings

4.1. Guides in Romanian

The guides in Romanian are distributed by Ad Libri Publishing House in Bucharest, and include two collections, namely: "Travelers on the World Map" and "Go and see". The "Travelers on a World Map" collection is based on an original formula, inspired by travel guides and photo albums. The chapters, organized according to areas and presented in different colors, provide information about the top galleries: for example: "The 10 most beautiful places in Romania" or "The 10 most beautiful tourist attractions in Bucharest", about the objectives of interest, and a column «Did you know that ...?» which includes anecdotes or short interesting stories about past events or personalities who marked the life of a city or who remained in the memory of the Romanian people. Other guides, belonging to the same "Go and see" collection, are dedicated to different geographical areas of Romania. They invite readers to discover the most beautiful regions and cities in our country.

Made in an attractive format, with suggestive photos and maps accompanied by a legend of the symbols used in the guide, they present, in an accessible way, a large amount of information related to the history, architecture, community culture, car routes, variants of walks, traditions and people of those areas. After the Introduction section, the presentation of the localities in the order of geographical location, not in alphabetical order, where the most picturesque areas in the described region are described, follows. They offer the reader a walk sprinkled with historical information, with details about the architecture of the buildings, with stories, bringing back the atmosphere of the villages that preserve the beauty of the traditions that recommend enrolling in the tourist circuit.

"So let us set out on our journey ... But not before we get acquainted, as befits a traveler, with the geographical and historical data of this land" (GTON: 14).

Also in these guides we find good quality photos, suggested routes (by car), marked paths and a map of the area, accompanied by a legend with the symbols that appear in the guide. In a rather dry style, sometimes close to enumeration, the presentation of a precise circuit provides the reader with information about the state of the route, duration and degree of difficulty (for example: «*route 5: Busteni-Gâlma Mare-Valea Jepilor-Cabana Caraiman- Cabana Babele- Hotel Peștera [..], lasting 5 hours, inaccessible in winter, is recommended only to **trained and well-equipped tourists***»)(GTVP: 35), recommending what to see, the direction he/she should look in and, less often, the impression he/she should make. The indications regarding the traveler's itineraries are really very precise: everything is specified (route, marking, duration, etc.), the route becoming remarkable by the way in which time and space are rationalized. The structure of the page is the classic one, ie the text appears on the whole page, while in the first guides described, the text is structured in two columns.

Unlike the other guides described above that belong to the same collection, the latter are distinguished by the fact that their real plan is not as organized because, according to the mentioned sections (Introduction and listing of localities), we find different sections specific to a single guide. For example, in the *Bucovina Tourist Guide* (2008) it appears: «*Small dictionary of regionalisms*»;

The Prahova Valley Tourist Guide (2006) ends with an appendix containing "*Practical tips for hikers*", and *Northern Oltenia Tourist Guide* (2006) has a caption entitled "*Holidays, fairs and popular festivals in the North Oltenia area*".

Others have a mini bibliography such as the *Rucăr-Bran Corridor Tourist Guide* (2006), and two of them contain attached mapped maps (*Bistrița – Nasăud Tourist Guide* [2006] and *Neamt County Tourist Guide* [2006]). Unlike the guides in French and those in the Top Collection, there is no practical information about accommodation, meals, transport, currency, prices, etc. in these guides.

Following a careful analysis of the corpus in Romanian, we can say that, regardless of the collection they belong to, the guides of Ad Libri Publishing House are structured in clear chapters, easy to consult, which provide information about exact data (tourist attractions, forms of entertainment etc.), detailed maps, impressive photos that take a complete picture of each destination.

Like the travel guides in French, the ones in Romanian offer a precise and complete ranking of the places worth visiting. For example, we cite the sections entitled "*The 10 most beautiful places in Romania*" or "*The 10 most interesting Romanian experiences*" (*Romania Tourist Guide* 2014), sections that reveal to the reader the main areas of Romania worth visiting. Along with "Contents", the first pages also contain a list of the icons that appear in the guide, as well as a legend with their meaning (GTRo 2015: 2).

The name of the chapters emphasizes the fact that the editors structured their presented material according to some main themes, such as: *Introduction, Historical landmarks, a top of the most beautiful destinations / most interesting experiences, the Regions of Romania and General Index*. The themes regarding the regions in Romania (GTRo) are classified, in their turn, according to the geographical location, where we find the following sub-themes: *Bucharest, Muntenia and Oltenia, Dobrogea and Danube Delta, Moldova, Transylvania, Banat and Crișana, Maramureș*. The cities and main tourist attractions bear an attractive historical and geographical description, and titles such as: *Recommendations* (on culture and entertainment, excursions, hiking, holiday activities, festivals and cultural events, recommendations) and *Practical information* including data on transport, telecommunications, banks, currency, climate, address of bars, restaurants and cafes, etc.) and a *General Index* that includes the names of the localities and attractions presented in alphabetical order can be found in them. In addition to the information on precise tourist itineraries, on holiday activities, related to neighborhoods, museums or monuments, there is also a detailed presentation of regional traditions, extremely well preserved.

Made in an attractive format, with good quality photos and colorful maps, they offer, in an accessible way, tips and recommendations regarding the tourist objectives in the area, where you can eat well, places where you can shop, etc. The editors of these guides recommend itineraries in well-known places, but also in places that are usually ignored by tourists, mentioning legends and stories that trigger curiosity and attract the reader's attention. Along with the description of tourist destinations, the village world present through folk costumes and dances, the description of various almost forgotten professions, religious holidays, important moments in the lives of the inhabitants contribute to the idyllic image of a fairytale world. In his imaginary itinerary, the traveler-reader is invited to meet the host population together with its customs and traditions through culinary tastings, by discovering the natural areas and the activities specific to those lands. So the rural universe and the stories from the stove, the old habits, delight the reader with their charm, strengthening the connection between him and the guide-writer even trying to attract other travelers.

In Romanian guides, the iconography is abundant because the typographic space has been reduced in favor of the one dedicated to photographs or advertising space. For example, the *Romania Travel Guide* (2015) contains over 170 photos of all sizes, some the size of a page. These photographs, representing various buildings (cathedrals, churches, hotels, institutions, etc.), landscapes, activities or traditions, are mostly accompanied by comments. The language used, the rigor of the presentations and the simplicity of the graphics are distinctive features of the style used in editing these guides. At the same time, the special attention paid to local traditions is a specific feature of Romanian texts. Thus, the travel guide, more than ever, appears as a cultural mediator between two different entities, namely: the guide-writer tries to create a link between the reader and the unknown destination, between the traveler and the places that are presented as typical elements of the „exotic” world. (Faccin 2013: 17) If the guides in French have up to 700 pages, the ones in Romanian are a bit voluminous. They contain between 80 and 280 pages. In general, their texts are composed in medium

characters and, in order to provide readers with accurate and useful information, the editors use only one type of text, namely the normal format (full page), while those in the Top Collections respect the structure of those in French. Although both types of guides have largely the same features, there are still some differences in graphics. In general, the characters of the letters are simple, easy to read, but in Romanian, the body of the letters is larger than in French. In terms of colors used and contrasts created, Le Routard uses titles in black and red, while Le Vert Michelin, in black and green. The same cannot be said about the guides in Romanian, where we find titles written only in black. Starting from the discursive characteristics of cultural guides, pointed out by Seoane (2013a: 33-43), namely: "hyperstructure moins segmentée, style plus littéraire, recours à l'hypotaxe, choix lexicaux plus soutenus" we can classify the guides in Romanian in the category "Cultural" or "literary" guides as the author calls them.

4.2. Guides in French

4.2.1. Le Guide du Routard

In our analysis, we stopped at Le Guide du Routard because it seemed to us one of the most widely used guides in French and the best-known travel guide since 1973, providing all the information readers need to discover, they themselves, a tourist product. Written in 1973 and published by Hachette since 1975, this collection of travel guides is primarily aimed at people who want to travel on a limited budget and who are trying to escape the routine of organized travel. Among the printed guides, "Le Guide du Routard", renamed Le Routard in 2013, remains the guide for totally independent tourists who like adventure. It has maintained this goal even though it is currently consulted by the vast majority of travelers. It owes its enormous success to the many practical information it provides. With a green cover ("vert tofu"), impossible to miss, Le guide du Routard is present in all cities and regions of France. On the fourth cover of this guide, the image of a young traveler with a backpack (the publisher's logo) appears, a symbol that has become the guarantee of a good price-quality ratio, valid for all restaurants and hotels included in the guide. The "Le Routard" guide offers a wide space for practical information such as: cultural places, travel preparation, hotels, campsites, restaurants, means of transport, events, etc. In addition, it provides readers with other useful addresses such as: the schedule of various means of transport: bus / subway / train, museum schedules, maps of subway stations, etc.

In Le Routard guides, we will find a first part with maps and color images for discovering the two chosen destinations and for locating the favorite places «nos coups de coeurs»; then itinerary suggestions and practical information for organizing stays; original cultural visits "off the beaten track"; detailed maps and plans. The following section entitled "*Bons à savoir avant le départ*" contains useful information on accommodation, money and bank, budget, cards, administrative formalities, etc. The section that represents the guide itself describes the regions of Corsica - for Le Routard Corse - presented according to a route starting from Bastia, continuing with Cap Corse, Saint-Florrent and the surroundings of Grand Sud Corse reaching Costa Verde, Castagniccia and Casinca, and the 20 districts of Paris - for Le Routard Paris - presented clockwise, starting from the center, to the north, east, south and west. In these practical guides, it is important to mention the existence of the following sections that we find in each region or city: *Useful Adresses, Transports, Where to sleep? Where to eat? Where to have a drink? Where to listen to music? See and do* for small and medium budgets.

The last part entitled "Hommes, culture, ambiente" provides detailed information on architecture, gastronomy, fauna and flora, history, cinema, economics, etc. This part of the guide contains practical information that helps the reader in choosing the services, the places worth visiting, where you can dine or stay. In the guide Le Routard Paris, there is a section entitled "Plans et cartes en couleurs" which contains maps of the boroughs of Paris along with some useful information such as: *Where to sleep?? Where to eat, where to go out? Wine bar etc.* In addition to concise descriptions, photographs, computer graphics (schemes, maps, itineraries), advertising are witnesses to a "mixture of genres" within the hyperstructure of this tourist material (Seoane 2013: 33-43). Browsing this guide, we notice the small number of maps, the almost total absence of images. The layout, the structure of the chapters and the organization of the paragraphs are the same in both versions (history, information, holidays and festivals). Section *À voir. À faire* appears in the description of each neighborhood, each

region, and sections such as: *Arrival-Departures, Useful Adresses, Where to sleep, Where to eat nearby? Where to have a drink? Where to listen to music ? ,Manifestations, etc.*) make Guide du Routard a real point of reference in the eyes of the readers. More recently, to seduce the general public, publisher Hachette has recently invested in good quality paper, adopted an airy layout, and used a larger number of photographs.

4.2.2. Le Guide Michelin

Le Guide Michelin is one of the oldest travel guides since it appeared in France, in 1900. It stands out for its sobriety and referential function, features that characterize this guide designed for a cultivated audience with a good material situation, working in -a wide variety of areas. We owe to this guide the remarkable cultural content that covers all areas, namely: political history, flora, monuments, curiosities, landscapes, etc. As a peculiarity of this type of guide, we can emphasize the special attention paid to the presentation of the natural and cultural heritage of a country. This work - in which we find practical information depending on the destination, about the best time to go on a trip, with the formalities to be completed before departure or with the useful addresses once you arrive at your destination, with tips about restaurants, accommodation, etc. - is appreciated for the seriousness and rigor of its presentation (Margarito 2010: 19).

Michelin guides are characterized by the elongated format in height, by the presence of photographs and the large number of maps, drawings and colorful reproductions of art objects, advertising posters. Like the one presented above (Le Routard), it is structured in sections, each of them dealing with information from the respective city / region or country. For example, four sections are grouped in the Alsace Michelin Guide. The first section entitled "Nos incontournables", which includes a selection of the most beautiful places listed with stars, is made up of images representative of the places worth visiting. The second section called "Organizer son voyage" includes suggestions for itineraries as well as thematic itineraries. The sub-category "Aller dans la region" lists practical information useful to the traveler with reference to: means of transport, weather, useful addresses, accommodation, meals and prices. The third section, entitled "Comprendre L'Alsace et les Vosges" presents the history, art and architecture, the artistic and cultural universe of the region, nature and landscapes. The last section "Découvrir la région", which is the actual guide, describes each sub-region in Alsace.

Also here are presented all the information useful to the reader, the points of interest to visit, the operating hours of various institutions, restaurants and accommodation, the most attractive activities. The maps that accompany each area in the Alsace region help to guide the reader, and the images, which fuel his curiosity, have the role of triggering the desire to buy. At the end of the Michelin Guide are some important sections for the reader such as the "General Index". This includes the names of cities and places in alphabetical order. Then another section entitled "Legends of Maps and Plans" explain the symbols used in the travel guide. As mentioned above, the attractions of tourist places, tours not to be avoided, activity ideas (for two, with family or friends, numerous maps and Michelin plans), are rated from one star to three. A star means that the tourist attraction is interesting (The Pont Neuf, although the name does not indicate, is the oldest bridge over the Seine) (GVMP: 78); Two stars indicate that the objective is worth a detour to see it (Blue fire Megacoaster ** propels you in 2.5 seconds at a speed of 100km / h) (GVMA: 452), and three stars tell us that the tourist attraction is worth the trip (Champ-Élysée ***, From the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe) (GVMP: 4). The Michelin Green Guide *Paris* has the same structure as the one presented above (4 sections). The first three are identical to those of the *Vert Alsace Guide*, while the fourth section describes the 20 districts of Paris, whose overview appears on a double page: starting with a plan, the main elements are indicated by a photograph, following to be described in the following pages. Therefore, the content of the guide is very innovative and its function as a *marketing actor* is put at the service of the tire, because this guide is dedicated primarily to readers-travelers who will explore unknown or lesser known places, traveling by car. The comprehensive information provided by the "*Michelin Green Guide*" is one of the key points that differentiates it from previous guides, and for which the guide becomes indispensable. It contains hundreds of addresses selected by authors in the field (restaurants, bars, hotels, shops) for all tastes and all budgets. The main cities and locations have a historical, geographical presentation and sections related to accommodation,

restaurants, shops, attractive activities for the reader-traveler. The text is completed by maps, plans, photos, sketches and eloquent and easy-to-read rankings. Thus, the French cultural guide remains a reference for presenting the different possibilities of visiting a city, a region, a country, etc. In the Green Michelin guides, the hyperstructure is marked by a special caption (titles, subtitles, intertitles), by the existence of spaces, by a two-column arrangement of the text, by the presence of color photographs, by highlighting places to visit. The didactic objective of this guide is achieved by its visualization and content.

The two types of guide are voluminous and expensive, containing between four and six hundred pages and even more. In small print, lowercase characters are used, probably for reasons of economy, where full-page text alternates with two-column text. In this case, we have to make the following observation: in order to provide information, the scriptwriters adopt the texts in two columns, while for the description of the destinations they resort to the text in full page. Michelin guides are "singularized" by the large number of maps they make available to readers. Some take the form of topographic images, necessary in locating the evoked places.

From a communicative perspective, the travel guide is interactive and proposes an agreement between the scriptwriter-guide and the reader-traveler. In the process of receiving the message, the reader will look for landmarks that will guide him and facilitate his understanding (Mareş 2004: 88). These landmarks are paratextual elements such as titles, subtitles, side notes, cover, illustrations, etc. which provide information about the text and act as an anticipator, preparing the reading for the reader. In this regard, Seoane (2013b: 8) points out that *Le guide du Routard* makes it possible to read it by proposing a ranking "*par puces ainsi qu'une fragmentation accentuée par polices en gras ou majuscules*", while *Le Michelin guide* "*privilégie un classement par localisation géographique*" clockwise. Also here we must add the presence of the iconic photographic and infographic elements that provide major information for the reader-traveler, the detailing of the information being far above that offered by other tourist materials with advertising character.

One of the innovative ideas present in the two guides is the collaboration between publishers and tourists through the white pages. These pages dedicated to the reader and entitled "*Notes personnelles*" in *Le Guide du Routard* (GRP: 620-624) or "*Notes*" in *Le Guide Vert Michelin* (GVMA: 472-475) invite readers to speak on their own behalf. But Hachette Publishing House goes even further. It is not satisfied only with arranging a possible space for the production of the discourse, but requests the collaboration of the reader in the production of information (Faccin 2015: 5): "*À vous ahora de nous faire partager vos impressions*" (GRC: 359). In other words, publishers invite readers to check the information provided and to participate in any changes or inaccuracies. The guides, which propose to readers-travelers to become mediators, disseminating "*leurs bons plans*" et "*leurs adresses*" achieve a mediation that defines the experience as "*un fait vécu*" as Vergopoulos and Flon (2012: 3) point out. Example:

«Faites-nous part de vos expériences, de vos découvertes, de vos tuyaux. Indiquez-nous les renseignements périmés. Aidez-nous à remettre l'ouvrage à jour» (GRC: 440).

«Il n'est pas totalement exclu que certaines [informations pratiques] ne soient plus, à la date de parution du guide, tout à fait exactes ou exhaustives. N'hésitez pas à nous signaler toute omission ou inexactitude que vous pourriez constater, ainsi qu'à nous faire part de vos avis et suggestions sur les adresses contenues dans ce guide» (GVMA: 485).

The collaboration between the publishing houses (the editorial group) and the tourist-readers can also be found in the guides in Romanian. Thus, in «Romania Tourist Guide» (2015), from the second page of the guide, the reader is warned that:

«The publishing house tries to provide readers with complete and up-to-date information. We apologize for any inaccuracies and are grateful to all who will report them to us. Any other comments and new information on the subject of this guide will be considered welcome »(GTRo: 2).

Following the analysis of the two categories of guides, practical and cultural, we can mention that "*Le Guide du Routard*" most often emphasizes practical information and the axiological dimension of discourse, while "*Le Guide Michelin*" focuses more less on these practical aspects, insisting on the historical and cultural aspects of the destinations. Aceste diferențe evidențiază faptul că locutorul fiecărui ghid se adresează unui cititor model diferit «*tablant sur les attentes et le profil socioculturel que celui-ci est supposé avoir*» (Seoane 2013b: 12). If "*Le Guide Michelin*" builds its relationship

with the reader on a rather cognitive and intellectual dimension, "*Le Guide du Routard*" uses a more subjective tone, in a familiar and relaxed style.

The large number of maps available in the two types of guide allows locating the localities or places presented. Both offer a selection of addresses of all types and at all prices and more or less detailed information about heritage and history. The tone and style of writing are a matter of taste, because the methodology used by publishers matters. Some guides use freelance journalists (*Le Petit Futé*, *Le Michelin Guide*), while others send their journalists to the field for a few weeks to bring a new breath to the guide (*Le Routard*).

5. Conclusions

Referring to travel guides, we can say that the differences appear in terms of format, number of pages and in terms of graphic adaptation. In contrast, in terms of content and structure, these media are almost similar, the differences being more important between practical and cultural guides than between guides in Romanian and French. These are volumes that contain practical information (itineraries, means of transport, traditions and art, fauna and flora, accommodation and catering, etc.), images, positive descriptions regarding the destinations presented and information that promotes the tourist product.

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